

Introduction: Towards an Experience of Gay History

There is an old expression, 'I came, I saw, I conquered'. While this may be true for military commanders, this is not always the case for field researchers, where often the reverse is true 'I came, I saw, I was conquered'. I started writing this paper as a history of a subculture of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Community (GAY) in Halifax, drag queens and kings. Through the Gay History Club of Halifax, I was referred to a gentleman who claimed to be Miss Gay Halifax 1969. The possibilities were quite intriguing, when and where was this contest held, who participated, and what was drag like in that time? Concurring with Kennedy that "oral history has been central in the creating knowledge about lesbian and gay male life before Stonewall." (59) I felt that these interviews would add new social facts (Kennedy 1995) to the historical record of gender bending performance and gay activism in Halifax in 1969 (a crucial year for GAY civil rights across North America). I went into the field to begin interviewing my participant, and ran into the limitations of oral history, where as a researcher you are dependent upon the memories and their experiences of your participant, which Kennedy (1995) refers to as subjectivity. Ten minutes into the interview, my participant informed me that he had never done drag and as such my original intention could not be carried out because X's subjectivity did not match my area of study.

What was I left with at this point? My own desire to ‘fill in’ knowledge about lesbian and gay history in 1969 was a standard approach to lesbian and gay history, which has been very reliant on adding facts to the historical record, rather than exploring the subjectivity of their participants’ experience (Kennedy 1995). Gay and lesbian historians look for the fact, not the experience and need to begin to examine ‘how oral testimony-the actual storytelling-conveys unique information”(Kennedy 1995 60). Faced with the decision of what to do, I decided to adopt Kennedy’s approach and incorporate subjectivity into the paper, to use D’Emilio’s and my participant’s (who has a rich experience of gay life, both in Halifax, in larger urban centers and in rural communities) subjectivity to explore two gay men’s experience with the gay liberation movement.

To ground two men’s experience within a historical time is not an easy task, therefore this paper examines the spectrum of GAY organizing in Canada and the United States, from the homophile movements of the 1950’s through to shifts from radicalism to rights within the movement that occurred in the mid 1970’s. The second part focuses on the life experiences of my participant and American gay historian John D’Emilio (who has written about his personal experiences within the American GAY liberation movement). These two contemporaries had very different lives and therefore, each experienced the movement differently, as the examination of their context and lives will reveal.

Section #1-Experiencing the Movement: An exercise in Differences

The establishment of ASK in 1964 represents the beginning of changes for the social, legal and political status of GAY people as Stonewall and decriminalisation

brought more GAY people out of the closet and into the activist movements. However, not all GAY people experienced this movement in the same way, culture, race and class meant different outcomes and different life chances for GAY people. The ability to be part of the movement and how one was part of the movement differed based on race, class and culture. The following discussion uses the life experience of two members of the same generational cohort (baby boomers) and how each of them experienced the gay liberation movement of the 1960's and 1970's.

John D'Emilio, an American gay historian has incorporated much of his own biography into his work as a historian. In many ways this is appropriate, since D'Emilio's experiences would be familiar with members of the baby boom generation (Owram 1996). D'Emilio experienced the upward mobility that was possible in the specific historical period that was 1945-1973, urban dweller, lived in a two-parent family, had a higher level of education than his parents (and in fact more education than most Americans) and grew up with the powerful influence of the Catholic religion (although for most of his American cohort Protestantism would have been the religious influence). As D'Emilio's personal experiences became more and more interconnected with the social changes of the 1960's, his participation in the movement went from non-existent to total participation (for gay academic rights), he fully experienced the benefits of the sexual revolution (1960's through the 1970's), and felt the backlash of the 1980's, when neo-conservative values returned to prominence. Following his generation, in the early 1980's D'Emilio re-joined the bourgeois class as a salaried worker as an academic and eventually settled into domesticity (and in contrast with his previous polymorphous sexual activity discovered celibacy as a vital part of his relationship). D'Emilio's Italian

ethnicity and Catholicism set him apart in childhood and as an adult, his sexuality, and the way that he expressed that sexuality affected his life and the way he saw society (1992 xiii).

Unlike D'Emilio, my participant, whom I will call X (an overused, if safe pseudonym) has had life experiences that would not fit with the majority of his cohort. He is a part of the generational cohort known as the baby boomers, is aboriginal, lived in a two-parent family that experienced turmoil and conflict, particularly involving alcohol use and spent his childhood on a reserve. As an adult, X would face constant geographical mobility as he searched for work. His experiences of racism and heterosexism forced him to remain in the working class and he was unable to access higher education. X is also Canadian and lived in a different legal, economic and cultural tradition than the United States. What I will expand upon in this section is the intersection and differences in the life experiences of these two men (and I acknowledge that the absence of women is a legitimate limitation in this study) in the following categories: education, sexual development and maturation, experience of the 'gay liberation' movement, experience of geography.

Education

D'Emilio notes that his education did set him apart, his attendance at a private Catholic school represented upward mobility for some working class Catholics like D'Emilio by complimenting urban city life with exposure to Broadway productions, European art and literature (some with gay themes) (D'Emilio 1992) that would be needed to advance in higher education. Opting out of the Regis tradition of ecclesiastical

higher education, D'Emilio decided to go to Columbia, "Columbia provided the best of all possible worlds, I'd be living on campus, but close enough to my family to pop home for dinner. I'd have freedom of movement and could explore the city, including those 'near occasions of sin', as the Catholic prayer for contrition phrased it, that I was pledging to avoid" (1992 xvii).

Despite the relative degree of freedom, D'Emilio found his undergraduate years confusing and disorienting. D'Emilio struggled with emotional angst and guilt over coming out, feared being drafted to serve in Vietnam, he experienced the turmoil created by the counter culture drug use (his own dorm room being a site of intense drug activity) he felt a sense of unfamiliarity with the new class and cultural milieu in which he was placed where differences of class and religion were pronounced, and the role of the anti-authority education had on deconstructing the conceptions of the world that had been created by his Catholic education, all created a sense of anxiety, much of it beyond his control to ameliorate (D'Emilio 1992)

X did not have the opportunity to attend university (nor the same anxiety). Although his family intended that X should go on to higher education (possibly to Saint Francis Xavier University) (interview 2) X did not really want to go to university since he felt that his schooling provided him with little opportunity to engage in meaningful learning opportunities. X felt his life experience taught him more than he learned inside the classroom (interview 2). In addition, the family's circumstances did not match their ambition, X was one of thirteen children living on a reserve, in a family that was desperately poor and trying to survive. To help support his family, X dropped out of school at age fifteen and went to work for several years. X's experiences were the

education system were fairly negative and although X is not specific, there is an indication that racism and assimilation may have contributed to his negative schooling experience. X had an opportunity, through an Indian Affairs program to return to school. He initially enrolled at a beauty school in Halifax to train as a hairdresser, but after he was robbed and assaulted X no longer felt safe and returned to Cape Breton, and began studying at a local beauty college (interview 2). This educational experience was not positive for X, the instruction provided was woefully inadequate and the students were not properly trained to do hairdressing since the college's proprietor sought to take advantage of the students in the program (since Indian Affairs was providing a generous subsidy) and enrolled far more students than they could reasonably accommodate. Students did not have enough time with their instructor and could not properly learn the techniques they needed to do hair properly nor were they provided with the equipment needed to do the training (which they could then take into the workplace). Cheating on the final examinations was rampant; the Indian affairs officer had been 'battered up' by the school's owner to overlook the mismanagement. X spoke out against these practices and this outspokenness made him a target, he was denied funding to attend the provincial examinations in Halifax. Without passing these examinations X could not get a provincial license to do hair and was forced to work with clients on the reserve, and then was forced out of the industry and had to become a personal care worker (interview 2).

X's experiences with education, from being poorly educated on the reserve to inadequate experiences in vocational training created a sense of alienation from educational systems. Whereas D'Emilio's experience of education had allowed him to experience upward mobility, X's experience continually prevented this kind of mobility

and in many ways served to further marginalize him by forcing him into low paying, low status work.

Sexual Development and Maturation

D'Emilio's initial sexual experiences included sexual 'play' with boys and girls his own age, adding initial confusion to his own internal struggle to determine whether he was gay or not. (1992). His identity would be confirmed by his experiences of urban life, he would first see drag queens on the streets of New York and knew they and he had something in common with them. The commute required of urban life also provided ample opportunity to explore his sexuality "subways were a place where men's eyes locked, where the back of a hand brushed against a thigh, and where the legs of strangers sitting next to one another pressed together for a second too long when the train lurched to a stop." (D'Emilio 1992, xv). As D'Emilio became more established in the practice of sex with men, he discovered "sex in the subways, deserted lots and highways in the Bronx, train terminals and movie theatres" (D'Emilio 1992 xv). D'Emilio cruised popular spots like Third Avenue in New York City; "I spent the nighttime hours looking for... sex?.....love...closeness?....comfort?.... someone with whom I could talk without censorship?..." (1992 xix) These sexual experiences were filled with anxiety as a fear of exposure coincided with a Catholic sense of committing sin contributed to a sense of guilt in D'Emilio.

As D'Emilio matured, experiences with men helped his own emotional development. One of his lovers Jose, when questioned why we wore a cross during lovemaking simply commented that he believed Jesus loved him too; another lover (Luis)

gave D'Emilio a copy of Oscar Wilde's *Luis DeProfundis*, which changed D'Emilio immensely. More mature relationships, for example, with Ron, a 29-year-old travel agent with a naval background brought D'Emilio to the piss-elegant queen scene. The piss-elegant queens were (and today as well) gays with pretensions to status and culture, whose knowledge of art, music and culture (they felt) set them apart from others (D'Emilio 1992). In 1968, while other students focused on protests and activism, he was in love with a graduate student named Billy who introduced him to life in the 'Village' which included cruising but also a sense of community, a place where former sexual encounters could become friends (D'Emilio 1992)

During the initial years of the gay sexual revolution of the 1970's, D'Emilio was a participant in sexual freedom and experimentation that became an expression of a 'gay politics' (D'Emilio 2002). It became freer to have multiple partners and open relationships. As D'Emilio entered 'the baths' a space where the purpose and intention was to permit multiple and open sexual activity, the need for cruising the streets faded. (D'Emilio 2002) By the 1980's this high level of sexual activity had cooled "the sense of frenzy had definitely gone" (D'Emilio 2002 206). Despite his statements of sexual freedom, D'Emilio began to lose interest in other men in favor of his partner. The onset of AIDS and the uncertainty it created led D'Emilio and his partner Jim to decide on monogamy. Despite D'Emilio's fears, circumstances created an easy transition. His first academic appointment was in Greensboro, North Carolina, a conservative, regressive environment, far less free than the 'gay scene' in New York. There were far less potential partners in North Carolina and D'Emilio found that his new work as a permanent academic took a great deal of time and energy (a familiar story to many academics in the

beginning sections of their career). Co-habitation with his domestic partner also created demands on his time and energy. Then an emotional crisis with his partner required a period of extended sexual celibacy. As with his 'expressive' stage of the 1970's D'Emilio found the social experience of celibacy was both extraordinary and ordinary at times, finding his celibacy something to be celebrated on one hand, and an ordinary experience, on the other (D'Emilio 2002).

X had a different experience, as a two-spirited person he had a status that was recognized within his own culture (interview 1) and was able to grow up without the guilt and anxiety felt by D'Emilio. While X feels his two-spirited status was widely accepted, he did face discrimination on the reserve, the Catholicism present in his community and the concurrent attitudes the Catholic Church holds on homosexuality created conflict and difficulty for X, more so from the hostility of others than any internalization of Catholic doctrine. Two examples from X's experience demonstrate this contradiction. While drunk one night X's mother called him a 'queer'. X had never heard of this term, and he questioned his mother about it, she acknowledged his sexuality "we brought you that way, take that word out of your mind", but strictly forbade him to use that term (Interview 2). The reasons for this are unclear. Did his mother realize that queer was a derogatory white terminology and she wanted him to situate his sexuality in aboriginal cultural terms? Or was she reflecting the widespread homophobia of the period and encouraging X to stay within the culturally allowed sphere of two-spirit, without straying into a more public role that might bring X into conflict with members of the community? X himself, when asked, was unsure of his mother's motivations, X simply noted that his mother had been drunk at the time she used the term (Interview 2) and she may simply

have wanted to 'cover up' a mistake she had made when drunk, that is to discuss the un-discussable. Beyond relationships with his family members, X faced difficulties in his community through occasional physical fights and conflict that X would have to face from some hostile members of his community.

Conversely, X's traditional aboriginal culture provided space for validation. X was always gay oriented: "when I came out of there, there was no way I was going back...my way I have friends that are girls but are not lovers." (Interview 1- 15:57). During his youth neither parent said very much to him about being two-spirited, X was not allowed to work outside because his family was afraid that he might strain himself, he worked inside helping his mother in the household. X was never allowed to do any work that was considered in the masculine sphere, such as engaging in agriculture, trade, fisheries or hunting. X was assigned to the indoor, perceptibly feminine world of work; he would assist his mother in the domestic routines of the household, he was employed as a clerk in a grocery store and he made baskets for sale to tourists.

X began his sexual experiences fairly young at age 15 and did have some sexual experiences on the reserve, but his move to Halifax and subsequent entry into the bar scene (and as X notes himself taking up regular drink, vodka) expanded X's sexual activity (interview 2 20:36). In regular contact with a larger geographic pool of potential partners X had ongoing participation in sex acts and two regular lovers, a 'summertime' and a "Christmas time lover". X would be with one or the other depending on the season and whether he was in Cape Breton or Halifax. His primary lover was five years older than X, and he would move around to be with him, they would be together for twenty-one years (although not monogamously).

X's experience in the bar scene opened him up to some of the norms of gay culture. While D'Emilio existed in the cruising scenes and the bathhouses, X focused his sexual gay life on the bar scene. The 'scene' at this time was very restricted, in that someone had to know where to go. The two main bars were the Green Lantern on Barrington and The Candlelight on Spring Garden (present day Park Lane) and both had unspoken, but strict expectations around sexuality and gender. All men at the bar were 'boys' and dressing in women's clothing was not regarded as the 'correct' thing to do, "if you wanted to be a proper fag, you just came out that way." (Interview 1 5:39). The men involved in the bar scene were roughly in their thirties and forties, married to women and some had children, the gay life existed as a secret and closeted night time experience.

For X, sexual experiences could take place in two areas in the 'downstairs' of The Candlelight where the washrooms were and on "the Hill" (Interview 1). For many years, sections of Citadel Hill have been the 'cruising' area for gay men looking to pick up sexual partners. In 1969 through today the Hill is known as a very dangerous place, X was warned that if he saw more than one man in a group to flee because straight men would go to the Hill to "hunt fags" (interview 1). While this danger is open and acknowledged in the present day Halifax GAY community, in 1969 this represented a change. Before then, "the Hill" cruising scene had been kept relatively quiet and secret, but around 1969 the public became more aware of what was happening on the Hill and groups of young straight men would go to the "Hill" to assault any gay men they found (interview 1). This new awareness of the "Hill" that X described left me with questions of why; if this space had existed as a 'cruising' area for much of its history, what brought it out into the open at this point? Did the Trudeau reforms of 1969 which decriminalized

homosexuality raised awareness about homosexuality in the city and that this new attention had found its way to the Hill? Did increasing urbanization bring a new core of GAY people into the environment of the “Hill” and thus put the “Hill” on the visual radar screen of social Halifax? Was this attention an underground (read vigilante) part of the continuum of practice that was occurring in other urban renewal scenarios in place in Halifax at this time (for example the removal of Africville)? Could official City tactics of removal in Africville been replicated by vigilante action to ‘clean up’ the ‘Hill’? X was not clear enough in his comments for me to make a determination; answers to these questions require further research.

X today is single. His sexuality, unlike D’Emilio’s has not faded into domesticity, as X still has regular partners and participates in the Halifax ‘baths’ and ‘sauna’ scene (places like Seadogs). His sexuality also has no impact on his employment since his co-workers are familiar with his sexuality and sexual practices and is not concerned over it.

Experiences of The Gay Liberation Movement

D’Emilio’s self-described participation in the movement at its beginning was minimal (1992; 2002). Despite some involvement in campus antiwar and anti racism protests D’Emilio was not part of the ‘gay liberation scene’, “I first heard about Stonewall from a distance, I was traveling in Europe with my lover Billy during the summer of 1969 and, that August in Paris, I picked up a copy of the Village Voice, in which the Stonewall Riots were described. We knew this was important, but also didn’t know quite what to make of it. That fall, back in New York, gay liberation was in the air.”(47 2002)

As D'Emilio slowly came out to other people, gradually he met other gay students and started to become part of a community of academics, in fact his connection to this community became so deep that D'Emilio did not immediately go to graduate school, he took a job to stay close to the gay subculture in New York (D'Emilio 1992; 2002). The establishment of the Gay Academic Union (GAU) in 1973 provided D'Emilio with an entry into a movement. At this time, GAU meetings were emotional and explosive since the movement was in the middle of finding itself, every issue discussed was done so without reserve and arguments were passionate, dramatic and uncompromising (D'Emilio 1992: 2002). Gay life, activism and academia came together in this period for D'Emilio; he participated in Jonathon Katz's gay men's study group. The influence of New Left scholarship, which was beginning to change the American research agenda, led D'Emilio in 1974 to select pre-Stonewall homophile movements for his historical dissertation (D'Emilio 1992; 2002). Despite the new focus in research, activism began to take precedence over work on the dissertation. During a trip to San Francisco, D'Emilio was again at the centre of gay events in the United States. At the time he was in San Francisco, the time of trial of the assassin of gay supervisor Harvey Milk were underway. When the verdict and sentencing resulted in a minimal punishment for the assassin, D'Emilio found he was caught up in the ensuing riots, barely escaping from physical harm as San Francisco gay men expressed their outrage at that injustice.

Around 1980, D'Emilio's life began to change, the GAU was changing as gay academics began to form causes within their own associations, and the GAU became less relevant. D'Emilio also had to deal with changes in his economic status since the rising cost of living and a sense of consumer deprivation left him without money. D'Emilio

decided to finish his dissertation and to find employment, which shifted his activism from direct participation to research and teaching (D'Emilio 1992).

X's participation in the movement was social, he was aware of the political changes of the time, but he was not a political activist and did not participate in the local gay liberation movements. He knew that there were discussions about the legal changes going on in Canadian society with gays in 1969, but he wasn't a part of any discussions on those issues. X vaguely remembers people like Jim DeYoung and David Gray, who would go on in the 1970's to be founding Board Members of Halifax's Gay and Lesbian Association, the Gay Alliance for Equality (GAE). GAE owned and operated bars like The Turret and later Rumours Bar, which meant that there was funding for social projects. It changed its name to GALA, the Gay And Lesbian Association, in the '80s. GAE's paper was the GAEZETTE, which in Feb '95 was renamed WayvesMagazine. (Gay History Project website: <http://gay.hfxns.org/GaeGala>). GAE also briefly owned a Community Center, located at Macara Street, which housed the library, and the two half time employees, and the Gay Line (Gay History Project website) (interview 1). X did not participate; activism held no appeal for him in 1969 and by 1971 he was living in Ottawa.

X was in Halifax at the time of Stonewall and he remembers that people knew what had happened in New York but nobody really wanted to talk about it, fearing that the talk would 'out' them. The guys in the 'scene' were middle-aged group (30's 40's) they had jobs and had to keep a low profile. X remembers that there was one protest in the summer of 1969, where GAE ran protests against discrimination against GAY people in the 'bar' scene in Halifax. However, after living in Cape Breton and Maine, X felt that Halifax wasn't too bad and he had no desire to participate in these local protest

movements.

Experience of Geography

At the same time, D'Emilio's geography began to change, AIDS was devastating the gay community in New York, and at this early stage (in 1982-1983) there was no idea or knowledge of what to do about AIDS. This created a great deal of fear and anxiety, which D'Emilio longed to escape. The development of a long-term relationship and a job offer in Greensboro, North Carolina prompted D'Emilio to leave New York for North Carolina, which the exact opposite social environment. D'Emilio found that he was one of few open gay males on campus. Striving to be a good teacher, he found himself constantly working in his teaching to communicate ideas that were unpopular in the community he lived in. Continual work as an activist (for example media appearances) prompted threats on his life and restricted the activities he was able to be involved in. A later move to Chicago, to take up a new academic appointment would again change the geography, space and opportunity for gay activism and participation in gay life for D'Emilio (1992: 2002). Until Greensboro, D'Emilio had had the advantage of being in urban centres like New York or Toronto that had a vigorous movement, in contrast X's geography marginalized his abilities to take part in the movement.

In contrast, X's experiences of geography were different, but no less central. Unlike D'Emilio who lived in urban New York, and travelled to San Francisco for social and political purposes, X moved between the reserve in Cape Breton and Halifax looking for education and work opportunities. X was a student at the Nova Scotia Institute of Technology (for ten months in 1963) before transferring back to Cape Breton. He spent

three weeks in Halifax in 1966 looking for a job and returned in 1969 to work in the Halifax infirmary in the kitchen. X went to Ottawa in 1971 and returned to Halifax in 1976, visited briefly in 1990 and settled permanently here in 1998. (Interview 1)

X found that Halifax was more accepting, his conflicts with those on the reserve who did not want to accept gays forced him into physical confrontations to establish his identity. Even in a community where cultural values could support a two-spirited person, colonized heterosexism still made life difficult. Although X did occasionally run into some problems in Halifax, he found life in the city to be very fulfilling. Halifax would also be the place where X would receive 'elevation', beyond the status he had enjoyed or fought for as a two-spirited person. X found his way to The Candlelight Bar on Spring Garden through a friend who worked at the Garden View who told X that it had good music (interview 1). The Candlelight was a fairly busy bar and while men did make out downstairs in the bathroom, and he would be occasionally approached in the bathroom, the dance floor was 'clean' and X found The Candlelight quite peaceful. The bar had a good band; it became the only place he went. One night at The Candlelight, X was approached by a gentleman who asked him to join a group of 4 or 5 men in another section of the bar. X says he got up and went over "of course hands went flying here and there, it didn't bother me." (Interview 1 00:47). Two weeks later a person approached him and said, "you must be proud." when X asked why? The person responded, "... You must be proud you won the crown...Miss Halifax." (Interview 1-1:24). X felt elevated by that honour and considered himself from that point to today a 'queen' (Interview 1). In 1969, the term 'queen' referred to a gay male who had been selected as a unique person or character, however they would not dress as women. In 2003, in the GAY community,

elevation is now reserved for drag queens, drag kings or ‘associates’ non-drag GAY people who have served to make a contribution to the drag community. In 1969, drag queens and drag kings as public performers did not exist (X interview 1.) In 1999, X was discussing this story with a friend who, when he told him he won something back in 1969, the friend exclaimed ‘so it was you’. The friend had been told to give him a crown (it was to go to an aboriginal guy). At that point, X did finally receive the crown.

X’s receipt of the crown and its meaning the Halifax gay community at that point remains unclear. X himself is not sure why he won it: “I was just purty at the time, of course they were colour-blind...the way I acted I guess...I was just on my own...acted on my own..I guess I was just natural in away, and they picked it up.” (Interview 1 3:27). The ‘hands flying around’ would lead me to believe that sexual activity was implied and that it is possible that the men whom X permitted to have sexual activity with him simply decided to vote him Miss Gay Halifax to show their appreciation. For X, Halifax represented a space that was open for X, valued and recognized him as a member of the community. In Cape Breton he faced discrimination, in Maine he was forced into the closet.

Since X began to return to Halifax in 1976, he has noticed changes and continuities (interview 1) in the city. In 1969, the Halifax gay scene was fairly closed, but by 1976 it was far more open, people were coming out. Even in 1976 X saw GAY people walking and holding hands, hugging, and sensed a more assertive public attitude. Between 1969 and 1976 the incidence of violence against GAY people had declined (and even this was an improvement over the rural areas of the province) (interview). The Halifax GAY community in 1969 (as today) was mostly white; there were few blacks or

Mi' kmaq (in 1969, X was not known by the GAY community to be Mi' kmaq),

Although X and John D'Emilio began (and continue in) different socio-economic spaces they have settled into an existence with work that is fulfilling. They experience personal lives that are satisfying. Their future has the promise to realize the possibilities and limitations that new freedoms have brought not only to their lives, but also to the cohort of lesbians and gay who formed the 'first wave' of gay and lesbian liberation in North America.

Conclusion

The 1960's had different legacies in North America; in the United States, a movement that began with energy and passion, with leaders that inspired a generation of youth and sent a message of freedom and hope for a better future was subsumed by conflict, changing economics and demographics into a neoconservatism that has threatens to roll back the advances in American society and culture achieved since 1960. In Canada, the 1960's began late but the ideas of the decade formed a foundation on which future development of civil rights has occurred. Despite a brief neo-conservative social period in the 1980's, the proclamation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is developing (I use this term deliberately since racism, sexism and homophobia are still ever present forces in Canadian social life) an inclusive attitude in Canadian society towards its racial, ethnic and sexual minorities that is in keeping with the spirit of liberation of the 1960's.

For lesbian and gays, the initial homophile movements that struggled to simply discover who the homosexual had by 1969, established a foundation of activism that a

new generation of gays and lesbians, inspired by the freedoms of Bill C-150 in Canada and Stonewall in the United States, built into a progressive and increasingly successful movement that has come very close (it remains to be seen what will happen with same sex marriage before the Commons) to removing all legal obstacles to gays and lesbians and has won an increasing acceptance for GAY peoples in Canadian society.

The lessons D'Emilio and X provide are multifaceted, race and class affect education and economic opportunities dramatically, movements for liberation carry different meanings for those who benefit from it. Some like D'Emilio were late but prominent activists, people like X contributed to the movement by living the new freedoms they won openly and unapologetically, despite increasing American political and cultural hegemony across the globe, geography still matters; it is within geographical regions that people create distinctive values that constitute culture.

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