Book Reviews / Comptes rendus

Hastings Donnan and Fiona Magowan, *The Anthropology of Sex*, Oxford and New York: Berg Publishers, 2010, 216 pages.

Reviewer: *Andrew Lyons*
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Courses in the anthropology of sex, sexuality and sexualities are finally becoming a standard offering in anthropology curricula in North America and Britain. However, there is a dearth of texts that can map the field adequately for both professors and students. The authors of this book (who have also recently (2009) published an excellent collection of essays on "Transgressive Sex"), have succeeded in filling some part of this gap with an intelligent and comprehensive discussion of much of the latest ethnography in the subfield as well as work in cognate disciplines such as history and sociology.

This reviewer found their chapters (4 through 7) on transgression—taken both literally (crossing of real borders) and metaphorically—to be most impressive. In other words, the reader can learn much about the problems raised by research on prostitution and sex tourism, and attitudes to liaisons that cross the lines of gender, religion, ethnicity and class (for example, Stoler's work on Indonesia). There are interesting discussions of military rape, sexual abuse, honour killing and female genital mutilation. There is also a chapter devoted to sex and the senses, which contains ethnographic material on dance (in Ireland, Greece, Arabia and Polynesia) and which explores the relationship between forms of dance, morality, gender and power. The last chapter discusses globalization with appropriate nods to Appadurai and Bauman and with an explication of recent work on cybersex.

Throughout the volume the authors endeavour to take account of intersubjectivity (where data are available) and individual agency, for example, in their discussion of work on child prostitutes in Thailand and middle-class Georgian "Natashas" who service uneducated Turks. However, they do not ignore the facts of political economy and the realities of oppression.

While no discussion of the anthropology of sexuality could ever be complete, there are some omissions which could be addressed before the book goes into a second edition. There is no sustained discussion of the divide between essentialism and constructionism that has been of continual importance in this area for over 40 years. Foucault is invoked, but the authors could say more about his significance to some researchers in sexuality. They modestly note that they have not much to say about same-sex sexuality because they could easily fill a volume with such material. However, for 30 years, until very recently, the most significant research on sex was on this topic, for example, the work of Esther Newton, Gayle Rubin, Gilbert Herdt, Kath Weston and, more recently, David Valentine. All of these authors are mentioned, but only Herdt's work is really addressed. With regard to heterosexuality, there is no discussion of the Mead-Freeman debate. The brief opening section of the book dealing with the history of the discipline needs to be expanded because it might otherwise confuse those students who are unaware of the distinction between the evolutionary theorists and writers of the early 20th century such as Mead and Malinowski.

This book has many virtues, and I strongly recommend it because of its coverage of "transgression" in the central chapters, and, above all, because it does attempt to engage both the burgeoning literature on GLBT sexuality and the new literature on heterosexualities. So often, one has the impression that these two bodies of anthropological literature are indeed two solitudes. However, the text should be supplemented by other ethnographic and theoretical readings for classroom use.

David B. Murray (ed.), *Homophobias: Lust and Loathing across Time and Space*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2009, 240 pages.

Reviewer: *Susan Frohlick*
University of Manitoba

In 1993, in her groundbreaking article mapping out the emergent field of lesbian-gay studies in anthropology, Kath Weston announced, "homophobia has become a topic for anthropological investigation" (1993:359). Citing five references written by three anthropologists, Weston would seem to have

envisaged a body of research on the rise. However, as David Murray indicates, a sustained interrogation of homophobia has not materialized in the discipline. Yet at the same time, the term *homophobia* has become common parlance, and certainly a plethora of social relations that constitute sexuality-based discrimination, hate, aversion, intolerance and violence continue unabated. A decade and a half later, this volume offers a timely, provocative and politically far-reaching set of papers that, together, open up absolutely vital space for thinking through the ways in which discrimination and hatred based on (non-normative) sexuality continues to be legitimized, organized and expressed in very different places in today's globalizing world. I agree with Murray's evaluation of the current situation: while the anthropology of sexuality has produced a wealth of knowledge about cultural particularities of non-normative sexualities (as well as sexualities of all kinds in the non-West), the discipline has, for various reasons, been remiss to look at how discriminations against non-normative sexualities are perpetuated, that is, at "understanding the causes, dynamics, forces, structures, and 'logics' which work to create, oppress, marginalize, and/or silence sexual alterity" (p. 2).

Such an agenda presents a quagmire of difficulties insofar as anthropologists have shied away from studying societal anxieties around sexual diversity more generally and also normative heterosexuality, both of which remain "touchy" subjects. Moreover, the onset of fieldwork on this subject has undoubtedly been slow in coming because anthropologists tend to avoid studying with research populations with whom we feel antagonism. Despite these and other hurdles, the contributors have written a set of papers that, as a whole, make a persuasive case for a new direction in anthropology.

Based on richly detailed ethnographic research, the book aims to achieve three main goals: to analyze the assumptions underpinning homophobic discourses; to examine homophobia as socially produced discrimination; and, to generate an analytical framework for advancing more accurate and nuanced understandings of homophobia than currently exist. Each of these are satisfactorily achieved, although the first two more so than the third, in my view. Murray's introduction outlines the book's aims for "rethinking homophobia" and offers four key over-arching questions that guide an anthropological investigation of sexual discrimination and structures of dominance: Is homophobia a universal prejudice? Is homophobia produced through nationalism or globalization or both? Is homophobia a gendered discourse? How do we eliminate homophobia? These are provocative questions, for which each author does provide provisional answers; but given that the book's strengths lie in the ethnographic and theoretical foci, the last question is left for readers to contemplate.

The volume proceeds with Part 1, organized around the theme, "Displac[illegible] Homophobia," while Part 2 addresses "Transnational Homophobias." A chapter titled "Can There Be an Anthropology of Homophobia?" by Don Kulick, an anthropologist on the forefront of ethnographies of non-normative sexualities, starts off Part 1. Reminiscent of a treatise 20 years ago on feminist ethnography in which Lila Abu-Lughod (1990) sketched out the dilemma of applying (partial, subjective) feminist approaches to ethnography (purported to be objective), Kulick frames this book's subject matter, also a political project, as a seemingly paradoxical task: how is it possible to interrogate a phenomenon glossed as "homophobia" while simultaneously deconstructing and reframing it? He traces "homophobia" in psychiatric discourses in the 1900s to its emergence in liberal political agendas in the 2000s captured in the neologism *homonationalism* (p. 28), then suggests that an anthropology of homophobia can and should attempt to document, contextualize, analyze and fight against it even as "it continually re-opens what homophobia is" (p. 32). Kulick's recommendation is to situate homophobia within a wider anthropological inquiry of hate and hatred, a groundwork that makes a great deal of sense when the ultimate aim is, as Murray affirms, to eliminate homophobia.

In outlining the remaining chapters in the first part of the book, I suggest how each contributor utilizes "displacement" as a strategy for deconstructing normative discourses of homophobia and hence for productively re-framing and politicizing debates about same-sex sexualities and the associated rights, claims to normalcy, and belonging.

Chapter 2 draws on Martin Manalansan's extensive research in New York City's lgbtq organizations and transcultural spaces in the 1900s to reflect on how accusations of "homophobia" against certain members within lgbtq groups serve to uphold race, class, and gender hierarchies. This chapter, perhaps more than the others, suggests practical ways to change course by looking at frictions within lgbtq communities where deployment of the label *homophobia*, in Manalansan's view a term best completely displaced from queer activism, derails open dialogue about sexuality across cultures, generations and activist groups. In chapter 3, Constance Sullivan-Blum examines the major divergences in attitudes toward homosexuality between mainline and evangelical Protestant followers in churches in upper state New York to critique claims about Christianity as a timeless, homogenous homophobic discourse. Over-generalizations of homophobia are inaccurate, she argues. By supplanting them with specificity, modernity and national politics come to the fore as wider forces that shape local belief systems against and for homosexuality, which change over time.

In chapter 4, Steven Angelides looks at how various right-wing movements fed into the "homosexualization of pedophilia" trafficked in public discourses in Australia in the 1980s. Gay men and gay rights' activists, notably Alison Thorpe, were imagined, held up and persecuted as alleged threats to the safety of children. Such scapegoating blithely ignored evidence that linked risk of child sexual abuse to heterosexual masculinity and familial rather than "stranger" relations. Angelides does an excellent job of showing how the displacement of hegemonic anti-homosexual discourses perpetuating vile stereotypes about "deviant" homosexuality usefully re-frames the problem of child sexual abuse to power dynamics and delete-

rious sexual behaviour within normative institutions (hegemonic masculinity, heterosexuality, nuclear family). In chapter 5, Brian Reidel also displaces "homophobia" from a universalizing framework centred in North American public discourses but does so to reveal a completely different system in Greece where terms for racism and homophobia are used interchangeably. His chapter looks at why and how racism operates to reflect discriminations based on sexuality in contemporary Greek society, where changes in language, immigration and same-sex sexualities all contribute. His main point, that because racism is the language used to articulate anti-homophobic sentiments does not mean that critiques against homophobia are not taking place, reminds us that homophobia is not a discrete form of hatred and hostility but is entangled within wider societal anxieties and senses of threat, exclusion and displacement.

The second part of the book is organized around the overarching idea that transnationalism and homophobias are linked phenomena and processes, which allows for a framework to emerge that articulates the *social* production of homophobia (rather than reinscribing it onto the pathology of the autonomous individual) and also addresses the tensions between globalization and nationalism as underlying structures (rather than one or the other).

Suzanne LaFont's chapter on LGBT-hate in Jamaica begins Part 2, and picks up nicely on earlier threads including the problems of working with a research culture holding anti-homosexual values and also the double-sided nature of heterosexism and homophobia. She found that homophobia was not a "fear-based disorder" but rather a deeply entrenched societal intolerance at the level of national identity. LaFont shows very clearly how multiple factors intersect in the production of LGBT-hate (slavery, colonialism, international HIV/AIDS activists, national politics and transnational Jamaican dancehall music) and debunks assumptions about how intolerance is expressed within Jamaican society, which deters readers from making simplistic claims about Jamaica as a "homophobic" place over "there." Tom Boellstorff (chapter 7) demonstrates how a formation he refers to as "political homophobia" emerged in Indonesia in the post-Suharto years of nation-building, using the term to link "emotion, sexuality, and political violence" (p. 127) and to show the centrality of both national and global discourses in violence and political will exerted toward Indonesians who were transformed from tolerated subjects to "sexual deviants" (p. 126) over the course of less than a decade. Boellstorff suggests that "everyday heterosexism" (p. 140), as official Muslim doctrine, was reconfigured into homophobia when masculinist visions of the nation-state warranted emotional visceral responses from male citizens against apparent transgressors. This chapter, while dense in places, deftly diffuses such problematic notions as "primordial violence" and "homophobic Islam" that might otherwise be used to explain away violence against non-normative (but decidedly "gay") men.

David Murray's contribution, chapter 8, provides innovative vocabulary and research avenues for thinking critically about transnational homophobias circulating in a hegemonic Barbadian discourse that represents both the "good citizen" and the "bogeyman" homosexual (p. 148). "Feedback media" is the analytic Murray uses to show the recursive loop that occurs between national media representations of the immorality of same-sex sexuality, citizens' concurring responses, and the production and protection of national identity vis-à-vis impinging transnational and global forces on political economy and social mores; while a second term, *spectral sexuality*, articulates the way in which homosexuality (as a haunting spectre rather than embodied entity) has come to index immorality and instability as a threat against Barbados from beyond its borders. In the final chapter, Lawrence Cohen's intricate analysis of the weighty significance of "feudal" for residents in Lucknow, India—resonating as it does with notions of backwardness, criminality and sexual decadence—for making sense of violence against non-normative men, provides a riveting illustration of a non-Western context where homophobia does not exist yet anti-gay atrocities occur. Cohen shows, through beautifully crafted prose, the impossible translation of *homophobia* in the Indian context but suggests how other equally vitriolic categories become the logic for heinous crimes against sexual difference.

What I find most compelling about this book is that rather than invoke homophobic discourses at face value, each chapter draws out the material, symbolic and social practices through which negativity and intolerance for "the homosexual" are played out in local contexts that range from New York City, to the Caribbean, to Australia, India, Greece and Indonesia, and spaces that include churches, law courts, activists' meetings, magazines, music lyrics and Jamaican dancehalls. At the same time, with candor and a willingness to expose internal frictions within gay, lesbian and queer organizations and communities, each of the authors addresses the limitations and politics of "homophobia," a universalizing concept that, as each author suggests, can obscure more than it reveals, by drawing on ethnographic scenarios that each knows best. *Homophobia* and associated terms, *homophobic*, and *homophobe*, are shown to be triggers that can set off virulence in all manner of directions: toward mothers who are silent about their son's boyfriends, toward entire countries that deter the attraction of "gay" tourists; and, to "the" morally righteous Christians in the U.S. As "umbrella" and "pathologizing" terms, they are not ultimately very useful in queer mobilization and the struggle against sexual discrimination. I appreciate the sensitivity with which the contributors tread on murky ground to crack open new lines of conversation and analysis rather than simply reproach "others," which is never a solution to overcome prejudice and narrow-mindedness.

I highly recommend this book. It makes a fascinating and important contribution to the anthropology of gender and sexuality, queer/LGBT studies, as well as to the areas of nationalism, human rights and violence, and sets new directions in anthropology of homophobia and hatred—and, I might add, fear. Its major flaw is the lack of any significant attention

to discriminations and "phobias" against lesbian and other non-normative female sexualities (except in Angelides' chapter on Alison Thorpe, where a lengthy footnote could have usefully been included in the main body of the text; and also touched on by LaFont and Reidel). Masculinity is fairly well addressed, especially in Part 2, but otherwise we hear very little at all about gender, one of the key questions Murray poses as an over-arching theme. Together these gaps unfortunately create a rather troubling exclusion of women and femininities, which perpetuates what Evelyn Blackwood and Saskia Wieringa identified as "the silence in the study of sexuality" in anthropology (1999). Also, I would have expected more attention on heterosexual non-normativity, perhaps including the work of a scholar such as Katherine Frank (2008), whose research on anti-homophobic discourses among U.S. straight "lifestylers" would have fit exceptionally well. Aside from these concerns, which Murray does raise in the introduction, I found the book hard to put down as it provides penetrating glimpses into "cultures" of hatred, fear and self-loathing that have been sorely missing from anthropological accounts of social anxiety about sexual diversity and of "fear of the queer" more widely (Bhattacharyaa 2002).

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Marguerite Blais et Jacques Rhéaume, *Apprendre à vivre aux frontières des cultures sourdes et entendantes*, Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2009, 146 pages.

Recenseure: *Anik Demers-Pelletier*
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Les auteurs Marguerite Blais, titulaire d'un post-doctorat en communication et ministre responsable des aînés et Jacques Rhéaume, psychosociologue et professeur associé à l'Université du Québec à Montréal, nous transportent dans un univers qui nous est généralement étranger, celui des CODAs (Children of Deaf Adults). Le lecteur découvre, au fil des six chapitres qui composent cette étude de type ethnographique, les parcours parfois éprouvants de dix CODAs devenus interprètes professionnels qui sont parvenus à vivre sereinement aux frontières des cultures sourde et entendante. Pour les auteurs, cela est essentiel pour qu'une société puisse « bien vivre ensemble », ce qui, selon eux ne peut se faire sans un cadre culturel marqué par la diversité.

Il existe bel et bien une culture sourde auto-définie, basée, selon Padden (1998), sur la vision et le toucher. Celle-ci se caractérise, entre autres, par l'usage d'une langue spécifique possédant sa propre grammaire et sa propre syntaxe, la LSQ (langue des signes québécoise). La communauté sourde a également ses loisirs, son humour propre et, selon les informateurs rencontrés par Blais et Rhéaume, les rapports entre ses membres se distinguent de ceux des entendants en ce qu'ils sont plus directs et plus concrets.

Adoptant une approche de constructivisme culturel, c'est-à-dire qui ne se limite pas à l'environnement social immédiat mais qui tient compte d'un contexte plus large, les auteurs ont procédé par entrevues individuelles semi-dirigées. Les questions « ouvertes » concernaient principalement la prise de conscience d'être différent en tant qu'entendant, les relations familiales, les expériences scolaires, les amis et conjoints et les loisirs. On y apprend que, de manière générale, les participants conservent de leur petite enfance des souvenirs plutôt positifs; les membres de la communauté sourde aiment se rencontrer, fréquenter les centres de loisirs et organiser des fêtes. C'est au moment de leur entrée à l'école primaire que le choc se produit. Ils prennent alors prennent conscience du fait qu'ils proviennent d'un milieu différent de celui des autres élèves et quelques-uns accusent d'importants retards de langage. De plus, ils sont souvent victimes de moqueries de la part des autres enfants qui imitent leurs parents qui « émettent des sons bizarres » et « gesticulent comme des singes ». Très tôt, ces enfants ont dû servir d'interprètes, ce qui leur a laissé un goût un peu amer. En effet, leurs jeux étaient souvent interrompus par leurs parents qui réclamaient leur aide pour intervenir dans des situations délicates et pour lesquelles ils n'étaient pas du tout préparés tels que renouvellements d'assurances, achat de maison ou de terrain, visites médicales, etc. À un sentiment d'incompétence s'ajoutait parfois un désir de protection à l'égard de leurs parents que certaines personnes malintentionnées tentaient d'exploiter. Devenus adultes, neuf des participants ont choisi un conjoint entendant. La raison le plus souvent invoquée pour expliquer cette décision est qu'ils n'ont pas envie d'être interprètes à la maison. Toujours soucieux de favoriser un rapprochement entre les deux cultures, il était cependant essentiel pour eux que leur conjoint soit ouvert à la communauté sourde et prêt à mettre au monde des enfants sourds.

Les parcours et les expériences de ces dix personnes présentent évidemment des différences, mais chacune est parvenue à se définir une identité. Les auteurs distinguent d'ail-