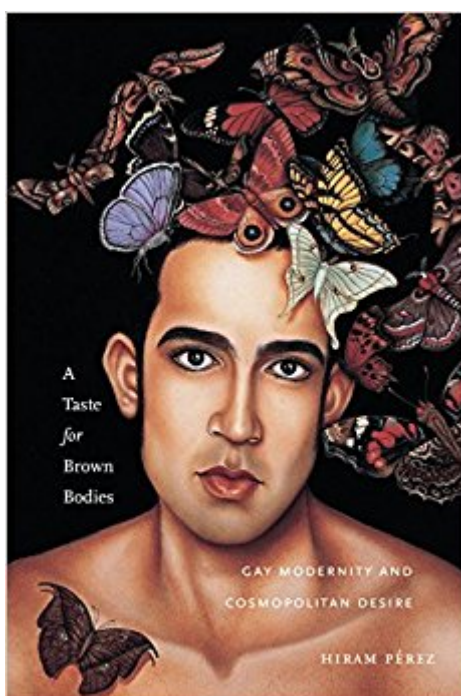


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A Taste For Brown Bodies: Gay Modernity And Cosmopolitan Desire (Sexual Cultures)



Synopsis

Winner, LGBT Studies Lammy Award—presented by—Lambda LiteraryNeither queer theory nor queer activism has fully reckoned with the role of race in the emergence of the modern gay subject. In *A Taste for Brown Bodies*, Hiram Pfaller traces the development—of gay modernity and its continued romanticization of the brown body. Focusing in particular on three figures with elusive queer histories—the sailor, the soldier, and the cowboy—Pfaller unpacks how each has been memorialized and desired for their heroic masculinity while at the same time functioning as agents for the expansion of the US borders and neocolonial zones of influence. Describing an enduring homonationalism dating to the “birth” of the homosexual in the late 19th century, Pfaller considers not only how US imperialist expansion was realized, but also how it was visualized for and through gay men. By means of an analysis of literature, film, and photographs from the 19th to the 21st centuries—including Herman Melville’s *Billy Budd*, Anne Proulx’s *Brokeback Mountain*, and photos of abuse at the Abu Ghraib prison—Pfaller proposes that modern gay male identity, often traced to late Victorian constructions of “invert” and “homosexual,” occupies not the periphery of the nation but rather a cosmopolitan position, instrumental to projects of war, colonialism, and neoliberalism. *A Taste for Brown Bodies* argues that practices and subjectivities that we understand historically as forms of homosexuality have been regulated and normalized as an extension of the US nation-state, laying bare the tacit, if complex, participation of gay modernity within US imperialism.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“Perez offers a provocative study that identifies connections between modern gay identity, sexual desire, US imperialism, and national identity. Choice” “Tracing the homoerotic archetypes of sailor, cowboy, and soldier, he offers close readings of Billy Budd and Brokeback Mountain and uses James Baldwin’s ‘Going to Meet the Man’ to parse images from Abu Ghraib, prodding readers toward a deeper, sometimes uncomfortable understanding of cultural context, colonialism, and complicity. Chronogram Magazine” “A compelling contribution to the pivotal turn in queer studies toward a critique of still-emergent forms of homo-normativities. With dazzling close readings of diverse texts, such as James Baldwin’s ‘Going to Meet the Man,’ alongside an equally bracing collection of visual texts, Hiram Pérez’s book is an impressive critical and analytical performance. Absorbingly written, it never loses sight of the urgency of its core claims and the work that a critically committed queer studies must continue to do.” —Ricardo L. Ortiz, author of Cultural Erotics in Cuban America “A Taste for Brown Bodies” is a crucial and groundbreaking study that throws new light on the interplay of cosmopolitanism and homosexuality. Its stunning historical depth and engagement with the promises and limitations of queer theory make it essential reading for scholars of critical ethnic and queer studies. With gorgeous prose and unflinching arguments, this book is sure to incite intense debate, ruffle the right feathers, and move us beyond the impasse that equates race politics with knee-jerk identity politics.” —Richard T. Rodriguez, author of Next of Kin: The Family in Chicano/a Cultural Politics

Hiram Pérez is an Assistant Professor of English at Vassar College.

Excellent book, well-written, and highly recommend for those interested in queer of color critique.

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