

Introduction

Building on a Changing Paradigm

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A child can learn social values by being terrorized by them.

—Brian Devor

The time is now.

—Shane L. Windmeyer

The first quotation is from Brian Devor, a female-to-male (FTM) transsexual who offers a stark reminder that the normal process of identity formation experienced by everyone of college age can be far more traumatizing for some, depending in part on the situation in which those individuals literally find themselves. The second quotation is far more hopeful, taken from Shane L. Windmeyer's 2006 book, *The Advocate College Guide for LGBT Students*. Windmeyer dedicates the book to the first generation of "out" students and quotes the ending of a poem by Elizabeth Marie Couch about heading off to college:

You've done your time in purgatory,
So let those old dogs lie.
Make light your feet and close your eyes . . .
It's time for you to fly. (5)

All of us working in secondary and higher education would hope that the latter sentiments are more frequently experienced by our students than those so memorably described by Brian. But, for all the hopeful changes in social attitudes in the United States in the last decade, we know that Brian's experience is still shared by far too many students. This book hopes to assess the

situation and to offer examples of steps that are being taken by our colleagues in academia to “expand the circle” of acceptance that encourages a pedagogy that liberates our students from the terrors that still lurk beyond the college walls, and sometimes within them.

The surprisingly complex situation facing lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer (LGBTQ) students on the contemporary high school and college campus becomes painfully clear in Matthew Blanchard’s account of his own experience. “My choice to remain in Virginia to attend university,” he writes in 2012, “was a decision I regretted for a very long time. During my freshman and sophomore years of college, I remained stubbornly closeted, despite the constant haranguing and harassment, not by homophobic straight students, but by the queer kids on campus” (116). A queer classmate whom Blanchard describes with some bitterness as “out, proud and loud” discovered his “loosely veiled cyberspace identity” and revealed Blanchard’s queerness to any and all, resulting in constant ridicule from more public gays. “Bred to condemn and constantly contradict all accusations against my good Catholic, conformist upbringing,” writes Blanchard,

I adamantly maintained that I was not in any way a ‘faggot.’ Homosexuality was a sin! I begged the culprits guilty of gay-on-gay cyber-bullying and rumor-mongering to let me be free to live my life at its own normal pace. I did not want them to force me out of the closet sooner than I felt comfortable enough to break down its doors. I especially did not want people telling me who and what I was before I had decided for myself. (116)

This student offers an example of a less-reported form of campus bullying and one that would have been inconceivable not many years ago. Times have, indeed, changed. But he also underscores the enduring truth that self-discovery and self-revelation cannot be forced without damage. In Blanchard’s case, the path chosen in response to this outing was an increasingly secretive and dangerous sexual life off-campus “in the unabashed bacchanalia of sex parties where drugs were lavished upon [him] and condoms were rarely in sight” (117). When he tests positive for the HIV virus he conscientiously informs each of his former sex partners, and word gets out—to devastating effect:

The ostracization I had first experienced as a ‘holier than thou’ homo-hater was carved into the cement stone of the cinderblock walls of my dormitory hallways, tacked to my door in scribbled sketches of guns, nooses, and scathing epithets; sliced and slashed into all four of my car tires, and tagged in soap on my car wind-

shield: A.I.D.S. WHORE! A.I.D.S. VERMIN! QUEER SLUT! YOU KILLED MY BOYFRIEND!! Needless to say, the hatred aimed at me by the kids on campus at the time of my diagnosis translated into my own vehement contempt and hatred of the greater LGBTQ culture and community. My unmitigated misery as victim to this venomous hatred in turn intensified my suppressed queer kid self-loathing. (117)¹

Somewhere in this history the educational system failed not only the student attacked by others often very much like himself, but failed also the persecutors. This collection of essays seeks to provide openings to discussions that may help administrators, counselors, teachers, and perhaps students to expand the circle of inclusion and to support the journey of self-acceptance that is so crucial a part of the educational experience.

If there have been undeniable improvements for LGBTQ students (Kaminer 2012; Swarns 2012), recent publications underscore that they continue to face challenges not shared by the majority of their classmates (Harris 1997; Owens 1998; Howard and Stevens 2000; Sears 2005; Singh and Jackson 2012). They typically endure microassaults, which Kevin Nadal and Marie-Anne Issa define as “name-calling, avoidant behavior, or discriminatory actions,” as well as microinsults (“often unconscious . . . verbal or non-verbal communications that convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person’s heritage or identity,” and microinvalidations (“often unconscious . . . communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the realities of individuals of oppressed groups” (235). One does not need to ponder the situation long to recognize, as these researchers do, the “various ways that systems, institutions, and environments are microaggressive in nature” (235), nor does it come as a surprise that “heterosexism and genderism toward LGBT individuals has also become less direct and more subtle” (236). Minority stressors are created by the “use of heterosexist terminology; endorsement of heteronormative culture/behaviors; assumption of universal LGBT experience [stereotypes]; exoticization; discomfort/disapproval of LGBT experience; denial of the reality of heterosexism; assumption of sexual pathology/abnormality; threatening behaviors” (243). “Experiencing heterosexism during one’s youth can . . . negatively impact one’s ability to gain a positive self-efficacy or navigate successfully in her or his academic and professional life. . . . Thus, microaggressions affect school achievement for LGB youth in ways that heterosexual youth are not affected. . . . it is clear that both intentional and unintentional forms of discrimination are negatively impacting LGB youth” (253). “On institutional levels, the absence of LGB-affirming spaces, role models, programs, policies, and organizations can be construed as a microaggression

in itself” (255). The statistic that jumps out in any of these studies is the following: “Gay and lesbian individuals [are] 2.5 times more likely to have a mental health problem in their lifetimes compared to their heterosexual counterparts” (237). Schools can mitigate this, or ignore it. In their 2011 study Genny Beemyn and Sue Rankin record that

Among the 1,669 self-identified LGBT students, faculty, and administrators surveyed nationwide, 36 percent of the undergraduates and 29 percent of all respondents had experienced harassment over the past year. Ninety-two percent (68) of the transgender respondents reported that they were the targets of harassment because of their gender identity. . . . [O]ne in five respondents feared for their personal safety on campus because of their sexual and/or gender identities and . . . half concealed their sexual and/or gender identities to avoid intimidation. (85)

The implications for college personnel come quickly to the fore in the Beemyn/Rankin study, since “41 percent [of students interviewed] believed that their institutions were not adequately addressing issues related to sexual and gender identity and 43 percent felt that their college or university curricula did not adequately represent the contributions of LGBT people” (85).

Colleges and universities have always been interested in attracting the best students to their campuses, and that is becoming increasingly evident in the proliferation of new sports centers, upscale residences, and so on. Many will have noticed the newest marketing assessment for a niche market, *The Advocate College Guide for LGBT Students*, which ranks the top twenty campuses as follows: American, Duke, Indiana, NYU, Oberlin, Ohio State, Penn State, Princeton, Stanford, Tufts, UC Berkeley, UCLA, UC Santa Cruz, U Mass Amherst, Michigan, Minnesota (Twin Cities), Oregon, Penn, Puget Sound, and USC.² The ranking was drawn from a 2005 national call for nominations from LGBT students currently at the schools: 680 schools were nominated, and each nominated school had at least five LGBT students and one faculty or staff member interviewed online (a total of 4,650 online interviews with students, and 560 with faculty and staff). Shane Windmeyer, the guide’s editor, judged this a significant response rate since, at the time of the survey, and according to the Human Rights Campaign and the Transgender Law and Policy Institute, there were “only 561 known campuses in the United States that [had] sexual orientation as part of their campus nondiscrimination policies and just over 60 campuses that [had] the same inclusion policy for gender identity or expression” (12). Windmeyer also considered types of institutions, campus size, and regional locales in order to present a broader

spectrum of options for students around the country. The questions dealt with issues of support and institutional commitment, campus policies, academic life, housing, student life, campus safety, and counseling and health, including the following:

- Are there active LGBT student organizations on campus?
- Are there out LGBT students, and out faculty and staff?
- Does the institution set a standard for its entire student body by publicizing LGBT-inclusive policies (including “same-sex partner benefits” and “trans-inclusive health benefits”)?
- Are there visible signs of gay pride on campus, like Safe Space signs, rainbow flags, and so on?
- Are there audible allies for the LGBT community in the administration who bring up issues of importance to this community in public speeches, and so forth?
- Is there LGBT-inclusive housing as an option, and are there gender-neutral bathrooms?
- Is there a dedicated center or office for the LGBT community on campus?
- Are there opportunities to study LGBT issues in the classroom, with perhaps an LGBT/Queer studies major or minor available?
- Is there a generally liberal attitude on campus and a lively LGBT social scene? (13–14)

These questions align well with the recommendations Beemyn and Rankin draw from their own study. Changes initiated on various campuses that proved constructive included

forming committees charged with the task of improving the quality of life for LGBT students and employees; creating LGBT resource centers and “safe space” programs; offering at least one course on LGBT topics; developing a formal academic program in LGBT studies; providing domestic partner health benefits; establishing LGBT-themed residential programs; including the experiences of LGBT people in student and staff orientations; and instituting nondiscrimination policies that incorporate sexual orientation and gender identity. (Beemyn & Rankin, 85)

In 1997 when J. T. Sears and W. L. Williams conducted a study similar to the 2012 research from Beemyn and Rankin, they found that at that time relatively few institutions had yet implemented the sorts of changes Sears and Williams were recommending. “Currently,” they wrote,

595 colleges and universities offer protection against discrimination on the basis of sexual identity . . . with 392 of these schools enjoining discrimination also on the basis of gender identity . . . More than 400 institutions provide health care benefits to the same-sex partners of employees . . . These numbers may seem large, but the LGBT-inclusive campuses account for only a small percentage of accredited colleges and universities in the United States [there are around 6,900]. . . . physical and verbal harassment has been reported on every campus where research has been conducted. (86)

Given the opportunity, students themselves offer creative interventions to counter prejudice and assaults from institutions and from other students. Gary W. Harper, Asya Brodsky, and Douglas Bruce, for example, note that “it is important to also highlight the strength and resiliency demonstrated by LGB adolescents” (23). Youths in their study identified positive aspects of being gay/bisexual, notably in the greater flexibility they experienced in three categories: their choices in sexual partners, their inclination to “explore more physical places and spaces, specifically ones that are gay friendly” (30), and the ability to experiment with gender roles. They also recognized a different sort of connectedness, both with females and with the gay community. In the face of oppression, the subjects of this study found strategies of resilience in four areas: in self-acceptance and through messages of acceptance from others; in increased self-care (emotional self-care through “increased vigilance around homophobic individuals” [33]), and physical self-care in increased concern for sexual health and physical appearance; in the rejection of stereotypes through an assertion of individual choices; and activism resulting from “an individual desire to be knowledgeable about issues that have affected the LGBT community in order to guide their future aspirations” (34). Similarly, in another study Arnold Grossman, Anthony D’Augelli, and John Frank concluded that “a central process in building resilience is the development of coping skills, processes, and styles [from which] four potential aspects of psychological resilience among transgender youth were selected: a sense of personal mastery, self-esteem, perceived social support, and emotion-oriented coping” (105). The take-away for counselors on college and high school campuses is clear: “By focusing on positive conceptualizations of being gay/bisexual, interventions may help improve gay/bisexual youths’ self-esteem and decrease the likelihood that they will participate in

high-risk behaviors” (Harper, Brodsky, & Bruce, 36). One thinks back to Brian’s experience, with which we began, and Matthew Blanchard’s, and imagines what their lives might have been had someone on staff intervened at the right time. In fact, Blanchard recognized the resilience within himself and, by extension, within other gay and lesbian students. He moves to San Francisco, joins BAY Positives (Bay Area Young Positives), and finds them very helpful, but complains that “I wanted the agency to shift away from viewing queer youth as passive clients to a focus on empowering queer youth to become participatory members.” Eventually, the organization responds to this criticism, and becomes “a participatory organization focused on the education, advocacy and empowerment of its ‘members’ as youth leaders in HIV/AIDS prevention” (Blanchard 118).³

Susan Driver writes that queer youth “become innovative participants in do-it-yourself media projects, popular cultural narratives, local drag performances, anti-oppression activisms, online communities, and music subcultures,” and thereby “push us to become nuanced in the ways we read, watch, and listen to young people telling their own stories and envisioning their futures” (1). Students are also leading the way in discerning the practical implications of moving from *gay* and *lesbian* to *queer*. Those of an older generation generally have more trouble with the latter term, finding it too fuzzy, too inclusive, perhaps too needlessly contrary—yet students often find it just right for their self-understanding. Youth “use ‘queer’ as an adjective to suggest a rich and layered sense of self, evoking a transitional process, refusing to define themselves once and for all” (11–12). Jane Bryan Meek agrees, noting that

Debates over the term queer often embody the most contentious issues within social movements organized around sexual orientation and gender—issues over the notion of an essential or fixed identity and “the policing of that identity’s boundaries and the concomitant exclusion of the gay community’s “others,” be they female, nonwhite, working class, or transgendered,” as queer theorist Thomas Piontek (2006, p. 3) articulates. My discussions with these students [at a large public Midwestern university] revealed that they are highly aware of this exclusion of “others,” labeled by one student “misfits,” within the so-called gay community. As articulated by my study’s participants, such “misfits” often employ queer to represent their distinct positions as the marginalized within a minority. (188)

Thus, the question of class and ethnic distinction comes to the fore. Echoing Eric Rofes, Meek writes “LGBTQ students might not appeal as much

to queer youth of color who might identify more strongly with their racial, ethnic, or religious identities and thus feel more legitimized in groups with such a focus” (189).

As sexual orientation becomes less an issue for students in adolescence, and less essentialized for some, “the ability of queer to simultaneously unite diverse populations as well as trouble the notion of rigid, binary-based identities makes it appealing to some LGBTQ people and dangerous to others, and thus queerness can expose ideological differences and power dynamics within LGBTQ and allied populations” (190). One imagines an “Occupy Gay” movement somewhere as inevitable, since “At least for this particular group, filling the void left by a commodified gay culture has led to the creation of a dynamic queer subculture grounded in activism, education, and creative expression” (193). Some students “are beginning to understand at an early age the problems of policing identities and are responding by actively queering identity-based community and culture” (196).

Transgender individuals are taking the lead here, as they did in the Stonewall Rebellion in 1969. Studies suggest that the parameters of the topic of nonconforming gendered lives is in creative flux and is now a more pressing topic on college campuses. In their recent comprehensive survey of individuals who identify as transgender Beemyn and Rankin find that most of the younger people they interviewed “began to identify as transgender while still teenagers,” whereas “few of the older participants indicated that they had acknowledged being transgender during adolescence” (160). These investigators conclude that these results “reflect a shift in transgender identity formation and not merely survey bias” (160)—but “transgender people are still completely ignored and invisible in most institutional structures” (159). Citing the 2011 report from the Transgender Law and Policy Institute, Beemyn and Rankin draw some stark conclusions: “. . . college curricula and co-curricular activities rarely encompass experiences beyond male and female; and most faculty, staff, and student leaders lack training on gender diversity” (160). Campuses are scrambling to catch up, as more transgender students become visible:

A rapidly increasing number of colleges and universities are adding ‘gender identity and/or expression’ to their nondiscrimination policies; creating gender-inclusive bathrooms, locker rooms, and housing options; providing a means for transgender students who have not legally changed their names or had gender confirmation surgeries to use a preferred name and to change the gender on public records and documents; and covering hormones and surgeries for transitioning students as part of student health insurance.

However, more than 90 percent of two- and four-year institutions in the United States have not taken any of these steps and remain completely inaccessible and inhospitable to transgender students. (163)

In short, their investigation confirmed what will be obvious to any of us, though seldom noticed: “genderism permeated every aspect of campus life,” including “LGBT and other student organizations and communities” (163–164). Not surprisingly, therefore, transgender students continue to experience more discrimination and marginalization on college campuses than do gay and lesbian students (164). Various authors have detailed steps that can be taken to improve the lives of transgender students (Beemyn 2005; Beemyn, Curtis et al. 2005; Beemyn, Domingue et al. 2005; Bilodeau 2009), including multigendered fraternities, expansion of the gender category on application forms, and, of course, grievance procedures for cases of harassment and discrimination.

Questions of gender are, perhaps, the last hurdle that must be passed in our society, and are as contested among gay and lesbian individuals as among heterosexuals. Grossman, D’Augelli, and Frank argue that “whereas society legitimates two genders, gender identities tend to vary along a continuum from hyper-masculine to hyper-feminine; therefore, there are many gender identities, e.g., transmen (FTM), transwomen (MTF), trannybois, tranndykes, genderqueer, and two spirit” (105). In their study of transgender youth, these researchers indicate that

youth reported feeling different at an average age of 7.5 . . . [and were] told to stop acting outside of their gender role expectations by their parents at the mean ages of 9 [FTM] and 10 [MTF]. . . . The FTM and MTF youth in the study also self-identified as transgender at mean ages of 15 and 14, respectively; and they disclosed that identity to someone else at mean ages of 17 and 14, respectively. (112)

These researchers recommend, therefore, that “interventions to enhance psychological resilience should begin when the youth are older children or young adolescents” (112); and, since these individuals often met with negative or very negative responses from their parents, these researchers underscore “the important need for psycho-education programs and other interventions with parents of transgender youth” (112). In the absence of such programs before transgender individuals reach our campuses, analogous programs are all the more essential.

The collection of essays that follows investigates a broad range of issues that will no doubt suggest new lines of research for our readers. The intersectionality of diversity issues, a broader focus on other racial identities (including the complexities of multiracial identity), and greater discussion of disability issues and sexual identity formation/expression—these are several such topics that we hope to see examined more fully in future studies, beyond our own.

Recommendations and Sources

In an academic environment that reflects the growing complexity of American society, Shane Windmeyer's *Advocate Guide* makes several recommendations that serve as a good prelude for those that will follow in our collection. One of the Windmeyer essays that follows his assessment of individual schools, written by Saralyn Chesnut and Angela C. Nichols, suggests academic strategies for a more inclusive LGBT classroom; for individual faculty members, they suggest using inclusive language and examples, addressing derogatory comments, establishing ground rules for dialogue, incorporating specific content into the curriculum, and learning more and involving oneself; for faculty groups and administrators, they suggest developing brown-bag lunch discussions, encouraging and recognizing outstanding work, planning annual events for academic learning, creating an ongoing development seminar for faculty, and building and institutionalizing course offerings (Windmeyer 360–362). In another of Windmeyer's essays, to improve campus housing for LGBT students Kaaren M. Williamsen-Garvey and Steve Wisener recommend being “intentional” in the recruiting, hiring, and training of housing staff “to ensure that staff at all levels are willing and able to deal with issues of sexual orientation and gender identity/expression”; writing housing policies that “include clear language that communicates to LGBT students that their needs can and will be addressed” by one's staff; offering a variety of housing options for LGBT students, such as single-room availability, an LGBT floor or house, gender-neutral options, and “private or coed bathroom availability for safety and privacy”; displaying visible symbols of support; publicizing community standards that include “an appreciation of diversity and freedom from harassment”; showing up at LGBT events; documenting and responding to “graffiti, hate speech, or other instances of discrimination,” and providing and publicizing the procedures for reporting incidents; serving as a campus role model on these issues (Windmeyer 363–365). Ric Chollar offers advice about the physical and emotional health concerns of LGBT students, including their need for access, comfort, and trust in providers during the processes of: coming out;

healing from oppression; coping with stress, anxiety, and depression; surviving suicidal thoughts, plans, or attempts; coping with sexual health concerns and HIV/AIDS; reducing smoking, which is relatively high among LGBT youth (“over 43 percent of young gay men and lesbians [aged 18–24] smoke, compared with approximately 17 percent of the general population of 18–24 year-olds” [369]); dealing with abusive drinking and other drug use; overcoming overly demanding concerns about body image (e.g., “gay and bisexual men are expected, by both mainstream and gay cultures, to be fit, muscular, well-dressed, and into trends and fashion” [370] (Windmeyer 366–371). Eric W. Trekell offers ways for campus safety to support LGBT students, including the creation of an LGBT liaison officer, the active recruitment of LGBT officers, visibility at LGBT events, the appointment of an LGBT person to the campus safety advisory board, the inclusion of LGBT issues as a component of the training procedures for campus safety staff, the broadcasting of methods for LGBT students to report harassment, and attention to the special concerns of transgender individual so that campus security does not become part of the problem when confusion or confrontations occur (Windmeyer 372–374). Brett Genny Beemyn offers recommendations to improve trans inclusiveness on campuses, including the addition of “gender identity or expression” to the campus nondiscrimination policy, seeing to it that residence life staff help create transgender-inclusive housing options “including gender-neutral rooms or floors” (Windmeyer 375), converting restrooms to gender-neutral, seeing to it that “transgender students can be part of gender-specific student groups” so that students are able to “participate in campus activities in keeping with how they identify and express their gender identities” (376), making it easy for trans students to change their name and/or gender on all campus records and documents, and other similar policies (Windmeyer 375–377). W. Houston Dougharty notes the several ways that college admissions offices can reach out to and recruit LGBT youths through the school’s publications, staff attitudes, college fairs, and so on (Windmeyer 379–381).

Elsewhere, Heather McEntarfer writes of three religiously affiliated institutions of higher education and details “the methods and approaches used when advocates of gay-straight alliances . . . encountered resistance from administrators” (McEntarfer 309). Another helpful resource is the collection of essays edited by Erica Meiners and Therese Quinn, in which Carolyn Ford, Becky Atkinson, Eric Rofes, Jane Gallop, and Coya Paz Brownrigg discuss the importance of teaching as a whole self, as someone whose sexuality is not erased when entering the classroom (Meiners 84–123). In the same collection, Tim Barnett’s resource guide for educators includes helpful websites categorized by intended audience, films grouped by appropriate age cohort, a discussion of *Sins Invalid* (“a performance project that incubates

and celebrates artists with disabilities” (Meiners 410), and print texts divided by likely age of readership.

Among the most helpful journals in this burgeoning field are the following: *Canadian Online Journal of Queer Studies in Education*; *International Journal of Transgenderism*; *Journal of Bisexuality*; *Journal of LGBT Youth* (formerly *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Issues in Education*); *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Mental Health* (formerly *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Psychotherapy*); *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*; *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*; *Journal of Homosexuality*; *Journal of Lesbian Studies*; *Journal of LGBT Health Research*; *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling*; *International Journal of Sexual Health* (formerly *Journal of Psychology & Human Sexuality*); and *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/tsq/tsq-transgender-studies-quarterly>

Moving the Conversation Forward

Our book is structured to reflect institutional concerns and personal choices. Part I surveys the current situation of intentional or unconscious structures in our academic units, including the administration and the academic study of LGBTQ issues. Part II flows naturally from the first, offering case studies of how individual institutions have confronted some of the problems that have been discussed in this introduction. Part III moves to the enduring problems of interpersonal relations on secondary and higher-educational campuses, moving from bullying to greater freedom in self-expression. The book concludes with an examination of the intersection of LGBTQ issues with those of the changing dynamic of the ethnic mix in the United States, especially as these questions engage the full spectrum of psychosexual and spiritual exploration.

Notes

1. An interesting sign of the times is the establishment of Spectrum clubs for gay and lesbian students at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, and the United States Military Academy in West Point, NY; as well as the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. Rachel Swarns writes, though, that “At the Naval Academy, where a tight-knit group of gay and lesbian friends had socialized underground, the repeal exposed an awkward divide between those who were ready to come out and those who were not. As closeted midshipmen, they all hated the law that barred gays from openly expressing their sexuality at military academies, but some still resist the new pressure to go public” (Swarns).

2. Others in the top one hundred: Antioch, Bowling Green, Bryn Mawr, Cal State Poly (Pomona), Carleton, Carnegie Mellon, Case Western, Central Michigan, Central Washington, Colby, Colgate, Colorado State, Columbia College (Chicago), Cornell, Dartmouth, DePaul, DePauw, Eastern Michigan, Emory, George Mason, Grinnell, Haverford, Iowa State, Ithaca, Kalamazoo, Knox, Lawrence, Macalester, Marlboro, MIT, Metropolitan State College (Denver), Michigan State, Middlebury, Minnesota State (Mankato), New College of Florida, Northern Illinois, Northwestern, Ohio, Oregon State, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rutgers, Sarah Lawrence, Skidmore, SUNY Purchase, Suffolk College, Syracuse, Temple, Arizona, UC Davis, UC Riverside, UC San Diego, Colorado (Boulder), Colorado (Denver and Health Sciences Center), Connecticut, Florida, Illinois (Chicago), Illinois (Urbana-Champaign), Kansas, Louisville, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota (Duluth), UMKC, North Carolina (Chapel Hill), North Texas, Rhode Island, Southern Maine, Texas (Austin), Utah, Vermont, University of Washington, Wisconsin (La Crosse), Wisconsin (Madison), Wisconsin (Milwaukee), Vassar, Washington State, Wellesley, Whitman, Williams, and Yale.

3. But his earlier experiences take a toll on Blanchard, who writes:

We were all to-die-for adorable at twenty-something; each of us boys (and grrrrls!) had climbed mountains in our Sisyphean struggle out of “Southern cruelty” and queer kid condemnations, and into the loving arms of San Francisco’s skid row SROs. We naively assumed that ‘It Gets Better,’ but it never did. Some of us celebrated drag princess pastiche or twink boy sex-tape stardom; some of us wanted to save the world through political action, civil rights coalitions or artistic agitprop performance cooperatives. We had all escaped the torment and turmoil of ‘home,’ searching for freedom and romance among the infamous hills, valleys and serpentine streets of San Francisco. Little did we know that we would instead be welcomed into the arms of a chaotically corrupt, crystal-lined, tina-torn, AIDS-quilted gay mecca. (119)

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