

# The 9th Annual American University Conference on Lavender Languages and Linguistics

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[021302]

## ABSTRACTS OF CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

**Note to reader:** These are abstracts of the presentations scheduled for the 9th annual Lav Lgs Conference. Note the attention to female masculinity, to transsexuality, to political economy, to race/ethnic diversities, and to building alternatives to "language of desire."

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### **Abrams, Brett (Washington DC)**

*Languages of desire: Queer vs. gay and lesbian sex in movies of the '90's*

Queer cinema emerged in the early 1990's to challenge previous depictions of gays and lesbians in motion pictures/ The queer movie makers dealt with fantasy and desire in complex ways. Striving to bring political activism and theoretical viewpoints into movies, these film makers raised issues and questioned assumptions regarding gender, sexual interest, community, identity and cinematic genres.

After a decade, the movement is less visible produces less movies and has less commercial appeal. While gays and lesbians today fit somewhat more comfortably into mainstream movies and television shows, queer cinema has been relegated to film festivals, if that. Gay and lesbian films, such as *Trick* and *Broken Hearts Club*, survive while queer cinema is buried.

This presentation focuses on the "heyday" of queer cinema and the representations of queer sexuality. Queer movie makers understood that gender and sexual behavior are socially constructed. They tried to break out of the heterosexual/homosexual binary and put forward a queer vision, one that might seem to be on the margins of the larger culture but at the very center of queer culture. Their movies did not automatically link an individual's masculinity or femininity to their sexual self. Sex became more fluid and sexuality became a category of analysis, away to depict the character on screen and push the audience toward a new understanding of gender, sexual interest and sexual behavior.

This paper highlights the cinematic language of queer movies, and contrast the aims of queer film makers and movie depictions with other films of the period which offer a more "traditional" view of gay and lesbian characters.

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### **Ambrecht, Thomas (William and Mary)**

*Redeeming Himself on Paper: Julien Green's Psychomachic Pen*

Julien Green's oeuvre is inspired by his obsession with what he considered to be two opposing forces in his life: the body and the soul. This conflict manifests itself through Green's desire to be a saint, which made him a devout Catholic, and the (homosexual) desires of his body, which distracted him and kept him from God. Although the psychomachic struggle is not uncommon for many religious persons, in the case of Green, it was the source of both incredible torment and great artistic expression, as is evinced by his twelve-volume autobiography.

Language is an integral component of Green's spirituality-not only as a means of articulating the nature of his conflict, but also as the source of it. Born in 1900 to American family living in France, young Green was taught English by his mother who, intent on raising him a Protestant, read him the King James Bible. Soon after her death when he was fourteen, Green and several other members of his family (including his father) converted to Catholicism, which also meant practicing their religion in French. His original Anglophone religious education and subsequent linguistic and sectarian changes marked him deeply. Even at the end of his life, after becoming a member of *l'Académie Française*, the acme of French literary accomplishment, Green still felt American. This sense of alienation was undoubtedly related to his spirituality.

I will examine crucial moments from Green's writing that address the issue of language either directly as described above, or indirectly through the use of religious symbols. Since the psychomachic conflict was the major motivation for Green's work, I will choose representative excerpts from each of the major genres in which he wrote, all of which are either overtly or covertly autobiographical. Among the documents I will analyze are the *Pamphlet contre les Catholiques de France*, his fanatical first publication, and passages from novels with religious protagonists, *Moïra*, and *Le Malfaiteur*. I will also examine the overtly religious

works written at the end of his life, *Frère François*, a hagiography of Saint Francis, and *Ce qu'il faut d'amour à l'homme*, an essay in which Green constructs a definitive religious persona for himself. In my conclusions I discuss how Green was able to use religion to control his increasingly attenuated sexual desires at the end of his life in order to resolve (or at least think that he had resolved) the psychomachic conflict that spawned his incredibly body of writing.

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**Bell, Chris (Chicago, IL)**

*It's an "us" thing, Miss Thang: The philosophy of the same gender loving identity movement*

Naming is a quintessential component of African-American history and heritage. At times, we have been colored, Negroes, and Black. Although the term we currently use to identify ourselves -- African American -- is a term embraced by many of us, we haven't always had the opportunity to choose what we call ourselves. In essence, for some African-Americans, having little else to point to they can readily call their own, there is a palpable sense of security (read: pride) in our collective name.

In the last decade, an identity movement has launched in the African American lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) communities. This movement encourages African-American LGBT's to renounce the terms "gay" and "lesbian." The movement posits these terms as so inherently entrenched in European history, they can only be applied to non-heterosexual white individuals. African American LGBT's should refer to ourselves as "Same Gender Loving" or "SGL" because this term more succinctly encompasses the breadth of our experience.

In this paper, I provide background on the SGL movement, discuss how the movement is reflected in popular fiction, and examine the pros (celebration of culture and community) and cons (the link to AIDS denialism) of the SGL identity movement.

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**Bramlett, Frank (University of Nebraska at Omaha)**

*Building the body: A corpus of Midwestern gay men's speech*

This paper outlines the construction of a new linguistic corpus. Since some scholars are reluctant to acknowledge the existence of gay speech, the next step is for researchers to provide a corpus for scrutiny. This corpus will do just that. The corpus consists of sociolinguistic interviews conducted with gay men, all of whom are native to the Midwestern United States. All interviews were recorded digitally, transferred to computer and permanently stored on CD-ROM. This report summarizes methodology, scope, and access to the Gay Midwest Corpus and calls for other linguists to construct their own corpora in earnest.

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**Bucholtz, Mary (Texas A&M) and Kira Hall (Colorado)**

*Selfless desires?: Language and the materiality of sexual identity*

Recent proposals to replace an identity-centered approach to language and sexuality with a desire-centered approach overlook the materiality of language as a constitutive practice of sexuality. This paper theorizes sexuality as nonessentialized identity by viewing it through the lens of political economy. Drawing on a range of examples from recent scholarship, we explore four possible relations between language, sexuality, and political economy. In each case, we argue that accounts based solely on desire are inadequate for the understanding of sexuality.

The first relation, reproduction, is rooted in ideological systems that promote hegemonic identities. We take as an example the case of homophobic and heterosexist talk, which through the enforcement of normative identities reproduces a political economy grounded in the institutions of marriage, the nuclear family, and heterosexual reproduction. The second relation, appropriation, involves the recontextualization of available symbolic resources that circulate within the political economy. We consider two types of appropriation: the recontextualization of consumer goods in the late-capitalist service economy as resources for gay identity display (Leap 1996); and the recontextualization of Western gay identity categories by queer Nigerians as a challenge to postcolonial economic inequities (Gaudio forthcoming 2001).

The third relation we examine, commodification, associates the performance of sexual and gender identities with participation in economic exchange, as in the situation of phone sex workers (Hall 1995) and transgendered prostitutes (Kulick 1998). Finally, we discuss resistance, or the rejection of the political-economic status quo, through a discussion of the kotis of India, a lower-middle-class transgendered identity that defines itself in opposition to India's upper-middle-class urban gay and lesbian community. The kotis' linguistic parody of the lower-class transgendered hijras paradoxically functions as an expression of class solidarity.

These examples illustrate that desire is not always relevant to the material ways in which sexuality operates, and even when it is, it is always mediated in some way by identity. Hence the proposal to eliminate identity from the study of language and sexuality, or even to eradicate the field altogether and to erect a field of language and desire in its place, is founded on an overly narrow and

restrictive vision of what sexuality is and how it is negotiated beyond the individual psyche, in the social, political, and economic world. We argue that the approach we take here, unlike rival accounts, has room for desire without excluding or marginalizing identity as a central element in the linguistic and material production of sexuality.

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**Bucholtz, Mary (Texas A&M)**

*Practicing heterosexuals: Sex education, heterosexism, and the limits of the community of practice*

Recent research within language and gender studies has been deeply influenced by the concept of the community of practice, which reframes gender from its traditional definition as a fixed and biologically bound social category to a complex and highly situated social action emerging from mutual but differential orientation to a shared cultural practice. Developing from educational theory, the community of practice improves upon the traditional linguistic concept of the speech community. Perhaps most important is the recognition that members of a community of practice need not be uniform in their identities and practices, and that individuals may be more or less central participants in any given community, especially as they learn to become competent members through observation of and peripheral participation in its main practices.

But the political efficacy of the concept of the community of practice is pushed to its limits when we turn to those communities that constitute themselves through systematic practices of exclusion and marginalization. This point is illustrated through data from a study of teacher and student discourse in a California high school sex education class. Even in this relatively "liberal" classroom, homophobia and heterosexism were everywhere in evidence, and classroom discursive practices guided students into a dominant heterosexual community.

Thus, if the community of practice has ushered in a new era for language and gender studies, one in which research highlights speakers' agency and their creative negotiation of often rigid gender ideologies, attempts to import the concept wholesale into the study of language and sexuality may meet with unanticipated difficulties-difficulties which must be addressed if the concept is to continue to be useful to scholars of language, gender, and sexuality.

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**Busbee, Elizabeth R (Yale)**

*Subversion at Dark Religion: Gender, Language, and Agency in BDSM Performance*

In this paper I examine data obtained during field research at a weekly fetish event at a New England night club, which I will call Dark Religion. The event caters to gothic and industrial music aficionados as well as younger members of the BDSM community. For the purposes of this paper, I have chosen to utilize the term BDSM to refer to sadomasochistic power-play activities. The term BDSM is condensed version of three acronyms: B/D for bondage and discipline, D/S for dominance and submission, and S/M for sadism and masochism. A broad range of relationship styles fit under the heading of BDSM. Individuals involved in BDSM may only practice certain types of activities on an occasional basis, or they may be involved in lifestyle or around-the-clock relationships with another person. In my research, I have been observing individuals participating in public BDSM performances. The extent to which BDSM is a part of the performers' lives outside of the night club varies from individual to individual. Most of the dominants and submissives performing at Dark Religion are women; however, male submissives receive rather different treatment from the head mistress than female submissives do. Roles and hierarchies are examined, including a discussion of removal of submissives' agency through verbal and visual dehumanization.

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**Davis, Erin (Antioch)**

*Passing as One's True Self? Exploring the Multiple Meanings of Transsexual Passing*

The paradox of transsexual passing is that individuals are simultaneously managing their self-presentation while striving for genuine self-representation. Based on interviews with forty transsexual individuals, this research examines different conceptions of transsexual passing and the potential implications of each. While many transsexual individuals understand passing as a means of being genuine, the pressure to be authentic can also create personal and social tensions. This negotiation of authenticity may limit complex, multiple identities, recreate social hierarchies, and reinforce oppressive gender norms. However, the public interpretation and emphasis on illegitimate identification ignores the extent to which transsexual "passing" is done out of a sense of authenticity. Transsexual individuals believe that, despite having unique life experiences, their claims to normative gender identities are legitimate. Thus, the usage of passing terminology undermines transsexual individuals' own understandings of their gender identification.

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**Delph-Janiurek, Tom (University of Wales, Lampeter)**

*Theo never speaks -- he's a bit weird": Gender, sexuality and local 'rules' in conversations in the workplace.*

The work of various commentators has established prime links between gender, sexuality and language, but attention has often been focused on the categorization or interpellation of individuals by authoritative social institutions working in ways that accord with 'global' hegemonic discourses relating to gender and sexuality. This paper draws attention to how performances of gender and sexuality may be authored and interpreted within the constraints of local 'rules' operating within the workplace. It draws on narratives produced in interviews with research workers in 'hard' science laboratories in the north of England, who comprised micro-communities of proximity and practice through sharing the same work locations and collaborating to various degrees in work routines. Focusing in particular on how the ostensibly 'personal' and 'private' are disclosed in conversation, and on bodily and verbal performances of gender and sexuality, it draws attention to various particular ways that interactants hail each other as gendered and sexualized social beings in these spaces. Interviewees describe how biographical stories are developed around individuals, based on fragmentary information that combines conversational disclosure with readings of bodily and spatial behaviors.

What emerges is how gendered and sexualized understandings of others may be bound up with other notions of sameness and difference connected to notions of age, race and ethnicity. These are (re)constituted according to local sets of 'rules' and knowledges shared amongst members of what Linda Hutcheon (1994) has termed discursive communities, or those drawing on a shared discursive repertoire. This repertoire shapes local notions of social intelligibility and viability and may be closely bound up with the conversational operation of workplace communities of practice.

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**Delph-Janiurek, Tom (U Wales- Lampeter)**

*"Wife? What? Sorry?": Vocal 'drag' in teaching rooms in Higher Education*

Work in linguistics has described how gendered voices are produced within physiological limitations imposed by vocal anatomy, but also how interpretations of voices are shaped around dominant discourses relating to gender and sexuality. Within these two sets of constraints voices are (re)constituted as gendered and sexualised according to features such as pitch, intonation and rate of speech. However, the contributions that bodies and interactional roles may play in shaping interpretations of gendered and sexualised voices has been relatively neglected. Work in geography has drawn attention to how bodies are (re)constituted as gendered and sexualised in particular ways within specific spatial contexts.

Bringing together these two collections of work, and drawing on theoretical ideas from the work of Judith Butler (1990, 1993), this paper presents reasons for regarding voices as a form of 'drag', as bodily stylisations assessed in relation to the extent they either do or do not cohere with the dominant discourses of gender. Focusing on teaching spaces in Higher Education and drawing on empirical work conducted in the north of England, it highlights how voices may be interpreted in close conjunction with embodiment, interactional roles and relations. It also draws attention to some problems that vocal performances of heterosexual versions of masculinity may create in these spaces.

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**Elder, Glen (University of Vermont) and Bill Leap (American University)**

*Linguistic inventions of gay Cape Town: Language, globalization, and the constructions of local "gayscape"*

Traditional analyses of globalization assert widespread evidence showing that the composite parts of cities are becoming homogenized by overarching and overbearing "global" processes, including international technologically facilitated flows of capital and information, cross border migrations, and movements of peoples and goods. What results are so-called global cities characterized by appearances of similarity and interchangeability.

Recent work in cultural geography and anthropology shows that the "global trumps local" accounts actually sees local places and experiences through a selectively racist, sexist, nationalistic and transphobic lens which is heavily influenced by the particulars of US gay history, aesthetics, and struggles; the proliferation of "pride parades" internationally serves as an example. Among other results, these accounts tend to undermine other important political strategies of resistance and co-optation being acted out in local places.

Accounts of gay and lesbian everyday life geographies in Cape Town, South Africa prompt a critique of these accounts of globalization, especially when these accounts are read against current efforts to marker selective spaces in that city to a highly mobile gay and lesbian identified international traveler. Through an examination of spacialized visions of gay and lesbian life in Cape Town, provided by travel promoters, tourists and residents from the City Centre , suburbs and townships, we demonstrate the competing and overlapping scales through which the Cape Town's gay city is now being imagined and discursively constructed, and we show how global influences in this setting reinforce constructions of privilege and strengthen technologies of race/class segregation and exploitation in this "globalizing" urban setting.

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**Etz, Rebecca (Rutgers)**

*Fashioning identities: What's hot and what's not in designer LGB labels*

Examining the tensions between two competing LGB nightclubs in New Zealand's Manawatu region reveals the indispensable contribution of ethnography to Community of practice theory. Ethnography, like CoP, is interested in "deciphering the mechanics of meaning-making", focusing on "actions, strategies and values, social practices and relations within and across groups" (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 1999, cited in Morrish 2000). A focus on language attributes, rather than structural and cultural interests would fail to explain why Club Far Out is called "straight" by Club Q members, why Club Q members reject the label "queer" and why "selling out" is denounced while "buying in" is supported.

My research uses ethnography to examine the linguistic strategies of one lesbian CoP in Manawatu, New Zealand as it negotiates two positions: one within New Zealand's LGB community, and the other within a larger transnational LGBT community. I use changes in the definitions of gay and lesbian terms as they are imported from the United States and filtered through a New Zealand screen to demonstrate the linguistic influence of political, cultural and economic structures. The use of language within the lesbian CoP reveals that participation in New Zealand's gay and lesbian community is a constant balancing act between appropriate performances of community and national loyalty as lesbians deal with the tension of recognizing the US as the source of (cultural/political) domination and the source of (gay and lesbian) inspiration.

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**Faiman-Silva, Sandra (Bridgewater State College)**

*Encounters at the Borders: Gendered Space as Contested Space in Provincetown, Massachusetts*

Provincetown, Massachusetts is a coastal New England fishing village, artist colony, and tourist mecca of approximately 3,500 year-round residents, where gay men, lesbians and other gender benders have entered the mainstream of local community life, interacting with 'straights' across the spectrum of social arenas. Street theater is a venue for expressions of gender borders and border-crossings. Gendered interactions occur at as forms of "identity politics" in which citizens, through "positioned discourse" (see Amit-Talai 1996), claim and contest social spaces, symbols, and resources. This paper will explore Provincetown 'street theater' as positioned discourse to reveal how citizens maintain, contest, challenge and reconcile social boundaries of difference.

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**Fejes, Fred (Florida Atlantic University)**

*From Invert to Pervert: The Construction of the Public Identity of the Homosexual, Miami 1954-1977*

The creation of the modern image and knowledge of the homosexual has been studied and critiqued by historians of science and media, and literary scholars. While such work has amply detailed the history of scientific theorizing, media images and literary constructions of homosexual identity and desire, often little consideration has been given to the larger issues associated with the politics of the public representations of homosexuality.

In this paper I give an account of the history of the public representation of homosexuality in Miami, Florida from the mid 1950s to 1977. Drawing upon concepts developed in cultural and media studies, I analyze the development of the "public identity" of the homosexual, or the body of discourses-- the images, signs, codes, myths, narratives and folk tales, along with the attitudes and feelings associated with them--that constitutes a "public knowledge" or "common sense" understanding of homosexuals. Such identity is primarily constituted and circulated within the public sphere with the mass media as major channels of dissemination

An important site for the development of this identity has been "moral panics," or episodes of intense media activity in which the homosexuals have been defined as a threat to the social and moral well-being of the community. Knowledge of homosexuals and homosexuality was developed in Miami during three major periods of moral panic. Fearful that Miami had a reputation of being lax on homosexuals, the Miami media in the summer of 1954 conducted a major campaign to close down bars catering to homosexuals. In the mid 1960s, echoing the concerns of the state legislative investigation headed by the Johns Committee, the Miami media publicized a spurious campaign by the police morals squad against the homosexual recruitment of high school boys. And in 1977 the campaign led by Anita Bryant widely publicized the notion of the homosexual as child molester. In each of these moral panics a understanding of the homosexual as pervert was constructed, amplified and widely disseminated. Only in the last episode was there an effort to challenge the dominant media constructions.

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**Grimard, Marcel (OISE/U Toronto)**

*Conceptualizing a Discursive Space for the Gay and Lesbian French-speaking Minority in Canada.*

Works from Foucault, Sedgwick or Rubin have inspired theoretical models to challenge heterosexuality as the social normative frame. In the Canadian context, Gays and Lesbians Studies or Queer Studies have ignored the linguistic identity. At the same time,

studies on francophone linguistic minorities, have wiped out certain marginalized groups and by doing so have presented a homogenized linguistic community purged of groups considered "deviants." How can we explain the invisibility of the Francophone Queer community? Is it possible to reconcile these two fields to create a new paradigm where sexual identity and language identity are taken into account, including other identities? This paper will introduce a conceptual model with the attempt to integrate both Gay and Lesbians or Queer Studies and the Social Reproduction Theory. We will examine how social geography influences the construction of specific identity discourses about sexuality and language and other identities.

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**Hall, Kira (Colorado)**

*Language Choice and Sexual Identity in New Delhi*

This paper investigates the role of language choice in the construction of sexual identity in New Delhi, India. The language practices that characterize the emergent urban gay and lesbian community contrast sharply with those of the hijras or kotis, transgendered communities that claim an indigenous lineage dating back to the eunuchs of the medieval Mughal courts. Tensions between the newer gay community and the long-standing hijra and koti communities materialize in language choice, with the upper-middle class gay community embracing English as an index of progressive sexuality and the comparatively lower class hijra and koti communities employing a variety they call "Farsi" as a marker of indigenous sexuality. The latter variety, structurally consistent with Hindi yet unintelligible to Hindi speakers, is characterized by distinctive intonational patterns and an extensive alternative lexicon. Although Koti/Hijra Farsi is unrelated to Persian Farsi, its speakers conceptualize it as the language of the Mughals, employing it in the construction of an historically authentic sexual identity. When gay-identified and koti-identified Hindi speakers come together, as in the non-governmental organization where I conducted my fieldwork, conversational interaction reveals much about local ideologies regarding the relationship between sexual identity, class, and language. Both groups find Hindi at times inadequate for the expression of same-sex desire, switching into either English or Farsi to distinguish themselves as gay or koti. Drawing from interviews and conversations I recorded in New Delhi during the spring of 1999, I uncover political, social, and global influences governing the choice of English, Hindi, or Koti/Hijra Farsi in liminal Delhi.

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**Hayes, Jarrod (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor)**

*La créolité's Queer Mangrove*

In Francophone Caribbean writing, there have been three paradigms for thinking the cultural unity of the Caribbean: the Afrocentric movement called *négritude* (represented in the Caribbean by Aimé Césaire), and two models that emphasized and valorized the cultural and linguistic *métissage* that resulted in Caribbean identities, *antillanité* (propounded by Edouard Glissant) and *créolité*, articulated by Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau, and Raphael Confiant. Notably, all these models have been developed by men and, interestingly, by Martinican men. Each successive movement was articulated in opposition to its predecessors in what might be described as an Oedipal revolt (in spite of Fanon's assertion that there was no Oedipus in the Caribbean). In the case of *créolité*, which emphasizes linguistic *métissage* over other kinds, the asserted difference from its most immediate predecessor is especially precarious. Many critics have argued that the cultural unity of the Caribbean described (invented?) by the *créolistes* is only obtained at the price of certain exclusions, most notably that of women and homosexuals. Other cultural critics have pointed out how the *négritude-antillanité-créolité* lineage (a patrilineal family tree indeed) ignores the ways in which even other Francophone Caribbean islands (indeed, even that of Guadeloupe, which shares a remarkably similar history) differ from Martinique. Can models of cultural unity in the Caribbean be obtained only through excluding what disturbs that unity? Must cultural unity always mean homogeneity?

This paper argues that there is a genealogy of Caribbean thought that exceeds the Oedipal complexes of its founding fathers. It begins by considering the image of the mangrove, deployed by all three movements mentioned above. In particular, it examines the ways in which Maryse Condé's *La traversée de la mangrove* both exemplifies the ideals of *créolité* and disrupts its exclusionary moves. It examines the figure of the *makoum* (Creole for "faggot"), which circulates in the novel as the objective of gossip (as opposed to the truth effect of realist representation). In spite of their valorization of Creole languages, in most passages of the *créolistes'* novels where the *makoumé* appears, they resort to a French orthography of the word, "Ma Commère" (in French, an expression of the "kinship" relation between godmother and godfather, but also the way one refers to a woman who gossips). In spite of Fanon's assertion that homosexuality (like Oedipus) does not exist in the Caribbean (even though he, like the *créolistes*, admits the existence of "Ma Commères"), Condé integrates the *makoumé* into a model of Caribbean unity whose roots, like those of the mangrove, are queer indeed.

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**Higgins, Ross (Concordia)**

*Reading AIDS in the Gay Press and the Failure of Safe Sex.*

The late 1990s saw an increasing breakdown in safe sex practices in North American gay communities, usually explained as the result of complacency due to the effectiveness of the new combination therapies which are assimilated to a "cure" in the popular imaginary. My paper takes this as one factor but seeks to identify levels of explanation. I propose that the current failure in safe sex practices also stems from the shift from the militant press of the early 1980s to today's commercial papers, leaving gay communities with diminished resources for discussing and solving problems. This shift has been one element in the ongoing inter-generational change in the meaning of gay community with the arrival of new cohorts of young gays whose experience and understanding of

AIDS have differed radically from those of the first group to confront it. I will examine evidence for these views by comparing the reporting and other types of representation (including silences) of AIDS in the Montreal gay press at selected moments over the twenty years of the pandemic and will seek to highlight commonalities between the gay experience and that of other groups where success in containing the disease has been mixed.

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**Jacobs, Greg (York)**

*"Performativity", "Verbal hygiene" and "Communities of Practice": Vocally resisting hegemonic masculinity(ies).*

Empirical evidence suggests that listener raters can identify some male voices as "gay sounding" with virtually 100% agreement. While this strand of research has focused primarily on phonetic cues that distinguish straight-sounding from gay-sounding voices, it has paid little attention to theorizing these results. The purpose of this paper is to lay out the theoretical frameworks to be employed in a large-scale study of the use of the "gay voice" with the aim of uncovering the social function(s) of such linguistic usage. These frameworks are community of practice theory (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet), verbal hygiene (Cameron), and performativity (Butler). In addition I will lay out the methodological tools particular to linguistics -- critical discourse analysis (van Dijk), interactional sociolinguistics (Goffman, Gumperz), and the ethnography of communication (Hymes) - that will allow the analysis of specific instances of talk and particular uses of the "gay voice". Such usage may include resisting, subverting, or perhaps reinforcing traditional conceptions of masculinity.

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**Johnson, E. Patrick (Northwestern)**

*"Quaring' Queer: Troping the Trope"*

Although queer studies has the potential to transform the way scholars theorize sexuality in conjunction with other identity formations, the paucity of attention given to race and class in queer studies represents a significant theoretical gap. Most current formulations of queer theory either ignore the categories of race and class altogether or theorize their effects in discursive rather than material terms. To suture that gap, this paper proposes "quare" studies as a vernacular rearticulation and deployment of theory to accommodate racialized sexual knowledge.

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**Kanner, Melinda (Antioch)**

*Toward a Semiotics of Butch*

Recent theoretical and experiential discussions focusing on the continuum and schism between butch lesbians and FTM transgendered persons have neglected the central and underlying principle of native knowledge. This research focuses on the category of butch as it is understood by the queer community. Using slides and photographs drawn from popular media (movies, magazines, web sites) subjects are asked to rate images for the degrees to which specific features do or do not conform to an abstract understanding of "butch." On every dimension, two kinds of knowledge are sought: 1) Is X feature a signifier of butchness? 2) To what degree is this representation of X feature butch?

This research draws on several traditions for its spirit and methodology. First, the anthropological literature that seeks to formalize native categories of sorting based on understood affinities provides the conceptual basis. Second, exemplar prototype research that focus on typicality, diagnostic criteria, and sorting judgments provides methodological strategies. Finally, the work of Les Wright and others in developing the Natural Bear Classification System for identifying and sorting aesthetics, proclivities, and practices has provided the inspiration for this research.

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**Knopp, Lawrence (University of Minnesota - Duluth)**

*Lavender languages and material spatialities*

Spatialized language and expressions permeate queer cultures (as they do all cultures). However most academic analyses of this focus on such articulations' metaphorical and symbolic significance (e.g., discussions of the closet, positionalities, social location, etc.). Rarely is the more material spatiality of queer experiences (built environments, physical routes, physical boundaries, etc.) taken as seriously. The sexuality and space literature in Geography, as well as in allied fields such as Anthropology and Urban and Regional Planning, has begun to correct this. This work often emphasizes not only the materiality of space and spatial relations, but of power relations generally.

In this presentation I consider the role of very material (and spatial) experiences of political-economic power (especially class) in the construction of place-based queer cultures, identities, and politics. I draw on my own and others' work to argue that place-based

commodity markets (especially land markets), spatially-constrained labor markets, spatial practices of the state (e.g., jurisdictional organization), and other material experiences of locality both shape and are shaped by equally distinctive and material *new* spatialities of queer resistance. I then temper this conclusion with a recognition that spatialized practices and representations operating at more micro and macro scales are also important, and that ultimately the distinction between the material and the metaphorical/symbolic is itself problematic.

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**Labrie, Normand (U Toronto)**

*The Migration of French-speaking Gay Men and Lesbians to Toronto: from Stigmatization to Social Mobility*

Analyzing GLBT discourse from the angle of political economy, this paper will focus on social processes which explain the geographic mobility of French-speaking Gay men and Lesbians who have moved from small traditional French-speaking communities into a large multicultural English-speaking urban center. It will focus on how migration, linked to social mobility, has transformed their sense of identity, as individuals who possess a variety of identity markers, related namely to their language practices or sexual orientation, which can be used either by others as stigmas with the objective to exclude or to exert power upon them, or by themselves as resources in order to access various material or symbolic benefits. This paper will be based on the analysis of interviews collected from six participants, three men and three women, who took part to the project, whose aim was to understand, through a discourse analysis of identity construction, how Francophone communities in Canada currently adapt to social and economic change. It will demonstrate that stigmatization based on sexual orientation in close-knit linguistic communities, does lead in some cases to geographic and/or social mobility, whereas sexual identity serves as a resource to get integrated into an alternative community, as well as to access a certain material security or professional advancement. Geographic and social mobility does not only impact on the languages practices of French-speaking Gays and Lesbians, but also of the construction of their new identities.

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**Lammers, Cece (Washington DC)**

*God Doesn't Use the Men's Room*

This presentation is about the struggles of one butch dyke to find her spiritual footing, to connect with a higher power that she can relate to and have a true personal connection with, and the language barrier she has found. It is the story of a dyke, raised in the catholic church, who rebelled but still kept a connection with "God." Her more recent search for spiritual fulfillment has taken her away from even the Christian-based gay and lesbian church and out on her own. She believes that the use of the word "he" to describe "God" has left many Lesbians without a spiritual guide, and thus without the power that comes from this connection. This is one of the most basic connections of language and power -- the naming of "God."

She explores the constructs set in place by Mary Daly in the late 70s and early 80s regarding "God = He" and the patriarchal dominance created by the ruling gender's use of the word "he" to refer to "God" and asks why there isn't a spiritual gathering place for Lesbians that see "God" as a mother figure, complete with all the love and compassion of a female. This presentation is personal, autobiographical, and all about the words "he" and "she" and the power of language.

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**Lancaster, Roger (George Mason University)**

*Exploring postfordist sexualities: Starting points for lgbtq language inquiry*

Recent works in lesbigay studies deploy concepts like "heteronormativity," "heterosexism," and "gay invisibility" in theoretical terms unchanged since the dawn of the first day of feminism and gay liberation. The state of queer theory thus seems oddly incommensurate with present-day realities.

Women still struggle for equality, but today's zone of contestation is very different from that at the beginning of the women's movement, when abortion was illegal, domestic violence went largely undiscussed, and it was taken as an article of faith that women were dispositionally unfit to practice most professions. Gays and lesbians still have too few rights, but our situation is scarcely comparable to that of three decades ago: a time when the police routinely pulled lesbians and gay men out of bars, loaded them into wagons and took them to police stations to be photographed and fingerprinted, a time when the official organs of the medical psychological establishment defined same-sex desire as a disorder, and when sodomy laws were actively enforced in many states.

This paper considers ongoing changes in American sexual culture since the '60s. It argues that the social movements of the '60s and '70s did not transform everyday life by dint of some herculean act of will--nor even as the cumulative effects of a thousand daily engagements in a thousand different battlefields. Rather, it suggests that radical changes in gender, sexuality, family life and public culture were secured by shifts in the deepest substrata of modern society: by institutional transformations party to a general transition from fordist capitalism to postfordism. Language has not been exempt from these changes, and these remarks establish a baseline against which postfordist effects on lgbtq-linguistic practices can be more fully explored.

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**Leap, Bill (American U)**  
*Discovering gay city*

"How I first discovered gay city" is a widely attested genre of story-telling in gay men's English, and a close analysis of these texts reveals much about the understandings of urban gay landscape which are acquired through the discovery experience. Understanding of landscape assumes access to the physical and social terrain in question, or access to descriptions of that terrain constructed by others. Either way, understandings of landscape becomes "determined" by the workings of opportunity structure, inequality and power, and language- of landscape and of discovery - becomes a key element in that determination.

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**Livia, Anna (U California - Berkeley)**  
*Passing, trespassing and false footing: On being taken for a man*

In summers 2000 and 2001, I conducted a series of interviews with lesbian-identified women in Paris and Lille. One of the questions I asked was whether they had ever been taken for a man. Everyone, however butch or femme their self-presentation, replied in the affirmative and proceeded to recount numerous, lively and polished anecdotes about such gender mistakes.

The anecdotes mostly described encounters with strangers and were almost invariably dismissed as "their problem not mine". The most frequently reported reaction was to laugh. One woman asserted "je suis en travail d'étude par rapport de là" (I'm studying that very thing myself), adding "je le contre là, j'ai une maîtrise complète de la situation" (I'm in control, I have complete mastery of the situation). Another woman, who reported being searched by a bouncer at a nightclub, claimed that even when he searched between her legs (believing her to be a man), it was still "not a problem." In this paper I discuss the way these gender mistakes are described, looking particularly at the construction of the mistake itself. Who is exactly is "mis-taken"? For what reason is the mistake made? Using Kira Hall's concept of cross-expressing (1995:183-216), meaning "the performance of the vocal and verbal garb associated with the other sex," and Allan Bérubé's concept of "trespassing" (1997), or "the deliberate violation of boundaries", I investigate these violations and the implicit assumptions behind them. Boundary violations break old alliances and create new ones, which in turn fragment existing communities of practice. The way the anecdote is told can support or threaten these imagined communities. While gender passing may simply be unnoticed, trespassing is intentional, used as a face-threatening device. An interpretation of "false footing," in contrast, allows the old alliances to remain intact.

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**McElhinny, Bonnie (U Toronto)**  
*Beyond queer peers: Towards linguistic accounts of stratified sexualities*

A large number of recent studies place same-sex, peer interactions at the center of queer linguistics. Although such studies provide an important corrective to work that focuses largely on heterosexual couples, I argue that in their current state they also adopt uncritically the hegemonic ideology of sexuality and gender in the US, an ideology which assumes that sexuality (and gender) can be positioned within a "private" sphere and should be understood as individual identities vs. structural forces.

Focusing on peer interactions does not necessarily challenge the idea that sexuality and gender are linked to individuals., Instead, we should organize our studies around stratified sexualities, which I define as the way that sexuality is understood or accomplished differently according to inequalities that are based on hierarchies of class, race, ethnicity, gender, place in global economy, migration status and object of desire. Stratified sexualities are thus structured by multiple and perhaps conflicting social, economic and political forces. I examine what kinds of projects this concept might enable in four domains: Labor, medicine, migration and colonialism.

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**Moonwomon, Birch (Cal State University -Sonoma)**  
*Polarities and the discourse of the distaff side of FTM.*

Lesbian partners of FTM transsexuals who continue in mated relationships with transitioning/transitioned persons face repositioning of gender and sexuality themselves. Women who may have been fems in relation to butches are, to some extent, heterosexualized in social position, even if not in internal sense of self, when they become females in relation to males. Female-to-female orientation is changed in the most intimate relationships to female-to-male orientation, a rearrangement that is inherently in some conflict with female interests.

A first discourse analysis of website statements and chatroom conversations of women so situated reveals a pattern of mixed stance. Lesbian and gay world discourse mixes with language from the transsexual community. While these discourses derive from and construct much knowledge in common, there are important differences of assumptions about such things as gender dichotomy, essential identity, and homosocial/homosexual orientations. FTM partner discourse voices tensions among bodies of knowledge

concerning gender and sexuality. The interdiscursivity in process here creates a linguistic discourse for the backgrounded participants (the women partners) in a politicized body of knowledge (that of FTM transsexuality). The chat of these women is a first dispersion area, a location through which the language of a certain area of knowledge moves from elite or expert expression to common expression.

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**Morrish, Liz (Nottingham Trent University)**

*"That's so typical of Peter - as soon as there's a cock-up he tries to sit on it": British Broadsheet Press versus Peter Mandelson 1997-2001*

Britain's Labour government, in power since 1997, has been determined to disassociate itself from the problems of 'sleaze' which overtook the previous Conservative administration. To that end, any minister suspected by the press of the slightest moral turpitude has been expected to fall on his sword. There has been a subsequent ambivalence regarding the place of homosexuality in a hierarchy of moral panics which has mirrored the uncertainty of a government still unable to repeal anti-gay legislation. The result has been that ministers suspected of being gay have been hounded by the press on other pretexts, e.g. financial scandal or allegations of incompetence, and these have been the vehicle by which the minister has eventually been outed. This reveals indecision in Britain about whether or not gay identity should disqualify a minister from office.

A selection of newspaper texts will follow the developing story of a former Minister who resigned in January 2001 from the Labour government. Up until just prior to his resignation, there had been a press embargo on mentioning the minister's homosexuality, however this was widely rumored. Press coverage of the minister before the resignation and after will be contrasted in order to show that outing is not always a direct speech act, and that journalists have access to several other strategies which are less transparent, but easily decodable. Texts will demonstrate that even in the face of an embargo on references to homosexuality a number of pragmatic devices are deployed in order to send an unequivocal message:

- \* Coded references to homosexual acts and gay sensibilities
- \* Embedding references to the minister in a discourse of gay suggestion
- \* Association of gay identity with undesirable characteristics
- \* Minister portrayed as camp, hedonistic and narcissistic

Linguistic representations of camp will be further investigated with reference to a framework suggested by Harvey (2000, Describing camp talk: language/pragmatics/politics. *Language and Literature* 9 (3). 240-260 ) which outlines four strategies: Paradox, inversion, ludicrism and parody.

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**Park, Krista (University of Maryland - College Park)**

*The Scarecrow and the Crucifixion: The Media's Indictment of Laramie in the Death of Matthew Shepard*

In an article on the filming of the film "The Laramie Project" in an April 2001 issue of the Cheyenne, Wyoming newspaper the Wyoming Tribune-Eagle, Mike Ryan, the location manager for "The Laramie Project" film explained that the media version of Matthew Shepard's death described Laramie as "a hick town - that somehow the cow town of Laramie had killed Matthew."

By comparing popular press and artists' depictions of Laramie with my own personal observations and academic descriptions of the town and the murder, I affirm Ryan's belief that the town of Laramie is being blamed for the death of Matthew Shepard. Two specific images are essential to the discourse that shifts the blame for Shepard's death from Russell Henderson and Aaron McKinnley to the town of Laramie: 1) The Cow Town: Laramie as a simple, rural town that does not appreciate people from larger, more urban areas; and 2) The Scarecrow/ Matt Shepard Crucified: Shepard as an almost religious martyr who died at the feet of The Cow Town tyrant.

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**Provencher, Denis (University of Wisconsin - La Crosse)**

*'Faire son coming-out' or 'sortir du placard'? The search for French authenticity in the coming-out process*

In this paper, I compare the coming-out process for gay men in the US and France. To accomplish this, I conducted a series of interviews with gay-identified men in both Caen and Paris, France and compared those responses to those analyzed in the US context by William Leap in *Word's Out: Gay Men's English*. In Leap's US study, participants often describe their experience as moving from a "desert of nothing" into a new world full of gay experiences. Indeed, American gays often describe the need to "come out" and fill a gap in their lives by seeking out "information about homosexuality."

In contrast, French gay men do not articulate their experiences in quite the same terms. During the interviews in France, I asked men to discuss their own coming-out process. The majority of these interviewees do not talk about this practice in terms of "coming out" ["faire son coming-out"] or "coming out of the closet" ["sortir du placard"]. Indeed, when prompted to talk about these terms,

they are able to define and use them in meaningful ways. However, most interviewees do not independently call upon these expressions when talking about their own discovery of same-sex preference.

Interestingly, many French gay men discuss how they had lead "full lives" before coming to terms with their own sexual preference. These speakers do not explicitly foreground issues of confusion, isolation or loneliness during the coming-out process as documented in the US context. In fact, neither the "desert" nor the "closet" seems to hold any particular metaphoric value for French gays despite the regular use of the term "coming out" in many commercial print publications (gay and straight press). Moreover, French gays do not necessarily seek out information about homosexuality and gay experience in a "self help" way that is typical of the US gay experience. Instead, many of them simply talk about leaving behind a "false self", and assuming a role in society in which they are "true to themselves" and their loved ones.

In this paper, I show how the linguistic data collected during these interviews illustrate discourses that are part and parcel of a French linguistic tradition. First, I demonstrate that these interviews concerning "coming out" and "discovering the true self" draw on French discourses that emerge during other moments in French history-specifically related to the notion of the "self" derived from both the neo-classic (17<sup>th</sup> century) and contemporary (20<sup>th</sup> century) periods. Next, I will illustrate how gay French text making related to "coming out" draws on an "authentic" French tradition that has long-maintained a strict separation between discourses dealing with issues related to public and private life. A seemingly "natural" and perhaps invisible boundary is linguistically maintained between these two spheres such that the individual never feels the need to "confess" or "come out" in a way that is typical of a Protestant (American) tradition. Consequently, it is impossible for the "desert" or the "closet" to function within a paradigm that does not provide for such cultural and linguistic distinctions. In conclusion, despite the emergence of North-Atlantic constructions of gay culture and the circulation of a "universal gay identity" across various national boundaries (Altman), French gay men articulate a discovery of the "homosexual self" that remains closely linked to a French linguistic tradition.

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**Redmon, David (Gettysburg College)**

*Queering criminology: Public sex and gay space during Mardi Gras*

On the corner of Bourbon Street and St. Anne during Mardi Gras in New Orleans are various GLBT bookstores, dance clubs, and bars. Although men occupy most of this space, it nevertheless provides revelers the possibility of participating in numerous stimulating, erotic, and sexual activities. Men openly dance to loud music, masturbate each other, kiss in groups, hold hands, and flash their dicks. Some have sex in clubs. So, imagine walking Bourbon Street during Mardi Gras and suddenly coming across two men performing oral sex in public named Karl and Tom. How does one respond to their act and which language should be used to "name" the act? Is oral sex in public during Mardi Gras an inscription of gay visibility and demarcation of gay space? Are Karl and Tom challenging the heterosexual identity of streets, or reinforcing masculinity? Is it a pleasurable, intimate, and playful activity, or is it political, or criminal? Does oral sex in public during Mardi Gras have artistic value? The language used to answer these questions and construct the act depends on where one is situated. For instance, the New Orleans Police Department defines Karl and Tom's act of oral sex in public as a felony crime against morality, while many of the spectators define it as an artistic act. Religious discourse constructs the event as "sinful," whereas entrepreneurs define the act as a commodity. Indeed, the language used to describe and "name" the act can perform various outcomes, ranging from time in jail to time in hell. This paper uses a case study of two men - Karl and Tom - who performed oral sex in public during Mardi Gras as part of an inquiry into how language constructs various interpretations of oral sex in public during Mardi Gras on the corner of Bourbon and St. Anne Street.

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**Sauntson, Helen (Kingston University)**

*Examining lesbian conversations as discourses of resistance*

In this paper, I aim to explore some of the ways in which lesbians construct their gender and sexuality identities through their spoken discourse. The data collected for this paper comprises transcripts of casual conversations which take place between groups of women identifying as lesbians. The conversations have been analysed according to two sets of linguistic criteria:

1. The conversations have firstly been analysed in terms of any explicit references they contain to lesbian identities and relationships. Such explicit references range from individual lexical items to chunks of narrative occurring across the discourse. These references often reveal ways in which the interactants construct their identities as resistant to those of their heterosexual counterparts.
2. The conversations have also been analysed in terms of their structure. This provides information about how lesbian identities and relationships are constructed through the discourse in more subtle ways. The conversation structures have been analysed using Francis and Hunston's (1992) system of discourse analysis, a system which typifies many British models of spoken discourse analysis. The analysis of the discourse structure suggests that the women in the research are concerned with constructing

*collaborative* lesbian identities through their spoken interactions. Thus, the women's conversations are seen as sites for the collaborative co-construction of gender and sexuality identities.

The preliminary conclusions reached in this research are that the women in the conversations produce discourses which frequently resist heteronormative ideologies about gender and sexuality through both the content and the structure of their everyday conversations.

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**Stewart, Christopher (Case Western Reserve)**

*Talking Sanskrit, Talking Sex: Isherwood's Vedanta*

In his spiritual autobiography, *My Guru and His Disciple*, Christopher Isherwood narrates his conversion from the Episcopalianism of his childhood to Vedantic Hinduism. His conversion was facilitated by Vedanta's use of the Sanskrit language, which defamiliarized metaphysical concepts and allowed him to step beyond the childhood religious culture he qualifies as "puritan." Despite his professed unacceptability with many aspects of Indian culture, Isherwood writes, "I was grateful to Vedanta for speaking Sanskrit." This paper explores the ramifications of Isherwood's statement. Isherwood's sect of Hinduism (Advaita Vedanta) is largely dismissive of sex and sexual desire. Despite his long association with the Vedanta movement, Isherwood remained sex-positive and was an important voice in the American gay rights movement of the 1970s.

I argue that beyond simple defamiliarization, the foreignness of Sanskrit and the need to translate/explicate its terminology permitted Isherwood to conceive of a polymorphous religious and sexual identity unprecedented in either Christian or Vedantic discourses. This identity (or identities) is grounded in human relationship, including the mentoring relationship suggested by his title, as well as the romantic relationships shared with Don Bachardy and many others. While transmitted linguistically in the autobiography and other texts, Isherwood's narration relies on affect, ellipsis, and the representation of persons rather than on precisely conceptual language to convey his personal transformation and to advance an apology for a post-Christian queer spirituality.

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**Surkan, Kim (University of Minnesota)**

*To be or not to be butch: The queering effect of female masculinity in film*

Representing female masculinity on film has been a controversial business for some time, largely because of the historical association of the particular gender nonconformity of butch self-expression with lesbianism. Some female characters are more easily read as butch than others, and for different reasons. In this presentation, I examine butch expression through verbal and non-verbal cues in a range of films, including the Alien series, Bound, Miss Congeniality, If These Walls Could Talk 2, and Fried Green Tomatoes., in order to analyze when and how characters became butch and for what reasons. In some films, the presence of the "unnatural" butch character is a problem to be solved or resolved. In others, she becomes a vehicle for the articulation of lesbian desire. Regardless of directorial intent, I argue, the portrayal of gender deviance through the representation of female masculinity operates as a queering force, as it often shifts the balance of the gender identities of other characters in the film as we read them in a new context. Operating as a quick signifier for queerness, the butch character on screen offers lesbian audiences a point of affiliation for resistant reading even when heterosexuality is reinforced and affirmed by the film's plot or directorial choices. In this respect, the failure of butches to be butch and/or the failure of butches to be lesbian offers an interesting study of the language of gender presentation in contemporary society,.

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**Tattelman, Ira (Washington DC)**

*The Hot Tub: Negotiating sex in suburbia*

Where people gather and leave marks affects both the social organization of groups and our understanding of the physical environment. People interact, exchange and connect within a spatial context. The spaces, in which identities are expressed, are the result of design decisions. Architecture communicates an ideological and economic make-up through gestures and signs, structure and setting. Users negotiate through these learned symbols, adjusting to the institutional, cultural and psychological forces that influence our physical surroundings. Since architecture (or design) communicates through a recognizable, familiar or understandable language, when that language changes, one must take notice.

In big cities, full of stimulation and activity, "alternative" lifestyles are not new. But in suburbia, they take some getting used to. There have always been GLTB's in suburbia, but now they are more open and active. GLBT's are decorating their great rooms, turning their extra bedrooms into offices and transforming their green lawns into garden paradises. While some of the homes include children, many are more likely to include a dog rather than a pre-schooler. The owners are also more inclined to install a hot tub than a swimming pool. The space and "language" of the suburban home must adjust to these new influences.

Hot tubs provide a gathering space and a space of relaxation. Within its waters, one finds conversation and sociability. Hot tubs are also expanding into a known setting for impromptu or pre-planned sex. Within the suburban "ideal," GLBT's are establishing a sex-based circuit that is becoming more visible. Unlike couples who swap keys and retire to one or the other's respective homes, the participants in these small orgies stay together within the confined space of the tub. The setting is charged with expectancy, a space for anticipation or escape, where fantasies are fulfilled or disappointed.

This paper will examine how hot tubs change the language of suburban living through physical manifestations and through verbal commentary from owners and users.

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### **Wise, Sheila (Context-Based Research Group)**

*Film: A Different Kind of Black Man*

About the film: *A Different Kind of Black Man* features nine (9) men ranging in age from 30-70. In the 18-minute video the men discuss their sexuality, masculinity and their perceptions of -- and role within -- the black community. This film adds a much needed dimension to the discussion of homosexuality -- it puts a "face" of the topic and in doing so dispels some of the myths and negative stereotypes that have been projected by the media.

"A Different Kind of Black Man" gives "voice" to a population that is often marginalized by the black community and is often subjected to forms of "internal policing" by other black people.

Why I did this project: My goal with this video is to initiate a dialogue with the larger black (heterosexual) community about homosexuality and our rigid constructs of manhood and masculinity. As a black, straight (heterosexual) woman, I chose to cross the invisible boundaries that sometimes separate black gay and straight people. My impetus for doing so was -- and still is -- to understand the cleavages which exist within the black community. The research I conducted also gave me the opportunity to examine how such cleavages could impede our growth as a community.

What I learned: Through this research I was forced to question my own upbringing, i.e., socialization process and how that process has shaped my views of manhood and masculinity. By this I mean, as a black heterosexual woman, I was/am considered "the norm." However, hearing the experiences of the black gay men revealed life for those "outside the norm." Through the voices of the men what is exposed is the subtle and sometimes not so subtle pressure to conform. One can immediately see instances of homophobia but the larger issue to contend with is heterosexism.