



CHICAGO JOURNALS



Henry L. Minton. Departing from Deviance: A History of Homosexual Rights and Emancipatory Science in America

Author(s): Vernon A. Rosario

Source: *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 107, No. 5 (December 2002), pp. 1598-1599

Published by: [The University of Chicago Press](#) on behalf of the [American Historical Association](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/532945>

Accessed: 24/05/2011 15:21

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=ucpress>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



The University of Chicago Press and American Historical Association are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to The American Historical Review.

<http://www.jstor.org>

Basing his thesis on a wide reading of manuscript sources, court cases, and secondary works, Jackson defends the interventionist orientation of psychologists such as Kenneth Clark and his colleagues and thereby assigns the blame for the failure to successfully desegregate most of the public schools either to the timidity of the Warren Court's "all deliberate speed" metaphor or to the rejection during this period of the potential of a more gradualist approach.

Although I concur in Jackson's argument that psychologists played an exemplary role in the *Brown* case, I nevertheless have reservations about the narrowness of his focus. First, Jackson's assertions that during the interwar years social scientists argued "that all races had equal intellectual and physical abilities" and that "differences in IQ scores between African Americans and white Americans were no longer viewed as proof of racial inferiority but as proof of the cultural bias inherent in the testing procedure" are overstated (p. 7). To be precise, Jackson has failed to contend with the skepticism—rather than advocacy of racial equality—that characterized social scientific thought on the capabilities of African Americans. As early as the 1960s, Thomas Gossett and George W. Stocking, Jr., demonstrated that the paradigm of white racial superiority was undermined not by some assertion of African American equality, but rather by the demolition of the evidence on which that claim was made. What social scientists argued during the interwar years, in other words, was not that the races were equal but rather that there was no scientific basis for the claim of white intellectual racial superiority. To put this argument more precisely, all whites were not assigned superior positions to all African Americans; yet social scientists held that the average intelligence of most African Americans was lower than that of most European Americans and that African Americans would not produce proportionally as many—to use Franz Boas's words—"men of high genius" as European Americans. In short, social scientists spoke in terms of "approximate equality" and "individual differences" rather than in the language of African American racial equality.

Furthermore, Jackson, in his preoccupation with the "cultural bias" of IQ tests, ignores the early works of African-American social scientists that were published in the Urban League's organ, *Opportunity: Journal of Negro Life*, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's *Crisis*, and the Howard University-based *Journal of Negro Education*. African-American scholars such as Charles S. Johnson, Howard Hale Long, Horace Mann Bond, Herman Canady, Martin D. Jenkins, Joseph St. Clair Price, and Doxey Wilkerson between 1923 and 1936 tended to argue that socioeconomic factors—not cultural ones—were most salient in the racial differentials in IQ test scores. Finally, it should be noted that the psychologist Otto Klineberg admitted during World War II that the attempt to create an IQ test free of cultural biases was impossible.

The above reservations should not detract from the strengths of this book, which lie in its delineation of social movements involving the effective collaboration of scholars of African-American ancestry and those of the Jewish faith, the contribution of a few social scientists in anthropology and sociology to court decisions, and the role of the African-American legal wizards Robert L. Carter and Thurgood Marshall.

This is a very good book that is well worth reading.

VERNON J. WILLIAMS, JR.
Purdue University

HENRY L. MINTON. *Departing From Deviance: A History of Homosexual Rights and Emancipatory Science in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2002. Pp. xi, 344. Cloth \$65.00, paper \$20.00.

In 1949, Alfred Kinsey wrote to his homosexual informant and volunteer collaborator, Thomas Painter, about the detailed sexual journal Painter had been sending Kinsey: "I think this is building into one of the most significant diaries that has ever been kept . . . It has done a great deal for our thinking, and I hope that we will be able to pass on enough of it to the rest of the world to effect [*sic*] everybody's thinking" (p. 185). Painter's diary was never published; however, we are greatly indebted to Henry L. Minton for drawing Painter out of obscurity and bringing to light the rich sexological work of American homosexual researchers of the mid-twentieth century.

Minton has mined the archives of the Kinsey Institute and numerous medical libraries to reveal the extensive contributions of Jan Gay, Alfred Gross, and Thomas Painter: three unappreciated homosexual collaborators in landmark sexological studies. Minton further explores the motivation of the numerous homosexual research subjects who participated in these studies. Minton's monograph is beautifully written and well contextualized, thanks to an introduction reviewing Victorian sexology and a closing chapter on the depathologization of homosexuality. Although the material in these bookend chapters has been covered in other works, Minton's concise review helps support his claim that homosexuals have been engaged in emancipatory science in Europe and the United States for a century and a half. However, it is Minton's extensive documentation of the life and work of Gay, Gross, and Painter that is a significant, and often poignant, contribution to our understanding of American sexology and of gay and lesbian social history.

"Jan Gay" (born Helen Reitman of American parents in Germany) was an educated lesbian with an eclectic career as a journalist, translator, writer, and promoter of nudism. While in Berlin in the 1920s, she became impressed by the research of Magnus Hirschfeld's Institute for Sexual Science and learned how to administer Hirschfeld's exhaustive psychosexual questionnaire. She interviewed three hundred lesbians in Berlin, London, Paris, and New York. However, she needed medical backing in order to legitimize and

publish her research and in 1934 she began a collaboration with Robert Latou Dickinson, a noted gynecologist with progressive, feminist leanings who had published works on fertility, marriage, and sexuality. Dickinson believed it was important to study lesbianism in order to better understand heterosexuality. Gay recruited Thomas Painter, recent graduate of Union Theological Seminary who had independently begun a study of male prostitution, to assist in launching a study of homosexual men and women in New York. Because of funding problems, Dickinson eventually organized an independent group to supervise and fund Gay's and Painter's research: the Committee for the Study of Sex Variants.

The committee's extensive research is primarily known thanks to a two-volume monograph, *Sex Variants: A Study of Homosexual Patterns*, published in 1941 by committee member, psychiatrist George W. Henry. The committee's work has been well examined in Jennifer Terry's *An American Obsession: Science, Medicine, and Homosexuality in Modern Society* (1999). Minton, however, offers more extensive details on Gay and Painter's methodology and the psycho-ethnographic wealth of the more than 200 homosexual life stories they collected. Minton particularly criticizes the ideological distortions introduced by Henry in writing up the data. Gay and Painter had recruited informants eager to demonstrate that they led productive, well-adjusted lives; therefore they were willing to share intimate personal details and allow themselves to be subjected to intrusive physical examinations. Instead, Henry was able to manipulate the data to support his eclectic theories that homosexuality was a social maladjustment resulting from organic and psychological pathology.

Despite this pathologizing perspective, Henry was unusually sympathetic toward homosexuals at a time of increasing societal and police persecution. From 1937 until his death in 1964, Henry supported the research of Alfred A. Gross, a highly educated, closeted homosexual man who collaborated with Henry and most likely ghost-authored articles on men convicted for homosexual offenses and men who gathered at typical homosexual pick-up locales. Henry and Gross concluded that these largely underprivileged men were socially maladjusted because of both constitutional and developmental factors. However, as with other offenders, proper familial and social interventions might have prevented their sociopathy.

Painter, like Gross, was a highly educated homosexual with a privileged background and early aspirations to a religious life, although far more open about his homosexuality. After meeting Gay, he recruited hustlers for the Sex Variants study and eventually completed his own book manuscript on male prostitution. Through the intercession of Dickinson, the manuscript came to the attention of Kinsey in 1943. Although not prepared to sponsor the manuscript's publication, Kinsey befriended Painter and engaged him as a recruiter of subjects for Kinsey's own research. The two corre-

sponded regularly and Painter donated his library, manuscript, and other materials to the Kinsey Institute. Painter was no queer activist (as Minton tries to suggest). He was deeply ambivalent about his sexuality and was committed to the medical model of homosexuality as a pathology, so much so that Kinsey criticized Painter for this moralistic prejudice. Yet Painter movingly appealed for social acceptance, and his scientific endeavors were driven by this desire for societal understanding.

The challenging task of destigmatizing homosexuality would be taken up in the 1950s and 1960s by Kinsey, Evelyn Hooker, and Frank Kameny. Minton provides an especially fine account of the role of gay firebrand Kameny in challenging accommodationist homophiles who believed only science could rehabilitate homosexuals in the eyes of society. Somewhat against the grain of Minton's own argument, Kameny argued vehemently and astutely that science was irrelevant because scientists only reiterated cultural prejudices and bolstered them with pseudo-objective data. The persistence of Kameny and other post-Stonewall gay radicals, assisted by newly emboldened gay psychiatrists, ultimately culminated in the 1973 declaration by the Board of the American Psychiatric Association that homosexuality was not in itself a form of psychopathology.

Minton's epilogue brings us up to date by noting the explosion of psychological and sociological work on homosexuality (often by gays and lesbians) that has argued for the psychological well-adjustment of gays, homosexual couples, and gay parents. Minton does not mention the recent debates over genetic research on homosexuality, which many gay critics, such as Terry and Edward Stein, view as a dangerous collaboration between gays and science that threatens to slip into eugenics. Minton's is a more optimistic, arguably meliorist, take on the liberatory potential of scientific research for gays and lesbians. As such, it provides a valuable, and richly documented counterbalance to the science critics in queer history and science studies.

VERNON A. ROSARIO
Los Angeles, California

M. L. TINA STEVENS. *Bioethics in America: Origins and Cultural Politics*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 2000. Pp. xv, 204. \$39.95.

A relatively new field, bioethics rapidly established itself in research institutes, universities, and hospitals. M. L. Tina Stevens offers a critical re-examination of bioethics and its origins. In *Strangers at the Bedside: A History of How Law and Bioethics Transformed Medical Decision Making* (1991), David Rothman argued that the rise of hospital ethics committees and the Karen Ann Quinlan case (known as the "death with dignity" case) brought "outsiders" into medicine to interfere with and overrule physicians. Stevens analyzes things differently. Bioethics, in her view, did not subject