emerging ideologies of consumption. Jeffrey Escoffier records the emergence of a popular sociology of homosexuality from the 1950s, and a symposium on "Twenty-Five Years after Stonewall" provides food for thought.

Other sections cover competent critiques of biological theories of homosexuality, and psychology. G. M. Herek's contribution once again makes clear the paucity of insights forthcoming from social psychology. The seven contributions under 'Homo-Economics' are particularly welcome, given recent concern over the disappearance of class, and provide a possibly unique selection, though fragmentary and tentative by comparison with more structured, in-depth work emerging from the UK. The section on law provides similarly perfunctory yet useful engagements in a field which has rapidly become more sophisticated. Other overdue work on youth and aging is also good to see.

The collection provides satisfying juicy bite-sized morsels of intellectual nourishment, essays which are succinct and readable due to their origins as public presentations. Excesses of pseudo-theory are largely absent. The impressive diversity of contemporary Lesbian and Gay/Queer Studies is once again laid out for the world to see, evidencing a pleasing internationalism. However, 'Lesbian and Gay' seems an increasingly inadequate rubric for proliferating work on third genders, non-western and/or historical same-sex sexualities, de-centred heterosexualities and queer identities.

Some absences remain, notably bisexuality, and some essays feel outdated. A more general observation is that despite much evidence of methodologically considered social and historical empirical research, there remains a lack of large-scale data which undermines claims for generalization. Greater efforts are required to escape the somewhat individualized structure of contemporary research, which is strangely mismatched with the strong sense of a collective enterprise shared at these presentations.

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Now that the sex wars of the 1980s have subsided, with the abandoning of projects of a singular feminism and political correctness, there is growing cultural space to re-examine so-called 'pornography': the specific experiences, representations, functions, and uses of avowedly erotic imagery. Tom Waugh's *Hard to Imagine* is one of the most comprehensive scholarly surveys of any sector of erotic depiction to date. The book represents a tremendous achievement, in cultural studies on sexuality, in two ways. *Hard to Imagine* represents years of loving compilation of what was considered, just a few short years ago, to be 'obscene' — and leading to
a scholarly publication. More importantly, *Hard to Imagine* embodies the construction of less judgemental and didactic, and more situated and critical, analytical frameworks for examining depictions of ‘the love that dare not speak its name’. The publication of this weighty volume of modestly presented black-and-white images has come after a spate of glossy ‘coffee table’ books of more conventional gay male erotic photographs – often pushing ‘white’, and middle-class imagery over less commercialized depictions. Roughly concurrent with Madonna’s heavily marketed book on sex, the publication of *Hard to Imagine* still required the mounting of resistance from Columbia University administrators and commercial print shops. In contrast to today’s proliferation of predictable and high-gloss imagery, this is a *history* of the tremendous diversity of gay male erotic *depiction*, primarily in North America and western Europe. Waugh maps a far richer and often divergent set of social processes of image making and ‘gay collectivities of image-sharers’ (p. 33) than had been previously acknowledged even within many gay male communities.

*Hard to Imagine* begins with the project of ‘reclaiming a cultural heritage’ and ends at the emergence of gay liberation with the 1969 Stonewall Riots in New York. Waugh grapples with the underlying theoretical problem of ‘the risk of an essentialist positing of the static and ahistorical face of homoerotic desire’ (p. 41). He begins to explore the heightened roles of graphic depiction for any sexual minority where

As for homoerotic culture in particular, the gratification in/of looking seems especially important, as it is for other stigmatized ‘perversions,’ because looking not only stimulates and organizes desire but also legitimizes it. (p. 42)

Waugh then looks at some of the complex social, and potentially liberatory, processes that were at work in early gay male porn.

This thick book is comprised of only five, often unwieldy chapters with a long introduction emphasizing the 19th century, a second chapter on art narratives, a third on physical culture, a fourth chapter on the media with the nascent distribution networks and pornography economies, and the final chapter which is an oddly brief discussion of law, science, and politics. Ending the book at Stonewall was necessary in part because of the proliferation of image production after 1969, that require in-depth volumes of their own. Stonewall also signalled the end for truly underground networks and modes of production. The almost parallel underworld of male homoeroticism with its black-and-white depictions was to be pulled into a context of resistance where the personal was, in deed, the political.

Waugh’s underlying agenda could be argued to be to show how the many private moments of disclosure, photographic and filmic representation, and often illicit image distribution were almost revolutionary. The intimacy, directness, and even the ‘crudeness’ of the information in many images pushed the envelope of propriety for both public homoerotic and heteronormative social narratives. But to present such an argument, the homoerotic ‘porn’ laid the basis for the opening of all postmodern public space, would be unconvincing if *Hard to Imagine* did not include such a massive compilation of intriguing images and well-composed and often disruptive captions.
The shift from private depictions to public activism can be traced in part to the construction of narratives, first almost anonymous and then more about a circle of friends. The homosexual male scrapbook (p. 57), that almost comprised a cultural movement in California in the first half of the 20th century, gave space to narratives that became as much about context as mementoes of individuals, their genitalia, and the sex. Image making as erotic fetish (p. 47) shifted from the individualized depiction and sharing to documentation as an increasingly eroticized and (homo)communal act. The question of ‘would you like to take a picture of us?’, with its underlying tension of risk and trust in effect asking ‘would you like to share your panoptican eye with us?’ became part of a movement, that given the ill favour of homocratnic with the 20th-century state, could not help but become politicized. And the celebration of the body as in the physique magazines, supposedly removed of the erotic, created new narratives around the care of the self as when Waugh notes that:

the moment that physique artists and their customers started setting up images in sequences and bodies in relation to each other, the moment they told a story, however oblique, the era of alibies was irrevocably over. (p. 255)

Waugh also presents numerous arguments that are worthy of entire post-graduate theses and volumes. One tentative conclusion was that ‘size-ism’, at least in Western culture, is a relatively recent and North American phenomenon (p. 8) intensified through ‘the hysterical paranoid, cynical, and cock-obsessed atmosphere that would prevail from the 1950s on’ (p. 210).

While Hard to Imagine is obsessively methodical, it is impossible not to be activist around such a vilified topic. Waugh was indeed successful at his ‘mission of getting us off together, in our present urgent imperative to think globally, act locally, fuck (safely) everywhere, imagine hard’ (p. 420).

In his home country of Canada, Waugh’s work has been crucial to the redefining the increasingly fluid lines between eroticism and so-called pornography and obscenity and the broader fight against state censorship. His testimonies and scholarship have influenced the recent legal cases that have seen anal penetration no longer considered legally obscene and Canada Customs guilty of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in its decades of harassing small lesbian and gay bookstores in their importing of erotic material (p. 418).

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This book is stunning in its originality, and is bound to become a controversial debating point in radical sexual communities. Argue with it one must; but there is much to think about. Its thesis simultaneously pushes constructionism as far as it can go, whilst at the same time importing a historically specific essentialism into