



PROJECT MUSE®

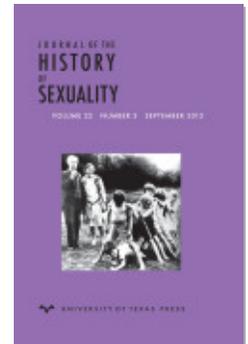
---

## A Suitcase Full of Vaseline, or Travels in the 1970s Gay World

Lucas Hilderbrand

Journal of the History of Sexuality, Volume 22, Number 3, September 2013, pp. 373-402 (Article)

Published by University of Texas Press



➔ For additional information about this article

<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/sex/summary/v022/22.3.hilderbrand.html>

# A Suitcase Full of Vaseline, or Travels in the 1970s Gay World

LUCAS HILDERBRAND

*University of California, Irvine*

A PHOTO OF A SOFT-SIDED SUITCASE, unzipped to reveal that it has been packed with nothing but small tubes of Vaseline, illustrated a summer 1969 feature article on travel tips for gay men in a new lifestyle magazine (fig. 1). The image appeared without a caption, suggesting the self-evidence of the visual joke that sex rather than sightseeing would be the activity on holiday. The writer advised: "It's a wise gay guy who takes a supply of antibiotics along for sudden viruses and other 'diseases of the throat.'" Also on the list of things to pack: "douche, needle and thread, scissors, Vaseline, K-Y, Vaseline, K-Y, Vaseline, etc."<sup>1</sup> Written prior to but published contemporaneously with the pivotal Stonewall riots, this article suggests a gay male readership hip to the innuendo of the image and the implications of the repetition on the packing checklist. But as an advice feature, it also suggested that there was still much for readers to learn about the gay lifestyle and about navigating the world of same-sex action.

This travel article appeared in *Queen's Quarterly* (soon to be renamed *QQ*), a glossy gay men's magazine that debuted in the spring of 1969 and continued publication for a decade. *QQ* explored the concept of a gay lifestyle, scripting a way of life for gay men that might be seen as both homogenizing and reflecting the range of interests and issues that such a lifestyle might entail. With the cover slogan, "For Gay Guys Who Have No Hangups," the magazine's articles spanned sex advice, health, hygiene and grooming, food, fashion, travel, and fiction. What was largely missing from its coverage were explicit claims toward political activism or news in

I dedicate this essay to my friend and fellow 1970s fetishist Joe Wlodarz. Thanks to the volunteers and staff at the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives and the New York Public Library Manuscripts and Archives Division, to the friends who read drafts, to my hosts and audiences at Northwestern University and Ohio State University, to my anonymous readers, and to my editor, Matt Kuefler.

<sup>1</sup> Gregory Dunn, "Making the Most of Your Gay Vacation (Including Some Tips on Cruising Moscow)," *Queen's Quarterly* 1, no. 3 (1969): 54.

Gay

# MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR VACATION

(including some tips on cruising Moscow)

by

Gregory Dunn

Have you ever tried getting away from it all by vacationing in the deep woods? How luxurious it'd be, you think, to be someplace where you could just relax, not caring about holding in your gut, or vying with the competition for a new guy in town. So you decide to go camping in a forest, or take a cruise on the Amazon, or climb Mt. Everest. Two days after you're there you're ready to scream. You get out your map and plot nearby towns. Now you are a man possessed, driving hundreds of miles to and from camp to check out the local movie house or railroad station in search of sex. Each weary day ends with a ring on your behind from having sat too long in a john you were certain had "potential." Your two or three weeks crawl by, the wet dreams increase—and you're a haggard mess by the time you return home. For the next couple of weeks you're going to do nothing but unwind—loading up with nickels for the subway johns and doing the baths every night.

If you are typically gay you should plan vacations with two thoughts in mind—(1) sight-seeing, meaning the usual things to do on a holiday, and (2) availability of sex, for unless you're a voyeur, places like the Grand Canyon and Lake George can wreak havoc on your nerves ("water, water everywhere...!").

To each his own, but I prefer to vacation at relaxed places—meaning no neckties... tight dungarees and tee-shirts. For me it's the ocean; you may dig lakes. For me it's a foreign city; you may prefer big cities here at home. For most of us it's a place where sex is in abundance. Vacations are playthings, and even if you prefer to relax, at least it's comforting to know that sex is there should you want it.

Plan ahead, not only concerning documents, health clearance, and transportation, but *where* you're going to stay once you get there. Will it be a luxury hotel (someplace nice to entertain a special guy)? The Y (who sleeps on vacations anyway!)? A favorite gay hotel (no need to worry about your pinky on the tea

cup at breakfast)? Get tips from friends, and buy a new gay guide listing hot spots. If it's the height of the season, make reservations well in advance.

Consider clothing. It's silly to take a half dozen suits when a single black one will do. Take plenty of shirts, underwear, etc., so that you won't have to scrub every night; wash-and-wear materials are great, and usually dry quickly when hung over a tub. Dry cleaning can usually be done in hours; most hotels are equipped. Don't forget those sexy bathing trunks; it's difficult finding snug bikinis where the supply is limited. Take your sneakers (if you plan to scale rocks, like Lands End in San Francisco, for instance), sandals if you're going to cruise the dunes (sand burrs can really turn a guy off), and a comfortable pair of shoes for walking the streets.

It's a wise gay guy who takes a supply of antibiotics along for sudden viruses and other "diseases of the throat." Always make certain you have plenty of whatever medications you normally use, and if you are going to un-Americanized places, take some

toilet tissue and soap with you.

Of course, a toothbrush and paste, medicated creams, mouthwash, deodorant, cologne, hair spray (try explaining it to a Zulu lover!), comb, band-aids, iodine, douche, needle and thread, scissors, vaseline, K-Y, vaseline, K-Y, vaseline, etc. In short, anticipate your every need—and pack it.

Travel light if possible, making use of every inch of your bag—like stuffing crevices with socks and cigarettes.

It's easy to tote a single suitcase, an airline bag, and a camera; two or three big bags can really slow you down. Leave some arm space for a souvenir you may pick up along the way (unless he can walk on his own power!).

Now, I'm not going to tell you where to go... you already know all the gay spots—like San Francisco, Chicago, New York, Miami, Provincetown, Tokyo, Bangkok, Munich, Copenhagen, Capri, Paris, Amsterdam, London... STOP... I'm telling, I'm just going to tell you where not to go—like Lake George, Paducah, Pocatello, and Mos-

(Continued on page 47)

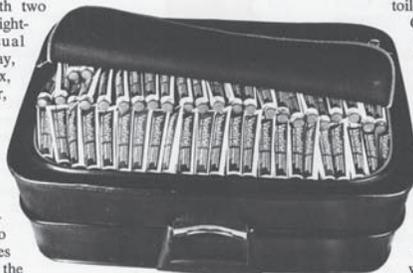


Figure 1. A suitcase full of Vaseline illustrates a gay travel advice column in *Queen's Quarterly*, summer 1969. Courtesy of the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives.

line with better-remembered gay liberation periodicals of the time. *QQ's* success helped launch two spin-off publications from the same publisher: *Body* (1972–80), a gay erotic magazine, and *Ciao!* (1973–80), a gay travel magazine. The point of gay travel, as introduced in *QQ* and expanded in

*Ciao!*, was less about sightseeing than it was about the potential for nonstop erotic adventure. *Ciao!*, the primary case study for this essay, fleshed out what it termed “the world of gay travel” during the 1970s.

My interest in these 1970s magazines is primarily historical, though my discovery of them was inadvertent. During a visit to the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives in Los Angeles to research the history of gay bars in the United States, a volunteer suggested that I start by browsing *Ciao!*, of which I’d never heard, as a resource to compile the names of specific venues for further investigation elsewhere. *Ciao!* proved fascinating in its own right, however, for the ways it charted the emergence of recurring sites for gay male sex and socialization across the country and around the world while also foregrounding that the period was very much one of transition for gay enclaves that reflected the broader political and economic crises of the time. Through in-depth guides, *Ciao!* treated each city as locally specific, and changes within cities during the decade were updated in follow-up articles. Thus, the magazine provided an exhaustive survey of local gay scenes and sites over several years and now stands as an unusually rich if untapped guide to the recent gay past. The magazine’s presumption of interracial desire in its prose and its conspicuous objectification of an array of ethnic bodies in photographs suggest both an unapologetic focus on sex and ambivalent politics; in this way, *Ciao!* documents precisely the practices of racialized desire that queer studies has at times been reticent to offer.<sup>2</sup>

The magazine was so slickly produced and continued publication for long enough to suggest some kind of mainstream status in its own moment, but it now seems all but written out of the existing gay histories of the period. *Ciao!*’s tone and attitudes often seem contradictory, even within the same articles, and in its focus on up-to-date coverage typically ignored potential connections to histories of public sex and homoerotic cultures. As historical documents, these magazines offer highly subjective accounts of different gay scenes, written in anecdotal voices and reflecting the particular inclinations of individual writers and their cruising habits. As a genre, travel writing operates from the perspective of having-been-there yet relies upon the reader’s own imagination of what-it-would-be-like; thus the evidentiary and the speculative are inherently bound up in the meanings they produce, and these magazines exist at the intersection of authority and fantasy. The gay scenes recounted here predate my own adult explorations (I was born in the 1970s), and I recognize my tendency to romanticize this heritage. Yet I have tried to balance the allure of presenting a golden age history that indulges the period’s sexual exuberance and vivid documentation by qualifying that many men would have felt disenfranchised or objectified in the venues and the press of the period (and these conditions may not necessarily have improved since) and by examining the costs of the period’s financial crisis and urban renewal.

<sup>2</sup> For a critique that white queer studies fail to address sex and interracial desire, see Robert Reid-Pharr, “Dinge,” in *Black Gay Man: Essays* (New York: NYU Press, 2001), 85–98.

In this essay I will examine the emergence of the concept of the gay “lifestyle” through these periodicals and the ways *Ciao!* specifically documented local gay scenes in different cities across the United States. But *Ciao!* was also, from the start, international in its scope. In the final section of this essay I will attend to the erotics of international travel and what it reveals about American attitudes about sexuality at the time. *Ciao!*’s content was often “problematic,” but it is precisely the magazine’s uncensored quality that makes it such a telling historical document of how emergent gay localities were constructed for its readership during the period when gay lifestyles came to be publicly defined.

#### PUBLICIZING THE GAY “LIFESTYLE”

The gay press of the late 1960s and 1970s not only reported on the political struggles of liberation but also regularly featured erotic images, commented on the arts with a gay sensibility, and described the various scenes at local gay bars. *QQ*, as a glossy national publication, might be seen as central to a major cultural transition from a gay *sensibility* to a more formalized and commercialized gay *lifestyle*. By examining *QQ*, we can see, historically, how the concept of a gay lifestyle, though based out of New York, was being constructed for a nationwide readership at the same time a visible gay public culture was being invented and gay ghettoization was developing in the United States. *Ciao!*, the travel offshoot from *QQ*, suggested that tourism was a significant element of the gay lifestyle. But in offering guides to specific destinations, it also reinforced the concept of different (though often familiar) local gay scenes in each city or foreign country. Thus *QQ* and *Ciao!* publicized, respectively, the homogenized national gay culture and the resiliently distinct local and international cultures.

Writing in the early 1980s, Dennis Altman offered one of the most insightful and synthetic readings of the development of gay public life in the United States during the prior decade. He suggested that in the 1970s gay identities became newly understood through the frameworks of a specific gay lifestyle and as a minority status, conceptual shifts that appeared concurrently with the increasing visibility of gay sexuality and the formation of gay institutions.<sup>3</sup> Altman saw gay identity and politics as being particular to the United States in their contradictory notions of liberty and repressive mores, their bases in capitalism, and their notion of civil rights.<sup>4</sup> As he observed, even in Paris the gay bars had names that referenced the United States (or, more specifically, New York City), further reinforcing the association of gay life and American culture.<sup>5</sup> *Ciao!* offered a specifically American vantage point on the gay lifestyle and its spaces; as a travel magazine, it reported on local,

<sup>3</sup> Dennis Altman, *The Homosexualization of America, the Americanization of the Homosexual* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1982), 6–7.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 21, 25.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 217.

national, and transnational differences and developments through specific examples of what Altman would soon term “the homosexualization of America” and “the Americanization of the homosexual” during this period.

The concept of “lifestyle,” central to the new public gayness, was recognized and articulated as a new cultural paradigm more widely at this time. In the introduction to his influential 1976 anthropological study of (straight) tourists, Dean MacCannell defined what was apparently a newly minted concept, a compound verbiage that was still hyphenated: “‘Lifestyle,’ a generic term for specific combinations of work and leisure, is replacing ‘occupation’ as the basis of social relationship formation, social status and social action.”<sup>6</sup> What strikes me here is that, if we think of this study as appearing contemporaneously with the early formation of a public gay culture, the gay—often euphemized as “alternative”—lifestyle was perhaps formative to the concept of “lifestyle” itself. As *QQ* was scripting the tastes, tendencies, and questions that seemed to constitute the gay lifestyle, *Ciao!* was mapping where to find it.

In addition to their suggestive connection to the formation of the concept of a “lifestyle,” travel guides’ instant-datedness is central to their usefulness as historical snapshots; by their nature, travel guides either risk obsolescence as listings go out of date or are actually intended to become obsolete when updated editions are published. Tourists, it has thus been suggested, exist in the “now.”<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, *Ciao!* regularly countered rigid notions of stable or “authentic” identities based upon sexual orientation: the men available for sex are often defined as *not* gay, though they were differently so depending on the context. In US locales, the nongay men who had sex with men were assumed to be closeted or merely curious, whereas in foreign destinations, men who had sex with men were typically presented as securely straight but available for paid sex as trade. In this way it was the American men whose identities were questioned, not the international men. For generations, international travel promised same-sex erotic release for privileged classes of men to have sex with men who could or would not otherwise engage in same-sex practices at home; that such practices evidently remained central in the now-idealized promiscuous US gay culture of the 1970s suggests that, for many men, escape remained essential for making contact.

The gay press generally and publishing related to gay tourism specifically retrospectively offer important insights into the ways gay public life was articulated for readers. By 1969, when *Queen’s Quarterly* debuted, a number of gay periodicals, such as *Vector* (published in San Francisco between 1964 and 1968) and *Drum* (Philadelphia, 1964–69), had already striven to publicize the politics and experiences of homosexuals, as well as to integrate nudity into their content as a reflection of the centrality of

<sup>6</sup> Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken, 1976), 6.

<sup>7</sup> Gabriel Giorgi, “Madrid *en Tránsito*: Travelers, Visibility, and Gay Identity,” *GLQ* 8, nos. 1–2 (2002): 59.

eroticism in the gay sensibility. The subsequent newspapers the *Advocate* (Los Angeles, 1967–present) and *Gay* (New York, 1969–74) carried these trends into the early 1970s, and various later, more sex-oriented magazines such as *Mandate* (New York, 1975–88) and *Drummer* (Los Angeles, 1975–89) continued to feature substantive cultural reporting alongside nude pictorials. Historians have remarked on the *Advocate*'s explicit transition from news to more lifestyle content—signaled with new advertising such as the slogan “Touching Your Lifestyle”—in 1975 (though it would not be reformatted into a magazine until 1985), but *QQ* and other publications anticipated this focus on lifestyle by several years and more completely.<sup>8</sup> The *Advocate* has been understood as the most widely read national gay publication of the time, but a fall 1971 *QQ* ad in the *Advocate* suggested otherwise, claiming (perhaps dubiously) that it was currently outselling all other gay publications of its kind; ads in subsequent years boasted a readership of 95,000.<sup>9</sup> (*Ciao!* never publicized its circulation or readership statistics, thus making it impossible to determine the scale of its audience.) Even allowing for exaggeration, *QQ* must have had far wider reception than is commonly remembered or otherwise documented.<sup>10</sup> But by always

<sup>8</sup> See Michael Bronski, *Culture Clash: The Making of Gay Sensibility* (Boston: South End, 1984), 148–49; Rodger Streitmatter, *Unspeakable: The Rise of the Gay and Lesbian Press in America* (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1995), 183–210; Katherine Sender, “Gay Readers, Consumers, and a Dominant Gay Habitus: 25 Years of the *Advocate* Magazine,” *Journal of Communication* 51, no. 1 (2001): 73–99; and Sender, *Business, Not Politics: The Making of the Gay Market* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004). For a prehistory that stresses the significance of physique magazines and mail-order catalogs, see David K. Johnson, “Physique Pioneers: The Politics of 1960s Gay Consumer Culture,” *Journal of Social History* 43, no. 4 (2010): 867–92. In claiming that the emergence of a conception of a “life style” was central to 1970s gay culture, Altman used the term as two words, unhyphenated (Altman, *The Homosexualization of America*). The *Oxford English Dictionary* online indicates that the term “life-style magazine” appeared as hyphenated as early as 1971 in relation to a boating magazine; it suggests that the term appeared without hyphenation as late as 1988 (oed.com, accessed 20 December 2010). On *Gay Power*'s transition from a newspaper documenting gay liberation to an entertainment and erotica tabloid in 1972, see Richard Meyer, “*Gay Power* circa 1970: Visual Strategies for Sexual Revolution,” *GLQ* 12, no. 3 (2006): 455.

<sup>9</sup> Ad for *QQ Magazine*, *Advocate*, 29 September 1971, 13.

<sup>10</sup> The *Advocate*'s circulation increased from 60,000 to 80,000 between 1976 and 1981 during its transition to lifestyle coverage and increase in national advertisers. The *Advocate* was also the first gay publication to conduct market research of its readership. It was not until 1994, however, that *Out* was reportedly the first gay publication to surpass 100,000 circulation (Sender, “Gay Readers,” 13, 18, 28). As early as 1977, however, the new publication *Blueboy* reportedly had a circulation of 135,000 and a readership six times that figure (Clarke Taylor, “Gay Power,” *New York Magazine*, 29 August 1977, 45). *After Dark*, the cryptically gay entertainment magazine, reportedly saw its circulation spike from 49,500 to 71,300 between 1977 and 1978 (Roger Ricklefs, “Glossy Magazine Aimed at Homosexuals Wins Advertisers but Loses Militants,” *Wall Street Journal*, 1 August 1978). Glossy gay magazines featuring erotic images, such as *Blueboy*, *Mandate*, and *Man's Way*, were simultaneously hailed in the press for their affluent readership and characterized, at least in one profile, as “immensely profitable, with circulations running into the mid-five figures” (Gilbert Choate, “Fag Mags,” *Alternative Media* 10, no. 1 [1978]: 8).

containing unabashedly sexual content, the magazine never attracted the mainstream national advertising that the *Advocate* eventually would.<sup>11</sup>

*QQ*'s version of the gay lifestyle suggested the intersections of sex, self-presentation, and self-preservation, with secondary attention to refined tastes in food and art. The magazine combined playful images and articles emphasizing eroticism alongside feature articles with witty graphic design and sassy writing.<sup>12</sup> Titles for sex-advice features, in particular, tended toward the attention-getting, from "What Not to Wear to an Orgy" and "Glory Holes: A Piece of Vanishing Americana" to "Bottoms Up: Avoiding the Heartbreak of Anal Ooze."<sup>13</sup> Other features ranged from speech therapy to diminish effeminate lips to straightening up the apartment for a mother's visit to the publisher's autobiographical account of adult circumcision—complete with before and after photos!<sup>14</sup> The magazine's content suggested that gay culture, like the broader culture of the 1970s, embraced strategies of sexual self-help and other turns toward self-improvement that prompted the derisive designation of it as the "me" decade.<sup>15</sup> The turn toward lifestyle, straight and gay, involved a turn toward consumption as a form of self-invention, yet the gay lifestyle media instructed its readership not only how to become "themselves," as in the straight publications, but also how to become gay.<sup>16</sup> Such self-cultivation took place against a backdrop of domestic economic anxiety and transitioning urban landscapes.

If *QQ*, as the flagship publication, articulated a range of gay lifestyle interests in the 1970s, its spin-off travel-focused publication *Ciao!* narrowed its focus to the geographies of same-sex erotic activities. *Ciao!*'s travel guides featured information on bars, restaurants, hotels, adult theaters, and cruising spots such as parks, beaches, bus stations, and public toilets; these were the recurring sites that constituted gay spaces. In addition to the city-by-city (or in some cases regional or international) travel guides, the magazine regularly included two other features: nude pictorials (in which nameless models were identified solely by country) and personal ads. Display

<sup>11</sup> On the tensions between gay magazines' sexual content and desire to attract cagey mainstream advertising, see Sender, *Business, Not Politics*, 200–226.

<sup>12</sup> The December 1971 issue was both the first of *QQ* to feature full-frontal nudity and the first to be sold by subscription only; it had previously been available on newsstands. From the start, both *QQ* spin-off magazines *Body* and *Ciao!* featured full-frontal pictorials.

<sup>13</sup> Philip Bailey, "What Not to Wear to an Orgy," *QQ* 4, no. 2 (May/June 1972): 30; Frank Samuels, "Glory Holes: A Piece of Vanishing Americana," *QQ* 4, no. 2 (May/June 1974): 7; and Roger Watson, "Bottoms Up: Avoiding the Heartbreak of Anal Ooze," *QQ* 7, no. 2 (March/April 1975): 7.

<sup>14</sup> Harold Bailey, "Voice Improvement Made Easy," *QQ* 3, no. 2 (May/June 1971): 31; Edwin Gordon, "Mother Is Coming to Visit!," *QQ* 3, no. 1 (February 1971): 37; and George Desantis, "Prime Cut: Adult Circumcision," *QQ* 4, no. 6 (December 1972): 19.

<sup>15</sup> Altman also comments upon this tendency in relation to the search for sexual self-fulfillment in *The Homosexualization of America*, 82.

<sup>16</sup> Sam Binkley similarly locates the emergence of "lifestyle" in the counterculture print media of this period but does not include the gay press in his history (*Getting Loose: Lifestyle Consumption in the 1970s* [Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007]).

advertisements for sex aids, “poppers” or “room odorizers” (amyl nitrite), and various gay publications also appeared. All of this content—the articles, the images, and the ads—were overtly sexual.

*Ciao!*'s covers typically featured photos of solo men in states of undress. In some cases the models' hair and fashions now appear comically dated, and in others their stylings attempted to suggest some kind of “timeless” exoticism, even when the featured model was white. On the cover of the February 1974 issue, for example (fig. 2), a series of head shots of different men appeared in boxes with the word “peace” translated into different languages under each image; such captioning both identified models as being of different nationalities and suggested a desire to make panethnic love rather than war. The more frequent solo-model cover images generally bore no apparent correlation to the places featured inside, as when a shirtless African American man with a leather cap and handkerchief around his neck posed with a chain on the cover of an issue with profiles of Manila, Fiji, Sydney, Barcelona, and Cannes, or, even more curiously, when an apparently white man dressed as a Native American, complete with feather and companion horse, appeared on the cover for an issue with guides to Toronto, Morocco, Malaysia, Singapore, Dakar, and New York (see figs. 3 and 4). Although *Ciao!* could accurately be accused of ethnic fetishization, looked at more generously, the magazine was far more diverse and inclusive, ethnically and racially, in its conception of what was beautiful and sexy than most other contemporaneous gay magazines, which overwhelmingly focused on white models.<sup>17</sup> *Ciao!* may have only occasionally acknowledged in its articles that race and ethnicity were constituent parts of its imagined gay male readership's identity, but race and ethnicity explicitly intersected with sexuality in the magazine's projections of gay male desire.

Inside the magazine, the feature articles on each city were generally chatty, with some overview remarks preceding blurbs describing the scene at each venue; for larger cities, the venues were broken down by neighborhood. By comparison with *QQ*'s cheeky graphics, *Ciao!*'s black-and-white interior design was unimaginative, following a streamlined template from issue to issue. Unlike traditional guidebooks and some local gay papers, *Ciao!* did not feature maps to locate venues within densely gay neighborhoods; however, for most city guides, a number of the venues were pictured, with thumbnail images of their exteriors, thus facilitating recognition of the locations but giving little visual representation of the interior ambience or goings-on. These images reinforced that bars were often nondescript from the exterior and that, presumably, customers inside didn't want to have their pictures taken. What was rarely represented visually for specific venues was their primary attraction: the men. The burden fell to the prose, then, to take the reader inside and to assess the erotic prospects; bars were

<sup>17</sup> David Johnson has suggested that pre-Stonewall physique magazines were also less homogeneously white than is often imagined (“The Adonis Male Club: Physique Magazines, Censorship, and the Making of the Gay Male Community,” conference presentation, Queer Places, Practices and Lives, Ohio State University, 19 May 2012).

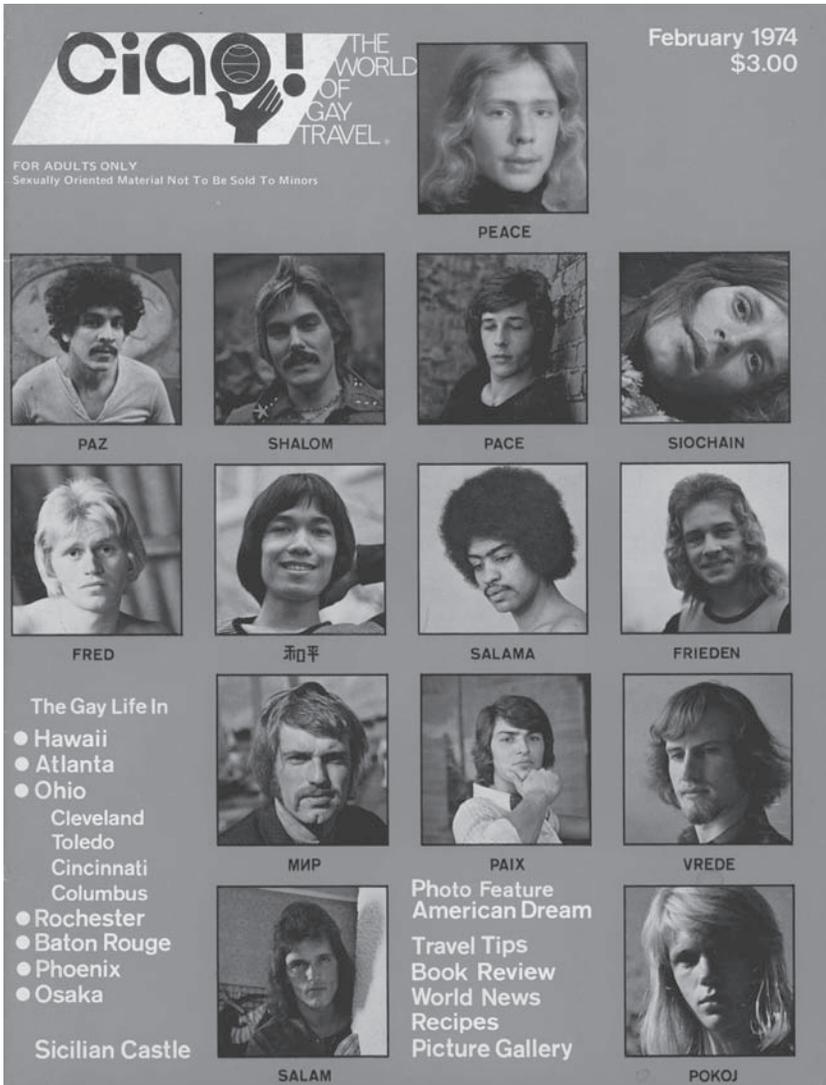


Figure 2. Peace, love, and transnational desire on the cover of *Ciao!*, February 1974. Courtesy of the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives.

differentiated based upon whether they were dance venues or leather bars or whether they attracted “groovy” or “collegiate” young crowds or a mix of “all types.” *Ciao!* occasionally acknowledged travelers on a budget; lodging accommodations were regularly evaluated on the basis of value and listed for a range of prices, and one write-up even included McDonald’s among recommended Tampa restaurants.<sup>18</sup> Features about US cities rarely

<sup>18</sup> David Bartel, “Gay Florida,” *Ciao!*, February 1977, 19.

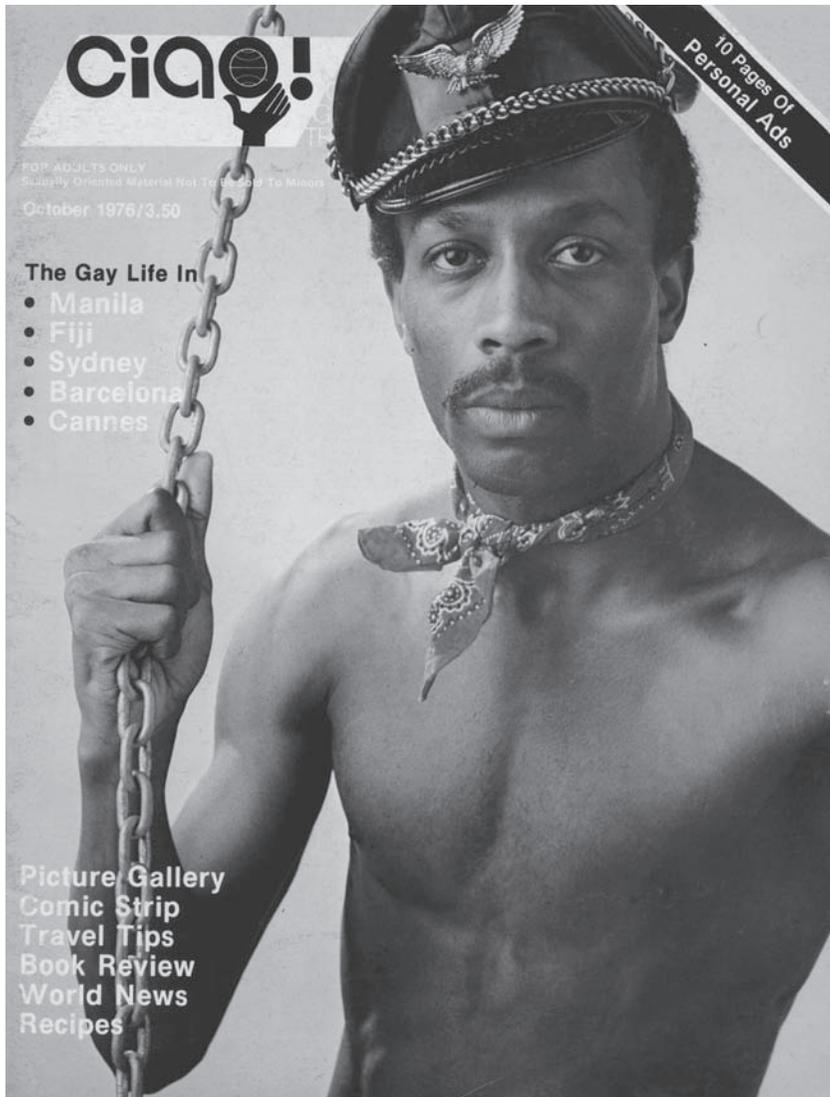


Figure 3. *Ciao!*, October 1976. Courtesy of the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives.

if ever listed general tourist attractions, such as museums or historic sites. Specific city write-ups often revealed a tension between speaking from the perspective of locals and the perspective of tourists navigating an unknown destination. Although *Ciao!* was published out of New York and focused primarily on urban destinations, as a subscription-driven magazine it allowed



Figure 4. *Ciao!*, September 1978. Courtesy of the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives.

more geographically isolated readers the actual or vicarious ability to travel to more developed and centralized gay locales.

*Ciao!*'s occasional "practical" travel tips for international gay travel were often comical. For Sylt Island in what was then West Germany, travelers were advised to survey the terrain before tricking in outdoor public spaces:

“A section of Sylt Island in the North Sea is a bog, and there lie several sets of lovers who went ‘glug-glug-glug’ while going ‘suck-suck-suck.’”<sup>19</sup> For carnival in Rio de Janeiro, sex tourists were told to pack sensible weather-appropriate gear: “So put on your summer-weight cock ring and enjoy!”<sup>20</sup> Navigating the Dominican Republic’s customs with gay paraphernalia prompted similar language: “Metal detectors will be passed over every inch of you—so you are advised not to wear a cock ring if you’re going to get flustered when the buzzer sounds when the man pokes at your crotch.”<sup>21</sup> From the unfamiliar terrain to the opposite seasons in the Southern Hemisphere to the surveillance of national security, *Ciao!*, though surely intending to be provocative, also suggested a commonsense approach to sex, reinforcing that *Ciao!* was a travel magazine that fancied itself as “for gay guys who have no hangups” and that public sex and traveling while wearing a cock ring were acceptable, even expected behaviors.

As has been previously documented, travel guides were among the first forms of gay publications in the 1950s and 1960s, though early guides were comprised almost exclusively of listings of bars with names, addresses, and coded descriptions of the venues’ clientele.<sup>22</sup> These guides institutionalized what had previously been a mode of personal record keeping. Allan Bérubé describes US gay public life during the World War II era as transient, with soldiers passing through cities on temporary leave and civilians often relocated from home. Knowledge of the scene was largely constituted through word of mouth, and specific sites were often shifting. The later published guidebooks were a formalized version of the earlier period’s amateur record keeping: “‘Most guys devoted a rear section of their address book,’ recalled a veteran of the wartime gay life, ‘to city-by-city listings of action spots and people to contact. . . . One was forever up-dating his information to keep it current, crossing out closed bars or adding new ones.’”<sup>23</sup> Martin Meeker suggests that early published travel guides achieved a form of what Benedict Anderson has called an “imagined community”: “The fact such [guide] books were produced demonstrates that . . . [their authors and publishers] imagined the gay world to be expansive, established, and spatially anchored in the early 1960s.”<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, he suggests, “it might be argued that those publications simultaneously allowed homosexuals to see how and where they fit in the gay world—and how and where they did not; it

<sup>19</sup> The Editors, “Gay World Travel Tips,” *Ciao!*, February 1973, 7.

<sup>20</sup> A. Jay, “Rio de Janeiro,” *Ciao!*, December 1973, 25.

<sup>21</sup> David Bartel, “La República Dominicana: Santo Domingo,” *Ciao!*, August 1976, 20.

<sup>22</sup> The most important early guides included Brice Bard’s international *Le guide gris*, dating from 1958; Guy Strait’s *Lavender Baedeker*, dating from 1963; *The International Guild Guide*, dating from 1964; and Bob Damron’s pocket-sized *The Address Book*, dating from 1965. In the 2011 edition of the *Damron* guide, listings remain sparing in information beyond business names and addresses (*Damron Men’s Travel Guide* [San Francisco: Damron Company, 2010]).

<sup>23</sup> Allan Bérubé, *Coming Out under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War Two* (New York: Free Press, 1990), 117.

<sup>24</sup> Martin Meeker, *Contacts Desired: Gay and Lesbian Communications and Community, 1940s–1970s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 214.

provided them with the opportunity to identify with a portion of the gay subculture but also with the possibility to identify with any particularities in the gay world as it was being parceled out and named.”<sup>25</sup>

These historians’ accounts suggest both that the spaces of public gay life were ever-changing and that personal or published listings were key to imagining that a gay community existed. However, these guides were often cryptic, out-of-date, idiosyncratic, or inaccurate; the published guides, in particular, offer very little information beyond names and addresses and thus give almost no documentation of the gay scene except that it existed and that there were resources for men to find it. With expanded gay publishing in the 1960s and 1970s, visibility for these venues correspondingly increased through advertising, travel features, and even news reporting of police raids.

In particular, the proliferation of travel magazines, guides, and features in general-interest gay magazines indicates that gay travel had become a major—or at least an imagined—market by the mid-1970s. Ads for gay resorts and nightclubs, particularly in Fort Lauderdale and Key West, also became a major boon to gay publications by the late 1970s. Symptomatic of the period’s impulse to index gay venues, the national edition of the *Gayellow [sic] Pages* first appeared in 1970, including not only bars and other leisure venues but also gay and gay-friendly businesses more generally.<sup>26</sup> I do not mean to suggest that pre-Stonewall public gay scenes did not exist; they most certainly did. Yet the flurry of periodicals and guides in this moment indicates an exuberant and perhaps slightly amnesiac focus on the expansion of gay scenes in the 1970s. That few travel guidebooks would be sustained over multiple years and editions suggests that the size of the market was perhaps overestimated. Yet gay travel was importantly central to a boom in gay publishing and to imagining the places and circuits of queer publicity. The late 1970s were also a period of transition for the travel industry, with deregulation of US airlines in 1978, which would eventually reduce fares for consumers and expand the markets and routes served for all Americans.

Significantly, most guidebooks organized the world as divided between the United States and the rest of the world; in other words, guidebooks typically covered *either* the United States *or* a sweep of other countries. (In the late 1960s, the *Advocate* began publishing its own travel guide, *Barfly*, which split the United States into East and West editions.)<sup>27</sup> Thus, the gay

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 223.

<sup>26</sup> Numerous similar compilations of listings would appear under different titles in the 1960s and 1970s. So many guides have been published that *Our Own Voices* includes twenty-four pages of listings of gay guides and directories (Alan V. Miller, *Our Own Voices: A Directory of Lesbian and Gay Periodicals, 1890–1990* [Toronto: Canadian Gay Archives, 1991]). Two US travelogue books also book-end the 1970s: John Francis Hunter’s *The Gay Insider USA* (New York: Stonehill, 1972) and Edmund White’s *States of Desire: Travels in Gay America* (New York: Dutton, 1980).

<sup>27</sup> *Barfly West* was published between 1966 and 1975; *Barfly East*, between 1969 and 1973. The *International Vagabond World Travel Address Guide*, published in Denmark and dating from at least as early as 1968, was unusual for integrating listings between the United States and the rest of the world.

scene in the United States was positioned as globally exceptional—and by implication more developed—than in the rest of the world. In contrast to compact paperback guidebooks, as a magazine *Ciao!* could offer far more expansive and detailed accounts of the featured cities, and it was often brazen in the candor of its travel advice. Unlike most other travel texts, it also integrated the United States and international destinations from the start, recognizing that homosexual men have long traveled overseas in search of sex and desired different same-sex cultures.

#### MAPPING US GAY CULTURE IN TRANSITION

*Ciao!* reflected a period in queer history when gay men were becoming a recognized market and imagined as having a coherent lifestyle yet when public gay male scenes were nonetheless in development. Guides to specific cities revealed and—in the hyperbolic prose of travel guides—accentuated local differences, and different write-ups for the same city across as few as four years indicated the rapid evolution of particular scenes. The articles reflected the decade's pervasive sense of transition and turmoil, as “self-fulfillment, immediate gratification, and personal freedom” became new goals in an era when future economic prosperity seemed doubtful and pervasive malaise about political leaders abounded.<sup>28</sup> The profiles of various US cities in the 1970s often demonstrated more awareness of national economic malaise and urban redevelopment than localized gay organizing, but ultimately any commentary was presented as context for the main subject: finding “humpy” guys for hookups. Perhaps more than other guides—or more than in any other period—politics and sex were explicitly articulated as interwoven for the gay tourist in *Ciao!*'s accounts.

Gay bars were prominently listed in local US guides, indicating their status as the primary locations for gay public life. In larger cities, they were described as catering to a range of distinct scenes and clientele, whereas in smaller cities they served broader, often mixed gay-straight populations. Bars were also typically framed as starting places for meeting people or getting to know a city rather than the most effective places for getting off. Guides to major cities gave evidence of a boom of new venues for gay socializing during the 1970s but also suggested that many sites were ephemeral. From the first sentence of the first guide to Los Angeles, the city's fickleness was flagged: “There is probably no other city in the nation that changes as frequently—as far as gay life is concerned—as Los Angeles and its suburbs.”<sup>29</sup> In the magazine's first report on Los Angeles, the writer describes various venues:

<sup>28</sup> William H. Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey: America since World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 412.

<sup>29</sup> John Roberts, “Los Angeles,” *Ciao!*, September/October 1973, 17. Despite the reference to Los Angeles's suburbs, the magazine never covered neighboring gay-friendly exurbs such as Long Beach, Garden Grove, and Laguna Beach.

The Bunkhouse: "Everybody's on a masculinity trip."

Oil Can Harry's: "Not the best cruising, but plenty of looking at groovy numbers. Oh . . . those tambourines!"

The Office: "Too much black lite and wall-to-wall mirrors, but exhibitionists might dig the décor."

The Rivers Club: "If you're into Chicanos and Orientals, this is for you."

Gino's: "The longtime after-hours spot featuring chicken. Many are affected and nelly, but if you prefer the young stuff, this is one of the very few spots you'll find them."<sup>30</sup>

These early listings indicated both the diversity and its diffusion of LA's gay scene, as well as some of the major gay male "types" during the early 1970s: "butch" men, hippies, "ethnic" minorities, and "jailbait." Recent work has sought to reclaim Los Angeles as a birthplace of gay politics and publicity,<sup>31</sup> though its sprawling geography has always worked against a sense of community and centeredness. Indeed, the isolation experienced in a city defined by car culture and hilly hideaways has perhaps driven the establishment of such a range of venues and has been as important in motivating the impulse to activism as police harassment.

Comparatively dense and defined by distinctive neighborhoods, San Francisco demonstrated the speed of cultural transitions and the emergence of the gay ghetto even more definitively. The city had long been a beacon for alternative lifestyles and, despite its influence, has always remained exceptional within the American cultural landscape. It was featured four times during *Ciao!*'s run, including in the premiere issue. San Francisco was already recognizably a gay destination, but what is remarkable is that the Castro neighborhood went unmentioned in the first write-up from 1973.<sup>32</sup> Two years later, the Folsom Street area was listed first, with the "Castro Village" mentioned later in the feature as a "nice neighborhood" with a mix of professionals and hippies. By mid-decade the opportunities in San Francisco were characterized as verging on excess: "Pleasure is the major industry in San Francisco, and the gays who visit greedily pursue it to the point of fatigue. . . . Yet it is this movement, this insatiable greed for pleasure that energizes San Francisco and keeps it alive and vital."<sup>33</sup> The number of bar and restaurant venues listed increased from thirty-six in the 1973 profile to sixty in 1975, and with the expanded numbers came

<sup>30</sup> Roberts, "Los Angeles," 18–19; ellipsis in original.

<sup>31</sup> See Daniel Hurewitz, *Bohemian Los Angeles and the Making of Modern Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); and Lillian Faderman and Stuart Timmons, *Gay L.A.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

<sup>32</sup> Ralph W. Davis, "San Francisco," *Ciao!*, February 1973, 18–20.

<sup>33</sup> Ralph W. Davis, "San Francisco," *Ciao!*, January/February 1975, 9.

a corresponding range of scenes, from “down to earth” to “elegant” to “freaky” (as in drug using) to dance clubs to piano bars to “drag” bars (indicating a transvestite and/or transsexual clientele) to an S&M club with a popular “slave-and-master auction.”<sup>34</sup> The range of bar demographics reflected in this profile might stand in for the imagined range of tastes and types within the magazine’s readership, too. In San Francisco as elsewhere, bars for men of color either are mentioned only in passing as exceptional or go unmentioned; these profiles do not generally seek out or report on scenes for nonwhite populations. A year and a half later, a mid-1976 San Francisco write-up listed the Castro first among neighborhoods, indicating a rapid shift in the gay geography of the city toward the Castro; the author described the neighborhood as “changing” but also warned readers about a surge in antigay violence. Rather than suggest that this was a reaction to the visible demographic shifts, the author suggested that gay men were taking too many chances in picking up strangers. Even the tenderloin district there was developing: “‘Polkstrasse,’ as most gays call it, is changing fast. Some think it’s becoming too elegant. Perhaps it is. Nevertheless, it is still *the* place for gay cruising, dining, and drinking.” Less than a year later, in the summer of 1977, San Francisco was profiled again, described as “the gay Oz at the end of the Yellow Brick Road.” Two notable shifts appeared with this profile: first, bathhouses had become so predominant in the gay scene that they were listed first, even before neighborhood guides; second, the Castro was not only listed first but also newly identified as the “gay ghetto.”<sup>35</sup> Bathhouses had long been homoerotic venues and had always been featured in *Ciao!*’s local guides. By the late 1970s, however, bathhouses had grown beyond being venues for steam baths to multiuse entertainment and nightlife emporia with live performances and dancing. The Castro’s rise to prominence over the course of four years, from unmentioned to the unquestioned gay ghetto, further suggests how quickly a dominant construction of gay male culture solidified during the 1970s.

Accounts from other cities likewise suggested that each local culture was in transition, if not quite with the speed seen in San Francisco, then with its own municipal temporality. Reflecting a shift from refinement to sleaze,

<sup>34</sup> The bars referenced in this list are the Round-Up, Twin Peaks, Toad Hall, the End-Up and Buzzyby’s, Purple Pickle, the Patch, and Folsom Prison (Davis, “San Francisco” [1975], 9–14).

<sup>35</sup> Ralph W. Davis, “San Francisco,” *Ciao!*, August 1976, 6 (emphasis in original); and A. Jay, “San Francisco Gay Update,” *Ciao!*, June 1977, 6, 9. Gayle Rubin suggests that in the 1970s the city had three distinct gay neighborhoods, differentiated in broad strokes as the Folsom Street district for the leather community, the Polk Street district for the older gays, and the Castro Street district for the younger gays. “By the late 1970s, the Castro was unquestionably the center of local gay politics, but the Folsom had become the sexual center” (Rubin, “The Miracle Mile: South of Market and Gay Male Leather, 1962–1997,” in *Reclaiming San Francisco: History, Politics, Culture*, ed. James Brook et al. [San Francisco: City Lights, 1998], 258).

New York's Manhattan was charmingly introduced as part of a dossier on the "Great Gay Islands of the World" in the 1973 premiere issue; by 1977 a "NY After Hours" down-and-dirty report on the rise of scat bars (catering to men who were into the erotic use of feces), such as the Anvil and the Toilet, revealed that the city was a site not only of genteel gay heritage but also where sexual tastes were ever-evolving.<sup>36</sup> Tourist attractions were rarely the focus in *Ciao!*, as, for instance, the legendary Stonewall Inn was never mentioned in any of the profiles of New York City as a local historical landmark that readers might want to commemorate. (The bar closed within a few months of the legendary riots, only reopening as a gay bar with the same name in the 1990s.) Of course, at times, cities were compared. For instance, one 1973 report dismissively proclaimed, "For gay guys especially, Boston is New York City 15 years ago."<sup>37</sup>

Beyond the New York–San Francisco–Los Angeles nexus, gay sex existed but not always gay culture or gay identities. (This article cannot attend to every city featured, but additional cities such as Chicago and Montreal were featured repeatedly and recognized as major North American gay capitals.) *Ciao!* focused on cities and resort areas as the major gay travel destinations; this emphasis might be read as part of the nationalizing "metronormativity" that Scott Herring suggests began during this decade.<sup>38</sup> In some cities, though, there was an apparent refusal of fixed gay constructions, even in relative proximity to San Francisco and Los Angeles. For instance, by mid-decade, San Diego could be cruised for plenty of available sex, as long as interpellation of sex partners as gay was resisted:

For the most part, these young men are unpolished and vulnerable, easy prey for anyone who, while deflowering them, can reinforce their heterosexual self-image. . . . Many older gays live here, who satiate themselves gluttonously with college students, servicemen and surfers. . . . Although these young studs may do everything in bed, except perhaps kiss, there is still one rule a gay must never forget. These youths cling tenaciously to their heterosexual self-image. It may be a *faux pas* if a gay dares to laugh when one of them says after sex: "I'm not really gay!" Perhaps they aren't; who can tell? To make sure no one doubts it, they will remind their partner right after sex. It is wiser, and more sophisticated, therefore, to accept this with an

<sup>36</sup> Hal Warner, "Great Gay Islands of the World: Manhattan," *Ciao!*, January/February 1973, 21–25; Scott Young, "NY After Hours," *Ciao!*, August 1977, 25.

<sup>37</sup> Daryl Touhy, "Boston," *Ciao!*, August 1973, 27.

<sup>38</sup> Scott Herring, *Another Country: Queer Anti-urbanism* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 74. Perhaps the most unexpected destination featured in *Ciao!* was Des Moines, Iowa: "Since there are not many amusements in Des Moines, the mind often idles. Therefore it isn't at all difficult to pick up a straight who is just a little bored and curious, and expand his experiences. . . . There are two things a Hawkeye learns early in life: how to screw/how to drink. So even though the boys seem a little young, they are usually quite versatile" (Bill Josephs, "Des Moines," *Ciao!*, June 1975, 20).

understanding smile or a “You know, I thought so!” than to try to probe their psyche with some Freudian wisecrack.<sup>39</sup>

This write-up would seem to suggest that this city, with its complex local culture—constituted by its mix of conservative politics, massive military presence, retiree population, surfing beaches, major public universities, and proximity to the Mexican border—was perhaps impervious to the gay liberation movement. San Diego was thus constructed as an exotically primitive destination with pliable, masculine young dudes for gays with “liberated” identities and erudite psychoanalytic savvy. The author also acknowledged that there was a public gay culture, however, particularly along the La Jolla “Fruit Bowl” boulevard and beach: “At night the gays walk the area and ogle each other with an audacity that would shame a prostitute.”<sup>40</sup> Again, this version of gay public life in the 1970s was structured through desire and sex less than through identity and politics. But in this profile it was articulated as a locally specific culture with unique contradictions.

Significantly, racial difference—and racial preference—appeared to be more central to the ways Detroit, Miami, and Baltimore were constructed for *Ciao!*'s readers than such diverse cities as New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, which were imagined as more racially homogeneous and as representing the mainstream of national gay culture. In addition, by the late 1970s these “other” cities were more likely to be understood in relation to ethnic tensions, national stagflation, and local urban renewal. Two profiles of Detroit reflected a significant shift in the city's public image, from a prosperous industrial center in 1973 to “Murder City” in 1976; the primary continuity was the city's working-class masculinity.<sup>41</sup> Detroit's purported danger and its sexual allure were implicitly and explicitly racialized: “The bad is too often exaggerated—and the good is simply brushed aside. . . . If you like Blacks you'll be in Seventh Heaven—but if you're strictly looking for Honky Donkey Dicks . . . never fear—plenty are here.” This focus on Detroit dicks characterizes the city in ways similar to descriptions of developing nations (addressed below); here Detroit was presented as if it were a Third World city in the gay American imagination.

In the profiles of Atlanta and Miami, the economic, population, and political shifts to the New South or the Sunbelt were observed in contrast to northern cities' postindustrial plight, as in Detroit and Baltimore, or redevelopment, as in Seattle and Indianapolis.<sup>42</sup> Coverage of Florida specifically articulated that cultural conflicts drove uneven development between whites and Cubans: “Transition is a natural thing. The face

<sup>39</sup> Bill Josephs, “San Diego,” *Ciao!*, February 1975, 20; emphasis in original.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>41</sup> Ralph W. Davis, “Detroit,” *Ciao!*, December 1973, 8; Tom Banks, “Gay Detroit,” *Ciao!*, December 1976, 13.

<sup>42</sup> On the rise of the US Sunbelt, see Bruce J. Schulman, *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo, 2002), particularly chap. 4.

of Florida has changed greatly in recent years. Modernized cities. New highways. Shifting neighborhoods. Declining downtown areas. Booming shopping centers.<sup>43</sup> The author went on to explain the limited political consciousness of tourists; his assessment may be disheartening, but it may also have been an accurate representation of gay tourist priorities: “The gay tourist, of course, doesn’t concern himself with local politics. What he is interested in is the existence of gay places and action—and Cubans are an attractive addition by virtue of their good looks and hot blood. Yes, the Cubans have driven a lot of residents out and bars and other business establishments that formerly catered to straights have gone bust and have been forced to sell out to gay businessmen (or businessmen who cater to gays), and the result is more gay places than ever and a hotter Miami for gay guys.”<sup>44</sup> In characterizing “Cubans” in opposition to the gay tourist or the local community, they were excluded from both *Ciao!*’s imagined readership and from integration within the gay community generally. In part, this may reflect that this profile dates from before the common usage of the compound identity term “Cuban American,” and thus local Cuban Americans were still understood as Cuban rather than American.<sup>45</sup> Yet this write-up suggested that the possibility of a gay scene was contingent upon Cuban immigration altering the urban space and market; according to the logic of this author, the minorities staked out spaces in tandem—if not quite coalition. In addition, the promise of Latin machismo clearly stood out as one of the city’s selling points, and a specifically Cuban gay culture was implied, even if it remained unexplored. A follow-up report, however, flagged the local club scene in Miami as responsive to the Florida Orange Juice spokeswoman Anita Bryant’s bigoted platform in 1977 to “Save the Children” from homosexuals when a venue named Hurricane Anita appeared on the scene. The travel guide explained: “Named after the shitass bitch. It’s a disco and part of its revenue goes to help fight for gay rights.”<sup>46</sup> What the profiles of Florida do not reveal is how much a focus on attracting tourists shaped the local south Florida gay scenes themselves.<sup>47</sup>

The 1977 Baltimore write-up presented a similarly complex understanding of desire and travel: gay sex—and an emergent gay life—could not

<sup>43</sup> Bartel, “Gay Florida,” 14.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Citing Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick, Ricardo L. Ortiz notes that this identity term was rarely used before 1980, the date of the Mariel boatlift, after which Cubans were admitted in large numbers into the United States, and the date of the Dade County, Florida, English-only initiative (*Cultural Erotics in Cuban America* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007], xv).

<sup>46</sup> David Bartel, “Cruising Gay South Florida,” *Ciao!*, May 1978, 11.

<sup>47</sup> Anecdotally, friends who grew up in the region have told me that the bars have typically catered to tourists and, in doing so, have created an underdeveloped sense of local community. In my own recent experiences, every conversation I had in Miami Beach and Fort Lauderdale started with a variation on the question, “Are you a visitor or a local?” “Visitor” seemed to be the default assumption.

exist without the complex intersections of economics, race, and politics. Although perhaps an unexpected gay tourist destination, Baltimore was presented as the ideal place for those looking for rough trade (heterosexual-identified men who have sex with men). The guide commented on the industrial city's ugliness but suggested that the "modern" public housing projects seem "livable."<sup>48</sup> With a tone both liberal empathetic and pitying, the feature suggested that Baltimore was already widely presumed to be a city of "slums" and that gays, who had for decades sought out sex in sketchy neighborhoods, might feel an attraction or kinship for those parts of town.<sup>49</sup> Yet, the profile suggested, gay gentrification in economically depressed neighborhoods was already transforming the city: "Many of the stately homes, abandoned by the affluent in their exodus to the northern suburbs, have been taken over by gays and restored to their old splendor and charm."<sup>50</sup> This being *Ciao!*, eroticization was never far behind: "Those who can will love the city because they have many opportunities to turn on to the dangers of late-night liaisons in dark places."<sup>51</sup>

In neighboring Washington, DC, unlike Baltimore, the gay tourist was imagined to cruise for men of privilege hailing from the halls of power rather than men with tenuous economic stability who lurked along dark streets. The relocation of gay venues in proximity to prominent sites was marked as a recent shift for the District, first mentioned in 1978: "Confining activity to the slums, in my opinion, has always been an embarrassment to the gay movement in D.C. . . . Now, at last, this has changed. The bars are in better neighborhoods, and many are even prospering." The equation of "slums" with black populations was more often implicit than explicit in the magazine, for instance in the ways that Washington, DC, despite its large black population, was deracinated through the movement of gay bars to "better neighborhoods." The guide to the capital proposed that the corruption in the hearts of its politicians would actually be good for the gay tourist: "Naturally, in such a morally relaxed atmosphere, sex is abundant."<sup>52</sup> This writer went on to suggest the possibility of picking up a closeted congressman and to question Jimmy Carter's commitment to gay rights. It may be hard to imagine a travel writer now taking such a cynical position in relation to a major business and tourist travel destination, particularly when promotion has become the name of the game. Yet *Ciao!* was often cognizant of racial divisions in its guides to US cities; at

<sup>48</sup> Jerry Daniels, "Baltimore," *Ciao!*, October 1977, 6.

<sup>49</sup> Some of the most significant historical work on gay nightlife has addressed early twentieth-century urban "slumming." See, for example, George Chauncey, *Gay New York* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 36–41, 233–36, 246–48, and throughout; Chad Heap, *Slumming* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); and Shane Vogel, *The Scene of Harlem Cabaret* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 16–18 and throughout.

<sup>50</sup> Daniels, "Baltimore," 6.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Ralph W. Davis, "Gay DC," *Ciao!*, March 1978, 7.

times, this was reflected in a sympathetic liberal attitude, at times in blatant fetishization—two positions that were often intertwined.

Urban renewal projects in the late 1970s had complex effects on gay culture. As gay tourists typically sought out cities, it is perhaps unsurprising that the issues of urban blight and gay travel intersected in a number of profiles, particularly for cities marred by postindustrial decline or tensions between identity groups. In some cases, development displaced precisely the tenderloin venues that fostered queer sex; in others, gays were seen as early adopters in neighborhood gentrification who raised real-estate values and cultivated upscale consumer lifestyles. The development of gay travel helped produce gay ghettos in ways that were, fundamentally, acts of gay complicity with the market economy. Indeed, in many of the studies of both travel and gay spaces, “consumption” stands out as a key word.<sup>53</sup> In early books commenting on the emergent gay culture, Dennis Altman stressed the capitalist underpinnings of American gay scenes and recognized already visible patterns of gay gentrification, and Michael Bronski suggested that the rise of pornographic lifestyle magazines reflected participation in consumer capitalism more than broader cultural tolerance.<sup>54</sup> But in the 1970s, such gay commercialization both was still nascent and retained some connotations of community participation; the gay market was more entrepreneurial and speculative than corporatized and stable. The gay male promiscuity of the 1970s operated within and outside of this market; numerous venues, products, and publications were dedicated to the commercialization of gay sex. Indeed, if one takes advertising in *QQ* and *Ciao!* as evidence, this industrialization of gay sex was perhaps the most visible form of gay culture at the time.

Recent nostalgia for the 1970s as the halcyon days of gay liberation and promiscuity before the crisis of the AIDS epidemic or our current era of homonormativity tends to reduce the period to a utopian bubble rather than reflect the tensions and transitions of the period.<sup>55</sup> More than travel guides today, *Ciao!* understood local gay scenes, identities, and desires as constituted in relation to issues of economic and racial struggles. Certainly, pleasure was central to gay politics at the time, and importantly so. But a sense of community and erotic inclusion would not have been available to everyone. *Ciao!* reflected ambivalence about the state of urban areas in the United States as both in crisis and depressed sites where gay worlds could be developed. But *Ciao!*'s attention to destinations around the world suggested a pervasive and promiscuous desire to leave the United States, too.

<sup>53</sup> See, for example, John Urry, *Consuming Places* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

<sup>54</sup> Altman writes: “No other minority has depended so heavily on commercial enterprises to define itself” and “it is ironic that as we have become freer in our sexuality we seem to have become more reliant on business institutions to provide us with the means to express this freedom” (*The Homosexualization of America*, 20–21, 85; he comments on gentrification on 32–33). See also Bronski, *Culture Clash*, 164.

<sup>55</sup> For an example of such nostalgia, see the documentary film *Gay Sex in the 70s*, directed by Joseph F. Lovett, 2005.

## TRANSNATIONAL FLOWS

A significant body of scholarship has worked through the globalization of queerness, a complex phenomenon that has raised concerns of cultural imperialism and homogenization and counterclaims of local specificity.<sup>56</sup> In *Orientalism*, first published contemporaneously with *Ciao!*'s run in 1978, Edward Said recognized a long history of "oriental sex"—both its promise of libertine pleasures for European travelers and its already commodified forms.<sup>57</sup> Critical studies specific to gay tourism have tended to read the commodification of the gay community as a recognizable market demographic in dialogue with theoretical work on postcolonialism and globalization. M. Jacqui Alexander incisively articulates the questions of agency that arise in transnational tourist sexual exchange and the ways in which published guidebooks both reduce foreign men to sexually available objects and train their (presumed) white Western readers in how to navigate foreign cultures to their ideological and erotic advantage.<sup>58</sup> In contrast, Jon Binnie suggests that queer tourism needs to be understood in relation to other forms of queer migration and calls into question presumptions that all gay tourism is exploitative. He suggests: "All tourism is sex tourism to the extent that tourist practices are sexualized."<sup>59</sup>

That some degree of imperialism structures international tourism is irrefutable, but I want to complicate this given in my analysis here to explore what else is happening at the same time. If it is a specifically American gay lifestyle that has been the most influential, exported, and critiqued model of queer culture, this cultural imperialism could only happen after the solidification of a recognizable gay community and patterns of consumption within the United States, forms of publicity that began developing during the 1970s when *Ciao!* was published but were by no means yet fully institutionalized. Second, it seems significant that, at least as portrayed in *Ciao!*, in the 1970s

<sup>56</sup> The literature is too vast to cite in full here, but foundational and/or introductory work includes Martin F. Manalansan IV, "In the Shadows of Stonewall: Examining Gay Transnational Politics and the Diasporic Dilemma," in *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*, ed. Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 485–505; Cindy Patton and Benigno Sánchez-Eppler, *Queer Diasporas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000); Dennis Altman, *Global Sex* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Arnoldo Cruz-Malavé, *Queer Globalizations: Citizenship and the Afterlife of Colonialism* (New York: NYU Press, 2003); Jon Binnie, *The Globalization of Sexuality* (London: Sage, 2004); and Peter A. Jackson, "Capitalism and Global Queering," *GLQ* 15, no. 3 (2009): 357–95. See also the *GLQ* special issue on transnational sexualities: 5, no. 4 (1999).

<sup>57</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 190. Said's remarks present the starting point for Jarrod Hayes's discussion of queer travel in the Maghreb in *Queer Nations: Marginal Sexualities in the Maghreb* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

<sup>58</sup> M. Jacqui Alexander, "Imperial Desire/Sexual Utopias: White Gay Capital and Transnational Tourism," in *Talking Visions: Multicultural Feminism in a Transnational Age*, ed. Ella Shohat (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 294, 297.

<sup>59</sup> Binnie, *The Globalization of Sexuality*, 100. Jasbir Puar has also been especially insightful in introducing critical analysis of transnational gay tourism by editing a special double issue of *GLQ* on queer travel: 8, nos. 1–2 (2002).

gay culture broadly conceived was not actually being exported so much as it was individual tourists who were encouraged to travel in order to fulfill sexual desires. Here there is a separation between gay “culture” (constituted by identity, community, consumption, and politics) and same-sex acts between individuals. In the case of *Ciao!*, getting laid abroad was less about conquest than about negotiation. Again, the 1970s seems to have been a transitional time between the long history of privileged men seeking out erotic colonial adventures and the industrialized version of gay travel that exists today.

The emergence of publicly promoted gay sex tourism in the 1970s simultaneously with gay liberation and ghettoization in the United States suggests, perhaps, that the idealized sexual free-for-all for gay men in the United States was not as pervasive and inclusive as might be remembered if gay men continued to seek out sex that was more (or at least differently) available overseas. Or it may simply be that much of desire remained structured by attraction to the “other.” The magazine seemed to presume that its readers were familiar with the trends and etiquettes of contemporary gay scenes in the United States, yet some gay readers would have felt themselves as outsiders in almost every context at home, including in gay ghettos, if they didn’t fit the gay male ideal.

Just as *Ciao!* published a plethora of city profiles that suggested distinctions between locales and the rapid development within individual cities during the 1970s, the write-ups of non-US destinations suggest that there were marked differences between gay culture in the United States and in most other places. For instance, gay bars seemed to play a far less prominent role in constituting a gay scene in many foreign cities if for no other reason than gay bars were often underground or nonexistent outside of the United States, Canada, and western Europe. The international features revealed that gay identities, lifestyles, and ghettos were understood to be primarily American phenomena. As in the US profiles, however, the articles emphasized finding sex more than sightseeing, reflecting the magazine’s goal of offering a different kind of travel information than standard guidebooks. There was a far more frequent tendency to generalize about foreign ethnic bodies, particularly with celebrations of penis size. This might be read as evidence of Franz Fanon’s claim that, from the white perspective, the black man “*is a penis.*”<sup>60</sup> Bodies, primarily cocks, were foregrounded in *Ciao!*’s guides to getting off rather than sexual positions. The magazine did not seem to assume that travelers will be tops or bottoms, and even accounts of sex with closeted men suggested the polymorphous promise that they “*may do everything in bed*” (as in the San Diego article). In cases of paid sex, presumably a range of sex acts could be bartered, though perhaps for different prices. This focus on the male body and an apparent versatility of sexual acts is reflective of the period. During the mid- to late 1970s, gay macho masculinity became fetishized to the point of cloning; this manly gender performance, however, did not correlate to fixed sexual positions.

<sup>60</sup> Franz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 170.

Masculine men were not automatically tops; rather, many men were versatile, and bottoming or getting fisted might not necessarily undermine an American gay man's macho image.<sup>61</sup>

The magazine's focus on foreign bodies reflected the presumed motivation for many men in pursuing foreign travel. But there remained a remarkable difference between the profiles for destinations in the United States and for those abroad: the magazine surveyed institutionalized and clandestine *venues* in US cities but less often generalized about the bodies of the men who lived there, whereas the international guides, in the absence of established gay venues, focused more on *men*, whether describing protocols for interpersonal negotiation or stereotyped ethnic physiques. This difference also perhaps suggests presumptions that the readers of *Ciao!* would primarily hook up with white men in the United States, whereas they would be far more likely to consummate cross-racial desire in other countries. There was also a clear difference between the presumption that sex should be free in the United States and that it would most likely be bought in many other countries; what was perhaps most remarkable was that, most of the time, there was no sense of embarrassment about paying for sex in these profiles. This was not to suggest that male prostitution didn't also exist in the United States, even informally, but rather that at this time, the profiles of American cities suggested abundant free "tricks" and easy "pick-ups."

In many cases, the foreign profiles are alarming in their freewheeling exoticism and ethnocentrism. Through their excessive prose, the authors invented sex tourism scenarios that actively worked to diffuse any sexual shame. Indeed, this might be the operative tension in the magazine's international coverage: a tension between fetishization of othered bodies and liberation from shame for the tourist. The write-up for Morocco exemplified the pithy wit, brazen exoticization, and recognition of globalizing trends common in the foreign guides: "For one thing, all those humpy young-hungs of Morocco wear European-cut trousers and have also discovered Levis, and so you'll see more 'bunsifilled' jeans than underfilled caftans—a real throat-clutching heart-stopper with all that big thick throbbing Arab meat bulging beneath. You simply stop in your tracks, gawk, grab a popper, and orgasm [*sic*] in your pants . . . right there in front of Allah and everybody!"<sup>62</sup>

In the same issue, the gay guide to Dakar, Senegal (titled "Every Man's a Superstud!") opened with a reference to the popularity of the TV miniseries *Roots*, which first aired in 1977 and had prompted an interest in Senegalese

<sup>61</sup> On the rise of gay "macho" roles during this period, see Joe Wlodarz, *American Macho: Masculinity in Seventies Cinema and Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, forthcoming); on the cultural politics of "bottoming" (being anally penetrated), including its racialization, see Nguyen Tan Hoang, *A View from the Bottom: Asian American Masculinity and Sexual Representation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, forthcoming).

<sup>62</sup> Jon Lorrimer, "Gay Morocco," *Ciao!*, August/September 1978, 5.

heritage. The write-up transitioned between fetishization, eugenics, histories of atrocity, and contemporary local US politics with whiplash speed:

The Dakar pilgrimage has also engaged the attention of many gay guys—black and white—in Europe and the United States who have been stirred by stories about the extraordinarily handsome, extremely tall, very courteous and most obliging Senegalese men whose cocks are believed to be the biggest in the world. The traditional elongation/attenuation of the male African body generally assures fantastic cock length (and any cock less than 9 inches in length is regarded with suspicion). As a biological plus, through Senegalese intermarriage with the French (Senegal was once part of French West Africa) one usually finds both Senegalese length and legendary French thickness. . . . It should also be noted that, as in other Muslim countries, there is no civic objection to homosexuality. Anita B[ryant] couldn't sell a drop of orange juice here. Also, remembering the privileges their ancestors were denied—as slaves—causes the Senegalese to be tolerant about almost everything.<sup>63</sup>

In the cases of both Morocco and Senegal, the men's exotic difference was central to their allure, though a touch of Western influence—from Levi's jeans to colonial miscegenation to a major TV miniseries—made the men both more accessible and more desirable. In the absence of fixed identity categories premised upon sexuality, these cultures were also unexpectedly portrayed as more tolerant and sexually fluid than much of the West. Such foreign men were objectified by *Ciao!* writers and readers, but not necessarily at the expense of their own agency, pleasure, or profit.

*Ciao!* was published during a period when gay liberation advanced both a politics of radical promiscuity (of which crossracial desire would be a part) and protests against segregation and discrimination (through pickets of bars that discriminated against people of color and/or women and the eventual formation of organizations such as Black and White Men Together in 1980 in San Francisco, with other local chapters soon to follow) in the United States. Like the nude pictorials, *Ciao!*'s text offers a complex, perhaps contradictory, politics: the magazine is more multicultural in its representations of men who have sex with men than almost any other publication of its time, yet it blatantly engages in racial fetishization. That the magazine often reads as "racist" seems obvious; my analysis here gestures toward additional, potentially more uncomfortable, interpretations. While the magazine might most immediately be legible as offensive, it might also be understood in its historical context as a set of provocations toward "progressive" promiscuous desire across cultures and skin colors. Because of the extraordinary global breadth of the magazine's coverage, *Ciao!* does not reduce race to a strict black/white binary; rather, even in instances of

<sup>63</sup> David Bartel, "Gay Dakar/Senegal: Every Man's a Superstud!," *Ciao!*, August/September 1978, 20.

essentialism and generalization, the magazine promotes each destination, culture, and ethnicity as part of a diverse international spectrum of bodies and sexual possibilities. The magazine objectifies *all* men, though undeniably racial and ethnic differences are regularly accentuated and eroticized.

Published readers' letters to the editor suggested a diverse and international readership that commented directly upon the magazine's coverage of racialized male physiognomies and desire. One reader from Los Angeles wrote in: "I am an American of Japanese ancestry and find Mr. [Walter] Norris' remarks [in the article on the "Festival of the Phallus" in Moritsubo] totally derogatory. Having traveled extensively throughout Japan, I can assure you most Japanese men do not have less than five inches. . . . As far as Mr. Norris' knowledge of the Japanese sexual technique is concerned, it is so ridiculous it hardly deserves comment."<sup>64</sup> In later issues that year, the magazine published a letter and a response from African American readers from New York indicating debate within the readership about the politics of racialized desire. The first reader wrote: "I want to especially congratulate you on using a Black model in your fine photo feature, 'The Americans,' in the June *Ciao!* I am Black—and as much as we seem to be in the fore front of things these days we're 'included' only as a token gesture so many times . . . so I was pleased that you saw fit to regard a Black man as belonging with your other Americans—when you could have so easily left him out." This note of appreciation signals the contradiction of both how rarely black men were represented in gay publications at the time and the often-calculated politics of inclusion. The reader then suggested to other readers and fellow travelers that he has observed that black men no longer privilege white hookups in gay cruising venues.<sup>65</sup> In a response, another African American reader retorted that black men continue to prize "white meat."<sup>66</sup> German and Puerto Rican readers also wrote in with appreciative responses to coverage of their countries, though they also offered clarifications. After the first year, readers' letters were published infrequently, though personal ads increased and reflected readers in locations across the country. When letters did appear in later issues, they usually offered additional tips on foreign venues and tips for hooking up without hassles but no political debate. In the absence of more letters, it is difficult to make claims about the magazine's reception generally or shifts over time.

In contrast to the African guides quoted here, the profiles of foreign destinations did frequently express negative takes on international travel, ranging from disgust at European men's different standards of personal hygiene to alarm at the risks of violence and disease in Mexico to full-blown abjection at the miseries of India. American-style gay life was upheld as the international gold standard. A curious recommendation for Copenhagen suggested

<sup>64</sup> R.A., "A Matter of Opinion," Letters from Our Mailbag, *Ciao!*, April 1973, 36.

<sup>65</sup> A.A., "Black vs. White," Letters from Our Malebag, *Ciao!*, August 1973, 37.

<sup>66</sup> W.C., "White Fever," Letters from Our Malebag, *Ciao!*, December 1973, 41.

as much: “For a city where gays bathe regularly (most Europeans seldom bathe—let alone douche) . . . for a city where you can enjoy Americanized sex with a foreign accent—try Copenhagen.”<sup>67</sup> Again, however, the *Ciao!* writers expressed no imperialist desire to “develop” nations in the model of American gay culture. If anything, difference was essential to the desire that drove sex tourism, and the same remains true today. The profiles’ attitudes varied depending on the writer, with some authors more likely to embrace difference than others. Comparisons to international destinations occasionally appeared in profiles of US cities, though less often. In contextualizing the Cuban influence in Miami within a broader Latin American male sexuality, one author made the arrogant assertion: “If you have traveled the world then you know that American guys are the best. We have better looks and good bodies. We have relatively few hang-ups in bed. We go about it expertly. It is a joyous experience. We don’t charge each other for it.”<sup>68</sup> This series of generalizations, however, presented a minority among a range of attitudes toward international men and sex as expressed in the magazine.

What is perhaps surprising from today’s perspective is the relatively nonjudgmental advice that appeared in numerous profiles of Asian and Caribbean locales for procuring sex for pay. These profiles repeatedly suggested that all sex with men—whether trade or homosexual—would be paid and that tourists should treat their paid tricks with respect. Citing the wisdom of a gay elder, the guide to finding sex in the Philippines instructed the reader: “Remember that these boys are not gay—hardly any of them. But they acknowledge what gay people want. They see in us a source of revenue and manage to be rather loving about it. Noel Coward would have loved Pagsanjan because he loved ‘the boys’ but he did so realistically. You must, too. Realistically. They are *not* gay.”<sup>69</sup> What here was intended as an “enlightened” respect for another culture may have been an accurate assessment of many encounters, but it also refused the possibility that foreign men might take up “gay” as a self-proclaimed identity. But the assertion of men who have sex with men as “not gay” again pointed to a recognition—if not fully explored—that sexual identities were often constructed according to different logics in different cultures (including different cultures within the United States, as suggested by the San Diego article quoted above).<sup>70</sup>

<sup>67</sup> George Desantis, “Copenhagen,” *Ciao!*, December 1976, 16.

<sup>68</sup> Bartel, “Gay Florida,” 14.

<sup>69</sup> Crichton Stenhouse, “Philippines—Pagsanjan,” *Ciao!*, April 1977, 22; emphasis in original.

<sup>70</sup> In a classic essay on Latin American male sexual identities—particularly Mexican and Chicano—Tomás Almaguer observed that sexuality was defined more by the gendered associations of topping and bottoming than by the biological sex of one’s sexual partners; in cases where Latino men identified with the white Western “gay” culture, they were called *internacionales* to connote their hybrid identities (“Chicano Men: A Cartography of Homosexual Identity and Behavior,” *differences* 3 [1991]: 75–100). In a later article, Robert C. Philen suggested that self-identifying as gay correlated less to ethnicity than to participation in gay venues, such as bars (“A Social Geography of Sex,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 50,

All of the sex imagined in *Ciao!*—domestic or international, paid or unpaid, often public, and always promiscuous—would fall into the “outer limits” of sexuality as theorized by Gayle Rubin in the early 1980s.<sup>71</sup> Assimilation into mainstream culture, political enfranchisement through elected representatives and legal protections, even homonormativity (or what David Eng has recently called queer liberalism) were just starting to emerge.<sup>72</sup> Gay sex was still, for the most part, both culturally oppositional and escapist. But sex also pervaded every sphere of gay life, public and private. In the absence of true political recognition, the centrality of sex in what at the time was the mainstream of gay public culture might now, in Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner’s terms, be described as a queer counterpublic.<sup>73</sup> In a sense, *Ciao!* magazine was a queer world-making project, and its readers were tourists exploring the developing gay male public sphere. Implicit yet striking throughout *Ciao!* is that travel features seem to presume *solo* sex travelers more often than dual-income couples’ retreats or organized group tours.<sup>74</sup> This suggests that gay travel at the time was imagined to operate for many men outside of normative coupling or a community structure.

Analyzing the comparatively matured gay travel industry two decades later, Jasbir Puar recognized three major shifts: gay and lesbian travelers being actively courted by destinations (compared to promoting themselves as potential consumers), national tourism offices marketing to gay and lesbian travelers instead of just private industries, and a rise in international over domestic travel. There has also been a rise in “high-end” tourism that solicits an educated clientele differentiated from sex tourists.<sup>75</sup> Gay travel magazines from the 1990s to the present reflect these trends and depart from the frankly erotic counterpublics imagined and produced in *Ciao!*; instead, they focus on packaged vacations and high-end consumption. *Our World* (1989—2003) was both comparatively chaste and conscientious in

---

no. 4 [2006]: 31–48). In his excellent recent study of sex tourism in Cuba, Jafari S. Allen recognizes continuing markets of racialized objectification in which economically dominant northern tourists seek out men of color who perform “tropical” sexual prowess. Allen argues that personal agency in “choosing” to go into sex work should not be understood as operating outside of or undoing the economic structures that remain oppressive and that such choices are often driven by the desire to acquire the type of consumer goods that, in global capitalism, “signals full personhood” (*Venceremos? The Erotics of Black Self-Making in Cuba* [Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011], 165).

<sup>71</sup> Gayle Rubin, “Thinking Sex” (1984), in *The Gay and Lesbian Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Abelove, Michele Aina Barale, and David M. Halperin (New York: Routledge, 1993), 13.

<sup>72</sup> David L. Eng, *The Feeling of Kinship: Queer Liberalism and the Racialization of Intimacy* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

<sup>73</sup> Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, “Sex in Public,” *Critical Inquiry* 24, no. 2 (1998): 558.

<sup>74</sup> According to an ad in the *Advocate*, Hanns Ebensten began organizing specifically gay international tours from the United States in 1972 (2 June 1976, 38).

<sup>75</sup> See Jasbir Puar, “Circuits of Queer Mobility: Tourism, Travel, and Globalization,” *GLQ* 8, nos. 1–2 (2002): 108, 109.

addressing lesbian as well as gay male readers; it also reflected a fully commercialized and institutionalized gay travel industry. The current glossy gay travel magazine, *Passport* (2001–present), similarly reflects an established gay travel industry and target marketing to gay clients by mainstream companies. Compared to *Ciao!*, *Passport* magazine surveys far fewer destinations, gives less of a sense of local scenes or politics, and reflects promotional prose rather than lurid wisdom; although it features frequent images of men in Speedos, it contains little overt sexual content. Destination guides focus on tourist attractions and upscale dining and lodging, with only minimal attention to nightlife and no acknowledgment of public sex. The magazine has targeted affluent leisure travelers (in its early years the masthead slogan urged readers to “Go First Class”) and travelers with expense accounts (there is a recurring feature titled “Doing Business in . . .”). But its assimilationist politics has perhaps been best evidenced by a cover slogan from 2008–9: “The hetero-friendly gay travel magazine.”<sup>76</sup>

Surely *Ciao!* functioned as much to stimulate fantasies for its readers as it did to document other cultures. The magazine profiles covered far more territories than any of its readers could ever visit themselves. The more salacious the accounts, then, the more likely they functioned for readers not as travel guides but as erotic literature that fueled vicarious fantasies of jet-setting and contact with exotic bodies. But, as I have already hypothesized, these were also written up during a still largely transitional period for gay culture in the United States and at a time when many cities may not have yet had a safe zone for queer outings. Indeed, even the third San Francisco guide warned readers about gay bashings. In this way, these travel narratives suggested the possibility of finding erotic fulfillment of any reader’s racial or ethnic desires—not unlike the magazine’s nude pictorials that represented idealized national types. Such desires were often structured through transgression, imperialism, or exploitation, but in some cases, what the reader or traveler sought elsewhere might not just be sex but also connection, as demonstrated by the integration of personal ads into a travel magazine. Like pornography, the feature articles may have been more about fantasy than realism, and these international guides suggested that, somewhere in the world, everyone could have their sexual desires sated.

The fantasies fueled by these magazines suggest that gay public life, in the United States and abroad, was understood as still incompletely rendered, still to be discovered, still to be developed. Over the course of the 1970s, gay sex and identities became reconceived as “lifestyles” with neighborhoods, publications, and cultures so recognizable as to inspire both reactionary backlash from the New Right and mainstream representations that ranged from ambiguously parodic (the Village People) to anxiously fascinated (the

<sup>76</sup> Another current publication, *Out* magazine’s online guide *Out Traveler* ([outtraveler.com](http://outtraveler.com)) exhibits a more pronounced gay sensibility but not *Ciao!*-level sass, sleaze, or comprehensiveness.

film *Cruising*) by the decade's end.<sup>77</sup> These gay guides alternately suggested keen political insights and apolitical indifference, liberal politics and blatant exoticization. In mapping gay desire and publicities in the rapidly changing 1970s, *Ciao!* presented the emergent "world of gay travel" in complex relation to local customs, national economics, and often racial difference.

<sup>77</sup> On the Village People and *Cruising*, see Wlodarz, *American Macho*.