

that the term can nonetheless be used without insisting on a binary economy.² Wahl deploras “the critical inability to find a specific seveneenth-century vocabulary of female intimacy to describe Philips’s imagined world of female friendship” (p. 162); I think it would be more helpful to allow a term like “lesbian” its full richness of expressive potential.

Invisible Relations fills out an important chapter in the history of sexuality. I would place it among a handful of books on this topic that have begun to change our understanding of female-female desire in early modern culture. This book marshals a great deal of scholarship in a huge apparatus of footnotes and bibliography to establish itself as a serious study. Even more important, it actively engages with the work of scholars in both English and French literary, cultural, and historical studies, in order to expand on that work and build a critical consensus. This is surely preferable to those studies, especially in this field, that tend to dismiss everything that has come before. This is a work that historians of sexuality will be turning to again and again. Its author never settles for easy answers and is always ready to look ever more closely at the texts examined. It is a challenging study, but also an inspiring one.

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Making Sexual History. By JEFFREY WEEKS. Cambridge, England: Polity Press, and Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000. Pp. x + 256. \$59.95 (cloth); \$24.95 (paper).

Jeffrey Weeks has been a major contributor to the development of lesbian and gay studies and to the larger fields of the history and sociology of sexuality. *Making Sexual History*, a collection of eleven previously published pieces and an original concluding essay, presents a broad overview of the substantial range and depth of his research in these fields over nearly twenty-five years. With clarity, wisdom, and commitment, the various essays work harmoniously to develop Weeks’s insistence that “[w]e are the makers of sexual history, in our everyday lives, in our life experiments, in the tangle between desire, responsibility, contingency and opportunity” (p. vii). His ability to span multiple differences in the often contentious debates on sexuality and to discern deep historical and social significance in them reveals his craft as an engaged scholar.

²In addition to Donoghue, *Passions between Women*, see Susan S. Lanser, “Befriending the Body: Female Intimacies as Class Acts,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32 (1998–99): 179–98.

The book is divided into three parts. Part I focuses on five intellectuals of the twentieth century involved in sexual studies, beginning with Havelock Ellis and ending with Michel Foucault. Severally, these chapters explicate the ideas and contexts of individual thinkers and how and why their thoughts matter; collectively, they trace a shift from a concern with expert knowledge and elite scientific audiences to a more democratic sense of community and (personal) politics. In framing his discussion of Mary McIntosh's groundbreaking article "The Homosexual Role" (*Social Problems* 16:2 [1968]: 182–92), Weeks rightfully worries about how previous research is forgotten and the consequence of having "early efforts in understanding sexuality in general, and homosexuality in particular, refracted back to us through post-Foucauldian abstractions . . . , and then taken up as if the ideas are freshly minted" (p. 53). Weeks's introduction to the reissue of Dennis Altman's *Homosexual: Oppression and Liberation* (New York: New York University Press, 1993) captures why that volume remains significant, even as he clarifies its relocation in the then-new domain of queer theory. Likewise, his preface to the English translation of Guy Hocquenghem's *Homosexual Desire* (trans. Daniella Dangoor [London: Allison and Busby, 1978]) situates and presciently anticipates the theoretical and political interests of a later generation of scholars concerned with discursive formations of sexuality, desire, and subjectivity.

Examining the impact of social movements and community formation on historical and sociological conceptualizations of sexuality, the three essays of Part II flesh out the ideas presented in the earlier chapters. This section of the book, and especially the chapter "Sexuality and History Revisited," will be of greatest value to general audiences and students unfamiliar with Weeks's research or sexuality studies in general. Here he asserts that "[w]e cannot properly understand the past, let alone the present, until we grasp [the] simple fact" that "sexuality in its broadest sense has been at the heart of moral, social and political discourse" (p. 126). With its variety of examples, the book as a whole persuasively supports that central claim.

In Part III, Weeks offers more detailed analyses of how the daily making of sexual history is carried out. Here he covers such topics as "the idea of a sexual community," the multiple community discourses on AIDS/HIV, and accounts of nonheterosexual "families of choice." These more focused essays maintain his general concerns but also bring them into greater relief. Yet even with the increased detail afforded by this closer scrutiny of specific examples, Weeks returns us to a macrohistorical level, pointing out for instance that "[d]espite the particularism of the homosexual experience, one of the most remarkable features of domestic change over recent years is . . . the emergence of common patterns in both

homosexual and heterosexual ways of life as a result of . . . long-term shifts in relationship patterns” (p. 214).

The book concludes with an assessment of “sexuality at the *fin de millennium*” and glances forward to what is yet to come. Cautious but optimistic, Weeks identifies the democratic impulse in the proliferation of challenges to expert knowledge as a crucial development in the latter years of the twentieth century—coinciding with and exemplified by the grassroots responses to the AIDS epidemic. He also explains why marginalized practices, desires, identities, and communities must be recognized as integral to making, and making sense of, sexual history.

In writing about sexuality, Weeks adamantly avoids a liberal approach that acknowledges sexual diversity in purely descriptive ways. He is not content to catalogue types of sexual expression such that, for example, homosexuality seems to be recurrent and universal. Rather, he theorizes the deeper meanings, social forms, modes of expression, and relationships that characterize historically situated and specific ways of making sex in order that we might begin to grasp the significant interplay of sex, power, and politics in the modern West. Although Weeks is less concerned with developing new theories than with clarifying key concepts and issues and defining the terms of debates in the past and for the future, there are times when the brevity of his summaries of complex arguments weakens his analysis, at least for a reader who might have the greatest need to understand the history and content of those arguments. Of course, part of Weeks’s project is to recognize that all knowledge claims are imperfect, partial, and limited. In its limited, but still quite vast way, this volume of essays probes ideas that continue to weigh heavily on daily lives.

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