Introduction

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A FEW YEARS AGO, HARRY BENSHOFF and I signed a contract to write a textbook for courses on cinema and diversity (Benshoff and Griffin 2003). Both of us had taught such courses at a variety of universities and colleges, and so we felt reasonably well equipped to tackle such a project. The book would be divided into four sections: race, class, gender, and sexuality. To keep abreast with recent film scholarship, we felt including a chapter on "whiteness" in the race section, as well as a chapter analyzing filmic representations of masculinity in the gender section, was important. Yet neither of us had really consciously considered an in-depth analysis of cinematic representations of heterosexuality in the sexuality section. Without discussing it, we both seemed to feel that we needed to use the space to educate students on the cinematic history of homosexuality and other "nonstraight" sexual identities, rather than talking about heterosexuality. Yet in doing so, we came to realize (partly through others who also noticed this omission) that in neglecting to analyze heterosexuality, we were still possibly granting heteronormativity a sense of power.

I open this anthology with this anecdote because our realization not only seemed to apply to the first draft of the textbook, but also to the general application of queer theory in cinema and media studies since the advent of the "queer moment" in academia in the early 1990s. In sexuality studies, little investigation has been done with regard to how heterosexuality functions as a social construct—how it must continually reify its

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primacy through repeated rehearsals, performances, and announcements. This collection attempts to redress this imbalance, shifting the application of queer theory in media studies away from the social construction of minoritized sexualities and toward the heterosexual dominant to deconstruct its conceptual stability. In other words, these chapters posit that if queer theory is to break down effectively the barriers of sexual identity, it needs not only to examine marginalized sexualities, but it also needs to deconstruct the love that *does* dare to speak its name—over and over again until one is almost unaware of hearing it.

The Foundations of Hetero Studies

Many of the formative texts of queer theory laid the groundwork for undertaking the deconstruction of heterosexual identity—specifically announcing that all sexualities are social constructs. In fact, long before the "queer moment" blossomed, writers such as Lisa Duggan (1983) and Jonathan Ned Katz examined the social invention of heterosexuality and its subsequent enforcement. Michel Foucault's work was a history of the entire concept of sexuality, proposing sex as a discourse, a power relation between and among a multiplicity of various medical, legal, and social discourses (and between sexualities themselves; Foucault 1978, 1985, 1986). In this history, he examined a variety of sexual practices and identity formations. Judith Butler's examination of the performativity of all sexual identity, and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's (1985, 1990) call for a universalizing view of sexuality similarly implicate heterosexuality in their theoretical work.

In the ensuing years, two general trends emerged linking queer theory and heterosexuality in academic discourse. The first was devoted to "queering" certain heterosexual cultures and practices, such as S/M culture and same-sex affection and sexual acts among self-identified heterosexuals (Califia; Duberman, Vicinus, and Chauncey). In doing so, such investigations point out the blurred lines between supposedly rigid sexual categories—queering aspects of heterosexuality. The second trend examined the concept of the "straight queer"—an individual who identifies as heterosexual, yet still considers him or herself "queer," outside normative heterosexuality.[1] The idea of "straight queers" has often been a problematic concept among nonheterosexuals and, as Calvin Thomas puts it in his introduction to *Straight with a Twist: Queer Theory and the Subject of Heterosexuality*, straight queer academics spend much of their time trying "not to arrogate, confiscate, or seize queer theory's varied conceptual tools and put them to straight use" (3).

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Thomas's anthology focuses mainly on "the general problematic of straight negotiation of queer theory" (4). How can a straight person write about a marginalized sexual identity? How can a straight person read or watch through a "queer subjectivity"? Such questions are important—but they obfuscate how heterosexuality itself, even at its most normative and approved of, can be "queer." The anthology's subtitle, "the subject of heterosexuality," ends up referring to "the heterosexual subject" engaging with queer theory rather than queer theory engaging with heterosexuality. Similarly, dissections of things such as heterosexual S/M culture and nongay same-gender sex tends to pull such desires, concepts, or activities into the realm of the nonnormative, constructing a minoritized view of sexuality in which normative heterosexuality is still shielded from the realm of queerness.[2]

Several reasons are possible for this reticence to zero in on normative heterosexuality with a queer magnifying lens. First, the reworking of the term "queer" began not in academic ivory towers but on the streets with radical activists, who very much invested the term "queer" as the binary opposite of "straightness" (Duggan 1996). Queer activism rose out of a literally life-and-death struggle for marginalized sexualities to be acknowledged and addressed in the wake of the AIDS crisis. Hence, in the early stages of queer theory, it should not have been surprising that there was felt a need to explore and discuss sexualities that had been historically castigated, erased, or both. Drawing back the veil on histories and reception practices that had been ignored and censored for generations took precedence over giving attention to heterosexuality. Heterosexual academics felt the need to respect that imperative or were criticized if some felt that they were not respecting it in their articles or conference papers. For example, Jacqueline Foertsch, in her article "In Theory if Not in Practice: Straight Feminism's Lesbian Experience," details the "lengthy, emphatic, multivoiced attack" to a self-identified heterosexual "'using' a lesbian subject position" at a conference presentation (55). The use of "queer" by activists specifically to define themselves as "everything *not* straight" seems to battle actively against applying the concept to heterosexuality. Whereas the subsequent use of "queer" by academics deconstructs the ideology of sexuality in general, this activist-based definition seems to have affected the work done by queer theorists and kept the focus away from conceptions of straightness or heteronormativity.

Another possible reason for the relative lack of attention to the social construction of heterosexuality may be that because heterosexuality is so intricately tied into the ideology of patriarchy, some academics may have

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felt that any analysis of it crosses out of queer theory into gender studies. The work of feminist scholars such as Laura Mulvey, Mary Ann Doane (1992), Molly Haskell, and numerous others might seem to cover representations of heterosexuality in great depth. Long before queer theory's rise, Monique Wittig's landmark essay, "The Straight Mind," focused on the "obligatory relationship between 'man' and 'woman,'" attempting to lay bare the power of heterosexuality's invisibility in culture (107; see also Rich). Yet, queer theory has brought out new ideas and areas of study that lie beyond the foci of gender studies. Judith Butler, for example, took from feminist theories to help lay the foundation for queer theory in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, critiquing earlier feminist conceptions of sexuality, including Wittig's (120–128). Continuing in this vein, heterosexual identity is more than just or only patriarchy and concepts of gender.

Studies in sexuality could learn from further developments in gender studies (and race studies as well). In the late 1980s, a growing body of feminist criticism began to focus on the social construction of masculinity, moving beyond an earlier felt need to devote time to the marginalized histories and issues of women (Penley and Willis; Boone and Cadden; Lehman). Similar to this shift in the application of feminist theory, the more recent boom in "white studies" has opened up entire new areas for discussing and conceptualizing race and ethnicity (Bernardi; Dyer 1997; Hill; Rogin). Both of these developments have turned attention to the dominant ideological positions, attempting to unseat their power as an almost unspoken "default" core from which everything else is defined.

Similarly, queer theory needs to draw out the bland, white bread, vanilla, missionary position, monogamous, married, patriarchal form of heterosexuality and point out it is just as much a social construct as any minoritized sexuality. Just as Richard Dyer (1997) has pointed out that part of whiteness's power is its practical invisibility, the omnipresence of heterosexuality in society is often not fully recognized. Precisely the sense that heterosexuality is "bland" or "vanilla" gives it such power. Conceiving of heterosexuality as some sort of "default" sexual identity creates the same sense of cultural invisibility that race scholars are attempting to tear down in social conceptions of "white." "Straight queers" (and those who would argue about the concept) need to stop worrying about the legitimacy of their "outsider" badges—stop interrogating those areas of their sexual identity that make them feel "nonnormative"—and start deconstructing those aspects of their heterosexual identity that *are* considered normative. Shifting the focus in this way can become another way in which the academic concept of queer can link up with queer activism. When everything—including normative heterosexuality—is considered

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queer, then the terms of sexual identity (as well as concepts of normal or abnormal sexuality) will cease to have meaning and real social change may be accomplished.

Heteronormativity and Heterosexualities

A small but growing interest in deconstructing the heterosexual paradigm has begun to emerge (Dixon; Richardson; Sullivan). This scholarship has often focused on heterosexual ritual: ceremonies that mark an individual's coming of sexual age (such as bar or bat mitzvahs, or quinceañeras), traditions of dating (high school proms), weddings, and celebrations of childbirth. Weddings in particular underscore the theatricality of heterosexuality, and wedding culture has become a budding area of academic inquiry in cinema and beyond (Freeman; Geller; Ingraham; Manekar; Otnes and Pleck; Wallace; Wexman). Through such rituals, heterosexuality is conspicuously displayed with the community supporting or enforcing its standards of sexual identity. The emphasis on following detail (something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue) and order (the regular guests are seated followed by the immediate family, then the bridal party enters, then the groom, and lastly the bride) stresses the highly structured nature of heterosexuality. Motion pictures and other cultural texts can also be seen as ritualized performances of heterosexuality. The prevalence of (and audience expectation for) "boy-meets-girl, boy-loses-girl, boy-gets-girl" narratives exemplify the reinscription of heteronormative traditions.

Ironically, such ritualized performativity attempts to present heterosexuality as natural, ahistorical, and self-evident. It does so by presenting heterosexuality functioning smoothly and simply, bereft of complications (we are never in any doubt that boy *will* get girl). Such ritual performance of heterosexuality (whether in ceremony or in media) also supports other ideological concepts. This is most obvious with regard to gender (boy gets girl, not girl gets boy; father gives the bride away). The history of matrimonial and childbirth celebrations are also intricately tied to notions of community identity, helping support national, ethnic, and racial cohesion. Furthermore, the growth of capitalism has used heterosexuality and its rituals to further its own aims (from inciting heterosexual desire in advertising to the multimillion dollar wedding industry). The interweaving of heteronormativity with ideologies of gender, race, and economics works even further to essentialize it even as it is so lavishly and repeatedly enacted.

Yet, as Butler theorizes, such multiple discourses create overlaps and contradictions. Anyone who has ever been involved in organizing a

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wedding, for example, generally finds that such celebrations of heterosexuality are not straightforward and simple—rather they are fraught with tension as various individuals struggle over what they consider "ideal" or even "proper." Posing as celebrations of a univocal heterosexuality, ritualized performances more specifically enforce *heteronormativity*. The term "heteronormative"—standardizing heterosexuality as the only healthy and normal desire—is usually invoked to discuss how nonheterosexual desires are marginalized in the process. Yet, heteronormativity also hegemonically negotiates heterosexual desire itself, attempting to assert one "proper" heterosexuality and deny or pathologize the multiple other forms of heterosexuality that exist.

For example, intergenerational conflict over wedding plans has become common fodder for comedians, advice columnists, and screenwriters, exposing that what is considered acceptable heterosexual behavior now (a couple living together before marriage, for example) was not condoned in the past. Structures of sexuality and gender also create conflict, juxtaposing heterosexual desire with patriarchal norms that assert men prefer to socialize with each other than with women (and vice versa). Traditional assertions of patriarchy also usually involve men denying emotion or interdependence (often through displays of violence or power), making commitment to a woman difficult. Similarly, patriarchal traditions have often denied or demonized a woman's own heterosexual desires. Capitalism's need to maintain and increase consumption has resulted in offering ideal images of heterosexuality (the perfect sexual partner, wedding, family) that consistently lie just out of reach to keep the individual unfulfilled and needing to buy more. Thus, capitalism instills in heterosexual individuals a constant sense of self-judgment and insecurity. Such attitudes are most obvious when issues of class are wedded (pardon the pun) to sexual desire—worries about having enough money to attract a partner or actual prohibitions of having relationships across class or caste lines. Similarly, while heterosexual rituals often also function as ethnic or racial celebrations, race and sexuality can come into pitched (and often violent) conflict when heterosexual desire crosses perceived racial lines.

Differences in race, ethnicity, or nationality also often result in differences in notions of acceptable heterosexuality. What may be considered shocking in one culture may be accepted as part of the social system in another. For example, polygamy had been officially outlawed in the West for centuries, while it was still common practice in other areas of the world. Such a comparison may connote Orientalist notions of "oversexed" non-Western cultures, yet other aspects depict the West as being more sexually open. For example, certain public displays of heterosexual

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affection (holding hands, quick pecks on the hand or cheek) became accepted in the West by the start of the twentieth century, whereas such behavior is *still* regarded as improper in certain other regions (areas of the Middle East, for example). During the 1930s, at the height of the Production Code in Hollywood, studio films showed many heterosexual embraces but erased the existence of prostitution; during the same period, Japanese films never showed an on-screen kiss, but did often acknowledge the geisha system as an accepted part of the larger community. Such conflicts are exacerbated when cultures come into contact with each other (such as when Allied forces after World War II made certain that Japanese films started including on-screen kissing). Most particularly, while same-sex activity went on around the globe, the conceptual categories of "heterosexuality" and "homosexuality" themselves were devised in Europe and the United States, definitions that conflicted with how other cultures defined sexual behavior. As such, many postcolonial societies consider homosexuality and certain types of heterosexual behavior (particularly involving women's sexuality) to be Western inventions that are corrupting their communities. (The global reach of Hollywood film has often been implicated in these charges.) The United States and Europe, on the other hand, have historically displaced certain sexual desires they consider inappropriate onto foreign cultures, regarding Africans, Native Americans, Asians, and Arabs (not to mention, at times, European nationalities such as Irish, Italians, and Spaniards) as overly sexualized or improperly sexualized.

Once recognized, the multiple levels of conflict over heterosexuality amply reveal it not as a simple essentialism but a heavily contested terrain. Current events have highlighted this struggle. In 2003, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down all laws against "sodomy" that had been used to criminalize homosexuality (although, when many of these laws were initially passed, they criminalized heterosexual sodomy as well). In this action, the long-standing distinction that heterosexuality was the only completely legal and sanctioned form of sexual behavior in the land was eliminated. Yet, even before the high court's decision, another conceptual battle was being waged over the ultimate institution of heteronormativity: marriage. In 1996 various groups and politicians banded together to ensure that marriage could only be used to define heterosexuality by passing the federal Defense of Marriage Act. While the legislation's title claims to be defending the institution of marriage, it more specifically tries to protect traditional concepts of heterosexuality. Expanding marriage beyond straight couples would take away yet another part of heterosexuality's ability to define itself as different from homosexuality (Warner 1999). As state and local governments began granting marriage licenses

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to lesbian and gay couples in 2005 (in California and in Massachusetts, as well as in areas of Oregon, New Mexico, and New York), even more drastic attempts to keep marriage within the domain of heterosexuality were attempted. By 2007, twenty-six states had created heterosexual-only definitions of marriage to their constitutions, and attempts to amend the U.S. Constitution are ongoing. By 2007, however, nine states and the District of Columbia had granted same-sex couples some form of civil union acknowledgments or partnership rights.

The struggle over definitions of marriage and other negotiations of heteronormativity are often embodied in "civilized" debates, op-ed pieces, and peaceful demonstrations. Heterosexuality may appear so endemic an institution that it only needs Althusserian Ideological State Apparati (extravagant weddings, baby showers) to maintain its dominance, but Repressive State Apparati are sometimes frighteningly called forward to keep everything in check. Societies regularly resort to overt pressure and violence to establish one vision of heteronormativity over the other. Lynchings, stonings, riots, and imprisonment all work to terrorize the heterosexual man or woman into performing heterosexuality properly. Men regularly elect to undertake various rituals of violence, such as fraternity hazing, sports, and the military, as part of their induction into patriarchal heterosexuality. Women also commonly go through rituals of physical duress as part of their training—such as foot binding, starvation diets, and plastic surgery.

The Changing Screen Image of Heterosexuality

One of the strongest ways to expose the construction of various identities lies in showing how their concepts have changed over time. Work done in race studies and in lesbian/gay studies provide two apt examples. Scholars of race and ethnic identity have pointed out how Irish and Eastern European immigrants to the United States were originally not accepted into the category of "white," and had to fight to be included (Ignatiev; Negra). Similarly, historians of sexuality have detailed how definitions of homosexuality have shifted from "gender inversion" to "object choice" (Chauncey; D'Emilio and Freedman; Faderman). In addition, numerous scholars have specifically recounted the evolution of social attitudes toward sex in the United States (D'Emilio and Freedman; Lystra; Rothman; Seidman).

Motion pictures provide ample evidence of the shifting conceptions of heterosexuality. Although manifest expressions of same-sex desires were strictly forbidden for a large part of the history of filmmaking across the globe (and, in some areas, still are), images of heterosexuality

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have tended to be the stock-in-trade of cinema almost since its inception (going back at least as far as the infamous Edison kinetoscope close-up of May Irwin and Edgar Rice kissing). Most fictional narratives include some heterosexual romance, even if it has to be wedged into the plot uncomfortably. Men and women since the start of the twentieth century have taken lessons from movies in how to talk to the opposite sex, how to date, and even how to kiss. In other words, film has been a primary resource for training individuals in how to behave heterosexually (with audience members in theater balconies or at drive-ins often practicing what they have learned right there in front of the screen). The power struggles over what constitutes appropriate heterosexuality have continuously affected filmmaking (and again have often descended to threats of punishment and violence). In various eras and locations, police have arrested filmmakers, theater owners, and even audiences over films that were thought to have stepped over the line. Yet, even with such outcry and oversight, depictions of heterosexuality altered as the twentieth century progressed.

Early cinema often exposed a range of heterosexual behaviors. For example, numerous U.S. silent pictures, including *Ramona* (1910), *Birth of a Nation* (1915), and *Broken Blossoms* (1919)—all directed by D. W. Griffith—dealt with interracial heterosexual desires. Similarly, early Indian cinema often dramatized people loving across caste lines. Motion pictures also emerged as roles for women in the United States and Western Europe were shifting. The figure of the vamp—a highly eroticized female who lured men to their doom with her charms—became a popular recognition of women's newly empowered heterosexual desires. Such acknowledgement was not endorsement, however. In these narratives, only one type of heterosexuality was sanctioned—chaste same-race (and often same-class) courtship leading to monogamous marriage. All other forms were officially regarded as "unhealthy," much like the pathologization of homosexuality. Racial or intercaste mixing was often regarded as unnatural, and films about such desires inevitably led to tragic (and violent) consequences. Films often associated heterosexual vamps such as Theda Bara and their prey with alcoholism and, at times, hints of drug abuse—if not syphilis and other venereal diseases.

Demonizing such heterosexual desires or practices did not always placate critics, however, because the films acknowledge nonetheless that such desires did (and do) exist. (Also, by the 1920s, Hollywood became increasingly synonymous in the public imagination with heterosexual licentiousness, calling up images of wild parties and scandalous affairs.) Consequently, filmmakers felt pressure to treat not only same-sex desires but also certain opposite-sex desires as unmentionable. The establishment

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of the Production Code stands as the most elaborate example of regulating definitions of heteronormative behavior. The Code specifically forbade mention of miscegenation (interracial sex), prostitution, premarital sex, or extramarital sex. Incest was considered so taboo, it was not even mentionable within the Code itself. Attempts to regulate films existed prior to the Code however, and not just in the United States. City and state censor boards, as well as a Supreme Court ruling that denied motion pictures freedom of speech, led several films during the silent era to depict forms of heterosexuality quite literally as "loves that dared not speak their names."

One of the last silent films made at MGM was the Greta Garbo melodrama *A Woman of Affairs* (1928). An adaptation of *The Green Hat*, a novel dealing with premarital and extramarital heterosexual sex, as well as unwed pregnancy and—most notoriously—venereal disease, the studio took full advantage of the absence of sound to get around censors.[3] When Garbo's character is accused by her brother of being sexually promiscu-

Figure 1. A worried David (Johnny Mack Brown) and an intrigued Diana (Greta Garbo) in their honeymoon bed in *A Woman of Affairs* (1928). *Photo courtesy of MGM/The Kobal Collection.*

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ous, we see him angrily start to hurl a profanity at her, followed by the intertitle "You——!" The film cuts to a reverse shot of her reacting to the following word . . . without the viewer being able to see his mouth finish the epithet. Later on, when Garbo is hospitalized, her former lover asks a companion what could have brought her to this state. An intertitle has the fellow saying, "You didn't know?" followed by a two-shot of them as he explains the situation. Again, we have no intertitle that overtly reveals the cause, but this time alert lip-readers can see actor Lewis Stone say, "She was pregnant." The strongest example of this strategy occurs during the key moment when the female protagonist's new husband commits suicide on their honeymoon night. The scene has no intertitles to help us understand why the husband is nervous, what the men at the door want—much less why they have handcuffs and why subsequently he jumps out the window to his death. And the eventual denouement, which changes the husband's secret from syphilis (as it was in the novel) to being guilty of embezzlement, seems vastly out of proportion to the passion of the moment presented. In fact, the overwrought signals are very akin to the not-so-subtle hints usually used in Hollywood films of the era to suggest a secret homosexual past. While D. A. Miller famously theorized how homosexuality in cinema is often veiled in connotative ways, *A Woman of Affairs* reveals that heterosexuality was also sometimes subject to such mystification.

While a strict heteronormativity was asserted in classical Hollywood cinema, the existence of other forms of heterosexuality could be found hiding in the margins. Studio films indicated heterosexual activity through metaphor during the Production Code era: dissolving from a couple embracing to waves cashing or fireworks exploding (or, in the notorious final shot of *North by Northwest* [1959], a train going into a tunnel). While prostitutes were officially absent from Production Code–era films, once could still find plenty of "dance-hall hostesses" and "saloon girls." Furthermore, exploitation films sold themselves by promising to show or discuss the types of sexuality the Code did not allow, such as premarital or interracial sex, but framed within warnings of catastrophe, such as venereal disease or unwed pregnancy (Schaefer).

After World War II the desire by many postwar Europeans to throw off censorship restrictions associated with dictatorial regimes helped lead to more explicit representations of sexuality in cinema. Italian neorealists, the French New Wave, and international auteurs such as Ingmar Bergman and Federico Fellini attempted new ways of portraying heterosexual desire. These films mirrored increasingly relaxed attitudes about premarital sex and (hetero)sexual experimentation. Simultaneously, American filmmakers (such as Otto Preminger) chipped away

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at the force of the Production Code. Mention of unwed pregnancies, prostitution, abortions, and teenage sex, along with pictures revealing more and more of the human body, began to proliferate. With the onset of greater sexual liberation in the 1960s and early 1970s (and as the United States and other countries shifted from censorship to classificatory ratings systems), several important films interrogated the politics of heterosexuality in uncompromising ways (*WR; Mysteries of the Organism* [1971, Yugoslavia], *Last Tango in Paris* [1972, Italy/France], *In the Realm of the Senses* [1976, Japan], and *Salo, or 120 Days of Sodom* [1976, Italy]). Many of these films showed how heterosexual patriarchal notions often still held sway even within the so-called sexual revolution. Many exposed the power dynamics that often infuse sexual desire. Others pointed out the limits of sexual liberation without an accompanying change in the socioeconomic order.

The sexual revolution was followed by a general cultural backlash (partly fueled by growing fears of sexually transmitted diseases such as herpes and AIDS) that saw a variety of attempts to reassert "traditional values"—which generally meant reestablishing the patriarchal heterosexual family unit. British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher promoted a "heritage" culture that translated into numerous British films taking place in a nostalgic era of Victorian propriety. In the United States, under the Reagan Administration, "slasher" horror film became popular, visiting violent retribution on young people who had premarital sex (with particularly grisly focus on punishing sexually active women). By the 1990s, however, the complexity of heterosexual relations once again was being explored in greater depth by filmmakers such as Pedro Almodovar and Katherine Breillat, as well as in individual pictures, including *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* (1989, U.K.), *Henry and June* (1990, U.S.), *Kids* (1995, U.S.), *Baise Moi* (2000, France), *Intimacy* (2001, U.K./France), and *Lust, Caution* (2007, Taiwan).

Whither Hetero Studies?

This anthology focuses squarely on cinema to study the differing social constructions of heterosexuality, supporting that focus with the work of a legacy of queer theorists. The collection exposes how concepts (and representations) have shifted across time and cultures, but also examines the silent assumption of heterosexuality that gives the concept its ideological power (that is, its simultaneous omnipresence and its invisibility). The articles enter in various ways into the timeline and ideological matrices presented earlier, expanding the discussion and analysis of certain moments, industries, texts, or figures in the hegemonic negotiation of

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heterosexuality. The chapters have been arranged in a generally chronological order: the first chapters deal with classical Hollywood and other industries during the same era; Michael DeAngelis's chapter, roughly at midpoint, transitions the anthology into the modern era. Organizing in this manner highlights the hegemonic negotiations over heterosexualities and heteronormativity. Yet, the chapters can also be ordered around certain issues: the affect of class or economic issues on sexuality, for example, or definitions of heteronormativity beyond WASP U.S. culture. Most strongly, an emphasis is found across several articles on the performativity of sexual identity, attempting to take heterosexuality from its unspoken invisible centrality and expose the methods and manners of its public practice.

In invoking Butler's theories of performativity, many of the contributors point out the tension and anxiety placed on individuals to enact successfully their heterosexual identity. Whereas many in lesbian and gay studies have emphasized the emotional and psychological oppression of the "closet" that lesbians, gay men, and other queer individuals have faced for generations, pressures are also brought to bear on straight people to "live up to" expectations (much as men are granted certain privileges but also face numerous pressures within a patriarchal society). Straight-identified people charged with hate crimes against queer individuals have often invoked what is called the "homosexual panic" defense. Such a defense posits this panic as a brief moment of intense mental anguish and trauma over being thought queer that results in violence. In contrast, many of the chapters herein argue that rather than a sudden outburst, the demands of heteronormative performativity create an ongoing and deeper sense of "heterosexual panic." Such a panic arises from the ever-present sense that one not only watches others to "see how it's done" (how to ask someone for a date, how to kiss, how to be a parent), but also that everyone is watching back and judging. Thus, discussion of the performance of heterosexuality in many of these articles also includes how observation is structured into the texts.

Victoria Sturtevant's opening chapter on the films of William Haines provides a perfect entry into heteronormative performativity by examining how a self-identified gay man portrayed straight romantic roles. Sturtevant argues that Haines used his outsider's viewpoint comically to overstate his characters' heterosexuality, thereby emphasizing the construction of sexual identity. At the end of her chapter, she suggests that such overt performativity may have had a hand in Haines's decline from popularity during the depth of the Great Depression, a time when images that supported rather than undermined essentialist concepts of heterosexual masculinity were desperately desired.

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Mary Beth Haralovich takes up this topic as well in her examination of the advertising and publicity around the MGM melodrama *A Free Soul* (1931), which catapulted Clark Gable to stardom through his naturalized performance of brute male heterosexual desire. Yet Haralovich's main focus lies in how Hollywood films often display a range of heterosexual possibility, even if eventually favoring one type over others. In particular, extending the thoughts she expressed earlier in her well-known essay, "Advertising Heterosexuality," she describes how film advertising "flirts" with diverse heterosexualities to attract an audience's gaze. In the case of *A Free Soul*, such flirting is exemplified in the image of star Norma Shearer and her character facing various options of heterosexuality: Marriage or an affair? Clark Gable's character or Leslie Howard's? A working wife or stay-at-home wife?

David Lugowski's study of images of male heterosexuality in Yiddish American films also stresses the impact of the Great Depression (and the growing conflict in Europe) on struggles over definitions of heteronormativity, showing how a desire for an image of a naturalized physically strong heterosexual masculinity within Jewish communities contradicted other earlier cultural ideals of manhood. Three Yiddish-language films of the 1930s display a softer male image, one that today may connote queerness, but was held at the time within Jewish culture as acceptable (and even prized) heterosexual masculinity. Furthermore, Lugowski includes the impact of mainstream Hollywood films (such as *A Free Soul*) on these changing attitudes, pointing out that not just outside the United States did certain cultures have to negotiate their own concepts of heterosexuality against those of dominant Hollywood cinema.

Louise Wallenberg, in studying Swedish male stars of the 1930s, similarly discusses alternate visions of the heterosexual male ideal that arose when cultural notions of heteronormativity were under contestation. Similar to how the first articles implicate the U.S. economic crisis in attitudes about heterosexuality, Wallenberg asserts that the rise of Social Democracy and the decline of aristocratic rule overtly impacted debates over sexual behavior. She links notions of the heterosexual family unit with social discourse about national pride (thereby creating additional pressure to embody successfully the heterosexual construct to be a proper citizen). Both Lugowski and Wallenberg expose that definitions of heteronormativity were not universally agreed on, displaying the diversity of various national or ethnic conceptualizations of acceptable straightness.

Much of the pressure to enact successful heteronormativity is tied to enforcing gendered norms of behavior as countless feminist scholars have shown. Adrienne McLean's study of Eleanor Powell describes how

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the complex interstices of gender and sexuality impacted the career of one particular female star. While conventionally feminine in appearance and typically involved in formulaic courtship narratives, Powell's sheer competence as a dancer was itself regarded as problematic to the expectations of heteronormativity in the United States at the time. The pressures to embody one particular vision of heterosexuality are also the focus of David Gerstner's discussion of Vincente Minnelli's epic melodrama *Home from the Hill* (1960). Somewhat similarly to Sturtevant's arguments about Haines's performances, Gerstner reveals how the film exposes the difficulties of reconciling the demands of patriarchal masculinity to the demands of heteronormativity (not to mention small-town American class division).

Michael DeAngelis contributes an insightful and in-depth examination of the myriad issues that faced heterosexual women and men in the United States during the so-called sexual revolution of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Looking at several films—some of them generally forgotten today—DeAngelis explores how mainstream films often expressed the bewilderment and befuddlement major upheavals in sexual politics caused during this time.

Similar to Lugowski and Wallenberg, Bhaskar Sarkar showcases the sexual structure of another culture (this time popular Mumbai cinema), and the connections between notions of sexuality and notions of national identity. All three also invoke the importance of the family structure in linking cultural identity and sexuality. Writing about contemporary India, however, Sarkar's discussion strongly accentuates the impact of an increasingly global economy on negotiating what constitutes "proper" heterosexual behavior in India. He also describes how postmodernist commodification helps regulate current attitudes about heterosexual desire. Sarkar also analyzes how heterosexuality at the turn of the millennium increasingly must confront and deal with the growing awareness (and growing acceptance) of homosexuality.

While Haralovich examines the range of sexual possibility available to women (or at least to female film characters) in the United States in the early 1930s, Diane Negra discusses the range currently available to them. In a cultural overview of what many call an era of "postfeminism," Negra uncovers the new pressures (or hetero panic) facing women today. Like Sarkar, Negra reveals how the advanced stages of capitalism in the postmodernist era have impacted representations of female heterosexuality by simultaneously imposing rigid structures of time as "natural" (the moment of sexual maturity, of marriage, of motherhood) and pressuring women to somehow "overcome" time (such as extending the years of sexual activity, both the onset and the end).

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Kevin Heffernan complements Negra's chapter by laying out the state of contemporary "heterosexual panic" for American men. While Negra surveys film, television, newspaper and magazine stories, and best-selling books in her discussion, Heffernan zeroes in specifically on the career and films of Ben Stiller. Just as McLean uses Powell, Heffernan's star study uses Stiller's image to present the dilemmas and contradictions of heterosexuality. In particular, Heffernan points out the constant fear that social determinations of "unsuccessful" heterosexual masculinity will be deemed homosexual (paralleling arguments Lugowski makes).

An auteur study rather than an examination of a star, Allan Campbell's survey of Quentin Tarantino's oeuvre shows that the difficulties of reconciling the demands of patriarchal masculinity to the demands of heteronormativity did not disappear with the sexual revolution. Campbell points out how Tarantino's films often show heterosexual desire complicated by mixed expectations. While associated strongly with a straight male viewpoint, Tarantino often verges on queer desire through the representation of intense homosocial bonds between men or by creating sexually desirable women who often display conventionally masculine attributes.

Harry Benshoff brings the anthology to its completion by analyzing *Brokeback Mountain* (2005), generally regarded as a landmark film in the history of representations of homosexuality, as a film about heterosexuality. In so doing, he brings together several strains that filter through the collection (performativity, the ties to economics, the paradoxical expectations of male heteronormativity, and the impact of greater awareness of homosexuality on definitions of heterosexuality). As with all the chapters, Benshoff's piece reveals the potential of looking at heterosexuality with the tools of queer theory.

While this volume provides numerous examinations of the construction of heterosexuality in film, a wealth of potential exploration still remains. How heterosexuality has been depicted in preclassical Hollywood cinema (not to mention the wide range of other national cinemas), in experimental films or documentaries, on television, or on the Internet or other new media are not addressed (see Becker). And this is the main point of the anthology—to call for new examinations and new mindsets. In no way does this call claim that queer theory and sexuality studies should abandon the highly valuable and needed study of lesbian, gay, bi, transgendered, and other minoritized identities. Rather, what is needed is to broaden the scope of how queer theory is applied or put into practical use. It is time that queers—straight or otherwise—turn toward normative heterosexuality and start chanting, "We're here, *you're* queer . . . get used to it."

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Notes

1. Sedgwick (1993) has been instrumental in arguing this concept, forthrightly considering herself as a "straight queer."

2. Duberman, Vicinus, and Chauncey provides a perfect example of this conceptualization. Rather than looking at twentieth-century South African mining society or British boarding-school friendships of the 1800s as constructions of a variety of sexualities including heterosexuality, the collection subtitles itself *Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*—thus claiming all of this research as outside the boundary of heterosexuality.

3. The novel's fame for sexual situations led the studio to retitle the film and to scour its mention from the credits, which only read "from *the story* by Michael Arlen."

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