

the graduate student, or for the scholar looking into one of these topics for the first time. It's a book I know I will use as an invaluable reference.

For me, the book also has poignancy about it, for it is the first book from the Amsterdam school from which the voice of the late Rob Grootendorst is absent. It was the team of van Eemeren and Grootendorst who originated Pragma-Dialectics and built the Amsterdam department, and in my opinion, the book is a tribute to them, for it features the voices of the current colleagues almost all of whom were their students.

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*From Identity to Politics: The Lesbian and Gay Movements in the United States.* By Craig A. Rimmerman. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002; pp. xi + 239. \$69.50; \$19.95 paper.

Craig A. Rimmerman presents a compelling and timely argument for substantive changes in contemporary lesbian and gay movements. His argument for re-thinking current strategies derives from the book's central thesis:

In recent years, the mainstream lesbian and gay movements have largely been based on a fundamentally flawed conception of American politics. It is one that reinforces a narrow form of identity politics rooted in a top-down, state-centered approach and that embraces the language and framework of liberal democratic institutions, interest-group liberalism, and pluralist democracy. (3)

Following a provocative critique of these strategies, Rimmerman advocates an issue-centered approach to lesbian and gay politics, one grounded in coalition building with other social movements, grassroots organizing, and cultural politics. I will specify the ways in which this book succeeds admirably in the first of its aims while falling short of its second.

*From Identity to Politics* has much to offer those who study both social movements generally and lesbian/gay movements in particular. Its diverse perspectives on social movement, ranging from "resource-mobilization" and "political-process" approaches to "new social movement" theories, uncover the complex nature of social movements in contemporary America. The book also contains a rich history of the struggles facing non-heterosexual persons in the United States due to Rimmerman's thorough examination of case examples. Finally, *From Identity to Politics* bridges the prevalent gap between gay and lesbian activism and "queer" academia. While providing a theoretically challenging position on identity politics, its concrete discussion of movement strategies renders it accessible to readers who may not be familiar with other lesbian and gay scholarship. Yet the book only partially succeeds as rhetorical inquiry, even though this is not its stated purpose. The desire to critically explore the persuasive efficacy of movement strategies is an admirable aim, but one that remains slightly unfulfilled. This shortcoming will leave rhetorical scholars wanting more, but perhaps it will also motivate and direct future inquiries within the field of communication. The project's lack of a uniquely rhetorical orientation, which would enable close textual readings, appears to be the primary reason for this limitation.

Political science methodology prevents Rimmerman from fully illuminating lesbian and gay movements' persuasive strategies because it construes "politics" and "social movements" too narrowly. A restrictive concept of "politics," which is defined as "who controls access to power" (7), clearly guides the book's trajectory. For instance: "Ultimately, this book is concerned with the nature and distribution of power in the United States, and conflicts over power, as reflected in how the lesbian and gay movements have intersected with political and public-policy processes at all levels of government" (7).

The book argues that lesbian and gay movements must extend beyond this "access" model of politics to include "the broader cultural transformation of society that is the proper goal of any meaningful liberation movement" (167). This contention implicitly follows Michel Foucault's position that resistances "function outside, below and alongside the State apparatuses, on a much more minute and everyday level" (60). These persuasive tactics, however, are largely ignored because the forces of power are confined to State operations. The book's second conceptual problem constrains how we think about "social movements" more specifically. Lesbian and gay movements, although clearly multiple and diverse, are constituted as discrete "phenomenon" rather than "a set of meanings." McGee's distinction between these two notions of social movement seeks "an account of human consciousness [meaning], not an account of human organizational behavior [phenomenon]" (242). McGee's orientation attends to the uniquely rhetorical dimension of "movement" within a social sphere, a pursuit that is severely curtailed when we narrowly define social movements as "phenomenon," organizations, or institutions rather than "meanings" and "interpretations."

Despite these setbacks, *From Identity to Politics* has much to offer through its rich historical analyses of lesbian and gay movements. Chapter One [discussed above] sufficiently outlines the political issues and theoretical concepts that are central to the book's aims. The remainder of the book isolates different political strategies that have been employed by lesbian and gay movements. Each chapter traces a particular political strategy in chronological fashion, elaborating on its efficacy in specific struggles or conflicts.

Chapter Two assesses the "assimilationist" approach to lesbian and gay politics, which attempts to achieve equality in national public policies. Rimmerman maps this strategy from the Homophile Movement to contem-

porary political organizations. Formed in the 1950s, the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis enabled non-heterosexual citizens to build a political constituency that led to many legal advances, including the right to lesbian and gay publications, increased security in public spaces, and protections against police harassment. In the 1960s, the Gay Liberation Front and the Gay Activists Alliance, despite their differences, worked toward the visibility of lesbians and gays in American culture. Assimilationist organizations today focus on gaining "access" to the mainstream, national political system through lobbying efforts, campaign contributions, and education. Rimmerman concludes, however, "lesbians and gays are largely excluded from resources that are available to other groups within a pluralist system" (43).

Chapter Three critiques the overall efficacy of a legal rights strategy. Historically situated examples illustrate Rimmerman's thesis that "courts simply cannot play *the* central role in a social movement's strategy" (62). Although legal test-cases have proved moderately effective in struggles over the criminalization of homosexuality, immigration, censorship, employment, adoption and families, and so forth, they have great difficulty in creating coherent public policy and significantly altering cultural attitudes. Despite victories in the courtroom, lesbians and gays remain "second-class citizens" in the United States (46). These limitations to a legal rights strategy are demonstrated through multiple examples. The disillusionment felt following Clinton's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" military policy and the continuing failure to sanction same-sex marriages are cited as powerful evidence against the faulty presumptions behind legal rights strategies.

Chapter Four contrasts assimilationist and legal rights strategies with unconventional lesbian and gay movements. This chapter documents the rise and fall of unconven-