Theories, Practices, and Implications of Queer of Color Critique

Annotated Bibliographies

compiled by the students of UC Berkeley Ethnic Studies, Spring 2018

The following is a compilation of annotated bibliographies produced by the students of the undergraduate class, Queer of Color Critique at UC Berkeley in the Spring of 2018 taught by Juana María Rodríguez. We share them because as a class we are committed to making the resources of the university accessible to more expansive publics. While the annotations presented are in no way complete or perfect and some of the citation practices are imprecise, they illustrate the range of approaches, methods, and critical orientations inspired by our own engagement with queer of color critique. We hope they will be useful to others interested in researching these topics further.

Students in the class were given the freedom to pursue their own research interests and that range of interests is reflected in the diverse topics that they selected to research. The annotations are presented in no particular order and have not been edited beyond formatting changes. In addition to the specific topics outlined below, it is also searchable document that allows users to search for key terms. We hope you find this useful.

Please feel free to share this resources with others. Questions about this assignment can be directed to juarodriguez@berkeley.edu with the subject line: Annotated Bibliography
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Queerness in Central America and its Diasporas, compiled by Ashlee Lynda Quezada


In this reflection, Arriola uses narratives from undocumented gay migrants that were originally gathered by activists while touring a South Texas detention center in efforts to see the impact of American law at for-profit immigration detention centers. Within these narratives are testimonies of LGBTQ+ identifying Central American migrants who crossed multiple borders, risking their lives, seeking asylum from the persecution faced in their homophobic home countries. Arriola situates these narratives in response to the ruling in Obergefell which presents the United States as a safe haven for sexual and gender freedom. Additionally, Arriola utilizes her own experiences as a young civil rights lawyer in the 1980’s and volunteering for the Lambda Legal Defense Fund in hopes and efforts to fight for the decriminalization of homosexuality.


In this anthropological work, Florence E. Babb reflects on previous experiences of observing how Nicaraguan women and men negotiate the “terrain of same-sex sexual politics” (304). Babb argues that times of social transformation, such as the Nicaraguan Revolution (1979-1990), create opportunities for personal and national reflection regarding the politics of gender and sexuality. Babb distinguishes between the politics of male and female sexualities where men’s sex lives have continuously been publicized and given academic attention whereas women’s social activism with sexual politics is just now at this time (2003) receiving more attention in Nicaragua and remains deserving of scholarly recognition. Babb also includes the idea that the politics of women are usually thought of as closely linked to the local, while men’s are often more globalized. Babb contradicts this to say that in Nicaragua the contrary occurs with men’s same-sex practices being recognized locally and therefore obscuring attention from women’s local and global activism regarding same-sex, gay and lesbian politics. Babb ultimately calls for a closer analysis of women and gender differences for not merely inclusivity, but to recognize them in regards to local sexualities and transitional political movements.


This important epidemiological study focuses on HIV and STI control in El Salvador. More specifically the results come from a behavioral and cross-sectional study of men who have sex with men from two different cities, San Salvador and San Miguel, El Salvador. The methods used were respondent-driven sampling to recruit men who have sexual relations with men within
the two cities. 596 respondents were asked questions about “HIV risk behaviors” as well as collected blood, urine, and anal swabs. Samples were tested for herpes, syphilis, and HIV infections. The results found that condom use as well as HIV testing were low among all participants. There was a high level of HIV, many being recent infections, especially in the younger population. In conclusion, researchers found that the promotion of condom use as well as diagnoses and treatment are needed to intervene these issues especially for younger men who were found to be at three times higher risk than older men.


In this introduction, authors James N. Green and Florence E. Babb reflect on the significant changes in Latin America over the past two decades since 2002 when this was written. They reflect on the various LGBT political movements that have risen throughout Latin America and how their legitimacy has been altered from being seen as humorous to taken seriously as time has passed. Green and Babb argue that this change did not come about coincidentally or easily but rather was facilitated by revolutionary social settings such as the Nicaraguan Revolution. Additionally, they mention the history of homophobia in Latin America as well as its roots in the Catholic Church that spread throughout with the colonization of the land. They provide an in depth analysis of the development of homophobia and its relation to politics as well as its relation to Marxism. Furthermore, they go on to say that these occurrences have culminated into new social movements from the left in regards to identity and class.


In this anthropological work, Cymene Howe discusses the activism work that Television is doing for LGBT representation in Nicaragua. Howe emphasizes that television is a central provider of local knowledge for Nicaraguans. In particular, the tropes of queens and effeminate men are portrayed regularly while lesbians characters are extremely rare. However, one show in particular, *Sexto Sentido*, produced by a Nicaraguan feminist, does offer lesbian visibility. How analyses the ways in which knowledge of sexuality and gender are produced through Nicaraguan Television suggesting that there are feedback loops between the First and Third world that mediate representation. Using the example of *Sexto Sentido*, Howe suggests that this approach used by advocates and activists, is an attempt to reconstruct the meaning and preconception of reproductive rights and sexual identity for Nicaragua’s socially conservative political culture. Furthermore, the production of these images aim to reconfigure what viewers deem as dominant in Nicaragua.


A companion to *Women and Guerrilla Movements: Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chiapas, Cuba*, this work continues the work that Karen Kampwirth already started. Though this work focuses on the effects of what happened after the revolutionary wars in Nicaragua and El Salvador and what happened after the guerrillas emerged publicly in Chiapas. Kampwirth work consists of interviews she conducted between 1990 and 200 with women who were mobilized into revolutionary movements in FSLN (Nicaragua), FMLN (El Salvador) and EZLN (Chiapas,
The work delves into these women’s experiences in becoming revolutionaries and continuing on to break from those mentioned organizations after wars ended, to create their own autonomous feminist organizations. Kampwirth found that “gays and lesbians could be thrown out of the party merely for advocating women’s rights” (62). This harsh reality is the force and basis for why many queer women chose to leave the organizations behind to participate in radical feminist organizations.


Horacio N. Roque Ramirez, a treasure to the queer Central American community, writes this piece or the Oral History Review reflecting on his own experiences with research. Dr. Ramirez gives an insightful look into his journey of researching and historicizing his own community of queer Central Americans that began while working toward his PhD in Ethnic Studies at UC Berkeley. Ramirez focuses on the fact that “most people who actually lived this history were missing from the narratives” (88). Therefore, Ramirez dedicated his work to finding individuals that actually lived through these histories to record their narratives as historical evidence. One aspect he focused on in particular is the massacre of El Mozote, El Salvador in 1923 in which he returns to Central America to record the experiences of those who were actually living and affected at the time. Through this, he concludes that “death and less in community oral history projects allow others to come alive: in the voids left behind by the missing, the living take their place, often with fear” (89). Furthermore, he recounts discovering that oral history is not simply a research approach but rather a project that must consist of continuous engagement with a community’s memories.


In this piece, Dr. Ramirez creates a “Teaching Strategy” to educate students on how to interact with LGBT Latinx histories. In particular he focuses on Gloria Anzaldua’s idea of “borderlands” and how there are multiple identities within these spaces. He uses this piece to instruct students to become familiar with the interactions between Latino-American experiences and how they reflect as well as interrupt dominating American cultural norms. He emphasizes the importance of recognizing the “multi-racial, multilingual, multinational population of Latino/Latina Americans (39). Additionally, he calls for students to analyze the definitions of “race” and “culture” and to reconsider the black/white binary that frames civil rights struggles post-reconstruction. Ramirez also called for the analysis of the importance of individual and collective struggles as well as familiarity with the analytic approaches of “borderlands”, “diaspora”, and “transnation” for studying Latinx history. A particular narrative he uses to delve into these ideas is Ana, a butch lesbian who grew up in El Salvador. He uses her narrative to explain the distinctions between LGBT existences in El Salvador versus in the United States which allowed her to “still stay in a woman’s body, be a woman, and be with a women” (41). Ultimately he wishes for students in the U.S to appreciate the new LGBT borderlands, diasporas, and transnational passages.

After spending more than ten years researching in Costa Rican and Central American prisons, author Jacobo Schifter initiated this book. Schifter spent much time before researching and dedicating himself to the fight against HIV/AIDS. This book is a reflection of those experiences and an effort to reveal the sexual culture in Central American prisons in order to aid and improve AIDS-prevention programs. Furthermore, Schifter explores the types of relationships in prisons that place inmates at risk of contracting HIV. This exploration is supplemented with the various studies he has conducted in collaboration with ILPES (Instituto Latinoamericano de planificación económica y social) and the Ministry of Justice. Finally, the book concludes with recommendations of holistic approaches to preventing for these Central American prisons as well as to the general population. Schifter emphasizes the importance in respecting the Central American cultures in order for prevention programs to actually work.


In this journal article, Millie Thayer utilizes case studies of lesbian movements in Costa Rica and Nicaragua to find and embrace the differences in the content of these studies from forms of collective identities. Thayer mentions how more modern social movement theories call attention solely to the role of identity in contemporary movements but usually ignore the variations of identities in the various places being looked at. Thayer emphasizes that though these theories, more particularly resource mobilization and political processes implement tools to explain differences, these tools have not been applied to cross national comparisons in movements and identities. Thayer’s methodology consists of interviews with lesbian activists from both Costa Rica and Nicaragua that focus on participation, observation, and archival research. Thayer presents the argument that these methods and factors account for the manifestation of movements as distinctive national contexts that create collective identities in regards to economic structures, models of development, state civil society relations, and the general field of social movements.

Queer Indigenous Studies, compiled by Megan Xotchilt Espinoza Hernandez


This article constructs a manifesto outlining inclusive futurities that incorporate queer Indigenous thought. To ground this manifesto’s reparative intentions, Carillo Rowe looks to queer Indigenous theory and the activism. She uses queer indigenous theory to linger on the memory of 2017 Million Women’s March protestors singing, “This Land Is Your Land,” to define the “possibilities and limit points of left-liberal activism,” (2017, pp. 95) that always also
contributes to indigenous erasure. As a queer settler indigenous-identified Xicana, she ruminates on the consequence of her own emplacement in her Southern California sanctuaries also constituting the displacement of indigenous peoples from that land. Carillo Rowe points to the treaty violations leading up to Trump’s disclosure of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL), calling out the settler norms of land rights whose only purpose is to accumulate wealth. She ends with an exhale on the coalescence that indigenous queer theory can help the world achieve, because land as a “‘field of ‘relationships of things to each other.’” can be the locus of intersectional decolonization.


Estevão Rafael Fernandes reviews the impact of queer Native activism within and among indigenous peoples from the United States and Brazil. This case study uses news articles published by non-Native investigators on indigenous peoples from Brazil and several theoretical frameworks formulated within queer and Indigenous studies in the United States. Through this “comparative perspective” (2016, pp. 101) Fernandes interrogates queer studies for simplifying ties to land, bodies, and identity through “nationhood” and “diaspora.” (Driskill 2010: 86-87) (2016, pp. 106) Furthermore, Fernandes aligns with queer Indigenous identity activism of Two-Spirits and elucidates colonialism’s invasion and eradication of queer Native bodies and identities with heteronormative categories of gender and sexuality. Articles published on Brazilian Indigenous peoples reveal the way that Indigenous communities of Brazil internalize and attempt to replicate the power assumed through homophobia against Krembegi, of the Guayaki tribe, *tibira*, and Two-Spirits that unwelcomed them from their respective Nations. Fernandes recognizes that the fortification of these identities, therefore, supports anti-coloniality by claiming the rights to their identity formation and existence and as a “political phenomenon” contributing to the shift in relations between them and the state, their peoples, and themselves. (2016, pp. 106) Two-Spirit activism proceeds as a “form of resistance to colonial knowledge,” and especially as a “form of expression” centering the sexuality and gender of queer Indigenous peoples within and outside of the United States.


This chapter facilitates a discussion focused on sexuality, and not merely gender, within Native studies and Native communities. Chris Finley funnels through an extensive discourse analysis on Indigenous studies and Queer studies. She argues that “heterosexism” and the “structure of the nuclear family” propagated by “queered colonial” language are the heteronormative practices that target queer indigenous sexuality and thus further displace Native peoples. (Finley, 2011, pp. 32-33) A queer indigenous approach that nurtures sexual vitality within Native communities defies the heteropatriarchy they embody. White settler colonialism always-already queers Native women and men by either penetrating and/or erasing them completely for their own heteropatriarchal agenda. Discussions around sex and sexuality among
Indigenous peoples would recall the power giving way to the heteronormativity dividing Native peoples through homophobic logics, displacing them once and for all. Finley reasons through self-determinative praxes incorporating indigenous spiritualities embracing nonheteronormative sexualities as methods to reclaim sovereignty of land and self-identity. Through this intersectional critique, Queer studies can help Native studies untangle itself from the heteronormative coloniality of being.


Brian Joseph Gilley analyzes, through queer Indigenous theory, the stories of sexual encounters retold by Two-Spirited peoples as ethnographic evidence revealing the fluidity of sexual desire, and the motives they take on to delineate urban areas from being perceived as the locus of queer sexual activity. The study identifies the distance traveled, the gestures exchanged, and the sexual encounters experienced within these “sexual coup stories” (2014, pp.165) may suggest queer Indigenous sexuality as causal of a disarrayed prowess. Entropies of sexual desire mapped by Two-Spirited men reclaim the lineages of Indigenous sexual ontologies that have been historically queered by the “metropole,” that is, any heteronormative structure. (2014, pp. 173) He argues that these ever-present queer Indigenous sexual ontologies guide their sexual pursuits through an “indigenous cultural continuity.” (2014, pp. 176) He reasons through what seems to judge their desires through an assumption of chaos, but points to queerness’s tendency to regulate even its own subjects. Thus, the entropy of queer Indigenous “counting coups” (2014, pp. 176) that leads these Two-Spirited peoples to sporadic ventures of desire is not at all infested with chaos, but rather, is demonstrative of fluidity of embodied culture and desire.


As a queer Chicano male scholar engaged in queer studies, ethnic studies, and critical prison studies, Michael Hames-Garcia facilitates an intervention of the bestrides and dismounts between women of color and Indigenous feminist studies and between queer ethnic and Indigenous studies. He quests through an evaluation of four prominent works across the fields: *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature* (edited by Qwo-Li Driskill, Chris Finley, Brian Joseph Gilley, and Scott Lauria Morgensen); *The Erotic Life of Racism* (by Sharon Patricia Holland); *Strange Affinities: The Gender and Sexual Politics of Comparative Racialization* (edited by Grace Kyungvon Hong and Roderick A. Ferguson); and *Queer (In)justice: The Criminalization of LGBT People in the United States* (by Joey L. Mogul, Andrea J. Ritchie, and Kay Whitlock.) His survey of *Queer Indigenous Studies* and *Strange Affinities* highlights the “internal heterogeneity” of these collections to suggest that such works, with each their own take on identity and its formation, must be more open to “where [their] projects intersect in their challenges.” (2013, pp. 398) Hames-Garcia refers to approaches taken on by *Queer (In)justice* and *The Erotic Life of Racism* to exemplify a more community-inclusive approach to theoretical works premised on arguments aligned for the sake of using theory to answer what “maneuvers have kept [these] fields separate.” (2013, pp. 400) Surpassing this “critical shorthand” will nourish knowledge productions on identity as “fluid, complex, and multiple” (2013, pp. 398) for not just the sake of production, but for the betterment of the communities it speaks on.
In his first chapter of *Spaces Between Us*, Scott Lauria Morgensen unearths the settler colonialist nature of what we understand to be modern sexuality. Morgensen engages theoretical frameworks formulated within queer studies on Two-Spirit and Native queer sexuality, exploring the nuances of biopower and biopolitics as used by white-supremacist settler colonial states. This critical content analysis weaves through established ideations of gender and sexual formations upbrought by white settler states. Drawing from colonial studies, gender and sexuality studies, and Foucauldian notions of biopolitics, he denounces the universality of heteronormative sexual and gender identities that assume Native “primitivity” to fight for citizenship within the white settler state. Native peoples’ and non-Native communities “queer modernity” formations are often entrenched with the “biopolitics of settler colonialism [producing] settler sexuality.” (2011, pp. 32) Erasure of queer Native identities was often carried out within white settler schooling grounds. The *badès* and *botès* of the Crow Nation, the *winktes* of the Lakota Nation, and the *nadles* of the Navajo Nation were often punished for their nonheteronormative gender and sexuality. These systems exercised political biopower to enforce the “education of desire.” Through the colonization of Native sexuality, the white settler state was able to discipline Native and non-Native subjects through the biopolitics normalizing gender and sexual binaries. Two-Spirit and Native queer activisms become gestures of decolonial resistance against the white settlement of sexual modernities informed by nonheteronormative Native epistemologies. New modernities that inform the queer identities of Native and non-Native folks will inevitably function to eradicate white settler tendencies.

Scott Lauria Morgensen in his short chapter charts the exceptionalism of certain queer subjects over others within the U.S, what Puar calls “homonationalism.” As a post-9/11 sexual modernity, Morgensen traces “homonationalism” as a biopolitical derivative of settler colonialist nationalism and settler sexuality. Upholding Puar’s definition of “homonationalism,” Morgensen discusses similar sexual modernities benefitting from whiter settler colonialism, the pedigrees and environments that situate such privilege, and how it constructs “agents” who carry out the “violence of the settler state.” (2010, pp. 107) Queer and Native studies are asked to center Native peoples and decentralize nationalism in an effort to widen the queer peripheral that informs queer projects replicating normative settlement. Morgensen tests the grounds of “homonationalism” within non-Native queer projects through an analysis of critical queer theory of Michel Foucault on biopolitics, U.S. histories of sexual modernities uplifting the regulation of Native peoples and “terrorists” from Afghanistan and Iraq as gendered and racialized subjects. Evading both U.S. Native peoples and Afghani and Iraqi people of their humanity, “homonationalism” functions to retain them as both restrained and “uncontained objects.” (2010, pp. 124) Conversations within and among Indigenous, queer, and feminist studies about dismantling the normativity of “homonationalism,” as a biproduct of settler colonialist nationalism and settler sexuality, therefore, must apply a diasporic framework to disrupt its massive effects and do away with white settlement.

Murib wields an examination of politics of GLBT and Queer coalitions known for eradicating the nuanced lived experiences, political aspirations, and identities of queer Indigenous peoples. Methods he uses include the analyzation of minutes noted during the National Policy Roundtable and the Human Rights Campaign in the 1990s and 2000s and turning to the 2015 Black and Native Chicago coalition allied against police and gun violence. Findings exemplify that the GLBT coalition excluded peoples who did not exclusively prioritize sexuality, and that the Queer coalition focused on debunking normativity with approaches that validated state power like the sustainment of identity politics demarcated by gender binaries. Murib confronts preconceived tendencies to exclude queer Natives by reinstating that “identities are settler colonial paradigms,” (2018, pp. 167) which guides his imaginings of inclusive coalition politics as exemplified by the coalition in Chicago. He offers this example because it turns away from the uniformity politics of GLBT and Queer coalitions by welcoming differences in politics and working through the painful intersections in their respective histories that strengthen allyships based on an intersectional understanding of the state’s facilitation of such divide. Through education, Murib argues that the potential of relations within and across movements will embark towards deeper and much grander successes if differences across politics are learned of and embraced. Through the application of a queer Native approach to political coalition developments, non-normative Native and non-Native identities will be incorporated and the state will be exposed and dismantled for its divisive motives and structural impotence.


Andrea Smith’s chapter articulates the limits of queer of color critique within Native Studies. In its inability to challenge the “normalizing logics of settler colonialism,” (Smith, 2011, pp. 43) she argues that queer of color critique sustains heteronormative logics within and beyond identity politics. Her theoretical discourse analysis brings to light Denise Ferreira da Silva’s reinterpretation of self-determination, as it, too, can be an aspiration that entraps the queer Native person within colonial logics of state power. Harboring Robert Warrior’s notion of “intellectual sovereignty,” Smith offers an alternative form of self-determination upholding queer-informed Native theory produced by Native peoples. Narratives of Native peoples also become a medium through which the removal of Indigenous identity from the Indigenous body excavates the infantility of Indigenous people for the white settlement of queer “subjectless” people. By rendering the “infantile” nature of Native peoples, Native identities grounded in historical ties to sovereignty become twice removed by queer of color critique. Thus, queered Native and queer Native identity formations can also function to erase Native epistemologies that have become interlaced with the same politics queer of color critique rejects but also subconsciously regurgitates.

Emily Snyder bridges concepts borrowed from queer studies, legal studies, feminist studies, and Indigenous studies, and advocates for an approach that will pioneer integrative legal studies and education. She elevates Chris Finley’s take on centralizing sexuality, and claims that heteronormativity, homophobia, and transphobia continue to fissure through the potential of Indigenous law and education for the sake of “tradition.” (2015, pp. 603) She offers a queer lens to Indigenous legal studies; engages critical theory examining Indigenous laws and research of Andrew Gilden, Jennifer Denetdale, and Val Napolean; and proposes the long-lasting benefits for queering Indigenous legal studies while simultaneously considering the setbacks. Denetdale contests Gilden’s claim that Navajo law incorporates queer indigenous identities, and instead reveals the rigidity of Navajo law that excludes queerness and nonheteronormative sexuality. Napolean provides that though Indigenous peoples, like the Aboriginal nations in Canada, have historically mistrusted the political agencies that formulate law, Indigenous law is the channel through which heteronormativity must be challenged and queer Indigeneity can be accepted. Thus, queering legal studies may equip Indigenous law and education to holistically embrace queerness as an identity and as a framework.

Revolutionary Queerness in Latin America, compiled by Stephanie Hernández


Arguelles and Rich conducted interviews of gay and lesbian people in Cuba as well as Cuban immigrant communities in the United States, Spain, Puerto Rico, and Mexico between 1979 and 1984. They conducted this study in order to aggregate information on Cuban gay and lesbian experiences and to study day to day lives of members in Third World countries and socialist governments. Aside from interviews they also included historical analysis in order to incorporate the particular histories gay and lesbian Cubans lived through to their study. The results of this research reflect the need for more studies of this nature to be made for gay and lesbian communities outside of the United States. By looking on how opinions of the 80’s of homosexuality was informed by anti-Cold War sentiments, Cuba is rendered homophobic without including the measures, however small, they are making in order to reconcile the state’s relationship with the gay community. Their interviews with gay and lesbian Cuban immigrants resulted in a counter critique of commonly held beliefs of what the gay experience is for them and provides a perspective that includes the complexities of a Cuban diasporic identity.


This book consists of a variety of short essays, speeches, articles, and other texts by a variety of authors to be used and analyzed in academia. The authors within this reader are
activists, politicians, and political scientists that all provide a variety of perspectives in the
discourse of the subject of LGBT rights. The reader aims to discuss why despite progressive laws
and policies being enacted in Latin American there are still extreme amounts of homophobic acts
being committed on the daily basis. One of the conclusions made by a couple of the authors in
the reader were that gay rights movements are much slower to progress in comparison to other
movements (feminist, education, etc). One of the biggest barriers to LGBT community members
being treated equally in society is the heteronormative and patriarchal structures in place at
almost every level in Latin America. Some authors suggest the way that different sectors of
society (political, social, economic) must include LGBT members or else they will be forced to
make their own spaces at the margins of the mainstream culture will keep them unprotected.
Corrales and Pecheny end with the note that to be truly democratic, Latin American countries
must take care of all the segments of their populations including LGBT communities.


Encarnacion uses a historical analysis of different events in Latin American country’s
histories to provide an alternative way of discussing gay rights liberation. He begins by outlining
how an international gay rights frame was formed after the Stonewall riots in New York and how
since then, gay rights have been viewed as stemming from the West. He then goes on to discuss
more specific Latin American histories in order to “decenter” gay rights revolutions and to
reassess how informative the systems in place in Latin America are to how gay rights
movements progress in Latin America. Lastly, Encarnacion compares the different way that gay
rights movement look across different countries (specifically Brazil and Argentina) in order to
detail how different reception to LGBT issues is within the same region. This analysis comes to a
couple different conclusions. While Encarnacion concludes that the gay rights liberation
movement in Latin American necessitates its own independently crafted perspectives of analysis,
he also suggests that gay activists are at the forefront of the success of policy changes and other
progressions made in the equal treatment of LGBT community members in Latin America.

Fernandes, Sujatha. “Sexuality, Tolerance and the Nation.” (42-84). Cuba Represent!: Cuban

Fernandes conducts an ethnographic study of audience reactions to various art forms in
order to gauge how the population’s general opinion on controversial topics has changed in
comparison to pre-revolutionary Cuba and Cuba during the revolution. Fernandes does this in
order to reconcile the often contradictory existence of a repressive state in support of liberal arts.
In this essay, Fernandes’ study of audience reactions to Fresa y Chocolate is used to focus on
how film is an art form used by the state in order to “absorb oppositional ideas” and encourage
discourse amongst the population without explicitly leaning towards one position or another.
Through 75 interviews with Cubans of different genders, class, and ages, Fernandes comes to
The film’s dual perspective of “oppressor” and “oppressed” allows for there to be an
understanding between both groups that encourages discourse about the complexities both of
those identities entail. The film, which discusses a homosexual artists experience under Castro’s
government as well as that of allegedly straight characters that are pro-Castro, is analyzed by 75
Cubans of different ages, genders, and class; From these interviews, Fernandes dervies that urban
middle-class women showed the most interest in discussing the film while poorer individuals and
men did not. For Fernandes, this in itself entails where most of the opposition to positive change for LGBT communities stem from and the effects that the homophobic structures perpetuated by Castro and his revolutionaries still exist almost 50 years after the revolution ended.


Thomas creates an anthology of lesbian and gay writing from the Antilles; The Antilles is a group of islands that includes Cuba, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, and Haiti. The author and activist Thomas Glave, born in the United States to Jamaican parents, gathered a variety of texts that include fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and memoirs. While each author writes of different perspectives and discourse relating to LGBT experiences, they all aim to document the individual and collective experiences of being part of the LGBT community as Caribbean individuals (including diasporic experiences). Many of the authors discuss their migration, either voluntary or forced, with a political urgency that reflects their work as activists, performers, and teachers. This anthology is one of the only sources of documentation of LGBT experiences in the Caribbean.


In this chapter, Kampwirth analyzes the role feminism played in Nicaragua’s FSLN and the resulting environment that created for lesbian Sandinistas. Kampwirth uses interviews and oral information (existing audio files) in order to study the realities of lesbian revolutionaries in Nicaragua. The study resulted in the discussion of the importance of gender roles within the movement and how that allowed for women and LGBT members to form solidarity and create their own groups within or outside the movement. Kampwirth also comes to the conclusion that gay American activists volunteering in Nicaragua influenced and informed the way that LGBT members in the FSLN came out and learned about their own identities.


In this essay, Kampwirth uses a discourse analysis and draws from existing texts and theorists in order to analyze the FSLN’s newfound solidarity with the “LGBT movement” despite their homophobic past. In so doing, Kampwirth comes to the conclusion that this shift in solidarity is a result of changing opinions towards the LGBT community internationally. Another result of this study led Kampwirth to make the assertion that the FSLN is using their solidarity with the LGBT movement in order to create tension between LGBT and Feminist movements (since they are less endorsing of feminist movements). Kampwirth concludes by assessing how beneficial the alliance between the FSLN and LGBT communities would be and determines that most of the benefits would be cultural rather than actual change in law or policy.

In this essay, McCaughan uses a historical account paired with a discourse analysis to study the effects socially active art has in creating social and political change in Mexico over time. By analyzing cultural events and various works of art by different gay, lesbian and feminist muralists and artists, McCaughan concludes that artists are of utmost importance in changing gender and sexual norms in Mexican society. As a result of his focus on the role of art in revolutionary change, McCaughan also analyzes the cultural implications that come along with political issues amongst the country; At times of high political unrest, movements that come about are deeply intertwined with the production of socially active art and media.


In this essay, Padilla studies three female short story writers in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala in the perspective of a discourse analysis in order to assess their role in creating spaces for marginalized community members (LGBT, female, migrants). Padilla studies a single story by each of the authors; Jessica Masaya Portocarrero is from Guatemala, Claudia Hernandez is from El Salvador, and Maria del Carmen Perez is from Nicaragua. The similarities amongst the three countries’ histories allows Padilla to make general statements about the role that post-revolutionary politics (neoliberal policies) have in the production of literature and art. In each of their respective stories, the three authors that Padilla focuses on create stories that imagine the experiences and realities of women, gay and lesbian people, and migrants have in their countries. Padilla chooses to focus on these short-story writers because she believes that their own marginalization as females and within the realm of literature allows them to connect with other marginalized voices and more accurately portray these experiences.


*Letras Femeninas* is a journal that creates biannual volumes of texts by female writers who expand on topics of gender and femininity. In this particular volume, the entire focus was on lesbian identities and was compiled by authors Pertusa and Stewart. Though it was inspired by lesbian movements in Spain, the volume aims to document lesbian love through various mediums (literature, cinema, art, etc). An essay on art in Bolivia was the first one to explicitly use the word queer to describe the gay community present in Bolivia. The aim of all the authors is to document the progress made through the mediums mentioned above in increasing visibility of lesbian identities in the respective countries. One of the conclusions made through the different results of the authors is that though the different forms of art do increase visibility, they can do so in a way that reimagines how lesbians are viewed in the country or they can perpetuate the same problematic perspectives that they are already viewed in.
Pilipinx in the United States: Gender, Sexuality, and Diaspora, compiled by Jerry Javier


Pauline Abustan is a teaching assistant of cultural studies at the Washington State University. This article was published October 2015 in the Journal of Mestizo and Indigenous Voices. Since then Abustan has published multiple articles focusing on queer students, education, and the classroom. Abustan is writing as a pinay woman in the United States urging "Indigenous and Mestiza" Pilipinx to begin a process of decolonization. She utilizes a pre-colonial approach to argue that current day Pilipinx have non-Western practices that are "feminist queer, and trans" that we can fall back on. Abustan heavily cites Leny Strobel, a Pilipinx writer from the United States that has been heavily criticized for her work on indigeneity and Pilipinx identity. Similarly, Abustan is not critical of power relations between "Indigenous" and "Mestiza" Pilipinx, and does not bring up the different structures that Pilipnx navigate in the United States versus the Philippines. Abustan's work is needed to understand the intersections of gender, sexuality, and Pilipinx identity in a field with limited information and a history of oppression. Her work speaks to that of Nadal, Manalansan, and Chan by working to find something of Pilipinx origins that can combat the oppression different Pilipinx folk face.


Christine Bacareza Balance is an associate professor of Asian American Studies at the University of California, Irvine. Much of her work is focused on Asian Americans, Pilipinx Americans, queerness, and performance studies. This 2006 work has a Muñoz feel to it as she discusses the disruptive aspects drugs have for capitalism, temporality and the ways drugs are part of opportunities for different forms of community. (She did write explicitly on Muñoz more recently in 2014.) Balance's reading of drug use within the queer Pilipinx American communities requires that Pilipinx be understood in relation to colonization by the United States, their designation as inferior and less civilized than other (Asian) groups, such as East Asians, and having the highest rates of HIV/AIDS amongst Asian/Pacific Islanders. This understanding help to contextualize Pilipinx Americans queer drug use in a landscape where they are already stigmatized for being seen as inferior, and HIV/AIDS positive. Balance argues that drugs, especially pleasure drugs, are very queer, though always seen as for an individual and in promotion of HIV/AIDS. By recounting the ways that pleasure inducing drugs can release one from capitalist time and interaction, and conceptions of space, Balance argues that drugs can lead to community building through moments of belonging that go beyond the individual. She argue for decoupling HIV/AIDS stigma from drug use because drugs can help deal with HIV/AIDS socializing and safety can be done without policing deviant sexualities. Balance's work gives an insight into Pilipinx American queer life that isn't captured in the work of Nadal and Corpus, Manalansan, or Abustan in this bibliography. Her approach is needed because it touches on the tension between known drug use in queer and/or trans communities, and racialized
understanding of disease and sex. She argues for deviance and drug use in certain situation in light of the respectability politics Manalansan, Nadal, and Corpus cover within Pilipinx American communities.

Chan, Jason. “‘Am I Masculine Enough?’: Queer Filipino College Men and Masculinity.” *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, vol. 54, no. 1, Jan. 2017, pp. 82–94.

Jason Chan’s work is aimed at a student affairs audience. He is specifically looking at queer Pilipino men at universities for an assessment of their time as students with the goals of increasing retention and graduation rates. Masculinity is a constant throughout this work. Building of previous work that discusses the implication of hyper masculinity, or machismo, Chan expands on the different types of masculinity. In bringing in multiple masculinities Chan is able to show how gay Pilipino men adapt and change notions of masculinity to better fit their expression, as well as better navigate spaces. Masculinity becomes a more nuanced form of expression, and is able to go beyond the limitations of machismo. Chan also notes how many Pilipino gay men feel that their home lives are very different from other space they’re in. Family, religion, and culture play big roles in determining how gay Pilipino men express themselves. His work is in accordance with that of Manalansan, Mangaoang, Nadal and Corpus.


This 1995 work of Manalansan is among the most recent of the three works I source for this annotated bibliography. This article, having appeared in the *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, compares and contrasts the work of three gay Pilipinos in the Philippines, and three interviews with gay Pilipinos in the United States. In this work Manalansan critiques the globalization of the modern, Western "gay" identity because of the damaging universalizing. He shows that gay Pilipino men in the Philippines producing work around gay identity have written about bakala and the need for more inclusion. However, this is done using transphobic respectability politics that leave machismo and gender roles tightly in place. While it is also true that Pilipinx Americans are critical of Western (white) gay identity, they experience less restrictions around gender than the Philippines (performing drag for example). Though the process of coming out, and the idea of the closet, both remain concept that are more American than anything else. This is inline with his past work. Building off his past work on gay Pilipinx in the United States, Manalansan has claimed that class is a very salient factor in how Pilipinx navigate society. I found it interesting that Manalansan then makes the claim that the experience and trauma of immigrating to the United State can "overshadow" class. I would like to be able to learn more about this.


This 1993 work by Manalansan helps to build on his 1994 work about gay Pilipinx men in New York City. Focusing on postcolonial displacement of gay immigrant Pilipino men in the United States, Manalansan analyzes two texts by gay Pilipino immigrants in the United States, Silva and Peña. He calls the work of Silva and Peña "boarder texts", as they shift between spaces
and show the tensions of immigration that shape identity. In this text Manalansan focuses on class as a shaping force of identity and relation. He argues that the process of immigrants makes class differences more difficult to read, yet it’s still present. Manalansan insists throughout his work that class be taken into account when looking at Pilipinx since it's such a defining factor between the United State and the Philippines. This work builds on his claims that Pilipinx are facing multiple forms of displacement. Immigration being just one dynamic. This work importantly gives theoretic work that contrasts well with the more sociological work that Manalansan and many that cite him later produce.


Martin F. Manalansan is a well known academic from the Philippines, now practicing in Chicago. He is known for his work on Asian Studies, diaspora, queer of color critique, and his work specifically on gay Pilipino men. Manalansan is heavily cited by Nadal, and his work is often cited indirectly by people (like Chan) doing work on Pilipinx gender and sexuality. He provides a foundation that many have built on. Manalansan uses interviews of 50 Pilipino men now in the United States to better understand the role diaspora plays in gender and sexuality. He moves past dichotomies of here vs. there to show that the practices and attitudes of gay Pilipino men are more complex. His work focuses on the importance of performance and gay Pilipinx icons like Miss Saigon in making space for Pilipino men to express a gay identity alongside rigid masculinity and practices of isolation and exclusion. He specifically touches on the HIV/AIDS to illustrate the struggle of having a stigmatized disease compounded by a stigmatized sexual identity and immigrant history. (This is something that Balance writes about as well.) His work allows for scholars to ground themselves in work that decenters the US in its politics and rhetoric around gender and sexuality.


Gil Mangaoang's work appears in the 1994 Amerasia Journal. While he hasn't published much work, Mangaoang is a long time Pilipino activist from San Francisco, previously part of the Union of Democratic Filipinos, and has been involved in HIV/AIDS work. In this paper he draws from his activism to discusses what it was like to to come out (from a straight marriage) as a gay Pilipino man in San Francisco. Mangaoang's work resonates with that of Nadal and Manalansan. It touches on the difficulty navigating multiple identities. In this case: activist, gay, a man, immigrant, and Pilipinx. In addition to identities he touches on navigating the politics of collectivity and conflict aversion within communities; a theme that has emerged during this project. Particularly interesting is Mangaoang's writing on the influence of the university on the activism he was a part of, and the realization through education that gay identity could offer new methods of relation to other minority groups. He also writes about the stigma around HIV/AIDS and the extra difficulties being a Pilipino man in the U.S. produced. Often times these people ended up alone, further showing the isolation and shame that Mangaoang write about.

This psychology paper was written by Kevin L. Nadal (City University of New York), and Melissa J. H. Corpus (Columbia University). Nadal is a well known Pilipino scholar in the United States that has written on gender, sexuality, and race. Corpus and Nadal have worked together multiple times in the past. The language and structure of the paper show that it was written for an academic audience with knowledge of psychology methodologies, and familiar with work on gender, sexuality, and race. Using focus groups drawing from 24 Pilipinx American participants in the United States the paper establishes five domains that they then establish themes in. The paper brings up important differences in the way Pilipinx conceptualize sexuality and gender in the United States and the Philippines. Multiplicity is an important theme in Nadal and Corpus' work. Pilipinx are positioned as having to constantly deal with identity conflicts and multiplicity. The paper heavily builds of Nadal’s previous work on Pilipinx psychology. It also draws frequently from Manalansan, one of the main contributors to work on gay Pilipino men. While the paper is heavily focused on men, it does give insight to the gendered dynamics of queerness, and helps expand the periphery of this project.


Mikee Nunez-Inton is a faculty member of the Department of Communication Research at University of the Philippines, Diliman. This 2015 article looks at the way the category "bakla" is used in the movie, "Here Comes the Bride" (2010). Bakla is a term that is used in the Philippines, and in the United States. It is a slang term that can be used to refer to queer men and women, and trans people, depending on the context. Though, as Nunez-Inton shows, bakla in the Philippines is used more regularly to refer to people who are effeminate and male. This lines up with work by Manalansan. Like Manalansan, Nunez-Inton is working to complicate bakla and push against the "gay globality" that forces a Western gay lens on the rest of the world. Looking at bakla against modern liberal Western gay identity, Nunez-Inton shows that it does not fit the description, and is often ostracized. Bakla is not synonymous with gay in the Philippines and is not usually used to refer to machismo men who are gay or have sex with other men. Furthermore, Nunez-Inton shows that bakla is not being used in the Philippines by women who specifically identify as “transgender”, further showing that this identity doesn't simply fit into the Western LGBT framework. Rather, bakla is a category of its own that is still contested and shaped by the people who are male being effeminate and not matching ascribed gender norms. This work is one of the only works to be explicit about trans identified women's relationship to the term bakla. It also helps to make important distinctions between the Philippines and the United States queer and trans culture that inform each others understanding of gender and sexuality.


Anthony C. Ocampo is an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Cal Poly Pomona who is known for his work on gay Latino and Pilipino men, focusing on the these two populations because of their history of Spanish colonization and shared space in the United States. This 2013 work specifically focuses on second generation gay Latino and Pilipino men. By second generation Ocampo is referring to people that were born in the United States. Unlike the work of
Manalansan which argues that Pilipinx only consider themselves Asian in regards to geography, and don't consider themselves Latinx, Ocampo situates second generation Pilipino men right alongside second generation Latino men. He plays into the similarities to argue that by looking at the groups side by side we can learn more about processes of immigration and social development. Ocampo's work supports previous work by Nadal and Manalansan which indicate that girls are given some leniency with sexuality and gender, while boys are regulated to more strict gender norms, as well as sexuality. Building off this, his work shows that second generation gay Pilipino and Latino men use different methods to warm their parents up to their queerness. The coming out process was noted, but not as a singular instance. However, many time this is done in a way that does not challenge stereotypes of gay men, or negative attitudes to effeminacy.

Punk Subcultures and Queer Theory, compiled by Nerine Ortiz Pon


In "Work that Hoe: Tilling the Soil of Punk Feminism", Alice Bag briefly discusses the L.A. punk scene of the 70’s and eloquently relates her own experience within a historical framework, indicating how it has influenced “counterculture, protest movements, and popular actions aimed at societal change” (233). Through personal testimony and photographic imagery, she describes how growing up in the 60s and 70s in LA, and experiencing the sentiment of the “other” as the child of Mexican immigrants, led her to gravitate towards the diverse punk scene, where she felt accepted and liberated from cultural expectations. Bag argues that while punk is often associated with “angry white boys” (237), it was conversely a space tolerant and accepting of varied identities, with participants converging under a unified punk aesthetic. It is important that Bag herself write this article so as to get a fair representation of the punk scene from someone within it, however it was an extremely brief overview and would have benefited from more in depth analysis.


In “The Punk Show: Queering Heritage in the Black Diaspora”, Alix Chapman reviews the entertainment scene in “post-flood New Orleans”, specifically how Bounce music has created Black queer generation and agency through “communal and corporeal memory” (327-328). Chapman uses both life histories and oral narratives as well as pulling ideas from postcolonial, queer feminist, and performance theories to solidify their own theory on Black queer generation. The article is broken up into sections including the intro, What is Bounce music, The Punk Show, The legacy of Bobby Marchan, Catch Dat’ Beat, and the conclusion- Deconstructing heritage in the Black diaspora. Chapman effectively ties their research back to broader institutional violence that affects the Black diaspora, drawing those very necessary connections. The title led me to believe the article would be about the Queer Black diaspora within the
English-affiliated punk scene, however it was instead about the other interpretation of “punk” as in Queer shows, it was an appreciated surprise.


In “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?”, Cathy J. Cohen argues that queer politics in its current state is lacking and must be transformed by including how intersectionality of identity affects one’s relation to power and how those complicated relations should be the determinant of allyship rather than a single identity. They argue that in queer politics’ attempt to unify the queer-identifying side against heteronormativity and static identity, activists contradict themselves by creating a new binary of heterosexuals and queers. Cohen strengthens their argument by tracing the history of queer theory and queer politics, and highlights political organizations, campaigns, and movements that have either failed or succeeded in including an intersectional viewpoint through direct quotation and detailed description of each example. While Cohen illuminates how the current state of queer politics must be improved, they fail to offer concrete examples as to exactly how we can move forward in creating an intersectional “transformational coalition politics among marginalized subjects” and thus leaves the reader with more questions than answers (482).


In “Queer Anarchist Autonomous Zones and Publics: Direct Action Vomiting Against Homonormative Consumerism”, Sandra Jeppesen points to various ways in which mainstream society inherently enforces hetero- and homo-normative, pro-consumerist practices, and how her circle of queer anarchists resisted this by participating in direct-action literal vomiting. She argues for “autonomous space” in which people can congregate freely and participate in creating “radical queer” counterpublics (476). Jeppesen supports her claims through three examples: the first being a live performance, the second a zine, and the third a direct action, all to do with vomiting against the perpetual gag of normative capitalism. While this article was comprehensive on inclusion of gender and sexual diversity, it failed to include the ways in which non-Western cultures could participate in this form of resistance, and ultimately gave off a very narrow Caucasian viewpoint.


In “¿Soy Emo, Y Qué? Sad Kids, Punkera Dykes and the Latin@ Public Sphere”, Marissa Lopez uses the upsurge in violence against Mexican emo kids in 2008 as an entrance point to look at “emo” as more than an aesthetic taken from the punk scene, but rather a transnational “intimate public” that allows kids to envision a future not yet defined by normative standards. Lopez begins by giving a brief history of the origins of “emo” in Mexico, explaining that it receives hate from all sides for being an apolitical copy of punks, its style being too androgynous and queer-suggestive, and for illuminating emotions that should not be glorified; followed by a close reading of the main character in the novella, *Dahlia Season*, as an example for her argument that the “emo” scene is a survival strategy for those who feel left out of the main narratives. She draws on various theories, such as Berlant’s “intimate publics”, Muñoz’s
“queer/utopian ideality”, Muschert’s “agentic and structural action”, etc, to strengthen her argument. While Lopez does a thorough job analyzing Dahlia Season, her article seemed to be taken off course by the amount of close reading, and would have benefited more if she had limited it to a couple of pages rather than half the article.


In "Do You Want Queer Theory (Or do You Want the Truth)? Intersections of Punk and Queer in the 1970s", Nyong'o lays out how punk and queer subcultures have intertwining histories in antagonizing “society, politics, or the future” (104). He argues that despite these well known connotations, punk and queer have a history of aligning with the ideology of “reproductive futurity”, indicating a more complex culture, and a divergence from a binary to non identitarian ways (104). Nyong'o draws from a variety of methods to support his essay, including discourse and theory analysis, and historical account using queer theory, psychoanalytic theory, and popular musicians such as Patti Smith and the Sex Pistols.


In “Punk'd Theory”, Tavia Nyong'o critiques Cathy Cohen’s article, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?" by addressing the ironies in her analysis of punk and queer politics, drawing specific attention to the often glossed over questions regarding race. He traces the history of the term “punk” beyond its common association as “black vernacular for ‘faggot’ or ‘queer’” back to it’s English origin, to illuminate how the racist dominant powers correlate queer and abnormality with blackness (23). To do this, he dissects two lesser known visual texts, “Punk’d” and “Scared Straight!”, as well as using various other theories and writings to support his claim. Oftentimes keywords like “punk” and “queer” are used interchangeably without an explanation, this is a good article to read in the beginning of one’s research process.


In "Grace Jones, Afro Punk, and Other Fierce Provocations: An Introduction to "Sartorial Politics, Intersectionality, and Queer Worldmaking", Professor Eric Darnell Pritchard introduces his argument for the necessity of an intersectional approach to the contributions of the LGBTQ community in the fashion world. He begins by using Grace Jones’ performance at the 2015 Afropunk festival in Brooklyn as an example for how fashion has historically been used as an outlet for “queer worldmaking”, in which the boundaries of “race, gender, sexuality, time, and space” are pushed, as well as referencing Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw’s definition of intersectionality as an essential platform to analyze the dynamics of power and structure within fashion (4). Aside from Jones, Pritchard references various influencers in the fashion industry, photographers, journalists, artists, designers, and writers and their respective work in his introduction, while stating that his compilation includes “scholarly articles, critical essays, conversations, and a plurality of voices” to prove his thesis (8). While this introduction was informational and entertaining in its discussion of queer influence in the fashion world, the
inclusion of “Afro Punk” in the title misled me to believe the article would focus mainly on the sartorial politics specific to punk subculture.


In “Queer Punk Macha Femme: Leslie Mah's Musical Performance in Tribe 8”, Deanna Shoemaker uses the biracial lead guitarist, Leslie Mah, of the queercore punk band, Tribe 8, to discuss how performance is affected and affects change in regards to sexuality and gender within white hetero-feminine norms. By analyzing interviews, lyrics, iconography, and other visual texts and using analytical tools such as thick description, autoethnography and critical performance analysis, Shoemaker illustrates how Mah’s persona, playing style, and performance of identity cultivate her image as a “macha femme.” In addition, Shoemaker gives a brief background on queercore and riot grrrl history, and compares the lead singer, Lynn Breedlove, with Mah to display the ways in which Tribe 8’s performance and identity counteracted mainstream notions of gender and sexuality while continuing to silence the voices and experiences of women of color in the punk scene. Shoemaker skillfully displayed how Leslie Mah and Tribe 8 provide a counternarrative to the mainstream male-dominated narrative still present in the punk scene, however produced some of the exact same problematic practices they critique by leaving discussions on race to the end of the paper.


In "What’s That Smell?", Judith Halberstam, also known as Jack Halberstam, argues that subcultures, specifically queer subcultures, act as a constant critique to the normative binaristic logic of youthfulness and adulthood, separated by maturation and desire for family and reproduction. They break up their argument into four sections, addressing different aspects of queer subculture that must be developed, altered, or redefined, paying particular attention to lesbian subculture. Halberstam references a variety of subcultural academics, filmmakers, musicians and bands, and producers, and in doing so support their first point that the relationship between archivist and producer are intertwined. Halberstam does an excellent job breaking down how queer subculture circumvents socially-accepted ideologies of time, at this time, I find no outstanding limitations.

Additional Readings:


**Dissertations:**


**Queer Prison Cultures, compiled by Jessica Perez**


The investigation of prison literacy, abolitionism, and queerness is situated in a dissertation research targeting US prison populations of the 21st century, with interest in
California’s policies and existing incarceration structures. Published in 2015, rhetorical analysis is conducted on existing literacy programs across the nation and their role in maintaining larger political structures, and also the ways in which the existence of prison literature seeks to challenge understandings about “truth” and the inherent privatization of knowledge within prisons. This piece frames its argument by positioning queerness as a form of mode that challenges the institutional and state forces that normalize and commodify differences (p.120). While hegemony is considered the basis of normativity, counter-hegemony is deemed a queer stance, and taking this approach in activism can operate as a mode of resistance. Furthermore, the author suggests that critical prison literacy is a queered public pedagogy; to be public is to counter the privatization of knowledge and resist notions of hegemonic lived experiences (p.121). This resistance is made possible by the expression of “truth”, prison literacy programs provide an outlet by which those incarcerated are able to teach those on the outside to listen and learn from the inside turning underscored hope into an expression of critique of the status quo and progression vision of the future; a form of political advocacy. Furthermore, truth takes on a different meaning, in that truth is often understood to be comorbid with facts, when truth can also be found in lived experience and thus in the recorded experiences of prisoners. The nature of prison seeks to privatize many axes of life by restricting access to resources, including knowledge, prison literature seeks to reclaim agency over an individual’s experience as an unalterable tangible truth. Literacy workshops mediate this and help those incarcerated transcend beyond the expectation of individual reform and rehabilitation and toward a revolutionary approach to literacy-as-activism because it integrates the voices of the incarcerated to attempt to understand the past and project a future (p.125).


This research on masculinity within Canadian prisons relies on literary analysis of relevant prison narrative literature and poetry from the 1980s to early 2000s. The investigator examines the influences of economic interest and privatization evident in both Canadian and US prisons and the manner by which prisons are fertile ground for understanding masculinity. Given that prisons seek to restrict access to independence, money, agency, and heterosexual intimacy, this article poses prison as an environment where the identities of males shift more fluidly, and the ways in which complex relationships of sexuality within this space invert and reflect gender constructions within society. Masculinity is reconfigured in prison and homosexual sex is reconstituted as a heterosexual act, and while the men who engage in these acts to some degree challenge dichotomized understandings of gender and sexuality, they also conserve such polarities, while challenging notions of sexual identity as stable and unchanging (p.78). While these instances of sexual fluidity also speak to the desire for intimacy in prison and the defamiliarization of gender categories, these reconfigurations of sexuality are often constrained by traditional gender roles. This article unlike the previous does not propose a radical revolutionary view of sexuality; while these experiences are transgressive, they are influenced by outside power structures, but nonetheless highlights the ways in which gender identity is performative (p.87).

This article is a contemporary literary analysis of James Baldwin’s understandings of the functions of American prisons during the 1970s. Through Baldwin’s framework the author of this piece situates prisons as an expected penal site that intentionally structured to restrict the allowance of love or sexuality in any form, still fluid figures are existent within these spaces that “suspend between the sexes”. Again, gender is supported as a performative identity by which exchanges between prisoners, grapple with power and dominance, and there exists a possibility for the mutability of gender and sex. James Baldwin is presented in his critiques of the constraints of traditional gender roles and its ability to destroy possible communion, while recognizing the power in ambiguity of the sexes and complexities of sexualities as a sign of maturity. Fluid figures like hermaphrodites, as poised by Baldwin are “simply intimidating exaggerations of the truth concerning every human being” (p.693-694). The influence of Baldwin in this piece forces readers to consider consensual and pleasurable male-to-male interactions within the discussion of incarcerated intimacies.


This is a contemporary book that offers a sociohistorical anthology of existing analyses, memoirs, and philosophies of the US prison system. The discussion is opened by examining the roots of incarceration within American slavery and progressively transitions to other facets of incarceration such as death penalties, power and responsibility, and isolation and resistance. Arguments of this piece suggest prison abolition as a parallel platform with queerness, in that by accepting it, we must also be content with not comprehensively knowing of it because the carceral state operates on the normalization of its necessity and not allowing us to imagine structures/systems beyond its domain. Antinormativity beyond taking a stand against the norm, while still engaging with it as opposition, through its inhabitation engages in its corrosion. This is to say that although the nature of these sexually fluid relationships is still influenced by heteronormativity, prisoners’ engagement in these acts nonetheless corrode the integrity of heterosexual systems. Prisons are sites that violently regulate gender, engage in the invisibilization of queer people and reinforce binaries, but these structures also provide us with a mode by which to understand how the “structures of everyday life that sustain the carceral state are reproduced” (p.269). The discussion further critiques the criminalization of trans and queer people and the exclusionary nature of some abolitionists in their heteronormative, homogeneic frameworks. Strides need to be made to include trans and queer advocacy and move beyond an assimilationist political paradigm (p.268).


This a recently published Canadian academic article that closely examines an existing sum of correspondence letters between Joseph Beam, a black gay community organizer and his prisoner pen pal Kenyatta Ombaka Baki, spanning 7 years of exchanges (1980-1987). It should be noted that it is not made known if this pen pal was incarcerated in the US or abroad. Through this relationship, Fink presents us with queer friendship as a tool for abolition, because it is through textual exchanges (pen-pals) that challenge the isolated, unloving function of the carceral state. These textual exchanges provide outlets for alternative kinship relationships and intimacies to occur as well as re-imagining seemingly impossible futures beyond the constraints
of neoliberalism (p.84) These letters also challenge dominant narratives about prisoners and life and prison, and represent modes of emotional strategies for survival, it links people from the inside and outside in to a mutual exchange. This article posits writing with transcendence and the desire for intimacy as “evidence of mutual care, in spite of the violence of segregation enacted by the state” and that these exchanges in spite of not being physically materialized or realized allow for us to understand the capacities of media and print in countering the isolation of prison (p.88).


The archival research presented in this piece is conducted by a Canadian, literary English scholar concerned with analyzing three literary works of Kenyan political prison narratives. These works were sampled to offer a discussion surrounding queerness and sexuality within a political African perspective. The author makes evident current systems of oppression that seek to silence the narratives of such voices through negation and denial. Each of the literary works offers its own distinctive temporality ranging from African political climates of the 1960s to late 2000s. The author repurposes the forces of denial and negation of queer experiences as a mode by which to critique colonial and dictatorial terror. Within a dominant society that places emphasis on abstinence and sexual discipline as evidence of national; the erasure of queer African prison narratives seeks to “expunge or discredit lifestyles they [democratic political leaders] thought unfit for their political visions” (p.152). Furthermore, the author goes on to argue that regulation of sexuality within prisons is a bi-product of the collaboration between colonial and neo-colonial states, and how the hostility towards homosexuality in prison narrative points to these limitations as representations of faltering aspects of nationalism (p.153). Prisons through this framework are sites of contradiction and inversion in that prisons are able to convert the social invisibility of queer cultures into an enforced hypervisibility, this hypervisibility often misrepresents queer pleasure and fails to consider the ways in which these intimacies are formations of networks of social support.


This work offers a historical review of queer prison activism by Dr. Regina Kunzel who is a scholar in Gender & Sexuality at Princeton University. The historical review traces back to the 1970s, the tumultuous era of political movement for LGBTQ liberation. Insistence on the understanding of “connections between ‘politics of crime’ and ‘the general politics of social control, control of bodies, and even control of desire’” (p. 15), fostered an inspiration towards gay prison activism fostering a more analogous association between gay activists and gay prisoners. Efforts to challenge gay discrimination behind bars intensified and just as political climates began shifting in the outside world, such shifts also took place within prisons, with the author citing the experience of an incarcerated gay male claiming that in 1983 “every conceivable Gay subculture was represented in the jail’s ‘Gay Tier’: drag queens, hippie queers, muscle men, preppies, post-op transgender folks, leather men, rednecks, clones” (p. 18). However, in these attempts to foster networks between the incarcerated and non-incarcerated gay community, non-gay prisoners were found to extort gay correspondents for gifts and money
An insistence on the distinction between “true” gays and imposters also tainted the integrity of pen pal programs that sought to offer outreach and communal support between imprisoned gays and gays of the outside world. Still pressures of masculinity and prison sexual norms still permeated these structures. And emerging understandings of gay identities that pulled away from gender transgression came at the cost of the marginalization of trans folks, creating political tension between the two identities. The author concludes the review by stating that these encounters reveal overarching efforts to impose a gay paradigm and enforce a homo-/heterosexual binary system and how prison culture exposes the limits of such a system and only further marginalizes non-binary identities.


This book is an anthology of assembled writing, analyses, narratives, manifestos and interviews that explore the oppressions of queer life as well as the systems that maintain gender normativity within the prison industrial complex. This book contains contributions from many sources of knowledge, both scholarly and of those incarcerated within the US. The author opens by dissecting the prison industrial complex and the ways it engages with practices of profiling, screening, policing, and surveillance to divide people. Gender normativity is violently enforced through binary categories, and trans and queer people aside from prison are already subjected to immense surveillance and profiling. This book offer stories beckoning us to consider the intersectionalities of queerness with respect to blackness, immigration, and ability (to name a few) and how their liberation is also essential to the liberation of the LGBT community as a whole. Abolitionist efforts, echoing Munoz’s Queer Utopia sentiment, is argued to be a “time that is both yet to come and already here…acknowledge[ing] that there are countless ways that abolition has been and continues to be here now” (p. 8). Other pieces lay out strategies and tools for building an abolitionist trans and queer movement, encouraging us to challenge the discourse and need for prisons as a means of rehabilitation. So long as prisons exist trans people will never be safe, and real abolition is rooted in the liberation of persons who face multiple facets of oppression.

https://ssrn.com/abstract=1974678

This a contemporary research article conducted through an analytical law framework that examines current practices within Los Angeles jails surrounding trans and queer identifying people. Key criticisms made in this piece surround LA county’s practices of having trans and queer identities self-identify their orientations to segregate them into different units from the general population. These policies were put in place in efforts to “protect” these identities, but Robinson argues actually does more harm than good. This practice is toxic by the way it: relies on gender conformity, forces people to confirm their identity when persons may not feel comfortable “being out”, once identified places them at risk for stigmatization and retaliation. Furthermore, self-identifying only exacerbates systems of toxic masculinity by creating distinctions between gay men and “real” men. Other distinctions arise between those men who are “penetrable” and “un-penetrable”, and contributes to the theme evident in this bibliography of the practice of heterosexual men participating in homosexual acts while still being able to
maintain a heterosexual identity. These men reconfigure homosexual acts into heterosexual norms and traditional gender roles, emphasizing the ways in which gender is not a fixed construct but malleable to fit the needs of its practitioner.


This work examines the contemporary discourse of prison abolitionism through a queer framework. Contributors to this discussion have backgrounds in Gender and Women’s Studies and emails between several intellectuals are used to open the discussion. Stanley challenges the notion that queer abolitionism is new, claiming that while it is not the dominant driving force, it is a force that nonetheless has always existed. Queer resistance is evident in their ability to “exist beside, build community in spite of, and struggle against the police state” (p.116). Dean Spade argues that we should refuse invitations, like the “protective” policies presented in Robinson’s work, to be included in laws and policies that allegedly promote the value of queer lives but “actually operate to expand systems that we know target queer and trans poor people, people of color, immigrants, and people with disabilities” (p.117). Additionally, the authors argue it is key to queering abolitionism that we include conversations that extend LGTBQ criminalization and targeting and advocates for a better understanding of how gender, sex, and sexuality have been manipulated to promote larger political, economic, and social agendas in the US. We should not view “equality” labeled achievements such as same-sex marriage recognition, and the Employment Non-Discrimination Act as transformative change when these political moves fail to address larger political frameworks that contribute to the marginalization and violence towards trans and queer people (p.120). The authors promote that abolitionists must see imprisonment intertwined with gender violence and that the “broken” prison system is correlated to a “broken” immigration system. Both systems rely exclusionary and detention practices. The criminal system’s foundation is inherently rooted in domination and is built on the premises of: transphobia, sexism, homophobia, and racism.

Race, Sexuality, and Masculine Dominance in Gay Pornography, compiled by Michael Picard


Sheila Jeffreys takes a different view on transgender pornography than most critics of this genre of adult entertainment. Jeffreys studies transgender pornography to make a relation of types of sexual interest that influence the practice of bimbofication through transgenderism and how this male heterosexual utopia of women—men impersonating women—is insulting to natural born women. Jeffreys argues through examples of different sub genres of transgender pornography and conclude that heterosexual men often fantasize about other men playing women
gender roles and that these fantasies raise heterosexual men’s interest of more extreme forms of men impersonating women. Films such as ‘Transgender Prostitutes’, ‘Transsexual Babysitters’, and ‘Transsexuals Cheerleaders’ are used as examples by Jeffreys to demonstrate how bimbofication is used in transgender pornography to provide the desired genre of transgender porn heterosexual men want.


Dines argues that analyzing racial representations in porn is empirical to understanding how porn is worth a discussion for the assumptions about what makes porn pornographic and, additionally, Dines is concerned about the way race and masculinity functions in pornography, including gay porn. Using Max Hardcore as an example, popular violent porn has increased the modern-day gonzo style pornography. Hardcore style porn constructs a hierarchy of inequality, masculinity, and violence according to Dines analysis. Dines expresses the contemporary obsession of black men’s bodies is desired because of their cool and muscular bodies that reflect masculinity and dominance which has led to a demand for interracial porn—specifically narratives with black men and white women. This obsession of black male dominance and interracial porn is not only popular with white straight men but also gay white men. Dines also notes that films such as “Blacks on White Boys, Ebony Dicks in White Assholes, and Black Bros and White Twinks” of who plays what roles and that these roles identify black masculinity in gay porn.


This entry explained by Israel and Delucio focuses on the exoticization of queer people of color and how the intersection of ethnic, racial identity, and queer identity affects the exoticization process and practices. Their work expresses how people of color, including LGBTQ people of color, or seen as “Others” because of their ethnic or racial bodies because of their intersectional minority status: being queer and a person of color. They argue that these individuals are expressed as “exotic” because of their ethnic and racial identity with regard to their sexuality such as Asian people being seen as passive, or Latinx seen as fiery. Through this work, Israel and Delucio explain the process of exoticization and practice and how exoticization is used as a way to serve as levels of discrimination and objectification.


Using racial iconography to examine the mobilization of race in porn, Nash’s ethnography of Saartjie Baartman’s story has allowed Nash to argue that stories similar to Baartman’s that are constant in gemanining and thus has allowed for a wave an anti-pornography movement within the black feminism, and of which Nash calls “racial progressivism.” The problem that Nash points out is that by opposing pornography they are ignoring the what black women may desire. There are two important areas of consequences Nash brings up in this reading: first, that black feminism has enhanced their view of porn to a conservative level and degrades black women’s sexual desires instead of seeing porn as pleasure; and second, the
establishment of normative considering the lack of black bodies and racialized imagery in pornography, which raises questions the level of racism in the porn film industry. Using the practice of racial iconography, Nash discovered, for example, the pleasures black spectatorship and representations of black race-pleasures, and that it provides a framework which connects the objectification and degradation of black women in porn.


Analyzing an archive of films and videos from 1967 to current, Nguyen focuses on the roles of tops and bottoms in gay male pornography by defining the actions of these roles and how bottoming is seen as a negative view which reinforces heteropatriarchy and conceives his term of “bottomhood”—a “sexual position, social alliance, an affective bond, and an aesthetic form.” Nguyen expresses that in a patriarchal society, being a bottom is affinity to being penetrated and dominated just like a woman and lacks power compared to the role of the top which is seen as dominate and masculine. Bottoming, as Nguyen states, is seen to be as equivalent to the idea of women being passive, feminine, and submissive in gay pornography and that in a patriarchal system, even in porn, Asian porn stars reflect these terms and are used in pornography as bottoms. This analysis of the roles of gay Asian porn stars as bottoms and Nguyen’s term of bottomhood discover the racism and reinforcement of heteropatriarchy.


Nguyen Hoang focuses on gay Asian American porn star Brandon Lee and how his role in gay pornography reflects what depicts American masculinity compared to his Asian bottom male co-star. In what Hoang calls “racial ‘packaging’”, he analyzes the role of Brandon Lee, “an assimilated (American) American”, by portraying Lee as Americanized masculine top ignoring his Asian ethnicity. Hoang explains that intertwining “sexual dominance and desirability”, position of a top, and white American masculinity, ranks Asian men lower to the position of submission and abjection of bottomhood. His analysis of transforming Brandon Lee establishes that Americanizing non-white porn stars and embracing masculinity in tops delivers pornographic fantasies.


Larry Nuttbrock and Sel Hwahng’s study covers the high capacity of transgender sex workers and, those who are, why is the proportion of these workers of ethnic minorities. Their study explains the comparison of an average of 1% to 7% of women who have engaged in some sort of sex work compared to the rate of transgender sex workers of 37.4% from their own research. They further explain that research has shown that adolescents who perform sex work generally have a reduced chance of graduating from high school which in turn leads to unemployment as adults and continue as sex workers which escalates life-course disadvantages. Using scholarly data, including their own, Nuttbrock and Hwahng explain that androphilia and sex work may be related because of early experiences of anal-penetration and the perception of themselves being homosexual. They add that transwomen have higher chances to be involved in
sex work because of the socioeconomic conditions that restrain them from having higher paying jobs and often resort to sex work because of the high pay potential and their experience of anal sex during adolescence. Nuttbrock and Hwahng conclude that ethnic transwomen have the highest rate of sex workers because, like most transwomen performing sex work during adolescence, and because of their already life-course disadvantage from inequality and poverty in inner cities disproportionally compromising ethnic minorities.


This chapter of Barnard’s series explores areas of gay identity that are missing through The Men of South Africa videos and the possibilities of objectivity such as interracial gay desires, desires of queer men of color, and representations of queers of color. Understanding that representation of all-white gayness eliminates subjectivities of queers of color, Barnard then examines that this then gives gay people only a site of digressive intersection of struggles between the erotic and political that reduced the desires and fantasies between people of color and white people. This chapter also looks deeper into gay text and porn cinema to discover that racist strategies are enlisted into contemporary representations of white people, people of color, and interracial relationships by individuals and these racist strategies take on particular justifications, denials, absences, and codes that are attached with desire.


Analyzing gay porn film La Putiza, Subero illustrates that gay Mexican men do not consider pornography as an attribute to the objectifications of the queer community and that national and ethnic self-identity are constructed in Mexican gay porn and that the structures of ethnic self-identification in Mexican gay porn helps establish the queer community as mainstream culture. Mexican gay pornography reflects their national identity and ethnic self-identity in ways such as an Aztec narrative and wrestling subtext as seen in La Putiza. Because of gay male pornography, Subero also suggest that gay male porn has provided forms of validation, self-expression and self-identification that heteronormative societies would call disorderly to their orders of hetero structured societies. This gay porn cinema analysis of La Putiza describes that the narrative of this porn film does not focus on ethnicity as erotic but rather embraces its narratives by including aspects in the film that represent Mexican culture and muster gay Mexican stereotypes in as seen in Western pornography.


Exploring Latin American gay pornography, Subero suggests that Latino gay male pornography and Latin pornographic houses add to queer Latino gay male history and that these productions also provide place for self-reaffirmation to Latino gay men without homophobia and
machismos being imposed. Subero points out that although there has been an increase of queer theme films in Latin America they lack to normalize homosexuality by denying “the visual expression of their own visual desires.” Subero claims that pornography is the only visual form that narrates and understands the desires of gay males as being authentic and has an audience that accepts this desire. Comparing Latin American pornography with producers such as Mecos Films and American Top Producers, Subero notes how these two separate regions of culture produce gay male porn and reflect their gay male culture into gay Latino male porn. Analyzing Latin American and West pornography, Subero finds that gay Latino male pornography produced in Latin America, such as Mexico and Argentina, have added new to gay male homoeroticism and have disclaimed the roles portrayed by Latino gay men in Western porn.

### Female Same Sex Intimacies in Egypt, compiled by Noori Tawakol


In this piece, Amer argues for the reclamation of terminology used to describe female same sex relations in medieval Arabic literature. She argues that reclamation will serve two purposes: demonstrate the extensive, indigenous history of lesbianism in the Arab world; and ensure that Arab lesbians are able to integrate their sexual orientation into their ethnic identity. Amer argues that while uncritically enforcing western queer theory and binaries onto the Arab world is problematic, reducing todays queer Arabs to being solely a product of imperialism is also problematic. Thus, in her advocacy for the reclamation of indigenous terms, she is advocating for a pushback against both fundamentalist regimes which wish to re-appropriate Islam and Arab cultures to repress homosexuality, and Western imperialism, which seeks to export its frameworks as mandatory and universal. Amer argues that the push to create new Arabic terms for homosexuality, serves as an erasure of the “very rich tradition on alternative sexual practices that have been prominent in the Islamicate world at least since the ninth century.”(387). She explains that both “gender-bending” and lesbian relationships have a longstanding presence in Arab societies. She goes onto state that, despite its erasure from most mainstream texts on the Arab world, lesbianism was documented prior to male same-sex relationships. Further, there are many words that have been used to denote lesbianism throughout Arab history that have never been used as slurs.

She argues that fundamentalist regimes and western colonization have erased the strong history of sexual diversity from Arabic speaking nations and have pushed a narrative of an unforgiving, anti-gay society. This erasure pushes a narrative that both queerness and the permission to express ones queerness come from ‘The West.’ Remembering the existence of lesbians in the Arab world would allow todays Arab lesbians to “explore non-Western ways of being gay”(387). Amer argues for reclamation precisely because it frees Arab lesbians from having to fragment their identity, or ‘pick sides’, instead allowing them to enjoy an indigenously
Arab identity in which their sexuality is centered, included, and not reduced to being a product of Westernization.


In this piece, Awwad uses the Queen Boat Case of 2001 to speak to the discourse surrounding homosexuality in contemporary Egypt. The Queen Boat case of 2001 involved the raid and subsequent trial of 52 Egyptian men who were arrested, abused by police; and put on trial after being found in or in connection to a disco boat informally known as a hub for gay nightlife. Awwad first outlines the ways in which Egyptian nationalism that is anti-imperialist often centers “sexual purity, and the secular state defending itself against the growing power of the Muslim Brotherhood.”(321). In other words, the state must defend its “morality”(often articulated on Islamic terms) to ensure the public does not turn to Islamist political parties, while maintaining its ‘secular’ status. This creates a tension in which the government must maintain laws which enforce Islamic notions of ‘decency’ while doing so on secular terms.

Further, the increasing poverty in Egypt has caused men to feel their masculinity is threatened by their inability to provide for their families This makes the persecution of gay men important in the state’s desire to uphold cisgender, heteronormativity. Awwad then outlines some of the arguments that Joseph Massad makes in his work “Desiring Arabs,” in which he states that while same sex relations exist in the Arab world, they do not constitute identities. Specifically, he argues that in the Arab world, same sex relations are allowed so long as they remain private. Thus Massad critiques organizations like Gay International pushing a foreign and ill-fitting identity onto the local people of the Middle East, which he sees as a working of imperialism. In this piece, Awwad affirms the importance of Massad’s critique of the ways in which imperialism can manifest in Gay liberation, stressing that where the Arab world’s sexual ‘looseness’ was once used as a justification for colonialism, the region’s sexual ‘oppression’ and ‘repression’ are now used as justifications for foreign interference. Though he shares Massad’s views on imperialism, Awwad stops short of embracing Massad’s suggestion that queer identities are foreign and a symptom of westernization. Instead, Awwad analyzes points brought up by Massad, contrasts them to points made by Arab queer activists, and law scholar Carl Stychin who argues towards a universal frame of gay liberation set forth by the Western world. He deems the threat of foreign intervention a “postcolonial predicament” that queer Arabs find themselves in, feeling obligated to ensure their activism is not seen as a call for foreign (ie: Western) involvement. Further, Awwad argues that the emphasis on identity is not the only path to liberation, and other framings (for instance: the right to privacy) may aid in the fight for queer rights within Egypt. Specifically, in the context of the Queen Boat Case, he argues that framing the defense of the incarcerated men in terms of their right to privacy would be more effective and sensitive than advocating for their protection and wellbeing through the lens of queer rights.

Ultimately I found this reading to be very useful in understanding the complexity of the debate around the path to liberation for queer Egyptians and Arabs at large. I appreciated Awwad’s consideration of neocolonialism, and its effects on queer Arabs need to define and defend themselves, which is often left out from scholarship on queer Arabs. I do, however, wish this piece either mentioned non-male homosexuality, or acknowledged that it only addressed gay men.
This paper examines the framing of queerness in “Bareed Mista3jil”, a book consisting of stories of 40 Lebanese queer women and members of the transgender community. The individuals featured are mostly between the ages of twenty and thirty, and almost all born and raised in Lebanon. The book was compiled by an organization called Meem, a support and advocacy group for lesbian, bisexual, questioning, and queer women in Lebanon. Georgis engages Joseph Massad’s arguments about queer Arab identity in her analysis of the book, but ultimately concludes that the individuals in the text are not simply appropriating “western” identities, but rather forming their own understanding of queerness. Specifically, she engages Massad’s arguments that “Arab cultures have given permission to and tolerated same-sex relations as long as they remain unnamed.”(235); and argues that human and LGBTQ rights discourses can be imperial when exported. Georgis agrees that discourse surrounding rights and international organizations can, in fact, be imperial projects. However, she takes issue with Massad's ahistorical framing of Arab same-sex relations, arguing it is unfair and inaccurate to represent such practices as frozen in time and uninfluenced by globalization. She states:

“What Massad does not consider is that the assertion of traditional identity as authentic practice is just as much an effect of the trauma of colonization on Arabs as is Western assimilation. That is because...the repression of trauma leaves people ‘continually repeating the condition of being in pain as the basis of identity or community formation.’”(238).

Thus she argues that Massad is pushing an idea of an unchanging culture, a concept which can be stamenting, and continues to center colonization. Rather than demanding that queer Arabs return to their cultures’ ‘traditional’ same-sex relations and ignore seemingly new terms and identities, Georgis argues that queer Arabs should be (and are currently) forming their own paths, influenced by both their own culture and the world around them.

Further, she asserts that ‘coming out’ as queer is simply a western ideal, and just one path to gay liberation. Georgis emphasizes the importance of families in Lebanon, as social support, as well as social security. She explains this causes many of the subjects of Bareed Misa3jil do not publically ‘come out’, though some have told family members and been accepted. She states that fear of public and familial reactions are a greater hinder to public same sex relations than fear of religious sin. The communal culture of the Arab world makes the western identity-based, individualist politics of queer liberation hard to apply. She states that while the “post-Stonewall pride politics” push for the abolition of shame, shame serves as an important concept around which to organize and find community. She argues that contributors to the book have not claimed to have shed their shame, but rather chosen to proceed despite it. She stresses that their very acknowledgement of their queer shame runs counter to western ideas of ‘pride.’ Ultimately, Georgis argues that the individuals featured in the book are forging their own identities and ways of being that are neither essentially cultural nor totally foreign influenced.

This piece is a study involving three lesbian athletes in Tunisia. Two of the athletes are members of national championship teams, and the third has won international medals. For the sake of anonymity, the specific sport each woman partook in was not made clear. All of the women expressed certainty that they were not the only lesbians on their respective sport teams. Many of the women interviewed described a team culture where lesbianism was tacitly acknowledged but never discussed.

The study first explains mainstream Islamic discourse on homosexuality, stressing that women are almost always left out of the conversation. Since much of the material on homosexuality in Islam centers around Quranic text which speaks to male to male same sex relations, much of the Islamic rulings have focused on punishing those (male) acts. Thus female same sex relations are typically overlooked and thus punished less severely. In the case of Tunisia, the author states “female homosexuality does not officially exist. It is not conceivable to the popular imagination.” (1130). The study states that much of queer life in Tunisia centers around the internet: both online dating sites, and GayDay, Tunisia’s online gay magazine. The three women each exhibited varying degrees of openness about their sexuality, with one woman being open only with other lesbians, and otherwise passing. Another was open only to her closest friends. The third was open with just her family and a few of her teammates. Although many of the women described the existence of lesbians in their teams as an ‘open’ secret, they stressed there are never sexual relations between the female teammates within the sport. The researcher argued that the women’s early experiences of ‘gender nonconformity’, which he defined largely through their preferences in toys and sports, “helped train them to deal with being different in a highly regulated culture” (1133). However, while the women were able to reject some aspects of normative femininity in their decision to partake in professional sport, they were unable to embrace lesbianism openly. Hamdi describes the locker rooms in particular as being a highly ‘homohysteric’ and ‘homonegative’ space. This negativity and fear remains fully present, even in locker rooms where the majority of teammates are themselves lesbian, since they are unable to openly identity as such. Hamdi describes their sports as “the only physical space to meet other lesbians.” (1136), but stresses that the women are not able to pursue one another within that space. Hamdi concludes by offering a pessimistic view of the future for lesbians in sport within Muslim countries, and advocates for further research into the topic.

While I found this piece helpful in understanding the tacit ways in which women in Tunisia’s sexuality was understood and even accepted, I felt the study was lacking in complexity and centered around stereotypes. For instance, Hamdi explores gender nonconformity as central to the women’s sexuality. While pursuing women sexually and romantically is certainly subversive to traditional gender roles for women, Hamdi seems to imply that the women he studies are more masculine, and that this drives their desire for women. I felt the study erased femme lesbians completely in its assumption that lesbianism was intrinsically linked with gender-nonconformity, and the rejection of femininity. Hamdi also seems to enter the study with the assumption that the women would be having sexual encounters with one another regularly in their locker rooms. This sentiment is proven inaccurate by the women interviewed, who stress their professionalism, and lack of desire to be sexual with straight or inexperienced lesbian women.

Hassan first explains the influence film censorship has on social censorship, explaining the influence Egyptian films have on Egyptian society, and Arab societies at large. He explains that the Egyptian film industry relies heavily on funding from conservative Gulf states and thus religious Clergy are given the authority to censor films. The five major areas of limitations for films are “loose morality, politics, religion, seditious ideologies, and violence”(19). When filmmakers chose to overtly include homosexuality in their films, they must portray it in a way which evades censorship, meaning that it must be portrayed negatively, and shown as a negative effect of colonialism.

For instance, Hassan provides many examples in which homosexuality is portrayed as either in preformed in partnership with British colonial soldiers, or reserved for Egyptians with strong colonial ties or influences. Notably, in many portrayals alcohol is used to seduce a sometimes reluctant man into intercourse; and alcohol is seen as both Western and sinful. Hassan provides one example in which homosexuality is seen to counter colonialism, but only because an Egyptian nationalist rapes the British colonial soldier he had captured and intended to kill, thus enabling the Egyptian man to “physically ‘rape’ his colonizer, which in a sense allows him to claim back a part of his nationhood (and to an extent his manhood).”(21). Even in the case of the Egyptian nationalist, homosexuality is seen as existing only because of colonialism. Thus the censorship of Egyptian films creates an environment in which homosexuality is deemed unnatural and threatening, further stigmatizing it and reinforcing the notion that queer Arabs must flee the Arab world. Notably, homosexuality is only discussed in relation to men in this article. I would like to look further into the portrayal of female queerness, and intimate female relationships in Egyptian cinema.


In this piece Mervat seeks to complicate the notion that the patriarchy as the Western world knows it, is the ‘natural’ state of being. Specifically, she challenges the notion that there is an inherent allegiance between men across cultural and class lines for the dominance of women. Instead she suggests that such an allegiance is formed to maintain control over women. The maintenance of such control, however requires social bonding amongst men, which male same-sex sex can help to strengthen. Thus, Mervat argues that while female same-sex relations and sexual encounters threatened the patriarchy, male to male sexual relations strengthened it. While male same-sex sex only increased the social bonds between men, which in turned solidified their patriarchal allegiance; female same-sex sex threatened the patriarchy as it bonded women together and allowed them to be self-sufficient. Further, Mervat states that “Instead of assuming a static, ahistorical, and asocial definition of patriarchy, it is more important to trace historical changes in this system of male alliances and sexual control.” She does exactly that through her historical analysis of gender roles and homosexual relations in Egypt throughout three time periods: 1760-1798: the “advent of French expedition”, 1798-1801: the “French expedition to Egypt”, and 1805-1860. Importantly, Mervat states that gender segregation was present in Egypt even before Islamic conquest. She explains that women were able to form allegiances with one another, across lines of both class and race. She states that a major region
for the shifting, although not erasure, of the strictly gender segregated society, is that upper and middle class women in Egypt supported missionary schools for girls. This moved women and girls, if only slightly, into the public space. She uses the eighteenth and nineteenth century in Egypt to demonstrate that while the patriarchy is resilient, it is constantly evolving. This reading provides documentation of the long standing traditions of same sex relations in Egypt. While it was extremely difficult to understand, it did provide a historical context as to the ways in which female and male same-sex relations have been interpreted and punished in Egypt.


In this piece Joseph Massad takes issue with the advocacy of “Gay International” a term he uses to describe international, ‘first-world’ based LGBTQ organizations. He critiques the ways in which these organizations can seek to export their understandings of gender and sexuality onto the Arab world in order to ‘liberate’ it from its own ‘oppressive’ people. For instance, he emphasizes that homosexual vs heterosexual is a binary that does not exist in and should not be applied to the Arab world. Massad is essentially arguing that same-sex sex is allowed in the Arab world when done privately and does not constitute an identity. Further, he states that it is only middle to upper class, westernized men who are taking on a gay identity, and it is that identity, not the sexual act itself, which the government punishes. He cites the Queen Boat Case in Egypt as one such example. He argues that exporting a gay identity onto rural, working class men in particular will only cause them harm by either forcing them to stop engaging in ‘gay’ sex, or to take on a gay identity, which will only lead to government persecution. He explains that the middle to upper class men who are claiming a gay identity are doing so almost exclusively on the internet and in English, meaning that Western influence is a prerequisite to even gaining access to such an identity.

Massad also evaluates texts written on homosexuality in the Arab world and Muslim countries at large to demonstrate the glaring Orientalism, Islamophobia, and cultural illiteracy present in the thought processes of western scholars. He then shows how ‘Gay International’ uses these texts to justify their beliefs and actions, and how government and advocates who are otherwise anti-Arab in their policies can claim to be championing gay Arabs in their calls for intervention. Massad criticizes queer Arabs(mostly living in the first world), who work within ‘Gay International’ as further validating it; and approaching their activism from a place of disconnection and isolation to their own culture.

This piece was crucial for me to read because it is referenced in nearly every text I have found about queer Arab advocacy. Massad also addresses Egypt’s views on homosexuality specifically when he suggests that in the Queen Boat Case, the men were persecuted not for the actual sex acts they engaged in, but for their gay identities. Massad’s points about Orientalism and Imperialism are crucial to consider in my research, and point to a glaring failure on the part of “Gay International” to address colonial power dynamics within their advocacy. However, I take issue with his complete exclusion of women from his analysis. I also question whether it is possible that some of the men partaking in same sex sexual acts whom he advocates for are content doing so only in private, or if they would, in fact like to claim a gay identity publically. I feel Massad problematically takes the emotional and the romantic elements of same-sex sex out of his analysis when he insists it can comfortably exist in secret.

Moussawi contrasts two ideologies on global queer solidarity as they pertain to the Arab world, using two queer organizations within Lebanon: Helem and Meem, to demonstrate the ways in which they are forging their own advocacies and frameworks; rather than adhering to purely Arab or ‘Western’ values. Moussawi explores the different ways each group develops their identity and chooses to organize for the betterment of their members. He addresses Joseph Massad's’ argument that the ‘Third World’ should be critical of LGBTQ non governmental organizations because they are primarily funded by Western non-profit organizations. He argues that LGBTQ organizations seek to take individuals who partake in same sex relations and create an identity for them centered in their sexual acts, thus reinforcing a sexual binary where it didn’t previously exist. This argument is contrasted by arguments made in the book “The Global Emergence of a Gay and Lesbian Politics”, edited by Barry D. Adam and André Krouwel, who state there is, in fact, an “essential” and authentic queer identity globally, but it will manifest differently depending on the context of the country within which it resides. Adam and Krouwel go on to stress a solidarity, shared experience, and understanding they perceive to exist between queer individuals globally. Moussawi explains that the solidarity expressed by Adam and Krouwel is typically framed through Western queer eyes and tends to overlook issues of race, class, religion, and imperialism which complicate this solidarity, and cause an “unequal flow of discourse, material and people”(597). Moussawi also challenges Massad’s argument that queer Arabs within and outside the Arab world who participate in identity-based queer activism are agents of imperialism, instead demonstrating the ways in which both Helem and Meem refuse to submit to the agendas and frameworks of western LGBTQ organizations.

Helem is a “rights-based NGO” which was founded with the main goal of decriminalizing same-sex sex in Lebanon. It operates above the ground, and has a known location in Beirut. Helem was initially an underground support group for LGBTQ individuals, going above ground in 2004 and coming to welcome non-LGBTQ members who allied with their mission. Helem has thus far operated with no acknowledgement from the Lebanese government: neither positive nor negative. Helem largely adheres to fixed identity categories as they pertain to gender and sexuality, which Moussawi explains is an approach with benefits and drawbacks. He explains that adhering to stable categories can make advocacy easier and more understandable to the masses, but can also reinforce oppressive binaries.

Meem is a “grassroots LBTQ women’s group working on women’s empowerment and community-building”(594). Meem primarily operates underground, for the anonymity and security of the women they serve. Meem began as a branch of Helem for lesbian women, but separated itself in 2008 after feeling the need for a less male-dominated space. They operate in a less hierarchical fashion than Helem and consider privacy to be essential to the support they seek to provide. Meem believes in “empowerment through self-organizing” and seeks to “explore and address multi-layered forms of discrimination…faced as women first, and as lesbians second.”(606). Thus Meem is looking to dismantle the deeply embedded societal structures that oppress lesbians and women, rather than simply advocating for the rights and inclusion of lesbians into the existing system. This stance can be seen in their decision to remain closed and underground for the sake of self-empowerment and safety, rather than relying on outside support. Meem defines itself as being “queer deconstructionist”, and has spoken out against enforcing the
binary of out vs closeted, and took issue with the assumption that their members are ashamed of their sexuality because they are not outspoken about it. They also rely less heavily on fixed identity categories in their activism.

Despite their differences, both organizations have spoken out against the de-politicization of queer issues, emphasizing their pro-Palestine, anti-imperialist, pro BDS (the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement against Israeli apartheid) stance. Even Helem, which is arguably more in line with Western gay liberation models, has openly stated it does not adhere to all International Gay politics. Moussawi concludes by arguing that Lebanon is merely an example of the need for more nuanced conversations around Gay activism in the ‘Third World.’ He ultimately disagrees with both ideologies previously mentioned, arguing that queer Arabs are forging their own paths unique from both Arab traditions, and Western conceptions of queerness.

I found this article very useful, particularly in helping me understand the formation and evolution of both Meem and Helem, and the ways in which they frame their work in a global context. I appreciated this articles inclusion of women in particular and treatment of Meem and Helem as equally important and reputable.


In this piece, Pratt lays out the socioeconomic factors she believes caused Egypt to crack down on Gay men in the Queen Boat Case when they had previously turned a blind eye to the Gay nightlife in Cairo. She explains that the Queen Boat Case occurred at a time where heteronormativity was stressed because difficult economic conditions were causing gender roles to shift. Notably, homosexuality is not explicitly banned in Egypt, so police and courts must use the coded language of the law and public homophobia to persecute non-conforming individuals. Pratt explains that during the 1990’s, gay friendly clubs and parties were becoming more common, but stresses “that is not to say that homosexuality was beginning to become socially acceptable, but to draw attention to the fact that the Queen Boat Case did not represent the ‘natural’ continuation of the persecution of gay men in Egypt.”(131). Most of the men in the case were convicted on charges of ‘habitual debauchery’, but the alleged ‘ring leaders’ were convicted on the charge of ‘contempt of religion.’

Pratt explains that in 1991, Egypt was forced into neoliberal policies in order to access foreign aid. This increased privatization quickly dismantled existing social welfare programs and made land, education, and quality healthcare increasingly inaccessible. She goes on to state that poverty rates more than doubled between 1990 and 1998. In 2000, the government was forced to decrease the value of the Egyptian Pound by thirty percent in order to ‘make its exports more competitive’(135). Pratt states that within the context of this rapid economic decline, the “Queen Boat Case may be interpreted as an attempt to punish homosexuality in order to ‘rescue’ Egyptian masculinity from the insecurities experiences as a result of socioeconomic changes and shifting gender roles.”(137).

Increasingly, Egyptian men were unable to financially provide for their families, which challenged their traditional masculinity. Colonialism, neocolonialism, and the recent neoliberal economic policies Egypt was forced to enact (by outside, Western forces), caused an anger towards foreign intervention and involvement in Egypt. The homosexuality of the men in the Queen Boat Case was deemed a result of outside colonial influence, primarily from America and
Israel. Thus the case was seen as an opportunity to display state sovereignty and ‘cultural authenticity’. When Western governments and international organizations called for the condemnation of the Egyptian government because of their persecution of the men in the Queen Boat Case, they inadvertently strengthened beliefs that ‘The West’ was against the culture of Egypt, while also increasing anger towards foreign intervention in Egyptian affairs.

I found this article to be incredibly useful in placing the Queen Boat Case within an economic context, and in understanding the economic history of Egypt in general. The points Pratt brings up about state sovereignty against neocolonialism are helpful in understanding attitudes towards human rights as defined through western frameworks.


This piece uses the literary work of Muslim Women from the Middle East to argue that intersectionality must be expanded to include religion in order to be an adequate framework to understand individual identities and experiences. Specifically, the complex ways in which female protagonists in novels from the region relate to Islam are used to argue that religion should not be discussed in queer and feminist theories as being exclusively a site of power and tool for oppression. Importantly, the female protagonists in the novels analyzed are forming their identities largely through their acts of rebellion against traditional Islamic femininity. Despite their rebellion, all of the protagonists positively engage Islam as a source of spirituality and strength. The text engages three vastly different novels, and examines the ways in which Islam plays a central role in the characters growth and resolution of conflicts. The last novel discussed, Map of Home, is the only one featuring an overtly queer protagonist. In this novel, Nidali is first shown to have a negative relationship to Islam, which results from both the sexist verses she is exposed to, and her fathers violent insistence that she learn it. However, as the novel progresses, she is able to form her own personal relationship to the religion, using it as a source of strength, comfort, and purpose. Another protagonist, a Sudanese woman, enters into a forbidden relationship with a white, Christian, European man, and attempts to persuade him to convert to Islam in order to consecrate the relationship. All the novels center around women from the region exploring their sensuality and expressing their sexuality, and all include nuanced explorations of their relationship to Islam. Thus this piece illuminates another aspect of mainstream queer discourse that can at times be ill-fitting for the Middle East: the disavowal of religion. Of course, the analysis of three novels cannot be generalized to represent the viewpoints of beliefs of women in the Middle East at large, but this piece does bring up useful points about the complexity of individuals personal relationship to religion.

While I found this article to be informative, I take issue with the way in which the authors failed to take into account the effect living in ‘the West’ had on many of the protagonists’ relationships to Islam. She failed to examine the ways in which women choosing to embrace and celebrate Islam while living as religious minorities, and being persecuted against for their religious and ethnic background, differs from women living as the religious majority. I also take issue with the authors interpretation of Islamic feminisms. The authors presented Islamic feminisms as being either completely secular or completely adherent to scripture, citing two well known Islamic feminisms as the two ends to that binary. I found this examination to be extremely
lacking in nuance, and limiting to an honest examination of the ways in which Muslim women around the world incorporate feminism into their faith.

Transgender Men’s Health Problems and Possible Solutions, compiled by Alexander Gonzalez


The research for this article was carried out by the “Trans PULSE team, that is built on a partnership between academic researchers, members of the trans community, and community-based organizations” (68). In this article, Bauer, et al., explore “the experiences of trans GB-MSM (transsexual people who are gay, bisexual, and/or have sex with men), related to sexual orientation identity and behavior, HIV-related sexual risk, sexual satisfaction, and psychosocial factors potentially associated with sexual risk taking” (68). The researchers found that when it comes to HIV, the main contributor is “unprotected receptive genital sex” (70). They also found that trans men identify their sexual orientation in a more fluid way than first expected. The research was funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, HIV/AIDS Community-Based Research Program and Institute of Gender and Health (73). The survey used a mix qualitative and quantitative survey analysis, and the subjects were recruited through urban convenience sample. One of the solutions proposed is sexual health education about HIV/STDs prevention and better testing for gay and bisexual cis men and trans men.


This study was written and conducted by Charest, Maxime, et al. and it looks at ways to fill in the gaps in the literature around sexuality education for LGBTQ+ individuals and those that don’t attend school, and how those gaps affect sexual self-efficacy. Participants 18 to 25 years old were recruited for this study in Ottawa, Canada, and information was collected through anonymous survey. Some of the findings concerning LGBTQ participants were that they are not as certain as heterosexual peers about how to deal with “sexual assault and practicing safer sex” (82). The findings for LGBTQ participants are alarming because of the high levels of sexual violence and STIs/HIV within the LGBTQ community. The research was funded in part by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. Some of the proposed solutions were for doctors, apps and online services to offer more sexual education, especially for those who don’t attend higher education.

In this research, Dadasovich, et al., tried to find out whether there was a connection between the effects of testosterone used in hormone replacement therapy (HRT) for trans men and increase the risk of HIV. The study used a mixed of qualitative and quantitative methods. The data was collected from “[a] sample of 122 transmen from San Francisco [that] participated in a cross-sectional quantitative survey and 14 trans men participated in 2 focus group discussions” (1). The researchers found that there are “associations between the testosterone and changes in sexual behavior observed among transmen, especially with regard to increased sexual behavior with cisgender men who have sex with men and transwomen” (8). The funding for this research was not clearly stated in this paper. The researchers conclude that with more extensive research, better sexual health information and comprehensive HIV prevention could help prevent HIV from becoming an epidemic within the trans male community in San Francisco, CA.


A survey was conducted to provide evidence of the discrimination experienced by people living with HIV in the UK. For this survey 31 trans participants were selected, out of 1576, that were recruited from “120 cross-sector community organisations and 46 NHS HIV clinics throughout the UK” (12). A mixed qualitative and quantitative method was used to collect surveys and do interviews. The research was funded through a grant from the MAC AIDS Fund and scientific support from Public Health England. The report found that trans participants anticipate and experience stigma and discrimination within the healthcare system. Also, that trans participants lack support from family and the healthcare system. Stigma and lack of support has led to only a few seeking support from HIV organizations. Some of the potential solutions suggested by trans participants to curb stigma and discrimination were education around HIV for schools, the general public and health providers. Furthermore, a better understanding of the needs of trans people to fight the stigma and discrimination around being HIV positive is needed.


Lou Sullivan was the first publicly out trans gay man to have died of HIV. In this video, he talks about the challenges of not been treated with respect, especially by the HIV organizations treating gay men, because of their lack of understanding of trans needs. He attempted to bring awareness to the fact that there was, and still are gay trans men having sex with men, and there is a need to expand and make available HIV prevention resources to them.


Neumann, et al. did a critical analysis and summary of different research data available through the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) and data collected by other researchers. The research available focuses on both trans men and transgender women. The researchers “summarize the nature of transgender persons risks for HIV infection, present the best evidence prevention that is available, and how to apply that prevention in transgender specific and sensitive ways, and elaborate on immediately possible options for a comprehensive
HIV prevention approach for transgender people” (2). The researcher’s suggestions on potential solutions were referrals to transgender-competent health services, sensitivity training for clinicians, and resources like legal, and psychosocial services. No comprehensive information is available on how the project was funded, although they did collaborate with CDC scientists. Reisner, Sari L., and Gabriel R. Murchison. "A Global Research Synthesis of HIV and STI Biobehavioural Risks in Female-to-Male Transgender Adults." *Global Public Health*, vol. 11, no. 7-8, Sept. 2016, pp. 866-87. Taylor and Francis+NEJM, doi:10.1080/17441692.2015.1134613.

In this study Sari L. Reisner & Gabriel R. Murchison assessed the risk of HIV and STIs for trans men with a meta-analysis of 25 peer-reviewed studies and 11 grey literature reports. The authors found that, although trans men were engaging in risky sexual behavior, very little biomedical and behavioural research has been done. Moreover, the studies that do exist around HIV and STIs estimates are limited because they have been done with small samples and used convenience sampling. The researchers further state that “[f]ew have used laboratory-confirmed HIV or STI results” (879). The authors conclude by giving eight recommendations of things that could improve future research that involves trans men. Furthermore, they state that more FTM research, policy, sexual health education and programing needs to be done worldwide, taking into account the diversity of sexual behavior of all trans men. The research was funded in part by The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) of the National Institutes of Health.


In this study, Rowniak, et al. looked at the established risk of HIV within the transman community and contributed education on how trans men adapt and move around the gay community. He also identifies the unique sexual health risks that results from their transition (510). To carry on the research, they interviewed 17 trans men about their sexuality and their HIV risk behavior; they then analyzed the interviews and used other research to give it substance. The researchers found that transmen not only transition gender presentation but also sometimes transition sexual preferences and gender orientation, making trans men more vulnerable to HIV. Other contributors to HIV risk are sex work, testosterone and lack of familiarity with how sex and social interactions work in the gay community. Potential solutions offered were for more comprehensive sexual education for cis and trans gay men that have sex with trans men. Furthermore, better data collection of trans men getting tested for HIV at gay men's medical services is needed.


In this article by Ayden I. Scheim & Robb Travers, they reported on a study conducted on the “barriers and facilitators to HIV and sexually transmitted infections testing” for trans men who have sex with men (990). Due to lack of knowledge among testing providers, in addition to assumptions about the types of sexual behaviors and risks that trans men may engage in, participants often felt that HIV/STI testing providers lacked knowledge of trans identities and
health-related concerns. The participants were collected via convenience sampling and the research was funded by “the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), HIV/AIDS Community-Based Research Initiative and supported “by Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation and Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships” (994). The potential solutions that the researchers proposed were to expand the education and training of medical staff and include HIV testing in routine blood work done for trans people. The researchers reported no conflict of interest.


Sevelius writes about a study they conducted to “identify HIV/STI risk behaviors of trans transgender men who have sex with non-transgender men (MSM). Some of the risk factors they found included, misinformation, limited support, and lack of access to resources and partners who are knowledgeable and respectful of their bodies and identities (11). The study used snowball sampling and did quantitative and qualitative interviews. Some solutions the researcher proposed were prevention programs that particularly address the needs of trans MSM and their partners. Other solutions proposed were more comprehensive data collection, sexual health education and training for both trans men and medical staff. The research was funded by the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care.


In this chapter, Zimman argues “that trans men’s talk about genitalia shows how discourse can and does outstrip some of the most basic, common sense ‘facts’ about the gendered body” (15). He argues this by analyzing online conversations of people that are considering or have completed transitioning (completed transition, means different things to different people) from female-to-male, with data he has collected from multiple transgender community sites, that he has participated in and observed (14). For his analysis, he “focus[es] on the power of language to redefine the body in the face of compulsory gender and sexual normativity” (14). He posits that instead of just agreeing with the language used to describe the physical characteristics of what makes one female-bodied, the voices of the trans men he has recorded here “destabilize the boundaries between female and male embodiment by decoupling gender and body while making both a matter of self-determination” (29). The interchangeable language often used within the trans male community during sexual interactions is fluid and diverse, without focusing on whether a word is feminine or masculine.

Notes:

Some organizations and hospitals are already providing better guidance for inclusive research, educational pamphlets, educational sexual health workshops and health clinics, targeting the trans male community. For example, The Center of Excellence for Transgender Health (www.transhealth.ucsf.edu) has a group called tm4m set up the at API Wellness that describes itself as “a group for trans men who play with men (or want to...) and the men who play with us”(http://apiwellness.org/tm4m/). Also, Brown Boi Project organization created a health guide
especially targeted for Browns Bois called Freeing Ourselves, which describes itself as “The Brown Boi Project is a community of people working across race and gender to eradicate sexism, homophobia and transphobia and create healthy frameworks of masculinity and change” (http://www.brownboiproject.org). Although, there are more organizations and hospitals doing training for and about transgender men, health needs and risk, we still don’t have accurate information of the total number of HIV/STDs/STI cases in the US. Additionally, more data is needed about the health risk and needs of trans men of color.

Queer of Color in Sports in the most Masculine, Heteronormative Environments, compiled by Brandon White


Bryan Adamson, an African American gay man, describes in print the drafting of Michael Sam into the National Football League. This writing is in the Texas Review of Entertainment & Sports Law Volume 17 and provided by the BerkeleyLaw Library. Adamson cites numerous sources including ESPN, who broadcasted the event, to recreate the scene in April of 2015. In this article, Adamson, describes the hyper masculine environment that is perpetuated by everyone: from its’ viewers to its’ athletes and beyond. The heteronormativity of the National Football League (NFL) is to many, the bedrock of American, male masculinity and norms. The kiss and its’ subsequent reaction serve as a hypocritical example of the masculine environment that has permeated for decades. The construct of the draft day experience and what is expected or even allowed was challenged by that event and the swift condemnation he received from many, proves it.


In this piece, Anderson continues his research of homophobia in sports and the ever-growing fluidity of masculinity over the last several decades. He focuses very narrowly on white male homosexuality which again doesn’t allow for a full understanding of the impact in other queer groups (specifically queers of color). He argues that over the last 30 years what it means to be “masculine” has changed and allowed for an increase in gender boundaries and norms. This concept is tested in by Anderson calls the “Inclusive Masculinity Theory” where in culture’s with high levels of homophobia, “males go to great to demonstrate they are not gay…boys eschew feminized terrains, behaviours and emotional expressions” (Anderson, 366). On the contrary, males, “are less motivated to avoid a ‘gay’ identity, [then] homophobia loses its power to regulate masculinities.” (Anderson, 366). However, again this is authored by and about
mainly white male athletes that reinforce the patriarchy. Anderson does acknowledge the need to understand his theories more broadly on other races, economic classes and with more gender fluidity.


In this article, Anderson and McCormack apply Anderson’s social movement theory which consists of four parts that help them analyze the ways in which historically subjugated groups navigate similar settings. This movement theory focuses on phenomenon like identity politics because it claims to better define the plight of the oppressed in our hegemonic culture. The authors also use this theory to predict patterns of homophobic and racial discrimination in the future, especially as gay athletes gain notoriety in the more popular, masculine sports (football, basketball, baseball, hockey). Black homophobia and the intersectionality of race and sexuality are themes throughout the article although they acknowledge the need for more research in both areas. “For example, black gay athletes would not have to deal with the racism and homophobia of the dominant culture, but they would also fear elevated rates of discrimination within their own communities. Gay black athletes might therefore find themselves excluded by both support systems (Anderson, 146). I find this argument to be somewhat short-sighted based on Michael Sam and Jason Collins’ experiences. Although only anecdotal, Michael Sam’s story proves that even in the hyper-masculine environment of football, blacks can be accepting of another marginalized group. I do believe that there is some truth to “black homophobia” but is not representative of the entire community. I also wanted some introduction around how this plays out in the lesbian and transgender of color communities. There was little to no mention of either which would have been helpful in understanding our society and culture through the lens of the most marginalized groups.


This book claims to represent the most in-depth and comprehensive research on the experiences of gay and lesbian athletes in sports. The authors talk about openly gay and lesbian athletes on every level along with other larger themes, to include; homohysteria, homophobia and team climate. What I focused on for this annotated bibliography was connection between sport and homophobia, as well as, its alleged decline. The authors maintain that this decline is due to changing cultural attitudes especially among the millennial population (Anderson, 7). From a legal perspective, the passing of same-sex marriage laws and rescinding of sodomy laws as glaring examples to that end. However, the book argues that lesbians don’t receive the same level of attention because they are already “over-represented”. I think using the term over-represented is dangerous and homophobic on its own. One would never say that heterosexuals are over-represented in a sport as if there is a cap to how many should be on one team. In my mind, albeit unintentionally, the authors are perpetuating a heteronormative attitude that is limiting in nature.

Michael Sam coming out as gay before being drafted into the National Football League drew enough headlines alone. But when you draw comparisons to Jackie Robinson’s breaking baseball’s color barrier in 1947 attention only intensifies. In this articles, Abraham Iqbal Khan explores the challenges faced when associating sexual identity to the civil rights history embodied by a legend such as Robinson. While the article addresses Sam as an African American player, there is little discussion of how race informs how he was received or treated. I think by ignoring the intersectionality present in this situation the other leaves us a half-informed perception of the reality.

If Michael Sam was a white male in this same scenario I believe the narrative would likely be different. Khan asserts that, “Michael Sam mobilizes the political rhetoric of respectability, the notion that inclusion is the meaning of social struggle and that it is achieved in enacting the rhetorical and behavioral norms modeled in straight White men”. Respectability and economic value tied with comparisons of the civil rights’ struggle of Jackie Robinson’s era change what the narrative could do in today’s world. Lastly, the author argues that his economic value and marketability will be his “barometer for social acceptance” (Khan, 345) which leaves us with much to be desired. Sam’s ascension into the limelight and subsequent perceived desire to cash in on his fame seem more like excuses to see him fall than anything else.


This macro view of the sporting world and its history gives us a good foundation for the environment it operates in today. Kidd suggests that sport is one of the few things in history that has seldom been questioned. He asserts that sports were “made by males and for males” and “celebrate patriarchal (and class) power” (Kidd, 554). I appreciate his attempt to explore this broad theme because it is the exact gendered nature that queer-phobic principles have been built on in the sporting world. He offers several solutions to combat the inequalities present, to include: eliminating the military-style language and zero-sum game attitude, de-emphasize winning and actively support those trying to combat sexism and inequality in sports (Kidd, 562).


This article by Vikki Krane is one of the few that focus almost exclusively on the double standard of hegemonic feminism. She spends a significant amount of time explaining what it means to try to perform femininity or the prejudicial treatment that can come from nonconformity to the feminine gender roles in women’s sports. She gives several anecdotes highlighting negative bias and name-calling of lesbian athletes, among other harassments. Although I did appreciate the depth of the topic, race was left completely out of the conversation. Again, the author not acknowledging the intersectionality of the space leaves room for the most marginalized groups to remain left behind in a largely white, feminist movement.

Mazzie gives an overview of Michael Sam’s story and then begins to define masculinity in the broad sense. She argues that it is something that is varied and fluid and the implications of race, class and sexuality play a large role. Homosexuality has always been seen as “defiance” of gender norms and built a culture of resentment in the sporting world. And in Michael Sam’s case, people have trouble accepting his ability and greatness because it goes against everything “natural” to them (Mazzie, 160). She ends the article arguing that we may be in the midst of redefining what it means to be a “man’s man” but offers no solutions to continue to push us in that direction.


“Heartbeat of a Locker Room…” is an article that analyzes the reactions to two prominent sports figures’ coming out stories. Beforehand, I think the authors do a fair job of summarizing the more recent issues in the fight for equality for the GLBT community and the impact that the hegemonic masculinity theory has on that fight. “The hegemonic masculinity is not only concerned with what an ideal male is but also with what the ideal male should be in power over: females and homosexuals” (Connell, 1987). They used a qualitative method by analyzing over 400 quotations from large scale news outlets across the nation. Their focus on media and the locker room culture really serves to show the media’s grip and influence over current culture and its impact on younger generations.

The two subjects were the only openly gay players at the time, Jason Collins in the NBA and Michael Sam, in the NFL. One NFL assistant coach said, “there’s nothing more sensitive than the heartbeat of the locker room,” (Bruni 2014). How ironic that in such a masculine environment people use such emotional language to describe concerns for a player’s sexual orientation? This fallacy and backwards thinking shows how unjustified the environment can be. I think the authors do a great job in establishing the similarities and differences but fall short even though I recognize they have only two openly gay players to study. They never mention the role that race may play in either scenario as both Collins and Sam are black. I think that intersectionality definitely plays a role in the media’s response to them coming out.


Wellard begins the article by defining sports and how masculinity seems to dominate to this day. This type of “exclusive masculinity” is prevalent across the sports world and serves to deny unaccepted gender norms in society. Their research is through oral accounts and observation of male sports teams in the UK. One thing I appreciated from this article that very few others is the feminist view it describes through their research. One subject, Peter, enjoyed sports but struggled to find acceptance because of his effeminate traits. In contrast, other subjects were able to enjoy acceptance into sporting clubs through gendered “bodily performance and displays...
of sporting prowess” (Wellard, 236). The article challenges the establishment of “gay and lesbian” sports clubs because they still adhere to the underlying norms of the sport. This is complicated in the sense that it still excludes or separates many who don’t fit the appropriate stereotype. The article ends with a few strategies to explore a way forward in this field but offers little concrete steps and relies on “more research needs to be conducted” (Wellard, 245). More specifically, he highlights the need for alternative unorthodox sporting practices but does not establish what that may entail. I think that was an opportunity missed.

Gay Rights in Singapore, compiled by Thuy Van


From indoor meetings in the 1990s to the rise of decriminalization campaigns and frequent rallies over the past six years, gay activists have sought for justice and equality in a nation that has turned a blind eye to their rights and protection. In her motivating book, Mobilizing Gay Singapore, Lynette Chua narrates the history of gay rights movements in Singapore and illustrates what a social movement looks like in such conditions. To be precise, she examines the rise of the movement, strategies, development, and tactics. Additionally, she investigates the rights of social activities and what role the rule of law has to play in the equation. Chua develops her work based on comprehensive interviews with gay activists, government statements, media reports and movement documents. She displays how various activists employ “pragmatic resistance” to ensure that their grievances are addressed while at the same time fighting against the unequal political laws that have made their given way of life miserable.


Dr. George Babylon Radics reviews some of the current setbacks to the legal status of homosexuality in Singapore. Specifically, he discusses Section 377A of the Singaporean Penal Code which has made the lives of any gay male in Singapore extremely difficult as it states

“Any male person who, in public or private, commits, or abets the commission of, or procures or attempts to procure the commission by any male person of, any act of gross indecency with another male person, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 2 years.” He then discusses how despite several strong challenges to Section 377A like that of Tan Eng Hong who argued that Section 377A was unconstitutional, the Singaporean government still appears to be sticking with its overall anti-gay position of reasoning that the country “heteronormative” society. Radics attributes this position to clinging conservative colonial values left behind by the old British Empire that overtime, has gradually become Singapore’s own. Crucially though, Radics mentions that with the temporal, political, and cultural shift that has come with the 21st century, Singapore has undoubtedly softened its stance as shown by a clear relaxing of enforcement on political events like the now annual pro-gay “Pink Dot” gatherings.
The challenge to Singapore now, then, is how to balance the new age liberalism against ruling conservative traditionalists.


In this media analysis, author Debbie Goh shows how the Singaporean national newspaper Strait Times was used as a mechanism of oppression against gay individuals. Firstly, she revealed how in order to attract foreign talent, Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong had to revise several homophobic hiring policies as the targeted imports were deterred by the previous laws. This unintentionally created the hyperbole that Singapore was “the new gay haven” when in actuality, homosexuality was very much still illegal. Additionally, these changes also caused a conflict between the domestic gays in Singapore and the new foreign homosexuals. Thus, to combat this new found reputation and subsequent rise in homosexuality and homosexual rights, the government declared an AIDS epidemic and framed the gays using the Strait Times as their weapon of choice. This was accomplished by having the newspaper support the new AIDS regulatory laws and promote HIV surveillance of bodies with a clear emphasis on gay individuals despite the fact that “80% of HIV patients in Singapore were heterosexuals.”


In this discussion and cultural critique of sexual citizenship in Singapore, author Natalie Oswin gives an important perspective on Singapore’s strong heteronormative culture by analyzing why this stance came to be rather than just what it is. She reasons that Singapore was built around a traditionalist Asian family society that consists of a male dad marrying a female mom, who together have children whom are also straight. This process maintains not only functional stability but also necessary fertility as Singapore is one of the rare countries that have a declining birthrate. It is also importantly noted that in a society where the institution of family and/or anything that has to do with the domestic realm, such as housing and government subsidies, are contested and politicized, standards based in favor of the heteronormative and heterosexual majority are inevitable. However, few can deny that Singapore is changing with the times and addressing these issues of homosexuality will gradually become a higher and more contested issue in parliament. How to successfully deal and push these issues through legislations, then, will first require the understanding of the old heteronormative building blocks of this strict authoritarian society before trying to apply the new liberal homosexual/queer ideals seeking to change it.


In this research, Paul Tan and Gary Lee analyzes the public responses of two distinct events (a church proclaiming that “homosexuals can change” and Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong comments that he not only employs homosexuals, but even employs them to very sensitive positions) that when taken collectively, reveals the complexity of being gay in a legally anti-gay Singapore. To start, this work is creatively entitled “Imagining the gay community in Singapore” because of the paradoxical but true reality of the statement. As mentioned above, homosexuality is illegal in the city-state so one can only “imagine being gay” or else they would be officially breaking the law. However, this is in complete contradiction to the statement made by the highest
legislature of the land that not only acknowledges but openly supports the officially banned practice (presumably to attract gay foreign talent). As such, there is a fine silver lining that distinguishes the “imaginary” realm of being gay and the reality that exists for so many homosexuals in Singapore as they must constantly and carefully straddle this line in the navigation of their everyday lives.


In this revealing ethnographic article, author Chris Tan discusses the “Great Affective Divide” that separates Singaporeans from Queer Singaporeans. This divide paradoxically owes its existence to the efforts of the government to unify its extremely diverse ethnic, linguistic, and religious community into one Singaporean culture. Unfortunately for the LGBTQ community though, the unification efforts did not include but rather specifically excluded this group as there was a firm distinction between acceptable cultural and sexual citizenship. Furthermore, this separation is further enforced by the punitive anti-sodomy law of Section 377A. However, with changing times and a liberalizing regional and state culture, even the authoritarian government of Singapore has had to relax its previously firm views on Section 377A and allow protest in the form of the annual “Pink Dot” festival to take place. As a result, this work critically and effectively highlights the question of citizenship and how gay and queer rights functions with and against the concept in a heteronormative society. As such, this article, in the future, may contribute to Singapore being the de-facto case study on how to successfully implement queer rights in others conservative societies and culture.


In this combined research, Audrey Yue and Helen Leung examines the reasons behind the emergence of various “gay hubs” across Asia with particular emphasis on Hong Kong and Singapore. They compare but more importantly contrast these hubs to the traditional and established western “gay hubs” like San Francisco, New York, and London to uncover that neither of these Asian cities followed the normal developmental trajectory. In fact, they follow an almost counterintuitive pattern of development where key variables like legislation, economics, cultural policies, activism, and social movements did not align but rather contradicted one another. Thus, when considered through a western perspective, that combinations of variables should result in failure with stagnation being the best result. Nonetheless, in the case of Singapore and Hong Kong, the power of markets, tourism to be exact, paved the way for the rapid development of these communities as opposed to the normal developmental trajectory of western gay metropolitans. As a result, this work adds a new dimension to the queer of color critique in Asian countries by factoring in the effects of globalization to the argument.

Ross, Oliver. "Watching Solos in Singapore: Homosexuality, Surrealism and Queer Politics." *INTERSECTIONS-GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC* 38 (2015). This article revolves around the politics, homosexuality, and surrealism of the queer ways of life as shown in the film “Solos” directed by Loo Zihan and Kan Lume. As both a film critique and an ethnography, the author views “Solos” a silent protest by the Gay community to address the sensitive homosexuality issue present in Singapore. For starters, because the uncult version of the film has not been given a rating, per Singaporean law, the screening of the film in Singapore is
illegal. As such, the film itself was purposely produced to be an act of protest and anyone who chooses to access the film is without question, in support of the cause. Furthermore, a deeper analysis of the film also reveals that even down to the method in which it was produced, like the colorless diegesis, the film can be seen as a critique to the Singaporean government. This is because the government can be metaphorically viewed as also being colorless (black and white) to queer rights when in reality there are clear and vibrant complexities involved in the issue. Lastly, like many other authors, Oliver Ross attributes the homophobic attitude of the Singaporean government to colonialism, capitalism, and traditionalism. What the production of “Solos” and various other films symbolizes and indicates though, contrary to those ideals, is a clear liberalization of the Singaporean people and culture in the modern area.


Author Fan Kean Lim conducts an intense analysis of the social-spatial expression of homosexuality among Singaporeans. Specifically, he uses Henri Lefebvre’s spatial conceptual triad to prove how social spaces are not ontological but rather products of social construction that were built and manipulated by heterosexuals. Lim evaluates the roles of statistics, engrained educational materials, and legislative processes to demonstrate how heteronormativity has been fortified as ontological in the realm of everyday life. He argues that the use of these tools has helped create what society deems as “acceptable” spatial actions which has not only maintained social stability but generational continuity. And because these behaviors are framed in a heteronormative light, progress on gay and queer rights have been limited in the country. However, like many researchers on this matter, Lim acknowledges that considerable socio-political progress has been made as new age liberalism hits and transforms conservative Asia. Thus, he contests that with the new changes to common spatial practices, old beliefs of heteronormativity will be destabilized. Subsequently, how much progress will be made in terms of advancing queer rights because of this instability, though, will depend on how the aforementioned instruments frame the new conducts. Seeking control of those influencing structures, then, should be the real focus of the pro queer and gay efforts.


Editors Audrey Yue and Jun Zubillaga-Pow have curated a substantial collection of essays that examines homosexuality in Singapore from all disciplines, methodologies, and angles. In their cohesive work, they explore how the homosexual community exists against a backdrop that externally invites and welcomes their kind yet internally seeks to criminally prosecute them for being who they are. Boldly, this work seeks to reveal the intersectionality between this struggle of existence and the political, economic, cultural, religious, and legal frameworks that run the authoritarian society. This book also attempts to integrate the ever more important variable of globalization into the already complex equation that yields the Singaporean Gay/Queer identity. Lastly and perhaps most importantly though, much of this collection is written by and for Singaporeans who have experienced and/or are currently experiencing the struggle currently. This adds the personal touch that transforms a work like this into something beyond academic and analytical to something more personal and persuasive. And for this
Behind Moving Screens: Latinx Queer Struggles and Resilience in Film, compiled by Fátima Casas


Aurora Guerrero directed a coming of age film that centers on a first love story of two Latina teenagers, when Yolanda Olveros (Fenessa Pineda) meets Mari Rodriguez (Venecia Troncoso) in Huntington Park. The two protagonists are in a pre-coming out phase for their sexuality as they navigate a heterosexualized Latinx space. Yolanda has a nuclear family who pressures her to be an A+ student while Mari is dealing with her father’s recent death and tries to work to support her Mom and sister. Their friendship forms as Yolanda tries to help Mari succeed in school. Their friendship involves spending a lot of time with each other outside of school and escalates to a sexually charged scene when Yolanda traces Mari’s bare stomach. However, their relationship is ruined when Mari sells her body to pay for rent. After breaking Yolanda’s heart, both girls are able to forgive each other with the final scene closing on them looking at each other with smiles across the street. Guerrero is able to introduce the intersections of race, gender, class, and immigration status through this story line. The Latinx space that Yolanda and Mari navigate is heterosexual and prostitution as a way of economically surviving for low-income women of color. Mari’s character is chained by capitalism and selling her body in a world where she is not expected to graduate High School is one of her only choices.


The film *Mosquita y Mari* present the life of two 15 year old chicanas forming a fond friendship in Huntington Park. Their friendship becomes a relationship with sexual desires running between both protagonists. Guerrero confesses that this film was influenced from her own youth experience where her first love was her best friend. The movie never crosses the line of starting a teen romance and Guerrero has viewers question what keeps queer love from manifesting. The homophobia in Latinx households implicitly praise heterosexuality. Guerrero comes from a Mexican family of immigrants and she had to work in her family’s restaurants out of necessity. This was reflected in Mari’s role as she worked jobs handing out flyers on the street right after school. Thus, the story of *Mosquita y Mari* is one of “surviving as an immigrant or coming from a legacy of self-sacrifice for the sake of family and status in society”. Additionally, Guerrero invited youth in South East LA communities to intern for the film production for media
experience development or casting calls. This film was a result of many people coming together to tell a queer first love story.


In this article, Erica Gomez introduces the readers to the power of cinema shaping and representing queer visibility within two case studies, Mosquita y Mari (2012) and Slip Away (2011). There is an analysis of a daughter and mother scene when Yolanda and her Mom dance to ranchera music. Music and dance in this film allow for emotions to open up characters in new reflected ways. This encourages Yolanda to ask her Mom how she first met her Dad; however, this shifts the lighthearted environment to a harsh tone from her Mom who gets irritated Yolanda would ask this question. Instead, she wants her to focus on school. Gomez detracts the unspoken dialogue in this scene to mean that Yolanda’s Mom is assuming her daughter is having thoughts of romance and a boy which would distract her from getting into college, the American dream they have had for her ever since they immigrated. Catriona Esquibel argues that intimacy among female friendships is when lesbian desires emerge. The intimacy between Yolanda and Mari throughout the film is filled with lingering stares and bodily orientations that communicate their desire for each other. When Yolanda and Mari dance it stirs away from the straight form that Yolanda danced with her Mom. Instead their dance erupts in sideways motions that critical studies scholar Sara Ahmed clarifies is a way of escaping the heteronormative straightening process. The dance that the protagonists share is a spark of the mestiza consciousness that Gloria Anzaldúa’s borderlands theory discusses borderlands as a space of constant transition among different cultures as the borderlands become a place of producing desire as seen between Yolanda and Mari.


Throughout this academic journal, Lourdes Torres is coming from a homophobic religious environment that did not let her come out of the closet. She introduces stereotypes characterized onto Latina lesbian bodies as comedic relief or a traitor who abandoned her roots. The harsh realities of Latina lesbians is represented in the 1994 documentary film, Brincando el charco: Portrait of a Puerto Rican, where the director Frances Negrón Muntaner that follows a lesbian Puerto Rican who was kicked out her home for coming out by her father. This film is revolutionary in contesting the common discourse of heteronormativity in the island. Moreover, Torres discusses the film, Carmelita Tropicana: Your Kunst in my Waffen, directed by Ela Troyano that explores the life of Carmelita who is a Cuban American lesbian that works as feminist activist by day and performance artist by night. The film has a variety of Latina lesbians in racial and ethnic identities that include different butch and femme presentations. This representation debunks the idea of a ‘Universal lesbian’. Another way this film is able to empower Latina lesbian narratives is by reappropriating heterosexual Latino cultural formations like Mexican rancheras. In the end, the four Latina lesbians that are jailed for protesting abortion clinics sing a feminist ranchera with lyrics singing, “Rompiéndonos los hábitos/ de monjas
enclaustradas/ haciendo que la liberación/ sea nuestra religión”. These lyrics strive for liberation that Latina lesbians are not granted in their community or censored in expressing sexuality on screen. There is a list of Latina lesbian representation in film and literature that continues to grow and defy the heterosexual media world.


Tomboy is an educational Canadian 14 minute short animation film written by Karleen Pendleton Jiménez and created by Barb Taylor showing the life of a Latina Canadian girl named Alex. The animation makes it evident that this film is directed for a young audience as Alex suffers from the bullying at school. This film is influenced by Jiménez’s book, “Are You a Boy or a Girl?” The film starts inside the home of Alex’s messy room with a car bed as she’s playing with her bouncy ball. She’s dreaming of being a prince and defeating the dragon to save the princess. She displays a taste and fashion pertaining to boys from the start. Her gender is questioned at school by Berto who asks, “Is she a boy or a girl?” She is accused of doing boy things such as soccer, basketball, and wearing red, a boy color. Alex comes home from school and is crying in tears and feeling like a rat that her classmates look at. Her Mom comforts her and says, “Too many people don’t know girls like you”. Despite the bullying and shame that Alex faces for doing boy things she has her support from her Mom.


Are You a Boy or a Girl? is a story told in third person by a narrator that reveals a coming of age story of a Alex, a Latina Canadian girl, who does not conform to the gender norms. In the first picture, the girl doll with braids is crossed out emphasizing the noncompliance of gender norms from Alex. There is a recurring motif, “Are you a boy or a girl?” with the word boy first to situate the main character as performing boy gender expression. A photograph of Alex with short hair and a soccer ball juxtaposes her baby picture with a dress on. The patience of Alex was deteriorating every time she was asked this question, that her frustration shows when she yells, “I am a girl!” Alex was being bullied by those that questioned her gender identity because of the things she liked to do that were considered activities exclusively for boys. Her Mom comes in as comfort to tell her as a grown up that she will be accepted more because she revealed that she is not the only one like this. The last picture in book is a smiling mask presenting women with short hair, who is smiling and is calm and happy, as a possible future for Alex.


In this article, Lugowski situates understanding queer representations in American cinema with the stereotypes that follow these identities on screen. Queer people are seen as asexual “sissy” who were incompetent or if in a marriage are presented as fussy. Lesbians are represented with masculine characteristics of wearing a tuxedo, with a deep alto voice, or embodying hypermasculinity in having aggressive behavior against men. The Production Code Administration (PCA) was introduced into Hollywood in 1934 which forbid a man to present as effeminate or a woman as masculine on screen. The author will examine this hypocrisy of censorship of the PCA implementation to erase queer representation by revealing queerness in
During the 1930s, the lesbian representation in cinema were characterized with short hair, tailored suit, and embodied a tomboyish persona. Lesbian actors were seen as threatening the heteropatriarchal system as a result of their unmarried status or being working women to be self-reliant especially during the Great Depression. Men who directed pansy humor were viewed as effeminate and weak on stage. These queer stereotypes were coded with gender and sexuality standards that concluded women need a man to take care of her. These policing strategies against queerness does not work in The Big Noise (1936) because the minor character, Mr. Rosewater, had effeminate behavior with his hand on his hip, showed pansy humor, and had an attraction to Trent, his boss. However, in the end of the film Trent is in control of his business and has a family. He fires Rosewater and his queer identity is shamed and eliminated from the film. Mr Rosewater’s character serves to perpetuate and support heterosexual masculinity embodied in Trent regaining his masculinity and business during the economic depression. The representation of queerness was drowned in U.S. cinema censorship and homophobia where gays and lesbians were presented as comedic relief or scornful characters.


Saunders examines the representation of transgender characters in Hollywood cinema productions to follow the evolution of stereotypes. Transgender is defined as describing a person’s gender identity or expression that is in difference with the one assigned to them at birth. Films that first featured gender non-conforming characters focused on how cross dressing can be manipulated to one’s advantage in order to deceive others. Transgender people do not identify with this trickster display and comedic representation. For example, the film Tootsie uses cross-dressing among characters to expose a man dressing like a woman as comedic relief and weak which upholds women to have a lower social status in society. The author introduces the theory of denigration when a minority group are being appropriated as subjects of intolerance and ridicule. The main problem is that there are actors who are not transgender, but perform those identities on screen. An oppositional film to these toxic transgender representation are the films, Tomboy and Romeo. These films demonstrate the real life and complex experiences of transgender people. More particularly, Saunders deciphers the trope behind urinary segregation named by Jacques Lacan that identifies ‘man’ and ‘woman’ are the making of a gendered space. This placement places transgender people in vulnerable situations who don’t have gender-neutral toilets available and can make audiences laugh when a woman leaves a men’s restroom. In Tomboy, 10-year old Laure wants to be read as male instead of assigned female identity. Therefore he passes as Mickäel and encounters the gender public dilemma of urinating. The film takes this trope of urinary segregation and instead of negatively appropriating transgender experiences, it illuminates the anxiety and secrecy that Mickäel faces in possibly being caught when squatting to pee in the woods as one his friends approaches to find him. This article focuses on revealing how film like Tomboy is able to put transgender youth experience at the forefront that reflects real transgender experiences.

The introduction has the readers understand the huge gender inequality that persists in society and media because elite white men are head directors of media production businesses. Women or queer people are not controlling their own media representation. Therefore, white men views are privileged as masculine identities are constructed as powerful and violent. Also, there is a major representation of gender binaries and heteronormativity that disadvantages lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people identities. The entire book explores the different media productions that reproduce or contest gender identities that have been conducted in North America, Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand. More closely, in chapter 7, Sexualities/queer identities, by Audrey Y discusses how the intersections of sexuality and race construct and limit queer identities. For instances, the racialized sexuality presented on screen is a colonial fetishization of “Oriental sex” which states areas of Middle Eastern, Asian, and North African countries are traditionally undeveloped in contrast to the progressive civilized West. This hypersexualizes women from Oriental countries to be for white heterosexual men and simultaneously creates the panic of homosexuality. The introduction continues to argue the way film has the power to perpetuate women as sexualized objects created for the male gaze.


Throughout this academic journal, Graf analyzes the queer characters in the telenovela series, Ugly Betty, and the ways they override the normalized heterosexual space traditionally in telenovelas. There are expectations from dominant Anglo and traditional Mexican culture that forces men to embody hypermasculinity. Chicano masculinity historically arises from the myth figure of La Malinche (Malintzin Tenepal) who is known as the traitor of the Mexican race because she’s the translator and mistress of Hernán Cortéz. Therefore, Mexican men dissociated themselves from her “chingada” (fucked one) status by becoming “el chingon/ the fucker” who by procreating children is helping expand the race. Homosexual Mexican men are seen as a recurring embodiment of being “La Malinche” because they are traitors to the heterosexual standards of Mexican culture. Graf focuses on Betty’s nephew, Justin Suárez, who as a gay Mexican American boy and is able to disrupt the historically traditional gender norms. Justin’s macho father, Santos, clashes with him because he expects his son to not be effeminate. Due to this, Justin is characterized as a malinchista, a betrayer to his family, but the support that he receives from his Mother is loving and accepting.


Independent directors like Peter Bratt bring forth the violent homophobic space between families when a father refuses to accept his son as gay in the film, La Mission (2009). Che, who is the Mexica father, throws his son, Jes, out of his home in San Francisco Mission District upon seeing his son kiss another boy. Che’s homophobia arises from Mexican machismo and Catholicism. In this article, Estrada examines the violence Jes faces when he is shot on the streets after being teased with names like “Cinderella,” “bitch,” and “puto.” The gun has a phallic figure to symbolize the toxic masculinity in Latinx culture that rejects Jes’ sexuality and gender identities. At the same time, the bullet penetrating Jes’ body reveals an erotic pleasure for
genderqueer male penetration. However, in the end Jes is able to survive this tragedy and his resilience is able to critique the violence that queer people of color face in cis-heteropatriarchal systems.


Throughout this article, the authors investigates the ways in which the queer youth protagonists in the films, Gun Hill Road and Pariah, navigate the heterosexualized spaces in their families and culture. Gun Hill Road is centered on ‘Michael’ a transgender Latina women who presents herself as Vanessa secretly behind her family’s back. The film has the ability to humanize queer people of color when showing the process that is coming of age, dating, self-exploration, and fashioning. Vanessa is comfortable with her gender identity and sexuality despite her homophobic Puerto Rican family. Her father, Enrique, who does not accept her identity forces her into a sex worker’s apartment that sexually assaults her. This traumatic experience initiated by Vanessa’s father represents his ambition to discipline his daughter’s sexual and gender identity. Similar emotional violence arises when Alike, a lesbian dyke, in the film Pariah faces her family’s non-acceptance of her sexual identity. Her mother, Audrey, has social expectations for Alike to be modest and dress feminine due to her desire of social recognition from co-workers and friends. She is thrown out of her home after the violent interaction with her family who forces her to admit her identity. This reflects the physical and emotional violence that trans and queer youth face against their parents’ violent policing of identity.


Foster opens this introduction of the book with a mother, Leonor, that is not in favor of her daughter, Charlotte's, dwarf size. Leonor symbolically burns her daughter’s book about little people and buries dwarf statues to signify her denial of her daughter in Maria Luisa Bember’s De eso no se habla (1993) film. The denial Charlotte faces aligns with the context of Argentina during its authoritarianism society that eliminates and ridicules difference. As a result, Leonor’s actions speak to protect her daughter from ridicule and discrimination in society. Her daughter is not being protected at all, but limited to not appreciate herself fully as a human. This denial in difference continues to emanate when Leonor only lets her daughter ride a real size horse only in the confines of her barn that keeps her hidden behind doors. Foster discusses how Charlotte challenges her mother closeting her by standing in front of the Church audience after her piano performance and showing her size in front of everyone. The queerness within the film centers on Leonor’s efforts to hide her daughter in a constructed closet that does not show her evident dwarfism. By Charlotte defying these expectations, it humanizes her and eventually she is able to get married despite her mother never thinking anyone would truly love her because of her difference in size.

In this essay, Negrón-Muntaner introduces a wide variety of films and videos that cover the historical, political, and aesthetic contexts of Latino gay and lesbian representation. These films are in dialogue with the homophobic representations of queers in film like Orlando Jimenez-Léal’s Improper Conduct (1984) where Cuban gay men and lesbians are persecuted for their sexuality as an “evil” part of the Cuban Revolution. There is power in a filmmaker's hand to create alternative reality for characters being represented on screen. Aïnouz’s Seams (1993), is a mix of interviews, archival footage, and fictional fantasy parts that center on how gay and women survive the patriarchal settings in their culture. She also locates the difficulty in translating language from Latino cinema into English because sexism and homophobia present themselves in Latinx culture. By having Aïnouz pitted against cotton, it creates a metaphor meaning of his character being in process and transformation of sexuality and gender. Aïnouz finds resistance after being exiled from Brazil for being gay in the stories of his grandmother and great-aunts who are resisting patriarchy. Another documentary is Robels and Aguirre’s ¡Viva 16! that creates space for a Mexican or Chicano group who moved to San Francisco for a safe queer space. The main argument is that identity is not a set category that unites all queer communities. The struggles of a gay Chiano does not equate the experiences of a transsexual Chicana.

Queering Spirituality and Religious Thought, compiled by Jorge (Georgie) Güitrón


In this article, Anderson examines the experiences of Chicanas in writing that involve Cherrie Moraga, Gloria E. Anzaldúa, and Marci from the poem to layout the role of Catholicism and queerness. Both of whom, share experiences of Catholicism being “solidly” rooted in their Mexican/Chicana identity. Moraga shares that claiming to detach or be atheist came with privilege since the church was a place that was used as a tool for community and coalition building. Where Anzaldúa draws from indigenous goddess that allows for her to feel empowered using a duality of indigenous and orthodox Catholicism. All, however, stress on the importance of balancing both to find the self and by doing this we see the queering of religious icons where La Virgen is redefined by Lesbian as a religious deity who represents their qualities and their needs. This redefining is proven as necessary for the survival and support for queer Chicanas as they seek to find an understanding of sexuality and spirituality that is using frameworks like queering religion to validate their experiences.


In this article, Antuna goes beyond Gloria E. Anzaldúa concept of nepantla to further find visions and concepts that will enact social and radical change for those that are oppressed. Antuna adds that nepantla (the in-between) fails to accomplish the goals of a just society and that
malinali can inspire moves towards the displacement of the normative beyond what the nepantla allows for. Malinali is more proactive and forces the individual to act on it because malinali can only be accomplished mainly through action. Queer theory and malinali work parallel with one another to demand revolution and rejection of the norm. It is argued that malinali has a queer nature embedded in it, for queer theory and this Aztec philosophy on action twist what is expected to do so that those of marginalized communities can have their voices be heard.


This article serves as a guide on how social services can approach working with a diverse group of clients that come with different understandings of cultural norms and values. Specifically, Baez focuses on that importance of acknowledging religion and spirituality impact on gay Latinos. Religious institutions and herbal medicines are used more often than not to provide support and healing for Latinos rather than human service centers or organizations. But, for gay Latinos, resources are often unavailable because these “natural support services” can have negative sentiments around queerness, restricting access to gay Latinos. Therapy for clients has been seen productive when social services gear approaches to queer Latinos around goals that they might expect from tradition natural support by Santeros or Spiritualist. This also taking into account the macho mentality a lot of gay Latinos internalize and suppress their queerness with homophobic ideologies that further allow for them to seek help. Knowing this and approaching a client with this framework allows for trust to be in the works as the therapist alters their understandings and is more mindful of how they can be supportive culturally while also providing the necessities of gay Latinos.


Using Gloria E. Anzaldúa’s work around mestiza consciousness, Delgadillo approaches this concept as it impacts ideas around gender, religion, colonization, subjectivity, sexuality, and spirituality. Delgadillo approaches Anzaldúa’s work by using mestiza consciousness as an essential framework for understanding, as well as, producing knowledge from queer Chicana scholars. She does this by using other Chicana narratives and different forms of spirituality, in comparison and in tandem to show how they either interpret, reject, or use Anzaldúa’s implications that challenge the norms of gender, spirituality, and sexuality. Delgadillo critiques and emphasizes that spirituality for Anzaldúa is coming from a multitude of stands where spirituality and its legacy are inherited. It can be seen or known as a notion of hybrid spirituality which accounts for one to “renew” their relationship with spirituality and their connection to the world and all living.


The purpose of the article is to understand the impact Catholicism has on gay Latino men and how exposure to Catholicism can diverge or stop queer individuals from continuing to practice Catholicism as adults. García brings attention to the impacts religion may have on individuals who are expected to choose between their sexual identity for their social/familial
norms around heterosexuality. Religion often influences values and morals that help individuals develop a self-identity, support, and strength. Since this is the case, religiosity for gay Latinos is particularly different since they are expected to undergo radical changes within themselves to handle conflicts inflicted by their parents or their religion. Retention within Catholicism drops for queer Latinos because religious schooling gives obligatory and mandatory undertones that do not allow for the subject to find support and community that is genuine and does not clash with their sexual identities. Despite cultural practices and religion being intertwined with one another, relationships with queer Latinidad and Catholicism continue to be that of complexity and contradiction for religion serves as pain but also of cultural/familial connection.


This article approaches religious and spiritual practices within LGBT individuals and what religion and spirituality mean to them. Both spirituality and religion are used in comparison in this study, where spirituality was valued favorably over religion because it defined itself as a self-understanding relationship with God and the self rather than set expectations that religion often expects from LGBT individuals. This study finds that despite limitations in religion, a significant amount of LGBT individuals continue to be influenced and shaped by faith but, this is important because it sheds light on the strength religion can offer. This study provides us with how spirituality among LGBT persons can help them overcome adversity in life and that this relationship with the divine and the human is one that will overall help the greater community, moral frame, and tackle misconceptions that society has on LGBT individuals.


Within this reader, I focused on María Lugones comment entitled, It’s All in Having a History: A Response to Michael Hames-García’s “Queer Theory Revisited”, where she examines Anzaldúa’s approach to being interconnected with the “body, animal body, and the soul” (Lugones 46) by queering spirituality as it relates to indigeneity and Christianity. She references that Guadalupe (The Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus) as the colonized version of Tonantzin (Coatlicue) who represents the duality between queerness and sexuality. She uses Coatlicue as a decolonial effort to better understand how femininity and sexuality have been demonized but also how they can serve as liberatory support for uncovering and queering history. This process of undoing and unlearning is also approached on the emergence of intersectionality where race, gender, and sexuality provide depth for queer theory.


In this study, the author aims to showcase Walter Mercado’s queerness and astrological work as means for discourse around Orientalism and Puerto Rican queerness. Walter Mercado strategically used Latin America's fascination for contemporary knowledge, spirituality, and astrology as a means to showcase his queerness while in return gaining agency over his spiritual
capital or otherized identity. His performances on Orientalism shifted queerness towards a positive note as he, through the years, become more flamboyant and comfortable with who he was. However, this is partly because Mercado drew from ancient wisdom that looked different but was similar to spirituality that Latin Americans thought was new to them. This is to say that, Walter brought to light long traditions of alternative Latin American spirituality that allowed for questions around nationhood, queerness, and sexuality to happen while simultaneously working towards decolonial efforts that seek to remove Puerto Rican conservative ideologies. Mercado however, can shadow his queerness while moving into fame as he upholds whiteness that allows for him to profit off of media in the first place. He serves viewers by intriguing them to possibilities of upward mobility with “European” elegance and does this so that his predominantly Catholic audience gets captivated on that aspect rather than his queer spiritual approach.


This dissertation uses queer Xicanx scholar, Gloria E. Anzaldúa’s work around spiritual activist theories like, nepantla (the in-betweenness) and nepantleras (those who carry out the vision of the in-between) to further understand how spirituality can potentially aid in feminist and queer decolonial projects that are moving towards enacting social transformation. Ramirez introduces, the new queer feminist epistemology that they coin as, nepantlerX cosmologies, which work in relation to Anzaldúa’s work because it moves towards a knowledge that is multi-dimensional, versatile, and interconnected with all things living. The author approaches this work by first defining nepantlerX cosmologies and then puts it into practice by examining performative spaces. With this Ramirez is able to further understand the necessity for the person to be viewed as political and spiritual. Despite all cosmic forces that shape one’s spiritual orientation, she specifically usages the connection between political vision and social ethic to recenter a spiritual-political consciousness that Anzaldúa was in the works towards for queering spirituality but also allowing for spirituality to be versatile with one’s queerness. This approach of evolved consciousness is intertwined with contemporary indigenous philosophies that center trans and non-binary people as producers of nepantlerX cosmologies. These cosmologies can be seen on performance or through dance where music and movement to the music creates a space that allows for the queer body to be in a cosmic space rather than a physical or material space. But Ramirez stresses that this space created is the reclamation of a mixture between religious thoughts and spirituality that is extracted from various spaces. NepantlerX cosmologies allow for the mixture (interconnectedness) of theologies pr spiritual thoughts to work with one another to bring the spiritual and political together.


This article examines the relationship between LGBTQ practitioners of Santería in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the United States. Vidal-Ortiz draws from interviews that allow for an understanding of how queerness is expressed in Santería. To understand the context of how sexuality and gender identity impact Santería, Vidal-Ortiz stresses on language and how
language around identifying someone can limit/benefit them on the cultural practices and participation for certain roles. This article does not serve to justify Santería as a religion or form of spirituality that substitutes “traditional” Christian theology but rather serves to show how although queerness may be accepted amongst practitioners, it often bounds queerness to standards of gender that are binary and still rooted in heteropatriarchy because of linguistic interpretations. Yet, it should be noted that different understandings of gender and sexuality still take new forms in this religious cultural practice. Variance in language from these countries gives light to the interrelationship between race, gender, and sexuality - allowing for certain words (maricon, pajarro, loca, etc) to remove negative connotations, supplementing them with strong and empowering language that identifies practitioners as visible and productive in Santeria.

The Queerness of Time: Temporality across Cultures,
compiled by Melissa Stevens


1: The Future is Kid Stuff.

Lee Edelman examines, via content analysis of political discourse and literature, how those in power use the image of the child, who is perpetually in need of protection from those in the margins, as a tool for political and economic gain. The “reproductive future” keeps all who don’t adhere to the vision of “the future child” in the margins. The future child “remains the perpetual horizon of every acknowledged politics…” (2). Edelman explores the innocent child as a symbol of the ideology of the dominant culture and points out that politicians align themselves with causes that promote child protection to distance themselves from those whom society views as deviant. To be photographed as supporting a cause that advocates child protection is to advertise adherence to a particular moral order while distancing the subject from “the other;” the group from whom the child is being protected. The power in political campaigns that use optics highlighting slogans such as “We’re fighting for the children, whose side are you on” lies in the impossibility of questioning such a sentiment. The issue of who is protecting children from whom is prohibited because the society considers the answer to be self-evident and unquestionable; thus the image of the child is utilized for the political as an ideological framework that represents moral responsibility, and this shapes a type of discourse that Lee Edelman terms as “reproductive futurism.” By rendering a questioning of the image of the protected child as unthinkable, heteronormativity renders the queer invisible, making queer resistance to reproductive futurity impossible.

We construct our worlds through opposites and comparisons. Lee Edelman posits that a future utopia (futurity of hope) is unobtainable due to the psychological and philosophical phenomena of opposition. A utopian world can never exist because humans will always place value upon differences; hierarchical evaluations are inevitable because that’s how the brain constructs reality. A world without difference would mean a world without dissent, and such a world cannot exist because dissent is a form of opposition, and concepts exist due to comparisons. Within the context of opposition and dissent, the above example that asks “whose side are you on” necessarily needs to make a group into an opposite voice, and Edelman points
out that “within the politics of the cultural texts lies a simple provocation: that queerness names the side of those not “fighting for the children,” the side outside the consensus by which all politics confirms the absolute value of reproductive futurism” (2).

I loved reading this profoundly philosophical study of human perception and queer politics, which I’ve seen quoted countless times by queer theorists.


1: Queer Temporality and Postmodern Geographies
Halberstam’s seminal work In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives extends the meaning of “queer time” and “queer space,” concepts that evolved in response to heteronormative temporalities based upon reproduction, to other logics of identification such as non-normative economic practices, movements, and identities. People who live outside of reproductive time (such as sex workers, ravers, homeless people, and the unemployed) could also be thought of as queer subjects because they engage in non-normative temporalities. By extending queer temporality beyond mere sexual identity, Halberstam expands its meaning. In Friendship as a Way of Life, Foucault asserts that “homosexuality threatens people as a ‘way of life’ rather than as a way of having sex”(1). Said differently, nonheteronormative friendships are an act of political resistance because they occur beyond the surveillance of heteronormative power and control. Likewise, people who live beyond normative time and space are regarded with suspicion and contempt because they don’t adhere to reproductive time practices, and they are therefore considered dangerous.

Halberstam employs historiographical content analysis of archival documents, film, literature, and documentary film, to examine temporal narratives in the late twentieth century. Western culture bases notions of respectability and normalcy upon the “middle-class logic of reproductive temporality” which is “ruled by a biological clock for women and by strict bourgeois rules of respectability and scheduling for married couples” (5). Time is organized according to the “logic of capital accumulation” (5), and capitalism’s linear time with its neoliberal focus on the commodified, self-promoted individual is perpetually aimed at a more productive future. But the AIDS pandemic removed futurity for an entire generation of queer people, creating a space for questioning of time and what it means to live within a heteronormative culture that relies upon the realization of future accomplishments for its sense of moral worth, citizenship, and identity. For the community that was ravaged by AIDS, belonging had little to do with marriage, child rearing, or inheritance; belonging was formed beneath the specter of imminent death, risk, and disease. The removal of the future based upon the queer present of AIDS led to imaginings of alternative futurities, and those temporalities are still imagined according to “logics that lie outside of those paradigmatic markers of life experience—namely, birth, marriage, reproduction, and death” (5).

In a Queer Time and Place offered a groundbreaking examination of queer time and space, creating new directions for generations of queer theorists. The following sentiments perfectly reflect today's politics and they are therefore my favorite quotes from chapter 1; “As Lisa Duggan claims: “new neoliberal sexual politics . . . might be termed the new homonormativity—it is a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them, while promising the possibility of a mobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and
consumption” (5). “As many Marxist critics in particular seem to be fond of pointing out, identity politics in the late twentieth century has mutated in some from a necessary and strategic critique of universalism into a stymied and myopic politics of self “(19).


2: The Brandon Archive

Halberstam studies the archive of the murders of three friends on December 31, 1993, in Falls City, rural Nebraska. One of the victims, Brandon Teena, was born female but was living as a man and dating local girls. Brandon’s story caught the nation’s attention after it was made into an Oscar-winning film called Boys Don’t Cry, and a previous documentary film, *The Brandon Teena Story* (1998) also caught the public’s attention. Both films centered their narratives on rural homophobia and for Brandon’s death symbolized homophobic violence within backward, rural communities, especially in the Midwest. This can be likened to the backward “primitives” of colonial anthropology who, according to Johannes Fabian in *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* were considered both spatially and temporally distant, inhabiting a different timescale from the modern European. Most theories of homosexuality in the twentieth century assume that gay culture centers on urban spaces because queers are easily identifiable and therefore easily punished in rural settings. This assumption offered a convincing explanation for the large migration of queers from rural areas to cities that took place in the 1970’s (16) and most research on queer identity and community has studied urban populations (34).

Metronormativity, which is similar to Queer anti-urbanism, conflates “urban” and “visible,” supporting the assumption that closeted queers find tolerant communities only within urban settings, away from their uncultured, dangerous, violent, uncivilized rural origins. “The metronormative story of migration from “country” to “town” is a spatial narrative within which the subject moves to a place of tolerance after enduring life in a place of suspicion, persecution, and secrecy. Since each narrative bears the same structure, it is easy to equate the physical journey from small town to big city with the psychological journey from closet case to out and proud” (37). However, as Halberstam notes, “many queers from rural or small towns move to the city of necessity, and then yearn to leave the urban area and return to their small towns; and many recount complicated stories of love, sex, and community in their small-town lives that belie the closet model” (37). The metronormative model is inaccurate because it doesn’t reflect the nuanced relationship of queers and their rural communities.


Introduction: Feeling Utopia

Muñoz dares to speak of hope as a critical methodology within an antiutopian political and academic climate that thrives on cynicism. The hermeneutic of Hope for Muñoz rejects political and scholarly pessimism. *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* is a response to a politics and an academy that is dominated by dismissals of political idealism and a lack of critical imagination. Poststructuralism has supplied the academy with an armory of weapons to quickly shoot down any scholar who employs a utopian ontological or epistemological approach. Cynicism, the negativity of identity logic, anti-relational approaches to queer theory, and pessimism are the backdrop to *Cruising Utopia.*
How does one describe sunshine? One can speak to the physics of the sun, offering mathematical formulas that describe light, energy, and heat, but what of the affective experience of sunshine with its transformative power upon the psyche? Muñoz doesn’t reject liberal rationality, but instead, he offers a new framework for rationality, one that is centered on hope. He draws heavily from philosopher Ernst Bloch’s three-volume philosophical treatise The Principle of Hope to offer a different kind of queer critique, one that exists within a future beyond the heteronormative, constrained here-and-now. Capitalism employs a concept of time that relies on short-term gain. For example, capitalism’s subject seeks the quickest path to a return on their investment, whatever their investment might be. The focus isn’t on long-term solutions to non-commodified problems. Muñoz asserts that it is vital to imagine a new world into being by focusing on concrete futures, that is, a gaze toward the past for a reimagining of a then-and-there. The future is where queerness resides. Queerness can be recognized as a longing that searches for something more than the toiling in the present, and it can be experienced within the aesthetic, which “frequently contains blueprints and schemata of a forward-dawning futurity” (1).

Muñoz turns to critical idealism presented by Bloch as a hermeneutic to expand queer critique. Bloch makes a critical distinction between abstract utopias and concrete utopias. Abstract utopias can fuel the political imagination but they are “untethered from any historical consciousness” (3) which Muñoz equates to “banal optimism” (3) whereas concrete utopias are “relational to historically situated struggles, a collectivity that is actualized or potential” (3) or the “realm of educated hope” (3). Bloch spoke of educated hope’s affect, hope’s methodology that dwells in “the region of the not-yet” (3), which Muñoz describes as anticipatory. Muñoz regards queerness as “a temporal arrangement in which the past is a field of possibility in which subjects can act in the present in the service of a new futurity” (16).

Muñoz explores queer utopia’s terrain via an analysis of artifacts of cultural production from the time of the Stonewall rebellion of 1969. Through this analysis, he explores the not-yet-conscious via utopian feelings elicited by works from the Stonewall period. Artwork prompts wonderment, or “astonished contemplation” (5), and this can “surpass the limitations of an alienating presentness and allows one to see a different time and place” (5). Muñoz explores astonishment in quotidian things, such as a coke bottle in a Warhol painting or a memory of drinking coke with a beloved as described in a poem. The coke is an everyday consumer object, yet it represents a present that is a past memory describing a relationality that imagines a queer future because it “views a restructured sociality” (7). Utopia exists in the quotidian via a reimagining of capitalist commodities, in this case represented by the potentiality of a 1960’s poem that imagines a not-yet-realized time, “a relational field where men could love each other outside the institutions of heterosexuality and share a world through the act of drinking a beverage with each other” (9).

Muñoz uses archival research methods and discourse analysis of performance art, literature, and political documents. He employs hope as a critical methodology along with feminist theory and queer of color critique. His approach to hope as a critical methodology “can be best described as a backward glance that enacts a future vision” (4).


1: Queerness and Horizon, Utopian Hermeneutics.
Muñoz cites the 1971 manifesto by “Third World Gay Revolution” entitled *What We Want, What We Believe* as an example of radical hope from which today’s politics has fully departed. The manifesto includes a list of demands that may now appear naïve and impractical, but Muñoz confronts such attitudes as they inform “the extremely pragmatic agenda that organizes LGBT activism in North America today” (19.) Muñoz employs the no-longer-conscious of the past to critique the present. He separates the “we” of the manifesto from the “we” found within identity logic and places it beyond liberalism’s rationality into a logic of collectivity within futurity; of what a future society might look like. For Muñoz, queerness is found in the collective and he compares a futurity of hope with its “multiple forms of belonging-in-difference and expansive critiques of social asymmetries” (20) to the “anemic, shortsighted, and retrograde politics of the present” (20) as reflected in the recent campaign for gay marriage which can be measured by which bodies were left out instead of by which bodies were included. By fighting for an institution that is inherently anti-queer, campaigners didn’t create lasting change within the dominant power structure; rather, they created a narrow space for the elite few who fit within the margins of the heteronormative logic. Queer subjects who don’t align with the new homonormative marriage model remain, as always, on the fringe.

Muñoz offers the example of the “All Together Now” campaign led by lawyer Evan Wolfson (freedomtomarry.org) that focused on the financial advantages of traditional marriage, thereby hooking into today’s neoliberal logic as the main selling point for gay marriage. Such campaigns benefitted white neoliberal queers who conveniently avoided ethnic, racial, class, ability, or gender differences.

Muñoz argues that inclusion for the few (normative citizen-subject queers with enough capital and preexisting rights to be included within the capitalist system) within the current corrupt social order does not constitute freedom. By using the term “freedom” as he does in his campaign, Wolfson degrades the concept of freedom, just as current politics in the U.S. is degrading the concept of liberty. Muñoz wants to reinvigorate the LGBT political imagination away from the “aping of traditional straight relationality” and the naturalizing of straight time within “the flawed and toxic ideological formation known as marriage” (21). Straight time’s ideology focuses upon a futurity that is centered on “reproductive majoritarian heterosexuality, the spectacle of the state refurbishing its ranks through overt and subsidized acts of reproduction” (22).

Through a critical analysis of utopia, Muñoz places queerness perpetually on the horizon of being, in the not-yet-here. Holding queerness within this “ontologically humble state” places it within the imagination and away from the intolerable present with its violent degradation of politics due to neoliberal ideology. This isn’t to suggest that one can’t find utopia within the quotidian, as it is experienced in “utopian bonds, affiliations, designs, and gestures that exist within the present moment” (22), but rather that we place utopia beyond the bounds of quotidian heteronormative capitalism, or said differently, beyond the prison that is “straight time.”


Bastian explores the relationship between time and agency to examine how subjects innovate to create change, not just change within existing old structures and patterns, but radical change into new paradigms. Western culture views the agent as an actor who can achieve a goal in linear time through rational, logical, deliberate forethought; the self-directed individual who is
separate from nature and who acts upon nature, thus nature lacks agency. Said differently, Western culture views agency through the lens of causal chains across linear time. Groups considered “timeless” are inferior because they don’t appear to “improve” across linear time and those who are closely connected to nature (and are therefore lacking in agency) are subordinate (women, indigenous cultures, children, and anyone considered to be on the margins). To rethink nature as having agency by recognizing the ways that nature creates change is to reimagine agency and innovation through a new, more ethical lens. Ideas of what constitutes invention can transform Western concepts of agency because the reimagining of change disrupts the Western schema of linear time.

This complex and innovative paper by philosopher Michelle Bastian uses content analysis to describe schemas that lead to behaviors impacting the non-material world, nature, the environment, women, and different cultures.


Life Time, an ethnographic study of the Yarralin people of the Victoria River valley in the Northern Territory, describes the closest thing to a concept of time conceived of by the Yarralin. Linear time as we know it doesn’t exist for the Yarralin, rather, time is a quality of life, and events happen within the context of a particular space; the event is then remembered via its association with that space, not in relation to time. The Yarralin divide their reality into two concepts that relate to events and spaces, and Rose has labeled those concepts Dreaming and Ordinary. Ordinary can be thought of as change; beginnings and endings and the movement of inner landscapes of experience relating to social events that occur, and spaces that are inhabited between birth and death. Events occur in the perpetual present moment so that nothing ever happens in exactly the same way, but within this reality, rhythmic patterns do occur, such as seasonal changes (204). Beings begin and end within this rhythmic pattern, but life itself continues beyond the rhythmic pattern, and it is this enduring aspect of life that Bird refers to as the Dreaming. In other words, Dreaming is likened to the aspect of life that endures, that which isn’t washed away with the rhythmic pattern of the seasons. “Dreaming precedes us, and we are not it” (205) and “…Dreaming penetrates all kinds of life, co-existing with ordinary” (205).

American anthropologist and indigenous rights activist Deborah Bird Rose lived for many years among Australian Aboriginals who gave her permission to write this book. It is an authentic, sincere, heartfelt and insightful translation of indigenous concepts that had previously defied the English language and psyche. This work offers a unique insight into an indigenous concept of time and it offers an invaluable exploration into how another culture views reality in relation to time and space.


Introduction

In *Ho’oulo Our Time of Beginning*, Manulani Aluli Meyer Ph.D. explores Hawaiian epistemology. The introduction asserts that love is the foundation and backbone of the Hawaiian culture, that “Aloha is the intelligence with which we meet life. Aloha is our intelligence, and it animates this discussion. Aloha. Compassion – a sacred idea that connects us to all spiritual
traditions, all ancient cultures. We are people of aloha, despite our Education. Despite our Education” (IX).

Meyer uses the analogy of an internal re-voyaging across the seas beyond time and space, navigating by the wisdom of her ancestors to tap into ancient knowledge that can save the planet, “Culture. Ancient, timeless, appropriate. Indigenous culture will save this planet. Our evolving Hawaiian culture will save and nurture our homeland” (X). Meyer explores Hawaiian epistemology as a “…deep appreciation for the richness and fullness of life beyond linear thinking” (XI).

I had the honor of auditing one of Dr. Meyer’s postgraduate classes at UH Hilo several years ago, and I was deeply impacted by her teaching methods, which were interactive, integrative, and holistic. The experience was one of inclusivity and timelessness because it focused on social connections rather than linear thought processes of knowledge investment and knowledge gain. Knowledge was an activity the class created together with Dr. Meyer through the encouragement of shared social experiences on the themes being studied. Ho’oulo is useful for research on time and temporality because it describes an epistemology that centers its locus outside of linear time.


Wendy Brown explores how neoliberalism has hijacked democracy by supplanting the dream of classical democracy with an ideology that transforms every aspect of life into a pursuit of investment and return. Humans have become homo oeconomicus; human capital. Rather than approaching neoliberalism from a purely capitalist perspective as Marxists would do, Brown views it through the Foucauldian lens of rationality, positing that neoliberalist ideology has eroded democracy via governmentality – “a mode of governance encompassing but not limited to the state, and one that produces subjects, forms of citizenship and behavior, and a new organization of the social” (37). Said differently, neoliberalism causes us, without awareness, to view every aspect of life in economic terms and to regulate ourselves, and each other via discourse that makes moral judgments about poverty and ensnares us within an internal prison of economic rationality.

Neoliberal governance stems from liberal rationality that makes the citizen-subject responsible for themselves as entrepreneurs within a market economy. It replaces public projects with private ownership, public education with private education, imagination, and creativity with utilitarianism. The subject self-governs according to rationality that places value upon those things that one perceives as economically enhancing to the individual. For example, a parent invests in a particular school for their child to expose him or her to connections with other children (“networking”) that will later lead to job opportunities for that child, thus by choosing a particular preschool for the child they are seeking to increase that child's value as future human capital. Capitalism’s “free market” governs the current neoliberalist society via an unseen ideology.


This seminal work by renowned anthropologist Johannes Fabian questions the ethics of social science research by pointing out Western ontological assumptions of time that position
non-Western time-scales as indicative of the inferior “other.” The Western researcher has acted from within an imperialist methodology by viewing Western thinking through the normative lens of “civilized” to create the uncivilized “other” using temporal devices that imply “affirmations of difference and subjective categories of Western thoughts” (16). One such device is the “… naturalization of Time which was evolutionism’s crucial epistemological stance” (16), and this framework “remains by and large unquestioned” (16). Fabian explains that Newtonian physicalism (which posits that time is a fixed constant) led to the comparative method, which was supposed to apply equally to all people in “all times and in all places” (17). But this reductionist essentialist mindset led to massive inequality and unethical research methodologies.

Time and the Other offers a jumping off point for viewing the development of Western thought regarding time, temporality, and "the other," and how those concepts impact social science research.


Birth examines how methods of timekeeping have shaped our temporal realities, discussing both nature’s cycles and the human mechanics of timekeeping to point out the separation between the two and how this separation impacts our relationship with the environment and with ourselves. *Objects of Time* is an in-depth study of time machines and devices across cultures both ancient and modern, including clocks of many types, calendars, sundials, moon cycles, tides, and star gazing. Birth discusses the seasons and planetary movement, and he explains the ways different cultures use multiple methods for the telling of time. Birth outlines how Western concepts of time (which are constructions of thought that both describe and inform Western ontology) have created bureaucratic nightmares in a global economy and how this relates to human labor and dehumanization. Birth also discusses Marxism, capitalism, and other economic and political frameworks concerning time and temporality.

This book, which is presented by the “Book Series” of the “Society for Physical Anthropology,” is fun to read and offers a comprehensive background to the mechanics of the study of time and temporality across multiple cultures.


*A Briefer History of Time* is an updated version of Hawking’s bestseller *A Brief History of Time*. Hawking discusses cosmological time/space theories, tracing their development from the earliest astronomers to today’s exploration of string theory and a grand unified theory of physics. He outlines how physics has expanded the field of cosmology, how quantum mechanics has revolutionized science, and he explains Einstein’s theory of relativity very succinctly. These concepts are useful for anyone interested in studying time and temporality in the social sciences, as current scientific theories on the topic of time/space align perfectly with social science research on temporality exploring time as a social construct. Where we once supposed the material world and time to be a fixed constant, quantum mechanics has illustrated that events can happen in the material realm outside of time. It also happens to be an incredibly fun book to read.