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# Gay Men SEX, SPIRIT, COMMUNITY at the Millennium

*edited by*

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There are clearly many contentious issues—from within and without—that threaten to divide the gay community, but there remains much that unites us. Our individual and collective choices about how to define ourselves share a courageous creativity, an inventive questioning of established norms. If it is particularly confusing to be a gay man at the dawn of the new millennium, it is also thoroughly exhilarating. Never before have there been so many options.

Rafael Campo is someone who has difficulty knowing which community is most his: He is a poet, but also a doctor; an expatriate Cuban, but a politically liberal American; a gay man. And yet, despite his confusing conglomeration of identities—or, more likely, *because* of it—he is able to pinpoint the core of what community can mean. “Giving It Back” is about the ways in which simple acts of generosity can bridge the seeming gaps between disparate individuals. Campo describes how in his clinical work with patients, he confronts the democratic vulnerability of naked human bodies and is thus reminded daily that while we are all part of distinct subgroups, we also share a place in a single, transcendent community. “In illness,” he writes, “as in desire, all people are indeed created equal.”

20 FENTON JOHNSON

Appearing as a *Harper's* cover story just before the 1996 presidential elections, Fenton Johnson's insightful view of marriage—and how gay people might revamp the institution—galvanized nationwide discussion. Johnson is the author of two novels and a recent memoir about his own gay marriage, *Geography of the Heart*.

## Reinventing Marriage

IT IS A TRUTH UNIVERSALLY ACKNOWLEDGED, THAT A QUEER IN POSSESSION OF A GOOD FORTUNE MUST BE IN WANT OF A MATE.

Or so it seems these days in the gay and lesbian communities of America. What is this craze for coupling that has swept Castro and Christopher Streets, New Town and West Hollywood, Dupont Circle and South Beach and every other gay ghetto? Even as gays and lesbians are smarting from defeat over the issue of gays in the military, the national leadership launches a fight over access to an institution I eliminated from my personal cosmol-

ogy sometime in my early twenties, around the time I understood that life had presented me with a choice between love and propriety.

And so we have come to this: Congress overwhelmingly passing the "Defense of Marriage Act," sponsored in the House by Representative Bob Barr (three marriages to defend) and endorsed by 1996 Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole (defending two). The White House press office called the bill "gay-baiting"; President Clinton (he of the colorful personal life) denounced it as "unnecessary," then proceeded to sign it.

*Marriage.* What can it mean these days? Peau de soie, illusion veil, old, new, borrowed, blue? Can it mean the same thing to a young lesbian—out since her teens, occasionally bisexual, wanting a child, planning a career—as to me, a forty-plus shell-shocked AIDS widower? Can it mean the same thing to a heterosexual couple, raised to consider it the pinnacle of emotional fulfillment, as to a same-gender couple, the most conventional of whom must find the label awkward? And in an era of no-fault divorce, can it mean to any of us what it meant to our parents?

In the 1996 presidential election, both major political parties attempted to make political opportunities from the battle over gay marriage, but the issue has been on the legal agenda for as long as twenty-five years—Minnesota (1971), Kentucky (1973), and Washington State (1974) each witnessed unsuccessful lawsuits seeking legal sanction of same-gender couples. Then in 1991 three Hawaiian couples—two lesbian, one gay male—sued the state over the denial of their applications for marriage licenses; on principle, a heterosexual ACLU attorney took the case. Two years later, to everyone's amazement, the Hawaii Supreme Court ruled in *Baehr v. Lewin* that the state's denial of licenses violated the Hawaii constitution's equal-rights protections. The court took care to note that the sexual orientation of the plaintiffs is irrelevant. Instead, at issue is discrimination based on gender: The state discriminates by offering benefits to married men and women that it denies to exclusively male or female couples.

This is no minor point. What the court ruled on in Hawaii is *not* "gay marriage" but simply *marriage*—whether the union of two people of the same gender qualifies for the benefits the state offers to mixed-gender couples, no matter if the spouses' reason for marrying is love or raising children or better Social Security benefits, no matter if they are gay or straight or

celibate—in other words, all those reasons, good and bad, for which men and women currently marry.

The Hawaii justices remanded the case to the lower Circuit Court, presenting the attorney general with the challenge of justifying gender discrimination in marriage benefits. As expected, late in 1996 the Circuit Court found the denial of licenses to same-gender couples unconstitutional but immediately stayed its decision pending appeal to the state Supreme Court. As of this writing, attorneys for the plaintiffs expect that sometime in 1997 the Hawaii Supreme Court will reaffirm its initial decision, though given the determination and financing of the opposition, more litigation seems at least as likely.

If in fact the state court orders issuance of same-gender marriage licenses, the matter will surely be taken to the federal level. The issuance of marriage licenses is a matter of individual state policy, outside federal jurisdiction, but the recognition of those marriages across state lines is another matter. Politicians' rhetoric to the contrary, the "full faith and credit" clause of the U.S. Constitution does not necessarily require states to recognize marriages performed in other states; interstate recognition of marriage remains largely unexplored legal territory. If a couple marries in Hawaii, then moves to New York or Georgia, can those states refuse to recognize their marriage? The "Defense of Marriage Act" restricts federal benefits and rights to mixed-gender couples and permits states not to recognize marriages performed in other states.<sup>1</sup> Many legal experts doubt the act will survive a constitutional challenge, but in any case it invokes a resonant precedent: As recently as 1967, sixteen states refused to recognize mixed-race marriages legally performed elsewhere. Those anti-miscegenation laws were struck down that year by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Loving v. Virginia*, a landmark case which the Hawaii court cited at length in *Baehr v. Lewin*.

At stake first and foremost are the rights of gays and lesbians to assume the state-conferred benefits of marriage. The assumption of these rights is controversial enough, but *Baehr* invokes still larger considerations for an institution that has historically served as the foundation of a male-dominated society.

It's instructive to recall that in the late 1970s Phyllis Schlafly and her anti-Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) allies predicted that the codification of the equality of women and men, as embodied in a federal ERA, would lead to gay marriage, presumably because they felt that to codify the equality of women and men would be to undermine the social foundation

on which traditional marriage rests. The federal amendment failed, but Hawaii (along with several other states) adopted its own ERA—and here we are, just as Ms. Schlafly predicted; right in the place, I argue, where we ought to be. For this is the profound and scary and exhilarating fact: To assume the equality of women and men is to demand rethinking of the institution that more than any defines how men and women relate.

Marriage has always been an evolving institution, bent and shaped by the historical moment and the needs and demands of its participants. The ancient Romans recognized the phenomenon we call “falling in love,” but they considered it a hindrance to the establishment of stable households. Marriages certified by the state had their foundations not in religion or romance but in pragmatics—e.g., the joining of socially prominent households. Divorce was acceptable, and women generally powerless to influence its outcome; the early Catholic Church restricted it partly as a means of protecting women and children from easy abandonment.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, faced with schisms and heresies and seeking to consolidate its power, the Catholic Church institutionalized marriage, officially declaring it a sacrament and requiring for the first time that a priest officiate—a crucial step in the intrusion of organized religion into what had previously been a private transaction. Several centuries later, the conception of “family” began transforming itself from an extended feudal unit, that often included cousins, servants, and even unrelated neighbors, to a tightly knit nuclear unit composed of parents and children and headed by a man. With marriage as its cornerstone, that idealized unit forms the foundation for virtually all legislation and litigation in American family law.

Throughout these developments, one aspect of marriage remained largely consistent: Even as they were idealized, women were widely regarded as chattel—part of the husband’s personal property; marriage was state certification of that ownership. Then came the women’s suffrage movement and a growing acceptance of the equality of women and men, along with the principle that the individual’s happiness is of equal or greater importance than the honoring of social norms, including the marriage contract. Divorce became both common and accepted, to the point where even the woman who marries into wealth gains little economic security (absent a good lawyer or a prenuptial agreement).

Women have arguably gotten the worst of both worlds: Men may more

easily leave their wives, but women are nowhere near achieving earning parity, so that now they get to cope with economic insecurity *and* the fear of being dumped. For every woman who revels in freedom and income from a fulfilling career, many more face supporting themselves and often their children on welfare or at a low-income salary with few benefits and no job security, dependent on child support or alimony often in arrears. No wonder that almost a third of babies are now born out of wedlock, a figure that has risen consistently since the 1950s. Some of those mothers (some of them lesbians) are choosing to build matriarchal families, but many more are giving birth to unplanned and probably unwanted children. Whether by design or happenstance, these unmarried women are the primary force in changing the profile of the family; any discussion about contemporary marriage that excludes them is pointless.

Given these dramatic changes in the practice and place of marriage as a cultural cornerstone, the time seems ripe for some new thinking, informed by the understanding that what’s at stake is the evolution of our perception of the marriage contract and women’s role in defining it. Understandably, advocates of same-gender marriage have shied away from territory so daunting, focusing on the narrower civil-rights issues—the need to extend, as required by our American commitment to equal treatment before the law, the invitation to another class of people to participate in the same troubled ritual, with one likely tangible result being a bonanza for attorneys specializing in gay divorce.

That fight is important, but in the long run the exclusive focus on civil rights minimizes the positive implications of the social transformation lesbians and gays are helping to bring about. For centuries, gay and lesbian couples, along with a significant number of nonmarried heterosexuals, have formed and maintained relationships outside of legislative and social approval that have endured persecution and duress for this simple reason: love. This is not to downplay the importance of the marriage license, which comes with rights and responsibilities without which gays and lesbians will never be considered full signatories to the social contract; nor is it to imply that these relationships are perfect. It is rather to point out the nature of gay couples’ particular gift, the reward of those lucky enough to be given the wits to survive and courageous enough to use them: Many of us know as much or more about partnering than those who have fallen into it as a given, who may live unaware of the measure in which their partnerships depend on the support of conventions—including the woman’s acceptance of the man’s primacy.

*Baehr v. Lewin* represents the logical culmination of generations of challenge, by feminists joined later by gay and lesbian activists, to an institution once almost exclusively shaped by gender roles and organized religion. As such, it presents a historic opportunity to reexamine the performance and practice of the institution on which so many of our hopes, rituals, and assumptions are based; to reconsider what we are institutionalizing and why.

The Hawaii attorney general's years of intensive legal research have only confirmed that if one subscribes to the principles that government should not serve specific religious agendas and that it should not discriminate on the basis of gender, there is no logical reason to limit marriage benefits to mixed-gender couples. Opponents argue that same-gender marriage contradicts the essential purpose of the institution, which is procreation; but the state does not ask prospective mixed-gender spouses if they intend to have children, and the law grants a childless married couple the same rights and benefits as their most prolific married neighbors. Invoking the nation's Judeo-Christian heritage is no help—even if one believes that Christians and Jews should dictate government policy, a few of the most liberal denominations have already endorsed same-gender marriage, and the issue is under serious debate among mainstream sects.<sup>2</sup> How may the state take sides in a theological debate—especially when the parties to the debate are so internally divided? In 1978, the Supreme Court established in *Zablocki v. Redhail* that a citizen's right to marry is so fundamental that it cannot be denied even to individuals who have demonstrated they are inadequate to the task. Given that the law guarantees the right of deadbeat dads and most prison inmates to marry, what could be its logic for denying that right to two men or two women who are maintaining a stable, responsible household?

The strongest argument against same-gender marriage is not logical but arbitrary: Society must have unambiguous definitions to which it turns when faced with exactly these kinds of conflicts between the desires of its citizens and the interests of its larger community. In this case, marriage consists of a union between a man and a woman because that is how the majority defines the word, however unjust that may be for same-gender couples who wish to avail themselves of its rights.

Advocates of same-gender marriage respond that "larger community

interests" is an evolving concept. Because an institution embodies social norms does not render it right or immune from change—slavery was once a socially accepted norm, just as mixed-race marriages were widely forbidden and divorce an irreparable stigma.

The rebuttal is accurate, but it evades the question of where the state draws the line in balancing individual needs and desires against the maintenance of community norms. In the case of marriage, why should it endorse same-gender couples but not (as communitarians argue will result) polygamists or child spouses? The question is more pressing because of the prevailing sense of cultural breakdown, wherein nothing seems secure, not even the definition of . . . well, marriage.

Surely the triumph of Reaganomics and corporate bottom-line thinking is more responsible for this accelerated breakdown of the social contract than the efforts of an ostracized minority to stabilize its communities; and in any case marriage and the family began their transformation long before the gay civil rights movement—by 1975, only six years after the Stonewall rebellion that marked the first widespread public emergence of lesbians and gays, fully 50 percent of marriages ended in divorce. But in uncertain times people search for scapegoats, and unless gays and lesbians can make a convincing case for the positive impact of our relationships, we are not likely to persuade any but the already converted.

Tellingly enough, male writers (gay and straight) have been more passionate than women in their attachment to traditional marriage forms. Among gay male writers, Andrew Sullivan (*Virtually Normal*) and William Eskridge (*The Case for Same-Sex Marriage*) have written lengthy supporting arguments. (In contrast, *Virtual Equality*, lesbian activist Urvashi Vaid's 400-page treatment of gay and lesbian civil rights, mentions same-gender marriage only glancingly, by way of offering a generalized endorsement.) Both Sullivan and Eskridge consider the legalization of same-gender marriage as a means toward encouraging same-gender couples to form stable, coupled units modeled after heterosexual marriage.

Sullivan makes an eloquent argument for gay marriage but gives only a nod to the high failure rate of heterosexual marriages. Eskridge is sensitive to the women's issues inherent in marriage, but like Sullivan he endorses the institution as it exists, albeit together with other options for partnering. Along the way he implicitly endorses the myth that marriage

conveys the means to control sexual behavior to men (or women) otherwise unlikely to achieve such control, as well as the myth that gay men are more promiscuous than their straight counterparts.

Since great numbers of gay men remain partly or wholly in the closet, there's no accurate way to measure or compare gay and straight male experiences. But generalizations about gay male life based on behavior in bars and sex clubs are surely no more accurate than generalizations about heterosexual male behavior drawn from visiting America's red-light districts, where straight men guard their power by paying for a transaction they have previously outlawed, thereby rendering it dangerous for the women—the same transaction, it's relevant to note, which gay men (and, in very different ways, lesbians) accomplish for free between mutually consenting partners.

More discouraging is Eskridge's acceptance of the assumption that sexual desire is the beast lurking in our social jungle, whose containment is a prerequisite for a moral civilization (he subtitles his book *From Sexual Liberty to Civilized Commitment*, epitomizing in a phrase the puritanical equivalecy of bachelorhood with moral lassitude, where single persons are morally suspect and sexual expression outside wedlock morally tainted). That sexuality and morality are intimately connected I take as a given; one loses sight of that connection at peril of one's self-respect, and by extension one's ability to love oneself and others. We are surrounded by evidence of that loss of respect, particularly in television and advertising, whose relentless promotion of amoral heterosexual sex is surely the greatest factor in breaking down public and private morality. But to presume that morality follows on marriage is to ignore centuries of evidence that each is very much possible without the other.

Among heterosexual male writers, even the most intelligent dwell in fantasy logic, where when they arrive at a difficult point they invoke God (an unanswering and unanswerable authority), or homophobic bombast, or both. James Q. Wilson, management and public policy professor at UCLA, is among the more reasonable, but even he attacks (with no apparent irony) the "overeducated," whom he accuses of "mounting a utilitarian assault on the family." As the ninth of nine children of a rural, blue-collar family whose parents (married forty-seven years) sacrificed a great deal to educate their children, I note that the only "overeducated" people I have met are those who take as gospel the rules they have been taught rather than open their eyes to the reality in which they live; who witness love and yet deny its full expression.

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Not all men and women fall into marriage unconscious of role models, of course. But it's hard work to avoid a form shouted at us daily in a million ways; whereas for same-gender partnerships to fall into that form requires some deliberate denial. For same-gender relationships to endure, the partners have to figure out that we're required to make them up as we go along.

To point out as much is not to contend that we're always adequate to the task. In discussing modern marriage, real or potential, it's never a bad idea to consult a lawyer; and so I talked with my friend Frederick Hertz, an Oakland attorney specializing in same-gender partnerships.

Hertz originally entered the field opposed to same-gender marriage. "Marriage as it exists imposes a legal partnership on people that is seldom in sync with how they think about their relationship," he tells me. "Marriage is designed to take care of dependent spouses, people who stay home to take care of the children, as well as to compensate for economic inequalities between genders. The idea of supporting a spouse for the rest of his or her life is totally contrary to the way most people nowadays think." Hertz (a partner in a fourteen-year relationship) resists the "couple-ism" that he perceives arising among gays and lesbians because he believes it imitates a heterosexual world in which women whose partners die or abandon them are left with almost no social support. "I talk to straight divorced women in their forties and fifties," he says. "They have a lack of self-worth that's devastating. My single gay friends have a hard enough time—imagine what things would be like for them if marriage were the norm."

Then the realities of years of working with same-gender couples changed his opinion. "The problem is, wanting people to make their own, different, creative arrangements doesn't mean they'll do that," he says. "I think people should find their own ways to such agreements, but the fact is that they usually don't."

Enough experience with couples struggling without social approval brought Hertz to an uneasy support of the battle for same-gender marriage rights. Unlike most advocates, however, he qualifies his endorsement by adding that "while we're working for gay marriage rights we should also be talking about issues of economic and emotional dependency among couples. . . . a partner can contribute emotional support to a relationship that is as valuable to its sustenance as an economic contribution. We need to find legal ways to protect those dependent spouses."

To that end he argues for a variety of state-endorsed domestic partnership arrangements in addition to marriage, noting that though such cat-

egories may create a kind of second-class partnership, they're a step toward the state offering options that reflect contemporary life. "I want to go to the marriage bureau and have options among ways of getting married," he says. "I want the social acceptance of marriage but with options that are more appropriate for the range of couples' experiences—including childless couples."

In other words, rather than attempt to conform same-gender couplings to an institution so deeply rooted in sexism, why not consider ways of incorporating stability and egalitarianism into new models of marriage? Rather than consider the control of sexual behavior as a primary goal of marriage, why not leave issues of monogamy to the individuals, and focus instead on marriage as the primary (though not only) means whereby two people help each other and their dependents through life?

Invoking the feminist writer Martha Fineman, American University law professor Nancy Polikoff argues that organizing society around sexually connected people is wrong; the more central units are dependents and their caretakers. Extrapolating from this thinking, one can imagine the state requiring that couples regardless of gender accomplish steps toward attaining the benefits currently attached to marriage. Under this model, the state might restrict the most significant benefits currently reserved to marriage to those couples who demonstrate stability. The government might get out of the marriage certification business altogether—among others, Hawaii Governor Ben Cayetano has suggested as much. Government-conferred benefits currently reserved to married couples would instead be allocated as rewards for behavior that contributes to social stability. Tax breaks would be awarded regardless of marriage status to stable lower- to middle-income households financially responsible for children or the elderly or handicapped. Other state- or federally conferred privileges—such as residency for foreign spouses, veteran's benefits, tax-free transfer of property, and the right to joint adoption—would be reserved for couples who had demonstrated their ability to sustain a household over two or five years. The decision to assume the label "marriage" would be left to the individuals involved, who might or might not seek ratification of their decision by a priest or minister or rabbi. The motivation behind such changes would be not to eliminate marriage but to encourage and sustain stable households, while leaving the definition and sustenance of marriage to the partners involved, along with their community of relatives, friends, and—if they so chose—churches.

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In the most profound relationship I have known, my partner and I followed a pattern typical of an enduring gay male relationship. We wrangled over monogamy, ultimately deciding to permit safe sex outside the relationship. In fact, he never acted on that permission; I acted on it exactly once, in an incident we discussed the next day. We were bound not by sexual exclusivity but by trust, mutual support, and fidelity—in a word, love, only one manifestation of which is monogamy.<sup>3</sup>

Polikoff tells the story of another model, unconventional by the standards of the larger culture but common among gay and lesbian communities: A friend died of breast cancer; her blood family arrived for the funeral. "They were astounded to discover that their daughter had a group of people who were a family, who'd been providing support—somebody had organized a schedule, somebody brought food every night," she says. "In some ways it was the absence of marriage as a dominant institution that created space for the development of a family defined in much broader ways." I find it difficult to imagine either of these relationships developing in the presence of marriage as practiced by most of our forebears; easier to imagine our experiences influencing in beneficial ways the evolution of marriage to a more encompassing, compassionate place.

Early in this journey I called myself an "AIDS widower," but I was playing fast and loose with words—I can't be a widower, since my partner and I were never married. He was the only child of Holocaust survivors, who taught me, an HIV-negative man preoccupied with the future, the lessons his parents had taught him: the value of living fully in the present and the power of love in bringing us to this place.

He fell ill while we were traveling in France, during what we knew would be our last vacation. After checking him into a Paris hospital, I had to sneak past the staff to be at his side; each time they ordered me out, until finally they told me they would call the police. Faced with the threat of violence, I left the room. He died alone as I paced the hall outside his door, frantic to be at his side but with no recourse—I was, after all, only his friend.

At a dinner party I asked a mix of gay and heterosexual guests to name ways society might better support the survival of gay and lesbian relationships. There followed a beat of silence, then someone piped up: "You mean, the survival of *any* relationships." Everyone agreed that all relationships are

under stress; that their dissolution had become an accepted, maybe assumed part of the status quo.

The question is not, as opponents would have us believe: Will marriage survive the legalization of same-gender partnerships? Instead the questions are: How do society and the state support stable households in a world where the composition of families is changing, and how might same-gender relationships contribute to that end?

Denied access to marriage, lesbians and gays inevitably idealize it, but given the abuse the dominant culture has heaped on the institution, maybe it could use a little glamour. In my more hopeful moments, I think gays and lesbians might help revitalize and reconceptualize marriage by popularizing the concept of rich, whole, productive couplings based less on the regulation of sexual behavior and the maintenance of gender roles than on the formation of mutually respectful partnerships. *Baehr v. Lewin* presents us with a chance to conceive of a different way of coupling, but only if we recognize and act on its implications. Otherwise, the extension (if achieved) to same-gender couples of the marital status quo will represent a landmark civil rights victory but a subcultural defeat, in its failure to incorporate into the culture at large lessons learned by generations of women and men—lesbian or gay or straight—who built and sustained and fought for the integrity of partnerships outside the bounds of conventional gender roles.

In *Word Is Out*, the landmark 1977 documentary portraying lesbian and gay lives, comedienne Pat Bond described butch and femme role-playing among lesbians in the 1950s—roles as assigned and unvarying as those of Ozzie and Harriet. “Relationships that lasted twenty or thirty years were role-playing,” she says. “At least in that role-playing you knew the rules, you at least knew your mother and father and you knew what they did and you tried to do the same thing. . . . Now you say, ‘OK, I’m not butch or femme, I’m just me.’ Well, who the hell is *me*? What do I do? How am I to behave?”

To heterosexuals who feel as if the marriage debate is pulling the rug of certainty from beneath them, I say: Welcome to the club. Gays’ and lesbians’ construction of community—which is to say identity—is the logical culmination of the American democratic experiment, which provides its citizens with an open playing field on which each of us has a responsibility to define and then respect her or his boundaries and rules. Human nature being what it is, the American scene abounds with stories of people unable, unwilling, or uninterested in meeting that challenge—people who fare bet-

ter within a package of predetermined rules and boundaries. For those people (so long as they’re straight), traditional marriage and roles remain. But for the questioning mind and heart, the debate surrounding marriage is only the latest intrusion of ambiguity into the artificially ordered world of Western political, social, and religious thinking.

And Western culture has never tolerated ambiguity. The Romans placed their faith in the state, the Christians in God, the rationalists in reason and science, but (in marked contrast to Eastern religions and philosophy) all have in common their search for a constant governing structure, a kind of unified field theory for the workings of the heart. The emergence of gays and lesbians from the closet (a movement born of Western religious and rationalist thinking) is only one among many cultural developments which reveal the futility of that search—how it inevitably arrives at the mystery that lies at the heart of being.

But the rules are so comforting and comfortable! And so it is easier to oppress some so that others might live in certainty, ignoring the reality that the mystery of love and life and death is really grander and more glorious than human beings can grasp, much less legislate.

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#### Notes

1. States have always established their own standards for the recognition of marriage; no consistent, nationwide definition of marriage has ever existed. Currently, a few states (e.g., Pennsylvania) still recognize common-law marriages, though for such a marriage to be recognized in a non-common-law state, participants must usually submit to some official procedure. Some states allow first cousins to marry, some do not, and the minimum age for legal marriage varies from state to state, as does the actual recognition of such a contract across state lines.
2. Many gay Protestant congregations, Reform Jews, Unitarians, and a number of Quaker congregations have endorsed and/or performed same-gender marriage. Presbyterians recently passed a resolution urging the national office to explore the feasibility of filing friend-of-the-court briefs “in favor of giving civil rights to same-sex partners,” and the Episcopal church is studying the issue of blessing same-gender unions. In addition, Hawaii’s Buddhist bishops have announced their support of same-gender marriage.
3. This is not to say that I find monogamy old-fashioned or useless. On the contrary, I learned from my partner its significance and necessity as one means to the end of unqualified trust and intimacy.