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Joshua Gamson, *University of San Francisco*

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The Normal Science of Queerness: LGBT Sociology Books in the Twenty-First Century

JOSHUA GAMSON

University of San Francisco

gamson@usfca.edu

Generic human time is admittedly catching up to me, but gay sociology is on such a sped-up clock that just a few years after I was a whippersnapper I found myself a veteran. It's not just me. Given the rapidity with which lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) statuses, communities, and politics have changed, works that captured a new phenomenon in their time—for instance, my own 1990s study of LGBT populations and images within tabloid television talk shows—often become historical snapshots shortly after they are published. The field, like the populations on which it focuses, has grown and changed at sometimes dazzling speed.

When I entered the academy in the 1980s and 1990s, lesbian-, gay-, bisexual-, and transgender-focused sociology¹ was just past its infancy and in a big growth spurt. These were critical years for the field in a double sense: developmentally crucial and driven by critique. The activism of the 1960s and 1970s had helped to generate political ideas and a culture of outness that found its way into the academy, often in the person of openly lesbian and gay sociologists. The study of homosexuality had been effectively pushed beyond the field of “deviance,” where it had long been boxed. As feminist, ethnic-, and racial-studies scholars had been doing in a variety of arenas (including sociology), these folks pointed out blind spots, distortions, and holes in various sociological subfields. They began to redress the relative invisibility within sociology—and outright misrepresentation—of sexuality-based communities, identities,

The Dividends of Dissent: How Conflict and Culture Work in Lesbian and Gay Marches on Washington, by **Amin Ghaziani**. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008. 419pp. \$27.50 paper. ISBN: 9780226289960.

God, Sex, and Politics: Homosexuality and Everyday Theologies, by **Dawne Moon**. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004. 281pp. \$30.00 paper. ISBN: 9780226535128.

Invisible Families: Gay Identities, Relationships, and Motherhood among Black Women, by **Mignon R. Moore**. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011. 298pp. \$27.95 paper. ISBN: 9780520269521.

Dude, You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School, by **C.J. Pascoe**. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007. 227pp. \$26.95 paper. ISBN: 9780520252301.

Drag Queens at the 801 Cabaret, by **Leila J. Rupp** and **Verta Taylor**. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003. 256pp. \$27.50 cloth. ISBN: 9780226731582.

Courting Change: Queer Parents, Judges, and the Transformation of American Family Law, by **Kimberly D. Richman**. New York, NY: New York University Press, 2010. 267pp. \$22.00 paper. ISBN: 9780814776988.

The Stranger Next Door: The Story of a Small Community's Battle over Sex, Faith, and Civil Rights, by **Arlene Stein**. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2002. 267pp. \$19.00 paper. ISBN: 9780807079539.

¹ By LGBT sociology, I mean here scholarship on LGBT-related topics by sociologists. Plenty of non-sociologists have done and are doing sociologically relevant work on LGBT topics, but for the sake of clarity I'm restricting myself to those trained in this discipline.

and practices; centering the lives of sexually nonconforming populations became an opportunity to challenge, revise, and supplement existing research. In conversation with sexuality and gender scholars within other disciplines, sociologists began developing and promoting new theoretical frameworks, most notably “queer theory.” By the turn of the century, the sociology of sexualities field—in which LGBT or queer sociology was influentially situated—had come enough into its own to have its own American Sociological Association section (founded in 1997), generate related courses in many sociology curricula, and support the publication of numerous textbooks and anthologies.

We thus entered the twenty-first century with some quite well established premises and pathways. Foundational work by scholars like Dennis Altman, John Gagnon, Mary McIntosh, Ken Plummer, Gayle Rubin, Steven Seidman, William Simon, Jeffrey Weeks, and others—heavily indebted to feminist and phenomenological scholarship—had put LGBT sociology on a firmly social constructionist track. It had become a presupposition that sexuality is not mainly a biological characteristic, and that whatever “sexuality” nature provides does not tell us a whole lot about the shapes and meanings it takes on—as individual or social identity, as a basis for communities and politics. Perhaps because of this constructionist focus, qualitative study of LGBT lives had become the dominant methodological approach. Work by scholars like Patricia Hill Collins, R.W. Connell, and others had also put on the agenda the intersection between sexuality and other forms of social categorization and stratification including gender, race, ethnicity, class, and nation. Moreover, scholars were becoming adept at bringing queer questions into other subfields, from the sociology of culture and media to political sociology to urban sociology; given the rapid growth and complexity of LGBT social movements, sociologists were particularly active within social movement scholarship.

This heritage has shaped the continued maturation of the field over the past decade-plus. In addition to vibrant journal-based scholarship, an astonishing array of book-length studies—most of them

qualitative, most of them from a social constructionist framework—have traveled largely uncharted territories. We have had books about the identity work of suburban gay men, workplace rights organizing by lesbians and gay men, the regulation and pathologization of African American queer difference within the sociological canon, the interplay between cultural identity, globalization, and sexuality in modern Mexico, the lives of Bible Belt gays and lesbians, working-class lesbians, male-for-male escorts, lesbian and gay Jews, and gay male athletes—to name just a few. To borrow from Thomas Kuhn, if the 1980s and 1990s involved something of a queer paradigm shift, the last fifteen years have mainly involved the normal science of queerness.

It is tough to choose just a few books to pluck from this abundance, but what follows is my idiosyncratic selection, with a charge to interested readers to do their own digging from here. These chosen books I consider emblematic of the continued “queering” of sociology—as LGBT sociology has marched out of its own enclave into subfield after subfield—and that are both important and engagingly written. As a whole, they also illustrate the ways some aspects of the field remain unevenly developed.

LGBT Movements and Politics: The Place of Culture

The study of LGBT social movements and politics continues to be empirically lively and theoretically robust, with ground-breaking accounts of the evolution of gay life and organizations in northern California and southern Africa (Elizabeth Armstrong’s *Forging Gay Identities* and Ashley Currier’s *Out in Africa*), the complex, symbiotic relationship between the religious right and LGBT movements (Tina Fetner’s *How the Religious Right Shaped Lesbian and Gay Activism* and Amy Stone’s *Gay Rights at the Ballot Box*), and tensions within LGBT movement organizations (Jane Ward’s *Respectably Queer*).

Within this recent body of work, cultural sociologists have been making a particularly interesting mark. The trio of books to which I am calling attention in this arena take distinct cuts at how culture and LGBT politics intersect. Read together, they offer an

evocative portrait of how culture works within, around, and through LGBT politics, and of the culture-politics link more broadly.

In the beautifully written *The Stranger Next Door*, Arlene Stein tells the story of a small Oregon town—she calls it Timbertown—that in the mid-1990s found itself embroiled in an extended, nasty fight over whether gay men and lesbians should be considered a minority group and protected under the law. This was a familiar public debate, of course, not least because it came on the heels of a failed state ballot initiative to deny such civil rights protections. But it was a weird one, too. Even if the town had the power to create meaningful legal protections, it did not appear to have many gay and lesbian people to protect—no visible gay community, no LGBT political organizations, no nothing—and people did not really talk much about homosexuality. Yet in a period of a few months, Stein writes, everyone was talking about it, and not calmly: families on opposite sides of the controversy stopped their kids from playing together, “husbands and wives quarreled over it, and it sparked fistfights at the high school,” and the local paper, “normally preoccupied with news of the timber industry and Little League scores, covered little else for months” (p. 1).

Tackling this puzzle, Stein’s resonant ethnography builds an argument about symbolic politics—since in this town, homosexuals and homosexuality became symbols “upon which a group of citizens projected a host of anxieties about the changing world around them” (p.4). The argument is historically specific since, as Stein points out, “one must understand the different meanings and associations evoked by homosexuality (and by implication, heterosexuality) in a particular place” and time (p. 7). In Timbertown, the decline of the timber industry meant the erosion of a traditional economic and familial order with a male breadwinner at its center; in this context, evangelical Christianity provided community and tradition. The organized Christian conservative movement, seeking also to appeal to nonreligious citizens, attempted to associate civil rights strategies with “weakness, dependence, and femininity,” and opposition to those as an opportunity for white working men (and women “anxious about manhood”) to

reassert themselves as strong, independent, and masculine (p. 17).

The Timbertown conflict thus also turned on the meaning of homosexuality. If homosexuality and gay rights efforts could be potent symbols of shameful, morally weak others, it made sense for Christian conservatives to bring homosexuality into the public sphere, to present demonized images of “visible, politically active, and sexually promiscuous ‘bad gays’” (p. 16), and to assert that gay rights posed a direct threat. An opposition arose to argue that gay people were legitimate members of, not outsiders to, the community *because* gayness is an unchanging, inborn characteristic. The subsequent blurring of boundaries between insiders and outsiders exacerbated the tension for some in town: what really seemed to disturb people, Stein says, is not so much the specter of “bad gays,” but that “queer people. . . lived in their world,” that “the strangers in their midst looked very much like them” (p. 16). What mattered in Timbertown, what unlocks the mystery of the controversy’s eruption and dynamics, is not actual gay people or movements but imagined ones. What we learn is not just about debates over homosexuality but about “how symbolic boundaries are made and defended, especially in periods of rapid social change” (p. 8).

Though it might seem that a drag show in Key West, Florida does not have much in common with a gay rights controversy in rural Oregon, Leila J. Rupp and Verta Taylor’s *Drag Queens at the 801 Cabaret* suggests otherwise. Symbolic boundaries and the culture of politics take center stage in their book, as well. Rupp and Taylor interviewed drag queens, the owner of the cabaret where they performed, and some of their boyfriends and mothers; attended rehearsals, meetings, social events, and shows; taped and transcribed scores of shows; analyzed media coverage; and conducted focus groups with audience members. With thick description of the lives and performances of these drag queens, Rupp and Taylor enter a long-standing debate about whether drag subverts or reinforces “the concept of female and male as distinct, opposite, nonoverlapping categories” (p. 2). Looking through the lens of social movement theory, they argue that drag—at

least as performed in settings like this one—is best understood “not only as a commercial performance but as a political event in which identity is used to contest conventional thinking about gender and sexuality” (p. 2), not only as entertainment but as a part of the “repertoire of contention” of the LGBT movement (p. 217).

The evidence they provide is spirited and persuasive. Some of the drag queens’ songs explicitly reject or mock images of heterosexual femininity, as when Scabby performs “Wedding Bell Blues” in “a ripped up wedding dress, Coke-bottle glasses, and a mouthful of fake rotten buck teeth” (p. 117); most neither embrace nor reject dominant sex and gender categories, but use “the fact that they are being performed by gay men to make something quite different,” as when Inga and R.V. sing “Why won’t he touch my snatch? I think he’s gay!” (p. 124). Some arouse “erotic responses [in audience members] that do not fit into the categories of heterosexuality or homosexuality” (p. 124). The muddying of categories and desire is furthered in the queens’ interaction with audiences, most prominently in a show portion called “doing shots,” in which audience members from “each sexual category” (gay man, straight man, lesbian, straight woman) are called up on stage and encouraged to mime “sex acts that are outside their category of gender and sexual preference” (p. 136). In focus groups, many audience members describe the point and the experience: the labels don’t fit; we are all a bit queer. Symbolic boundaries are undercut and rearranged, and cultural performance, even entertainment, becomes a site of social protest against the sex and gender order.

Rupp and Taylor, like Stein, use their case to answer a question that goes beyond LGBT politics: “When is a cultural performance a form of protest?” (p. 214). Performance becomes political, they say, when it is a site where symbols and identities are contested by groups with different interests; when entertainment is used intentionally as a medium of expression of political ideas; and when it is “staged by actors for whom. . . culture serves as an arena for the enactment, reinforcement, or renegotiation of collective identity” (p. 217). Using a queer subject, Rupp and

Taylor offer a model for social movement scholars to expand and refine our understanding of culturally-based protest repertoires.

Taking up the more conventional protest form of national marches on Washington, Amin Ghaziani’s *The Dividends of Dissent: How Conflict and Culture Work in Lesbian and Gay Marches on Washington* offers another angle on the intersection between culture and LGBT politics. Ghaziani examines four national gay and lesbian marches on Washington, using a wide variety of untapped archival sources, extensive oral history interviews with organizers, and over a thousand articles from the gay and non-gay press. It is fascinating simply as history, but the book’s ambitions extend beyond documentation. Ghaziani zeroes in on the “flurry of infighting” (p. 8) that accompanied each march’s organization, which brought “to the surface rumblings of division that previously may have remained dormant or were discreetly managed in local pockets” (p. 6). In different ways in different time periods organizers struggled, often acrimoniously and publicly, over whether and when to march, what titles and themes to use, whom to invite as speakers, what organizing structure to employ.

These kinds of internal conflict and factionalism are often interpreted as a movement’s death cries, but Ghaziani demonstrates that it is not necessarily so. Instead, he sees infighting as a “culture carrier”: it “gives form to otherwise abstract conversations of strategy and identity” (p. 21). *Strategic* questions about the movement’s direction, who is and should be in control, and how decisions are made, and *identity* questions such as who is part of the movement and the meaning of gayness, get mapped onto concrete organizing decisions, which in turn influence organizing the next time around. Under certain conditions, therefore, infighting can be productive, as it becomes the mechanism by which a movement takes stock of itself, often bringing identities and strategies into line with a changed set of political realities. If in Timbertown homosexuals and homosexuality became useful political symbols in unstable times, and in Key West drag performance became politics by cultural means, in marches on Washington political infighting became the mechanism by which cultural meanings and boundaries

(who is part of “us,” for example) were made apprehensible.

LGBT Families: The New-ish Queer Frontier

Among the many rapid social changes in queer life over the past two decades, perhaps the most striking are those in family life, as same-sex marriage rights have gone mainstream and LGBT people have increasingly formed families through adoption and assisted reproduction. While psychologists have been more active in studying same-sex parenting, and legal scholars in writing about same-sex marriage, these phenomena have also been perceptively analyzed by sociologists in books such as Kathleen Hull’s interview-based *Same-Sex Marriage: The Cultural Politics of Love and Law*, Maureen Sullivan’s ethnographic *The Family of Woman: Lesbian Mothers, Their Children, and the Undoing of Gender*, and Brian Powell, Catherine Bolzendahl, Claudia Geist, and Lara Carr Steelman’s survey-based *Counted Out: Same-Sex Relations and Americans’ Definitions of Family*. Two recent books on LGBT families illustrate the ways this sort of scholarship is not only surveying the empirical ground but also shaking up theoretical conceptions in sociological and family studies.

For *Courting Change: Queer Parents, Judges, and the Transformation of American Family Law*, Kimberly D. Richman collected over 300 judicial decisions in child custody, visitation, or adoption cases involving a lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender parent from the 1950s to the 2000s—every one published—and interviewed key players in the legal process, including many judges. Hers is not so much a study of parents as of family law, “notorious as one of the most indeterminate and discretionary areas of American law” (p. 3). Guided by the ill-defined standard of “the best interest of the child,” laws and judicial decisions vary to the point of incoherence. At the same moment in time, a court in one state affirms the validity of adoptions by lesbians and gay men, while a court in another denies custody to a lesbian mother on the grounds of her “abhorrent” violation of the “laws of nature.” A judge in one state denies custody of two boys to the surviving female co-parent of a deceased biological

mother, ignoring the directives of her will; less than a week later, in another court, a judge makes the opposite decision in a similar case.

This malleable best-interest-of-the-child standard, as applied to LGBT family cases, becomes Richman’s analytical centerpiece, both as “an index of variation in Americans’ attitudes about family, parenthood, and child welfare,” and even more so as a “marker of the oft-critiqued and well-documented indeterminacy of law” (pp. 3–4). Indeterminacy is typically seen as undesirable for those facing discrimination, in that it allows plenty of room for judicial bias to enter the process—as the homophobic bias in many of the *Courting Change* cases illustrates. However, Richman also shows that indeterminacy has been a “key ingredient, if not a necessary precondition, in the creative process of legal and social change” (p. 158), opening up space for “new forms of family and new assessments of sexuality” (p. 11), new laws, legal rationales, and legal categories.

Indeterminacy is a double-edged sword. With no clear definition of family and parenthood to go by, courts are open not just to bias but to change. Richman shows how the fluidity of law leads to new understandings of who a parent is and can be, and of what a homosexual person is. She shows how LGBT parents and advocates have entered a space in which “rights” arguments are a legal minefield, and exploited the “‘open space’ of indeterminate rights” (p. 160), developing a new discourse in which familial rather than individual rights are at issue. She shows how dissenting opinions, encouraged by the law’s mutability, have served as avenues for change. It is because of indeterminacy, Richman argues, that over time “obstacles to LGBT parenthood, including presumptions of unfitness, statutory regulations, and criminal prohibitions, have fallen one by one as legal advocates assert and social scientists confirm their lack of basis in fact or reason” (p. 155). Focused mostly at the institutional level, Richman’s account is cerebral—one has to read between the lines to feel the heartbreak of families denied or torn apart—but engagingly so. *Courting Change* presents a powerful explanation of the recently expanded legal

recognition of LGBT parents and families, and in doing so queers sociolegal studies, illustrating how indeterminacy can facilitate, and even be harnessed for, social change.

In a very different way, Mignon R. Moore also takes on issues of the recognition and misrecognition of same-sex couples and families. Her *Invisible Families: Gay Identities, Relationships, and Motherhood Among Black Women* begins from the observation that the family life of gay women of color has been largely invisible to sexuality scholars, sociologists of family, and larger publics, including African American ones. Moore fills that gap with a detailed study that is at once fiercely specific and theoretically rewarding. Zeroing in on the lives of black lesbians in New York City—she followed a hundred of them for over three years, conducting surveys, interviews, focus groups, and participant-observation—*Invisible Families* is at heart a study of lives at the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality. Grounded in the voices and stories of these women, Moore shows how the distinct historical experiences, cultures, and ideologies of black American life structures lesbian identities, how these identities are differently inflected by social class, and how “Black lesbians’ participation in and enactment of their intersecting identities as Black, as women, and as gay people influence family formation, mate selection, expectations for partners in committed relationships, and other aspects of family life” (p. 3). We hear about the various pathways black women from different classes have taken to recognize and act on same-sex desire, how they present their gender and find mates within racially-segregated lesbian environments, how they manage the timing and meanings of motherhood, how they manage household labor, and how they negotiate interactions with the larger black communities and institutions which they value, need, and live within.

Importantly, race here is not just one among a bunch of intersecting identities, but the central force that guides the respondents’—and Moore’s—“interpretations of how gender, sexuality, social class, and other axes shape their lives” (p. 5). For instance,

Moore’s complex description of the parenting experiences in black lesbian families circles around the notion of respectability. With five case studies, she traces the differences between women who became mothers in heterosexual relationships before adopting lesbian identities (often low-income and working-class women still struggling with gay stigma) and those who came out as lesbian before pursuing motherhood (often middle- and upper-middle-class women who have resolved much of the initial shame). Class privilege and disadvantage shape motherhood for these women in very different ways, yet despite different resources and cultural capital, Moore finds most of the women working hard to establish themselves as “good mothers.” Facing negative racial stereotypes of the “bad” black mother, and seeking to maintain connections within black communities that are not always fully accepting of homosexuality, Moore writes, many “Black lesbian mothers seek to embody a definition of respectability in their dress, parenting, and management of home life,” offsetting the deviant assumption of lesbian sexuality and attempting to “reclaim sexuality as a component of their public, ‘respectable’ selves” (p. 217).

It is not news that identities differ at different points within and across what Patricia Hill Collins has called the “matrix of domination,” or that, as Steve Seidman deftly demonstrated in *Beyond the Closet*, the experience, shape, and valence of sexual identity vary considerably by race, gender, class, age, region, nationality, religion, and physical ability. But how they do so, and with what impact on the everyday practice of living (in relationships, in families) is rarely given such sustained, comprehensive analysis. By making visible these previously invisible queer families through an “intra-categorical approach,” Moore radically complicates categories like “lesbian mother” (typically imagined as white, middle-class, and feminist) and “Black woman” (typically imagined as poor and heterosexual). With this, *Invisible Families* challenges theories of lesbian sexuality, scholarship on family construction and motherhood, and intersectional theory itself.

Queering Institutions

Although scholarly attention is often drawn to institutions like the family that are in the midst of dramatic change, recent LGBT sociology books have also looked at sexual and gender nonconformity within relatively stable institutions. Such books have deepened our understanding of how particular institutions regulate homosexuality, bisexuality, and transgenderism and with what consequences for micro-level interactions, and the diverse ways they become sites both for the reproduction of sexual and gender inequality and for challenging LGBT inequality.

For instance, in her compelling ethnography of a high school, *Dude, You're a Fag*, C.J. Pascoe aims to explain "how teenagers, teachers, and the institutional logics of schooling construct adolescent masculinity through the idioms of sexuality" (p. 4). High school homophobia, Pascoe argues, is less about fear of or hostility toward homosexuals than about adolescent boys trying to achieve masculinity. In ways both funny and serious, the boys she studied shored up masculinity by enacting "repudiation rituals," most notably by aggressively attacking the "specter of the fag," constructed as feminine and weak (p. 157). This echoes the symbolic politics of homosexuality in Stein's Timbertown. They also routinely engaged in heterosexual "confirmation rituals" of "eroticized male dominance and sexualized female submission" (p. 159).

Pascoe covers much more here—the racialization of these activities; girls' gender strategies to deal with boys' masculinity practices; queer theory and the role of play in social change—but what she shows throughout is that everyday homophobic gender strategies are institutionally underwritten. "School ceremonies and authorities encouraged, engaged in, and reproduced the centrality of repudiation processes to adolescent masculinity," she writes (p. 157). Not only is masculinity an interactional process, with homophobic and heterosexist performances at its center, it is also an institutional process. Making room for multiple masculinities and sexualities, Pascoe argues, must also be accomplished.

Interestingly, the role of religious institutions in processing homosexuality as

presented in Dawne Moon's elegant *God, Sex, and Politics: Homosexuality and Everyday Theologies* is much more open than that of *Dude's* school. In the two United Methodist congregations Moon studied—one liberal, one conservative—homosexuality presented a highly charged, sometimes explosive focus of sustained debate. How that all played out, and with what impact on sexuality-based hierarchies and world-views, has everything to do with the specific institutional location.

Moon's analysis is largely focused, with nods to Foucault, on discourse: She's interested in how congregants, in debating homosexuality, debated "the meanings of concepts such as equality, community, sin, and love" (p. 3), developing "everyday theologies" using language and categories that "naturalized" members' views. That discourse is facilitated by their institutional location. For instance, United Methodist Church policy contains ambiguities and tensions that become fodder for the creation of divergent everyday theologies, asserting the need for "proper stewardship" to the "gift" of sexuality while also maintaining that homosexuality is "incompatible with Christian teaching" (p. 22), and acknowledging the possibility of a "valid nonheterosexual mode of being" that, Moon asserts, calls "into question the universality and timelessness of heterosexuality" (p. 22). Here are echoes of Richman's findings about productive indeterminacy in law.

More importantly, Moon says, members of both congregations saw church as a "zone of transcendence" in which the conflicts of secular life could be set aside; conflicts such as those over homosexuality were seen as antithetical to the very spiritual pursuits they sought in religious institutions. Operating with different understandings of God, one congregation suppressed dissent and the other sought to discuss and manage disagreement. Yet members of both repudiated "politics" as "less natural, less timeless, less true, and less ideal than anything else" (p. 11), representing the "self-interest, cynicism, and worldliness" (p. 15) that their church involvement aimed to transcend. Seeking to avoid political conflict, they thus often turned instead to the less debatable language of emotion, especially the narrative

of gay people's pain. This language of emotion, Moon finds, on the one hand "strengthened some of the very political divisions the church decried," and on the other "led to great changes in church policies and responses to homosexuality" (p. 205). Discursive practices surrounding homosexuality, *God, Sex, and Politics* shows, were facilitated by the particular uses, meanings, and actions of their institutional setting, and in turn have affected the institutions themselves.

Missing Pieces and Future Directions

LGBT sociology books are, in a good way, all over the place. This is not to say that they are everywhere, though. If the first part of this century has involved a very productive queering of sociological sub-disciplines, some identifiable gaps in the LGBT sociology bookshelf remain.

For one, bisexuality and bisexuals have received very little book-length attention from sociologists since the 1990s, when Paula Rodriguez Rust's *Bisexuality and the Challenge to Lesbian Politics* and Martin Weinberg, Colin Williams, and Douglas Pryor's *Dual Attraction* were published. (Psychologist Lisa Diamond and literary scholar Marjorie Garber, among others, have written stellar books about bisexuality.) With the exception of Taylor and Rupp's Key West ethnography and Kristin Schilt's recent *Just One of the Guys*, which deftly analyzes the experiences of transgender men in the workplace, it is the same story for transgender people: sociologists are not there yet. (Great books in this area have come from historian Susan Stryker, anthropologist David Valentine, humanities scholar Judith Halberstam, legal scholar Dean Spade, activist Jamison Green, and performer Kate Bornstein, among others.) Bisexuals and transgendered people are included within larger analyses of LGBT issues, sometimes revealingly so, but books remain to be written that attend more closely to their unique social and political formations, the specific ways in which they are socially regulated, and the distinct theoretical challenges they carry.

Second, LGBT sociology books have not journeyed all that far from the United States and Western Europe—or ventured very far

into questions of the global dynamics of LGBT populations, categories, and politics. (For books in this area, consider anthropologists like Martin Manalansan and David Murray, and literary scholars such as Gayatri Gopinath and Tze-Lan D. Sang.) Hector Carrillo's insightful *The Night Is Young: Sexuality in Mexico in the Time of AIDS* and Lionel Cantu, Jr.'s posthumously published *The Sexuality of Migration: Border Crossings and Mexican Immigrant Men* both took great strides in this area. Carrillo investigated how modernization and globalization have affected Mexican views of sex and sexuality, and how those he studied have gone about integrating new scripts of sexuality into traditional Mexican ones. Cantu's study of male immigrants from Mexico to the United States who have sex with men analyzes the intertwining of sexual identity and transnational migration, itself intertwined with global economic processes. Beyond these books (joined now by Currier's strong, comparative study *Out in Africa*), the shelf is mostly bare, highlighting just how much sociological work remains to be done to understand the transnational circulation of LGBT populations, movements, practices, and identities.

Finally, surprisingly few recent LGBT sociology books have taken up sex itself. Others have—read literary scholar Tim Dean's book on barebacking, and anthropologist Margot Weiss' study of BDSM (bondage, discipline, dominance/submission, and sadomasochism), both of which place erotic, bodily encounters and pleasures at the center of their analysis. Sex has made an occasional appearance through mentions of male-male encounters within sociological studies of commercial sex work, and within large-scale survey studies of sexual attitudes and behaviors, but the sex of LGBT sexuality has rarely been the subject of sociology books. As Kevin Walby, the author of *Touching Encounters: Sex, Work, and Male-for-Male Internet Escorting*—an exception to this trend and an exceptional book—puts it, "Sociologists of sexuality must start with bodies coming together, their parts and fluids, the interactions between bodies and the meanings produced therein" (p. 10). LGBT sociology books, you might say, could use some more sex.