

“We paid very good attention to ourselves”: Queer Families and Affective Constellations between Past and Future

Vincenzo Bavaro

As a gateway to this issue on queer families, this essay investigates the tension inherent in its theme: on the one hand, the defiance of norms and expectations, on the other, the struggle to be “recognized” by the Law. Bavaro explores the significance of “family” in queer culture by focusing on some key voices in LGBT history (from Larry Kramer to Tony Kushner), on queer theories (from Edelman to Muñoz), and on queer readings (from *Moana* to *Pose*). Queer strategies of survival and appropriation of exclusionary discourses have catalyzed the rise and development of diverse practices of creative intimacies, affective constellations of mutual care and responsibility, which shape queer kinships and the passing of transformative legacies across time.

Is Assisted Procreation an LGBT Right?

Michael Boucai

A movement long identified with the notion that “love makes a family” today flirts dangerously with the dogma that “blood is thicker than water.” Biogeneticism, an ideology that favors biological modes of kinship and genetic conceptions of identity, informs many LGBT individuals’ choices about why and how to have children. In turn, this ideology marks two troubling features of political efforts to facilitate LGBT parenthood: first, the markedly different understandings of equality –

full versus formal, lived versus legal – which guide movement approaches to assisted procreation and adoption, respectively; second, invocations of a fundamental “right to procreate”, which valorize reproduction, idealize a biological model of parenthood, and threaten to entrench biogenetic bias in family law and constitutional doctrine.

“The Deposit of the Heart”: Families, Relationships, and Bonds in *Nightwood*

Anna Cadoni

The article explores the ways in which Djuna Barnes’s *Nightwood* reshapes the notion of family and sentimental or erotic tie, envisaging new forms of bonds, like the ones established between the main character, Robin, and her lovers. These new bonds are not meant to be simple transformations or reconfigurations of the protagonists’ past and more traditional relationships, as they radically undermine the stable, predictable, and normative qualities of any idea of couple and family, including the homosexual one. The relationships featured in the novel, thus, are explored as autonomous but related phases within a fluid process of fragmentation and recombination of desires, affinities, and attractions, which question the protagonists’ very human nature.

Impossible Families and Pulp Passions: Diaspora, Race, and Sexuality in Loren Wahl’s *The Invisible Glass* and Lorenzo Madalena’s *Confetti for Gino*

Clarissa Clò

This article discusses the novels *Confetti for Gino* and *The Invisible Glass* set in San Diego and Bassano del Grappa,

respectively, at the end of WWII. In both cases, the author, Lawrence Madalena, weaves issues of race, gender, sexuality and nationality through the narrative, but ultimately denies that affinities among members of different communities could yield stable relationships in the years preceding the civil rights and gay movements. Nonetheless, the expression of such taboo themes through a popular genre like pulp offers an unexpected archive, both alternative and transnational, where to look for queer aspects seldom associated with Italians either in Italy or in the US.

***That Certain Summer* (1972): Scenes from “a kind of marriage”**

Leonardo Buonomo

This article examines the TV movie *That Certain Summer*, which aired on the ABC network on November 1, 1972. Written by Richard Levinson and William Link, and directed by Lamont Johnson, *That Certain Summer* was instantly hailed as a landmark in American television history, being the first TV movie to deal openly with homosexuality. Although rather tame by today's standards – because of the heavy restrictions imposed by the network on the writers and director – *That Certain Summer* remains worthy of attention for portraying the relationship between two men as a marriage of sorts (decades before gay marriage became legal in the United States) and for confronting the important issue of gay parenthood.

Affective Relationships, Trauma, and Narration in Michael Cunningham's *A Home at the End of the World*

Silvia Antosa

This article examines how the notion of normative, nuclear family is questioned, dismantled and expanded in Michael Cunningham's novel *A Home at the End of the World* (1990). Told in four different voices, the story focuses on two young boys who grow up in Cleveland in the 1970s and who come from different social backgrounds. As I argue, in this novel Cunningham narrativizes the process of reconstructing or forging 'alternative' queer family and kinship bonds, and demonstrates that both blood, biological and affective, non-biological ties are all transient and subject to change. Moreover, by drawing on trauma studies, I discuss the extent to which macro- and micro-traumas affect the characters' lives, as is clear from the different perspectives provided by the four narrators. Ultimately, what emerges from their narratives is the need to articulate and transform deep emotional traumas into a never-ending search for the self and love.

“Homodomestic Universe”: Queer Women and Families in Contemporary Media

Valeria Gennero

This essay outlines the short yet eventful history of the representation of lesbian families in U.S. movies and TV series. In less than three decades, the image of lesbian couples getting married and having kids shifted from the progressive end of the queer spectrum to an opaque position, sometimes linked

to an implicit, regressive acceptance of neoliberal heteronormativity. This theoretical trajectory has been influenced by the popularity of the so-called “anti-social” strand of queer theory. My reading interrogates the notion of “homodomesticity” from a feminist perspective, focusing on the critical debate surrounding Lisa Cholodenko’s *The Kids Are Alright* (2010).

**“Sodomites, Prostitutes and Queers”:
The Reception of Tennessee Williams’s
Characters in Post-WWII Italy**

Alessandro Clericuzio

The history of the reception of Tennessee Williams’s major plays in Italy provides a gauge of the sociocultural milieu of the times. Between 1946 and the late 1960s, his female characters, as well as his gay male characters, elicited a number of xenophobic, homophobic and misogynist reactions in theatre reviewers. These biased readings were the expression of a chauvinist mindset rooted in the tenets of the Christian-Democratic party and of mostly right-wing, reactionary critics. While the most derogatory terms were used to describe his queer characters, his women were all deemed prostitutes or nymphomaniacs simply because they expressed their sexual desires.

**The Challenge about the Role
of Tourism in the United States:
the Forgotten Argument from the
Seventies**

Giuliano Santangeli Valenzani

The relationship of the United States with the promotion of international tourism has been historically conflictual

at least. Through their formidable ability to spread culture, Americans have exported everywhere a sense of familiarity with the American way of life, but they have been much less successful in organizing promotional policies to attract visitors. In the 1970s, however, there was a profound and long-lasting debate on the role of tourism in American society, a debate that has remained on the sidelines of historiography, despite being to all intents and purposes a product of the American context in the 1970s and, in the end, a debate concerning also the power and the stability of America’s international image.