

A Companion to  
Lesbian, Gay,  
Bisexual, Transgender,  
and Queer Studies

*Edited by George E. Haggerty and  
Molly McGarry*



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Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual,  
Transgender, and Queer  
Studies

Advisory editor: David Theo Goldberg, University of California, Irvine

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# Contents

List of Illustrations	ix
List of Contributors	xi
Acknowledgments	xvii
Introduction	1
<i>Molly McGarry and George E. Haggerty</i>	

<b>PART I</b>	<b>QUEER POLITICS IN THE TIME OF WAR AND SHOPPING OR WHY SEX? WHY NOW?</b>	<b>15</b>
---------------	--	-----------

1	Sex, Secularism, and the “War on Terrorism”: The Role of Sexuality in Multi-Issue Organizing <i>Janet R. Jakobsen</i>	17
2	Freedom and the Racialization of Intimacy: <i>Lawrence v. Texas</i> and the Emergence of Queer Liberalism <i>David L. Eng</i>	38
3	“No Atheists in the Fox Hole”: Toward a Radical Queer Politics in a Post-9/11 World <i>Sharon P. Holland</i>	60
4	Queer Love in the Time of War and Shopping <i>Martin F. Manalansan IV</i>	77
5	Who Needs Civil Liberties? <i>Richard Meyer</i>	87

## Contents

<b>PART II</b>	<b>HISTORIES, GENEALOGIES, AND FUTURITIES</b>	<b>107</b>
6	The Relevance of Race for the Study of Sexuality <i>Roderick A. Ferguson</i>	109
7	The Present Future of Lesbian Historiography <i>Valerie Traub</i>	124
8	Deviant Teaching <i>David M. Halperin</i>	146
9	After Sontag: Future Notes on Camp <i>Ann Pellegrini</i>	168
10	Queer Spectrality: Haunting the Past <i>Carla Freccero</i>	194
<b>PART III</b>	<b>DESIRE FOR GENDER</b>	<b>215</b>
11	The Desire for Gender <i>Robyn Wiegman</i>	217
12	Methodologies of Trans Resistance <i>Dean Spade</i>	237
13	The History of Aphallia and the Intersexual Challenge to Sex/Gender <i>Vernon A. Rosario</i>	262
14	Gesture and Utterance: Fragments from a Butch–Femme Archive <i>Juana María Rodríguez</i>	282
<b>PART IV</b>	<b>QUEER BELONGINGS</b>	<b>293</b>
15	Queer Belongings: Kinship Theory and Queer Theory <i>Elizabeth Freeman</i>	295
16	Forgetting Family: Queer Alternatives to Oedipal Relations <i>Judith Halberstam</i>	315
17	Between Friends <i>Jennifer Doyle</i>	325

18	Queer Regions: Locating Lesbians in <i>Sancharram</i> <i>Gayatri Gopinath</i>	341
19	The Light That Never Goes Out: Butch Intimacies and Sub-Urban Sociabilities in “Lesser Los Angeles” <i>Karen Tongson</i>	355
	<b>PART V PERFORMING THEORY OR THEORY IN MEDIAS RES</b>	<b>377</b>
20	“Serious Innovation”: An Interview with Judith Butler <i>Jordana Rosenberg</i>	379
21	Materiality, Pedagogy, and the Limits of Queer Visibility <i>Amy Villarejo</i>	389
22	<i>Melos, Telos</i> , and Me: Transpositions of Identity in the Rock Musical <i>James Tobias</i>	404
23	Promising Complicities: On the Sex, Race, and Globalization Project <i>Miranda Joseph and David Rubin</i>	430
24	Queerness as Horizon: Utopian Hermeneutics in the Face of Gay Pragmatism <i>José Esteban Muñoz</i>	452
	Index	465



# Illustrations

- |      |  |     |
|------|--|-----|
| 5.1  | Robert Mapplethorpe, <i>Calla Lily</i> , 1988, silver gelatin © Robert Mapplethorpe Foundation.  | 88  |
| 5.2  | Alex Donis, <i>Officer Moreno and Joker</i> , oil and enamel on Plexiglas, 2001, 28 × 41 inches.   | 89  |
| 5.3  | Alex Donis, <i>Lucky Dice and Officer Gates</i> , oil and enamel on Plexiglas, 2001, 20 × 24 inches.   | 90  |
| 5.4  | Alex Donis, photograph of Gay Pride Festival dance tent, West Hollywood, June 2001; source material for <i>Lucky Dice and Officer Gates</i> .  | 92  |
| 5.5  | Alex Donis, <i>Abdullah and Sgt Adams</i> , ink and gouache on board, 2003, 16 × 24 inches. Courtesy of the artist.  | 93  |
| 5.6  | The FBI's Hazardous Material Response Unit of Quantico, VA, enters the home of Steve Kurtz to remove bacteria found inside in Buffalo, NY, Thursday, May 13, 2004.   | 94  |
| 5.7  | Al Brandtner, <i>The Patriot Act</i> , 2005.   | 95  |
| 5.8  | University of Wisconsin student protest at the University's Lawton Gallery in Green Bay.   | 96  |
| 5.9  | Nancy Worthington, <i>The Crossing (detail)</i> , mixed-media kinetic construction, 2001. Courtesy of the artist.  | 97  |
| 5.10 | Photograph of military casket with faces and insignia of honor guard "redacted" by the Pentagon, released April 2005 (on-line at The National Security Archive, <a href="http://www.gwu.edu/%7EEnsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB152/">www.gwu.edu/%7EEnsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB152/</a> ) | 99  |
| 5.11 | Anita Steckel, <i>A Family Affair</i> , 2005, photomontage, 16 × 20 inches. Courtesy of the artist.  | 100 |
| 5.12 | Photograph of John Ashcroft addressing employees of US Justice Department, November 8, 2001. AP photograph.  | 101 |
| 5.13 | Attorney General John Ashcroft speaks in the Great Hall of Justice, February 20, 2002. AP photograph.  | 102 |
| 5.14 | Patriot Act notice, USC Architecture and Fine Arts Library, February 24, 2005. Photograph by Richard Meyer.  | 103 |
| 9.1  | Albert J. Winn, "Summer Joins the Past," girls' cabin, abandoned Jewish summer camp, Pocono Mountains, PA, 2002.   | 182 |

## Illustrations

9.2	Albert J. Winn, “Summer Joins the Past,” cabin interior, deserted Jewish summer camp, southern California, 1997.	183
9.3	Paige Gratland, “The Sontag.”	185
17.1	“Between Friends,” Andy Warhol.	336
19.1	“Butchlalis de Panochtitlan” ( <i>left to right</i> , Rodríguez, Romero, García, Gutiérrez).	357
19.2	Promotional flyer for BdP’s “Teenage Papi: The 2nd Coming of Adolescence” at Highways Performance Space, Santa Monica, CA.	359
19.3	“Dodger’s Pennant.”	365
19.4	A scene from “Cockfight” featured on the flyer for “Teenage Papi the Remix.”	368

# Contributors

**Judith Butler** is Maxine Elliot Professor in the Departments of Rhetoric and Comparative Literature at the University of California, Berkeley. She is the author of *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France* (1987), *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (1993), *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories of Subjection* (1997), *Excitable Speech* (1997), *Antigone's Claim: Kinship between Life and Death* (2000), *Hegemony, Contingency, Universality* (with Ernesto Laclau and Slavoj Žižek, 2000), *Precarious Life: Powers of Violence and Mourning* (2004), *Undoing Gender* (2004), and *Giving an Account of Oneself* (2005). She is currently working on essays pertaining to Jewish philosophy, focusing on pre-Zionist criticisms of state violence.

**Jennifer Doyle** is the author of *Sex Objects: Art and the Dialectics of Desire* (2006), and co-editor of *Pop Out: Queer Warhol* (1996). She is associate professor of English at the University of California, Riverside, and lives in Los Angeles.

**David L. Eng** is professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania. He is author of *Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in Asian America* (2001), as well as co-editor with David Kazanjian of *Loss: The Politics of Mourning* (2003) and with Alice Y. Hom of *Q&A: Queer in Asian America* (1998). His essay is an excerpt from a forthcoming book, *The Feeling of Kinship: Queer Diasporas and the Racialization of Intimacy*.

**Roderick A. Ferguson** is associate professor of race and critical theory in the Department of American Studies at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. He is the author of *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique* (2004).

**Carla Freccero** is professor of literature, feminist studies, and history of consciousness at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Her most recent book is *Queer/Early/Modern* (2006).

**Elizabeth Freeman** is associate professor of English at the University of California, Davis, and author of *The Wedding Complex: Forms of Belonging in Modern American*

## Contributors

*Culture* (2002). She is currently at work on a manuscript entitled *Time Binds: Essays on Queer Temporality* and a special issue of *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* on “Queer Temporalities.”

**Gayatri Gopinath** is an associate professor of women’s and gender studies at the University of California, Davis. She is author of *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures* (2005). Her work on gender, sexuality, and the South Asian diaspora has appeared in numerous anthologies and journals, including *Social Text*, *positions*, and *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*.

**George E. Haggerty** is a professor of English at the University of California, Riverside. His recent books include *Unnatural Affections: Women and Fiction in the Later Eighteenth Century* (1998), *Men in Love: Masculinity and Sexuality in the Eighteenth Century* (1999), and *Queer Gothic* (2006). He has also edited *Professions of Desire: Lesbian and Gay Studies in Literature* (1995), *Gay Histories and Cultures: An Encyclopedia* (2000), and *Music and Sexuality in Britten: Selected Essays of Philip Brett* (2006). At present he is writing a book on the eighteenth-century letter writer, Horace Walpole.

**Judith Halberstam** is a professor of English and gender studies at the University of Southern California. She is the author of *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (1995), *Female Masculinity* (1998), *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (2005) and the co-author of *The Drag King Book* (1998) and co-editor of *Posthuman Bodies* (1995). She is currently working on a book about “the politics of knowledge in an age of stupidity” titled *Dude, Where’s My Theory?*

**David M. Halperin** taught literature at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology from 1979 to 1996, sociology at the University of New South Wales in Sydney from 1996 to 1999, and currently teaches English, women’s studies, comparative literature, and classical studies at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, where he is the W. H. Auden Collegiate Professor of the History and Theory of Sexuality. He is the author of *Before Pastoral* (1983), *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality* (1990), *Saint Foucault* (1995), and *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* (2002). He also co-edited *Before Sexuality* (1990), *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader* (1993), *Gay Shame* (2007), and *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* from 1991 to 2005.

**Sharon P. Holland** is a graduate of Princeton University and holds a PhD in English and African American studies from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She is the author of *Raising the Dead: Readings of Death and (Black) Subjectivity* (2000), which won the Lora Romero First Book Prize from the American Studies Association (ASA) in 2002. She is also co-author of a collection of transatlantic Afro-Native criticism with Professor Tiya Miles entitled *Crossing Waters/Crossing Worlds: The African Diaspora in Indian Country* (2006). Her current projects include a novella (*How Bubba the Socrates Got to Be Neither*), a play (*Killing Martha*), and a second monograph, “The Erotic Life of Racism.”

**Janet R. Jakobsen** is Director of the Center for Research on Women and a professor of women's studies at Barnard College, New York. She is the author of *Working Alliances and the Politics of Difference: Diversity and Feminist Ethics* (1998), co-author (with Ann Pellegrini) of *Love the Sin: Sexual Regulation and the Limits of Religious Tolerance* (2002), and co-editor (with Elizabeth A. Castelli) of *Interventions: Activists and Academics Respond to Violence* (2004). Before entering the academy, she was a policy analyst and lobbyist in Washington, DC.

**Miranda Joseph** is associate professor of women's studies at the University of Arizona. She is the author of *Against the Romance of Community* (2002). She served as Director of the Sex, Race and Globalization Project from 1999 to 2005.

**Martin F. Manalansan IV** is associate professor of anthropology and of criticism and interpretive theory at the University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign. He is a member of the teaching faculties of the Asian American studies and the gender and women's studies programs. Before going back to academia in 1999, he worked in AIDS prevention education, research, and program evaluation for ten years in New York City. He presently serves as the social sciences review editor for *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*.

**Molly McGarry** is assistant professor of history at the University of California, Riverside. She is co-author (with Fred Wasserman) of *Becoming Visible: An Illustrated History of Lesbian and Gay Life in Twentieth-Century America* (1999) and author of *Ghosts of Futures Past: Spiritualism and the Cultural Politics of Nineteenth-Century America* (2007).

**Richard Meyer** is associate professor of art history at the University of Southern California and Kathy Stein Sacks CW'69 and Keith L. Sachs W'67 Visiting Professor in Art History at the University of Pennsylvania. His book *Outlaw Representation: Censorship and Homosexuality in Twentieth-Century American Art* (2004) received the 2003 Eldredge Prize from the Smithsonian American Art Museum. With David Román, he has co-edited *Art Works*, Parts 1 and 2, and two special issues of *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* (volume 12: 2 and 3, 2006). His current projects include *Nomism: The Invention of Contemporary Art History* and, with Anthony Lee, a co-authored monograph on the tabloid photographer Weegee for the University of California Press.

**José Esteban Muñoz** chairs the Department of Performance Studies at Tisch School of the Arts, New York University. He is the author of *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (1999), and the forthcoming volumes *Cruising Utopia* and *Feeling Brown*. He has co-edited *Pop Out: Queer Warhol* (1996), *Everynight Life: Culture and Music in Latin/o America* (1997), and special issues of the journals *Social Text* (2005) and *Women and Performance* (1996).

**Ann Pellegrini** is associate professor of performance studies and religious studies at New York University. She is the author of *Performance Anxieties: Staging Psychoanalysis, Staging Race* (1997) and co-author, with Janet R. Jakobsen, of *Love the Sin:*

## Contributors

*Sexual Regulation and the Limits of Religious Tolerance* (2002). She and Jakobsen are also the co-editors of a volume on *Secularisms* (2008).

**Juana María Rodríguez** is the author of *Queer Latinidad: Identity Practices, Discursive Spaces* (2003) and currently associate professor in the Women and Gender Studies Program at the University of California, Davis. Her essay is part of a new project on queer pleasure and perverse politics.

**Vernon A. Rosario** is an associate clinical professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior, and a child psychiatrist in private practice in Los Angeles. He is co-editor with Paula Bennett of *Solitary Pleasures: The Historical, Literary, and Artistic Discourses of Autoerotism* (1995) and the editor of *Science and Homosexualities* (1997). He is the author of *The Erotic Imagination: French Histories of Perversity* (1997) and *Homosexuality and Science: A Guide to the Debates* (2002). His current clinical research is on sexuality and gender identity in transgendered and intersexed children and adults.

**Jordana Rosenberg** is assistant professor in the English department at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. She is co-editor, with Amy Villarejo, of *Capital Q: Marxisms after Queer Theory*, forthcoming. Her current manuscript considers eighteenth-century mediations of economic transformation via the transatlantic category of “enthusiasm,” and her work has appeared in *English Literary History* and *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*.

**David Rubin** is currently a PhD student in the Department of Women’s Studies at Emory University. He holds master’s degrees in women’s studies and comparative cultural and literary studies from the University of Arizona. He is the author of the essay “Women’s Studies, Neoliberalism, and the Paradox of the ‘Political,’” in *Women’s Studies for the Future: Foundations, Interrogations, Politics*, edited by Elizabeth Kennedy and Agatha Beins (2005).

**Dean Spade** is an attorney and activist and founder of the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, a law collective providing free legal services to trans, intersex, and gender non-conforming people of color and poor people. Spade is currently working on a law teaching fellowship co-hosted by the Williams Institute at UCLA Law School and Harvard Law School. His writing has appeared in the *Chicano-Latino Law Review*, the *Widener Law Review*, the *Berkeley Women’s Law Journal*, the *Georgetown Journal of Gender and Law*, *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, and several anthologies. He is also co-editor of the online journal *makezine.org*.

**James Tobias** is assistant professor of cinema and digital media studies in the English Department and the Program in Film and Visual Culture at the University of California, Riverside. His research interests include music and image studies across time-based media, the arts and technologies of interactive digital media, and cultures and theories of sexuality and corporeality. His publications include “Cinema, Scored: Toward a Comparative Methodology for Music in Media,” in *Film Quarterly* 57: 2

(Winter 2003), and “Gesture, Technique, and Time: Disorientation at the Interface,” anthologized in *Space/Time/Image/Word* (2005). He lives in Los Angeles.

**Karen Tongson** is assistant professor of English and gender studies at the University of Southern California. Her work has appeared in *Social Text*, *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, and *Queering the Popular Pitch* (2006). She guest-edited a special issue of *Nineteenth-Century Literature* on “Lesbian Aesthetics, Aestheticizing Lesbianism” (2006) and is currently at work on a book manuscript titled *Relocations: Emergent Queer of Color Suburban Imaginaries*.

**Valerie Traub** is professor of English and Women’s Studies at the University of Michigan, where she directs the Women’s Studies Program. She is the author of *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* (2002), as well as *Desire and Anxiety: Circulations of Sexuality in Shakespearean Drama* (1992). A new collection, *Gay Shame*, co-edited with David Halperin, is forthcoming. She has published widely on the history of sexuality and early modern literature and historiography.

**Amy Villarejo** is Associate Professor at Cornell University, where she teaches film and directs the Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program. Her book, *Lesbian Rule: Cultural Criticism and the Value of Desire* (2003) won the 2005 Katherine Singer Kovacs Prize from the Society for Cinema and Media Studies. She is also co-author of *Queen Christina* (1996) and co-editor of *Keyframes: Popular Film and Cultural Studies* (2001). Her introductory book on film studies, *Film Studies: The Basics*, is forthcoming, as is her co-edited volume, with Jordana Rosenberg, on Marxism after queer theory, *Capital Q*.

**Robyn Wiegman** is professor of women’s studies and literature at Duke University. Her publications include *American Anatomies: Theorizing Race and Gender* (1995), *Who Can Speak: Identity and Critical Authority* (1995), *Feminism Beside Itself* (1995), *AIDS and the National Body* (1997), *The Futures of American Studies* (2002), and *Women’s Studies on Its Own* (2002). She is currently at work on two book projects. *Being in Time with Feminism* examines the history of the institutionalization of feminism in the US academy; *Object Lessons: Essays on the US Knowledge Politics of Identity* pays attention to relations of identification and affect in the constitution of identity as a domain of academic inquiry.



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# Introduction

Molly McGarry and George E. Haggerty

When we began planning *A Companion to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBT/Q) Studies*, we intended to gather innovative new essays by established and emerging scholars. Imagining a volume that would animate the queer studies classroom as surely as it would further advance debates among scholars in the field, we were less interested in defining – or even surveying – LGBT/Q studies than asking what sexuality stands in for, what work it does, and how it continues to structure discussions in various academic disciplines as well as current politics. While many of us now take for granted the importance of the study of sexuality, this volume insists on returning to the category of sexuality as always interconnected with other markers of social position and (dis)privilege, of race, gender, class, religion, and nationality.

In the early 1990s, the term “queer” seemed almost magically to animate both the streets and the academy. This *Blackwell Companion* is situated at a very different moment. We led, then, with the seemingly simple question: is queer inquiry still relevant? What we received from our contributors was less a direct answer than a collective meditation on the term “still.” Indeed, analyses of sexuality are more relevant than ever. More than still here, these writers refuse to be still, inasmuch as that term suggests the static, frozen, and silent. The still, fixed time of the past is re-enlivened such that even those contributors addressing the contemporary present suggest at once a rethinking of histories and genealogies and also an attention to futurities – even utopian futurities. What emerges from the insistence on the ineluctable presence of sex is at once a revisioning of queer historiography, politics, and ethics, as well as an imperative relationship to the dead, the not yet born, and the still living. Troubling the boundaries between past, present, and future, these essays mark a pause in an unstill moment.

Because of the hard-won successes of the past two decades, courses on sexuality have become a mainstay of college curricula. At the same time, certain representations of queerness have proliferated on the stage, screen, and page, such that the once vaunted category of “visibility” has become a kind of banality, if not also a limitation to queer politics. Even the designation LGBT threatens to appear as less an inclusive rubric of specification, under which intellectual or activist projects might be organized, than a shopping cart in the marketplace of ideas.

The United States is ostensibly enjoying a time in which there are more mainstream

## Molly McGarry and George E. Haggerty

representations of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender lives than ever before. This proliferation of certain forms of representation – and, importantly, the exclusion of others – is happening in the context of expanding globalized capital and a newly intensified American imperialism. Given this fractious world, it would be easy to forge a dichotomy between the geopolitical as the properly political and sexuality as the frivolous fodder of lifestyle and entertainment. Indeed, the truism now circulating mutually but differently from both the Right and Left in the United States is that “everything changed after September 11th.” This diluvial declaration of change admonishes that it is now time to get serious and that sex, by definition, is never serious. What the essays in this volume demonstrate are the many ways in which sexuality studies remain as crucial, if not more so, to questions of politics, war, and homeland insecurities as it was to intimate culture and public bodies before that putative moment when “everything changed.”

The burden and boon of LGBT/Q studies is that we eventually, inevitably, find ourselves talking about sex. If talking about sex still appears too close to gossip, innuendo, sensation, and all the seemingly unseemly, then it is important to remember that academic sexuality studies were founded by insisting on the very seriousness of sex. The best practitioners of 1990s queer theory resisted its instantiation as a “field” precisely because its practice disrupted and deconstructed the implied differences between gossip and history, innuendo and subtext, sensation and performance.<sup>1</sup> To take sex seriously demanded an interrogation of all that was serious and disciplinary about standard academic disciplines. And it also demanded thinking politics differently.

Two decades after Gayle Rubin declared, “The time has come to think about sex,” this simple statement persists as a political and intellectual imperative. Over and above its context in the splintered feminisms of the “sex wars,” Rubin’s point is not that 1984 was the time to think about sex, but that the time to think sex is always now. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, Rubin’s thesis about the centrality of sex to politics seems uncannily proleptic:

To some, sexuality may seem to be an unimportant topic, a frivolous diversion from the more critical problems of poverty, war, disease, racism . . . But it is precisely at times such as these, when we live with the possibility of unthinkable destruction, that people are likely to become dangerously crazy about sexuality.<sup>2</sup>

To apply Rubin’s counter-intuitive insistence – that sexuality matters *precisely* in times of “unthinkable destruction” – to our own moment demands addressing different manifestations of poverty, war, disease, and racism, as well as different, and not always obvious, valences of exactly what is serious about sex.

Those of us who teach LGBT/Q classes are always in need of a new anthology that gathers cutting-edge work in the field. One of the goals of the present collection is to juxtapose the newest work of senior scholars with emerging voices in the field. Upon completing this volume, we are struck by the scope and diversity these contributors have brought to the project as well as the resonances between these different writers and different visions, which we never could have planned in advance. No single version of queer studies is in prominence here. Instead these essays chal-

lenge each other and, hopefully, challenge the reader to determine what, at its very best, queer studies might be.

## Queer Politics in the Time of War and Shopping or Why Sex? Why Now?

We begin with the politics of the present. Janet R. Jakobsen opens the volume with “Sex, Secularism, and the ‘War on Terrorism’: The Role of Sexuality in Multi-Issue Organizing.” Here she considers why sex, which seemed crucial to understanding the political culture of the 1990s, has been cast in the twenty-first century increasingly as a frivolous diversion from the life and death issues of war, terrorism, and state-sponsored violence. Posing the question “Why sex?” and implicitly “Why now?” she finds that “sexuality has remained central to both electoral politics and US public discourse,” from George Bush’s courting of “values voters” in the 2004 Presidential election to the conduct of the War on Terror itself. Even as sex remains key to politics, it has at the same time been dismissed as “irrelevant to issues of serious public importance.” Jakobsen locates this seeming contradiction – this simultaneous overvaluing and undervaluing of sex – in the multiple meanings of “value,” which is at once an economic category hailing from industrial capitalism and a secular category with a deeply religious past. Both forms of “value” are linked to a genealogy of “freedom” with roots in the Protestant Reformation. Jakobsen’s challenge is an activist one, urging us to center questions of sex in multiple arenas of organizing. To do so, she argues, “would also allow us to question what freedom means, to ask why a value like freedom must so often imply not just a disciplinary society, but one marked by coercion and violence. And to ask ourselves what vision we would offer instead.”

David L. Eng asks similar questions in his essay, “Freedom and the Racialization of Intimacy: *Lawrence v. Texas* and the Emergence of Queer Liberalism.” Tracking a genealogy of Enlightenment modernity haunted by the history of unfree labor, slavery, and colonialism, Eng locates “the disavowed racial ground of our contemporary political moment in the US.” This political moment has witnessed, among other things, new rights of inclusion for some gay and lesbian US citizens. If an earlier generation of feminist, gay and lesbian, and queer activists insistently critiqued marriage and family as disciplinary institutions, a new movement has petitioned the state under these terms for rights of recognition and inclusion. This confluence of political demands for liberal enfranchisement with an ascendant privatizing impulse of globalized “free market” capitalism constitutes the conditions for what Eng terms “queer liberalism.”

Queer liberalism vows allegiance to a universal blind justice, sightless of the historical exclusions it carries forward in our putatively “post-race,” “post-identity,” “colorblind” age. In response, Eng insists we recognize “how queer liberalism secures its legal, social, and moral claims through the dismantling of affirmative action and the folding-in of normative gay and lesbian US citizen-subjects into the mandates of US Empire.” Many of the contributors to this volume note the convergence of what Eng calls “queer liberalism,” with powerful and ascendant neoliberal economic conditions,

coalescing in a new assimilationist, “homonormativity.” Homonormativity, as Lisa Duggan has argued, is “a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions but upholds and sustains them.”<sup>3</sup> If queer liberalism and homonormativity offer a limited menu of choices, including gay marriage, private domesticity, and the freedom to consume, many of the writers in this volume decry the conditions of this particular “place at the table.”<sup>4</sup>

In “‘No Atheists in the Fox Hole’: Toward a Radical Queer Politics in a Post-9/11 World,” Sharon Holland asks: “Where is the space in queer studies for a feminist who still believes that state-sanctioned marriage is one of the most insidious forms of institutionalized racism? Where is the place for the atheist at the table where (black) queer studies meets African American studies and the church becomes an important and necessary center for a discourse on the politics of black bodies, black subjects, black lives?” If the phrase “no atheists in the fox hole” references a time of war in which those under fire cannot afford *not* to believe, then in the current moment of unending war, Holland proposes a new queer politics, radical in its refusal to center religious belief in analyses of family, race, and belonging.

Holland notes the simultaneous publication in 2005 of major volumes on Black Queer Studies and Queer of Color Critique.<sup>5</sup> Explored in this volume by contributors including Holland, Ferguson, Gopinath, Muñoz, Rodríguez, and Tongson, both Black Queer Studies and Queer of Color Critique trace their critical genealogies through women of color feminism, which inaugurated “intersectional” readings routed through theoretical interrogations of “home” and “nation” across the borders of time and space.<sup>6</sup> Holland challenges queer studies to “recognize its debt to decades of theorizing about difference in works by both feminists and people of color.” Holland’s hailing of this formative and ongoing work flies in the face of the much reported “death of theory” as well as the professional melancholy that attends the perennial announcement of the death and dying of queer studies itself.<sup>7</sup>

Interrogating mainstream culture’s voracious appetite for dead queers who might have lived otherwise, Martin Manalansan provides a reading of the film *Brokeback Mountain* as symptomatic of a new mainstreaming and marketing of gay lives, from Hollywood to network television (*Will and Grace*) and cable TV (*Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* and *The L Word*). Critically lauded as a “romance like any other,” *Brokeback* deploys generic conventions to universalize this gay love story as a “timeless” tale, isolating the lovers (literally and figuratively) from the time of family, the space of racialized others, and “the messiness of history.” If this film’s tragic ending set in a mythical past points forward to the potential promise of an identitarian future in which gay lovers might meet, love, and marry, then Manalansan challenges the limits of this scripted happy ending, which vanquishes the film’s unhappy end: “We do not need a ‘romance like any other’ but new forms of love motivated by collective wishes and aspirations and unscripted by heteronormative institutions.” Refusing cultural narratives, etched in timeworn patterns, Manalansan asks, with Hardt and Negri, how we might imagine love otherwise, opened toward “unforeseen kinds of relationships” in lived time, as an expansive and generative ethics rather than the closed world of private romance.

The collusion of neoliberal economics – whose key figures are always presented in terms of timeless values and private spaces – with a burgeoning gay consumer

lifestyle is hardly a new phenomenon. Beginning in the 1970s, a post-Stonewall, post-celluloid closet opened, spewing forth gay visibility and even a short-lived 1990s moment of “lesbian chic.” Yet as American viewers sat in front of the TV to see *Ellen* come out and Cindy Crawford got behind k.d. lang on the cover of *Vanity Fair*, the art world was mired in an ongoing battle with the federal government over censorship and funding. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), which provided federal grants to individual artists and art institutions, became a flashpoint in what came to be known as “the culture wars.” For perhaps the first time in American history, queer art was exhibited on the Senate floor as Senator Jesse Helms seized the moment to decry federal funding for the “obscenities” of queer and feminist art. Lost alongside a larger dismantling of the welfare state, the NEA could appear as a casualty of collusion between neoliberal privatization and the late 1980s and early 1990s censorship campaigns. Yet as Richard Meyer argues, the NEA “crafted a survival strategy that severed it from any form of potentially controversial art.”

In the halls of Congress, art controversy is no longer generated by the likes of Karen Finley’s yams or Andres Serrano’s “Piss Christ.” In his essay, “Who Needs Civil Liberties?” Meyer charts the post-September 11 battle over the arts in the United States in which moral discourse has morphed in a new context of national security. Meyer joins the other writers in this section in refusing the narrative that terrorists have replaced queers as *the* enemies of the state. As US domestic policy continues to be dominated by the rhetoric of “family values” and foreign policy increasingly markets American “freedom” at the end of a gun, what Martin Manalansan calls “queer love in the time of war and shopping” offers a powerful sexual and political hermeneutic that theorizes civil liberties beyond borders and beyond state recognition.

## Histories, Genealogies, and Futurities

The previous section’s engagement with the politics of a queer present by no means forsakes a queer past and the historiographic interventions that continue to be so crucial to sexuality studies. The writers in this section insist that queer historiography is a Janus-faced project that opens itself both to rigorous self-interrogation and to an uncanny haunting by the past, present, and future. In “The Relevance of Race for the Study of Sexuality,” Roderick A. Ferguson examines the modes by which a generation of scholars has established race and sexuality as mutually constitutive. Interrogating the work of the axiomatic in confining such epistemological interventions in queer studies to the dead category of “self-evident truths,” Ferguson insists that “intersections” be rigorously historicized rather than merely asserted as structural. This process involves fracturing dominant narratives of both sexual and racial formation, as well as their imbrications, to expose forgotten or incomplete sites of mutual construction. Ferguson’s project is to reanimate intersectionality, both refusing it as an already constituted category and refusing to abandon it. The study of racialized sexualities, in this framing, revises Foucauldian histories of sexuality and reworks the relationships between sexuality and epistemology and between sexuality and power. In entwined genealogies of the intersectional analyses that have historicized racial formations and monocultural Foucauldian histories of sexuality, Ferguson forcefully

## Molly McGarry and George E. Haggerty

elaborates the ways in which race rewrites the history (and present future) of sexuality studies.

In “The Present Future of Lesbian Historiography,” Valerie Traub returns to questions that have vexed the field of lesbian and gay history since its inception. From the time of the publication of Michel Foucault’s *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*, scholars have variously critiqued, augmented, and nuanced his narrative, while simultaneously forwarding their own. Whereas some find continuities in same-sex sexuality and gender nonconformity across time, others implicitly adhere to the Foucauldian “Great Paradigm Shift,” which introduced the discursive categories of homo- and heterosexuality at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> Yet the field has evolved such that even those theorists most associated with social constructionism would critique a catechism that creates an indelible divide between premodern subjects who committed sexual acts and modern people who were named and claimed by sexual identities.

Traub intervenes in this binary – alterity versus continuism – to offer what she calls “cycles of salience” specific to lesbian historiography. She argues that “the relative weight one accords to alterity or continuism has perhaps had a more pronounced impact on the practice of lesbian history than any other issue (including debates about what counts as evidence of same-sex desire).” The constancy and familiarity she finds in women’s bonds over time is neither self-evident “nor are these cycles, precisely, continuity – if by that we mean an unbroken line connecting the past to the present.” Rather, she recasts historiographic impasse as dialogue: “Would the dialogue I have advocated create a single lesbian historiography, which produces multiple histories that intersect at different points? Or would it create multiple lesbian historiographies, which refract and bounce off of one another in continual oscillation? Whatever our answers to these questions, the future of lesbian historiography will require a more ambitious and capacious response to our growing historical knowledge. The past deserves no less than this; the future demands this and more.”

To the extent that this section captures futures of the field as well as past currents, David M. Halperin’s essay performs a genealogy of queer pedagogy. Reminding us what kind of confrontations gay scholars risk every time they enter the classroom, Halperin articulates the concept he calls “deviant teaching,” which he traces back to Dante’s Brunetto Latini, a soul in Hell, a character that Dante praises as a teacher and condemns as a sodomite. Halperin traces the specter of sodomy into the twentieth century, considering its various permutations in Cold War America and its resonances in George Stevens’ 1953 movie *Shane*. Halperin connects these disparate works with the tribal details of the initiation of young boys in Sambia (New Guinea) culture in his notion of “deviant teaching.” For Halperin, “Teaching has always been the queerest profession, especially the male teaching of boys, which since ancient times has seemed to require the farming-out of boys to male role models from outside the family in order to assure the boys’ initiation into manhood.” His essay addresses some of the anxieties inherent around the question of homosexual teachers, and the ways in which knowledge about an instructor’s sexuality can undermine the very real bond between teachers and students that queer studies enables. Halperin looks beyond the homophobia of a specific situation to consider the institutional structures “that organize and underlie our culture.”

“Deviant Teaching” might be a useful subtitle to the next essay as well. Ann Pellegrini’s “After Sontag: Future Notes on Camp” is written as both elegy and return. Returning to camp after Susan Sontag’s death is complicated in a contemporary moment when irony is increasingly hard to track in the postmodern public sphere. In such a context, “where politics is so openly and cynically performative,” Pellegrini asks, “what remains of camp as an oppositional strategy?” In a detailed genealogy of critics, including eventually Sontag herself, of the apolitical and markedly unhomosexual thesis of “Notes on ‘Camp,’” Pellegrini delineates camp as a performative analytic whose political import depends deeply on the historical context and social circumstance of its uses. In her unlikely reading of camp through Sontag’s essay, “Fascinating Fascism,” she locates an enforced separation between “Jewish moral seriousness” and “homosexual aestheticism and irony.” Yet the separation she finds may not be such a gulf after all. Pellegrini calls on a version of camp with a complicated charge, at once conjuring the nostalgia of summer camp with the history of concentration camps, and eerily and implicitly invoking Guantanamo and other neo-concentration camps: “This dialectical tension – between past and present, morbidity and camp, morality and aesthetics, sympathy and revulsion – is a space of ethics. It is also a reason to hold onto camp in a time of terror. With camp, the past may yet awaken to charge the present and reimagine the future.”

The moral imperatives delivered by reawakened pasts occasion Carla Freccero’s “Queer Spectrality: Haunting the Past,” which asks how living with ghostly remainders, and reminders, might forge an ethical ground for both a renewed queer historiography and a reimagined futurity. Jacques Derrida’s idea of “hauntology” allows Freccero to “explore how those of us who live on might better honor the ethical and political challenges posed for the present and the future of queer survival.” This queer hauntology at once invites ghosts and ghosts the past by asking: “To what ethical imperative do spectral figures respond, and how might an openness to haunting guide, not only our historiographic endeavors, but our present and future political and ethical practices as well?” Freccero’s nuanced engagement with such disparate sources as New World encounter narratives, queer communities’ melancholic incorporation of Brandon Teena, and critical theory’s struggle with the seething presence of the past opens into an insistence on the social. In addressing what history makes strange in both the past and the present, she aims “not so much to ‘solve’ a problem of temporal accountability as to suggest alternative ways to respond to – and survive – the not strictly eventful afterlife of trauma in a just, queer, fashion.” This queer historiography at once embraces strangers and the inherent strangeness of sociability as an imperative that refuses to entomb the past and ignore its harrowing significance.

## Desire for Gender

This section opens yet another capacious, and ultimately uncontainable, category. To place “gender” in a single section belies the ways in which many of the essays in this volume engage queer feminisms, transgender embodiments, and the myriad ways of representing and living sex/gender. In “The Desire for Gender” which gives the section its name, Robyn Wiegman registers what, for at least some practitioners, has

been a return to gender in both academic sexuality studies and queer communities. The first part of her argument is disciplinary, or more precisely, anti-disciplinary, as Wiegman notes a “shift from an interest in sex and sexuality disaggregated from gender as the primary terrain of analysis to gender itself.” The gender she locates is “not heteronormative gender in its dyadic coupledness, but sexy, mobile, proliferate, transitive gender.” Queer genders – female masculinities, female-to-male (FTM), trans, boi – have proliferated while such stalwarts as butch–femme drag the past into the future. Wiegman asks of an earlier queer studies: “to what extent was the transitivity of gender a language of and for sexuality itself? And when and for whom might this be said to be so?” Her project reverses this trajectory, outlining “queer desire for gender transitivity” in theory and social practice. She offers an object lesson about the difficulties of containing a desire for gender and the profound and deceptively simple conclusion “that the desire for gender will leave none of us alone.”

Where Wiegman tracks the vicissitudes of gender in theory and community, Dean Spade’s “Methodologies of Trans Resistance,” examines new articulations of gender in a legal rubric. Tracing “the articulations of transgender identity emerging in ‘successful’ litigation and anti-discrimination laws,” Spade interrogates the means and ends of anti-discrimination laws that many states have adopted in the name of trans rights. As trans visibility moves from such victim narratives forwarded by *Boys Don’t Cry* and *Law and Order* to documentary representations like the TV series *Trans-generation*, trans activism has forced the reconfiguration of queer organizations to reimagine their boundaries of inclusion. In this context, Spade questions the efficacy of a “litigation and legislation-based struggle for gender rights” as a means for (economic) equality and political representation.

While Spade examines the failure of the legal system to adequately address either the discrimination or the economic barriers to trans rights, Vernon Rosario chronicles the medical profession’s approaches – many painfully, tragically failed – to non-conforming gender expression. In “The History of Aphallia and the Intersex Challenge to Sex/Gender,” Rosario revisits the treatment of intersexuality through a discussion of his clinical practice. Intersexuality has become a central figure in gender theory and activism in the past decade. Despite increased media attention, including representations like Jeffrey Eugenides’ Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *Middlesex*, and the pioneering work of groups such as the Intersex Society of North America, the issue is still met with shame and secrecy in most medical contexts. After surveying the medical history and current controversy surrounding “genital sex reassignment of intersex infants,” Rosario turns to the case of an aphallic child as a means to examine theories of intersex gender identity and “reconsider the role of biology in sex and gender.” He discusses case after case in which the “desire for gender” was no less than ruthless in its erasure of the desiring subject.

Juana María Rodríguez closes the section, and returns us to Wiegman’s claim that desire is always with us, by asking how we might “construct an archive of desire.” “Gesture and Utterance: Fragments from a Butch–Femme Archive” is at once a meditation on what it means to reimagine an archive and a performance of writing desiring bodies: “this archive, produced through memory and translation, imagination and interpretation, offers an invitation to think along, to play with the possibilities of sexual inquiry.” Rodríguez’s archive refuses identitarian mandates. She does not claim

to “represent” or be representative; instead, she stages a scene, makes an entrance, “saunters unabashedly into those minute spaces of intimate interaction, the fleeting gestures and utterances that perform their own complex designations of desire that always exceed the names and categories we assign them.” Exceeding the categories that might name or contain it, this is archive as performance, marked by language, accent, scent, and the touch of bodies. With gender-bent performances working as museums of lost gender possibilities, this sexual archive is passed on and sustained by the fragmentation and recombination that move it across space and through time.<sup>9</sup>

## Queer Belongings

Elizabeth Freeman lends her term, “Queer Belongings,” to the essays in this next section, which collectively interrogate forms of affiliation and connection. Applying kinship theory – derived from cross-cultural anthropological understandings of familial and non-familial bonds – to queer theory, Freeman finds a paradox in the possibility of “queering” kinship theory: “Any responsible family policy, any meaningful ethnography of gendered and sexualized social life, and any comprehensive theory of kinship must therefore answer to the paradox that lesbians and gays both inhabit and exceed the matrix of couplehood and reproduction.” If queer kinship can be imagined *in time*, “within larger formations like affairs, *ménages à trois*, friendships, cliques, or subcultures,” Freeman asks how these bonds might be extended across time. Is reproduction – or the adoptive relations that approximate it – the only means to secure the future? Echoing Rodríguez’s formulation in many ways, Freeman’s answer reconfigures kinship as process, centering desire rather than procreation as the means to extend bonds trans-temporally: “Queer belonging,” she argues, “names more than the longing to *be*, and be *connected*” as presence, but rather “also names the longing to ‘*be long*,’ to endure in corporeal form over time.” This queer kinship is also a radical engagement with time, a “dragging” of the past into the future through gestures and embodied stances rather than through genetics or family law.

Judith Halberstam likewise questions the limits of traditional kinship in “Forgetting Family: Queer Alternatives to Oedipal Relations” by charting its various reifications and undoings in contemporary popular culture and film. Comparing “the Christian right’s perverse readings” of the documentary *March of the Penguins* with current campaigns for same-sex marriage, Halberstam argues that we might “do well to forget family in our theorizations of gender, sexuality, community, and politics.” Halberstam submits traditional queer interrogations of “family values” to a critique of neoliberal economic policies via the US dismantling of the welfare state: “[T]he family takes on new significance in this scenario as it becomes a sole source of support in the shift away from public and toward private networks of economic relief.”

Refusing easy dichotomies between heteronormative mainstream and marginal queer culture, Halberstam casts forgetting against “memory as the motor of national belonging” by tracing amnesia’s various political deployments in films ranging from *Fifty First Dates* to *Finding Nemo*? In these unlikely sites for queer inquiry, Halberstam sees “popular culture texts which refuse the normative temporal logics of progress, deterioration, supersession, replacement, and hindsight while recognizing

## Molly McGarry and George E. Haggerty

other possible non-Oedipal logics including a focus on the ephemeral, the momentary, the surprise, simultaneity, contradiction, intergenerational exchange.” In doing so, she is mining an already richly, though often disavowedly, queer popular culture.

Jennifer Doyle’s “Between Friends” begins with Edith Wharton’s *House of Mirth*, ends with Andy Warhol’s *Blue Movie*, and between these bookends takes the reader on a trip through queer bohemia in a catalogue of unexpected queer belongings. The loves, friendships, and forms of “sexual generosity” Doyle discusses tether men and women in attachments “that are otherwise invisible or incomprehensible.” As she argues, “The ‘queerness’ of queer friendship is surely composed of more than the sexual identities of its practitioners.” Cast as impossible love between impossible people, these relationships are also ways of sustaining livable lives. Dependent upon mutual commitments to feminism and existing beyond the traditional sexualized couple, the multiple bonds she describes reflect the world-making possibilities of queer communities “in which mutual recognition converts not into a proposal, but into a lifeline.” The potentialities inherent in these seeming impossibilities and illegibilities speak to the utopian promises that queer theory offers in forms of connection beyond what has come to be called simply “community.”

Gayatri Gopinath’s “Queer Regions: Locating Lesbians in *Sancharram*” extends a queer feminist analysis to other mappings of connections, both across national borders and between film and its viewers. The author begins with her own uncanny experience of seeing her family’s small town in Kerala, a state on the southwestern edge of India, portrayed in a lesbian film screened for “an appreciative queer San Francisco film festival audience.” For Gopinath, “this familial, familiar landscape, oddly defamiliarized in the context of viewing” becomes an occasion for reconsidering the investments and modalities of transnational feminist and queer inquiry. Reading the tangential relationship of “regionality” to nation in conjunction with the circulation of lesbian identity as a globalized commodity, Gopinath examines how cultural and sexual specificities are subsumed by “diasporic representations of ‘India’ that circulate transnationally and that ostensibly stand in for the nation writ large.” The ways that transnational “circuits of reception and consumption” deploy the regional as *the* sign of the Indian nation-state’s legibility, even as actual regional differences and conflicts are obfuscated, she argues, parallels global human rights discourse’s reification of the category of “woman” wrought over and through disparate non-normative gender and sexual formations.

While all of the writers in this section are interested in how belonging seems ineluctably to evoke a sense of boundary, Karen Tongson joins Gayatri Gopinath in insisting that queer studies cannot ignore the ways in which space is employed in the work of cultural formation, queer or otherwise. In “The Light That Never Goes Out: Butch Intimacies and Sub-Urban Sociabilities in ‘Lesser Los Angeles,’” Tongson remaps “traditionally urban and cosmopolitan queer topographical imaginaries” in order to excavate “the narratives of queer sociability and self-creation being written beyond the vertical metropolis in lands of sage and sprawl.” Tongson’s evocation of a Smiths’ song about teenage alienation and angst pulls the concept of citationality from the maw of “memory born of the bustling nostalgia industry epitomized by the endless loop of commemorative programming” and puts it in the hands of the Los Angeles-based queer performance group *Butchlalis de Panochtitlan* (BdP). Tongson