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## Intimacies Leo Bersani

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Just around Midnight John Wiley & Sons Barebacking—when gay men deliberately abandon condoms and embrace unprotected sex—has incited a great deal of shock, outrage, anger, and even disgust, but very little contemplation. Purposely flying in the face of decades of safe-sex campaigning and HIV/AIDS awareness initiatives, barebacking is unquestionably radical behavior, behavior that most people

would rather condemn than understand. Thus the time is ripe for Unlimited Intimacy, Tim Dean's riveting investigation into barebacking and the distinctive subculture that has grown around it. Audacious and undeniably provocative, Dean's profoundly reflective account is neither a manifesto nor an apology; instead, it is a searching analysis that tests the very limits of the study of sex in the twenty-first century. Dean's extensive research into the subculture provides a tour of the scene's bars, sex clubs, and Web sites; offers an explicit but sophisticated analysis of its pornography; and documents his own personal experiences in the culture. But ultimately, it is HIV that animates the controversy

around barebacking, and Unlimited Intimacy explores how barebackers think about transmitting the virus—especially the idea that deliberately sharing it establishes a new network of kinship among the infected. According to Dean, intimacy makes us vulnerable, exposes us to emotional risk, and forces us to drop our psychological barriers. As a committed experiment in intimacy without limits—one that makes those metaphors of intimacy quite literal—barebacking thus says a great deal about how intimacy works. Written with a fierce intelligence and uncompromising nerve, Unlimited Intimacy will prove to be a milestone in our understanding of sexual behavior.

[The Essentialist Villain](#) Harvard

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University Press

In "The Sex Lives of Saints," Virginia Burrus argues that early accounts of the lives of the saints are not anti-erotic.

### **Dating Beowulf** Penny Ante Editions

Acclaimed for his intricate, incisive, and often controversial explorations of art, literature, and society, Leo Bersani now addresses homosexuality in America.

Hardly a day goes by without the media focusing an often sympathetic beam on gay life--and, with AIDS, on gay death. Gay plays on Broadway, big book awards to authors writing on gay subjects, Hollywood movies with gay themes, gay and lesbian studies at dozens of universities, openly gay columnists and even editors at national mainstream publications, political leaders speaking in favor of gay rights: it seems that straight America has finally begun to listen to homosexual America. Still, Bersani notes, not only has homophobia grown more virulent, but many gay men and lesbians themselves are reluctant to be identified as homosexuals. In *Homos*, he studies the historical, political, and philosophical grounds for the current distrust, within the gay community, of self-

identifying moves, for the paradoxical desire for diverse lifestyles--which can lead to a to be invisibly visible. While acknowledging the dangers of any kind of group identification (if you can be singled out, you can be disciplined), Bersani argues for a bolder presentation of what it means to be gay. In their justifiable suspicion of labels, gay men and lesbians have nearly disappeared into their own sophisticated awareness of how they have been socially constructed. By downplaying their sexuality, gays risk self-immolation--they will melt into the stifling culture they had wanted to contest. In his chapters on contemporary queer theory, on Foucault and psychoanalysis, on the politics of sadomasochism, and on the image of "the gay outlaw" in works by Gide, Proust, and Genet, Bersani raises the exciting possibility that same-sex desire by its very nature can disrupt oppressive social orders. His spectacular theory of "homo-ness" will be of interest to straights as well as gays, for it designates a mode of connecting to the world embodied in, but not reducible to, a sexual preference. The gay identity Bersani advocates is more of a force--as such, rather cool to the modest goal of social tolerance

massive redefining of sociality itself, and of what we might expect from human communities. Reviews of this book:

"Perhaps no one since Leo Bersani in 'Is the Rectum a Grave?' has written so convincingly against the danger of homosexual assimilation as Leo Bersani in *Homos*...One of the strongest elements of [this book] is Bersani's attack on things which promote a 'denial of sex,' whether it be sex acts themselves or, more importantly, the context in which those sex acts are made possible...*Homos* is a profound piece of imaginative literature."

DD--Dale Peck, *Voice Literary Supplement*  
"In *Homos*, Leo Bersani effectively attacks some sacred cows of gay cultural theory. Most obviously, he argues against the tenet that gay and lesbian identities are socially constructed and so ultimately (indeed, preferably) dissolvable...Refreshingly, [Bersani] also does not skate round sensitive questions such as the status of sadomasochism within gay sexual practice, and the tortuousness of the political liaison between gays and lesbians...Bersani emerges as our most persuasive advocate of

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homosexual identities that offer and require social resistance--he terms this 'anticommunitarianism'--but also as perhaps the only writer in the field who convincingly brings together psychological and sociological accounts of sexuality." DD--Richard Canning, *New Statesman & Society* "Bersani engages with questions which the gay movement cannot ignore." DD--Times Literary Supplement "In his provocative and sure-to-be-controversial book, *Homos*, Bersani argues for the need to preserve the 'otherness' that he maintains is the essential core of homosexual identity." DD--David Wiegand, *San Francisco Chronicle* "Homos is one of the most interesting books to appear in lesbian and gay literature--in fact its vision is so broad that it places lesbian and gay readers centre stage in what could be a revolution." DD--Our Times "Leo Bersani, one of the most interesting, original and sophisticated of...literary historians, has written primarily on Modernism, from Baudelaire to Beckett and Genet, using Freud's metapsychology as a way of penetrating into the radical implications of their thought...[His] work...[is] a surprise and a revelation, both

careful and highly original...It is deeply exciting to engage with Bersani's ideas. They allow us to open up traditional psychoanalytic theory, so that it is no longer a mere therapeutic strategy, and consequently a device for social control and homogeneity, but instead a larger perspective for understanding and valuing those possibilities and differences that can constitute human experience." DD--Kenneth Lewes, *Psychoanalytic Books* "Homos is an extremely persuasive analysis of the `anticommunal' freedom made possible by `perverse' sexuality...Bersani's argument is at once subtle, even brilliant." DD--Peggy Phelan, *Contemporary Sociology* [Metroimperial Intimacies](#) Manchester University Press This electronic version has been made available under a Creative Commons (BY-NC-ND) open access license. Featuring essays from some of the most prominent voices in early medieval studies, *Dating Beowulf* playfully redeploys the word ' dating ', which usually heralds some of the most divisive critical impasses in the field, to provocatively phrase a set of new relationships with an Old English poem. The volume argues for the

relevance of the early Middle Ages to affect studies and vice-versa, offering a riposte to antifeminist discourse and opening avenues for future work by specialists in the history of emotions, literary theorists, students of Old English literature and medieval scholars alike. To this end, the essays embody a range of critical approaches from queer theory to animal studies and ecocriticism to actor-network theory.

**The Jewish Dark Continent** Harvard University Press

In a style that is writerly and audacious, Adam Phillips takes up a variety of seemingly ordinary subjects underinvestigated by psychoanalysis--kissing, worrying, risk, solitude, composure, even farting as it relates to worrying. He argues that psychoanalysis began as a virtuoso improvisation within the science of medicine, but that virtuosity has given way to the dream of science that only the examined life is worth living. Phillips goes on to show how the drive to omniscience has been unfortunate both for psychoanalysis and for life. He reveals how much one's psychic health

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depends on establishing a realm of life that successfully resists examination.

*Caravaggio* University of Pennsylvania Press  
A rich analysis of the discourses and figurations of 'crisis masculinity' around the turn of the twenty-first century, working at the intersection of performance and cultural studies and looking at film, television, drama, performance art, visual art and street theatre.

*Great Mirrors Shattered*

ReadHowYouWant.com

Against Understanding, Volume 2, casts a spotlight on the status of case studies in psychoanalysis, which are commonly used to illustrate clinicians' expertise and mastery rather than patients' actual itineraries. When a case is presented, the complex, unwieldy, and often self-contradictory material of a therapeutic trajectory is often vastly oversimplified in view of producing a linear narrative that seems perfectly to fit the parameters of a practitioner's preferred theoretical framework. Bruce Fink attempts to eschew the appearance of "mastery" in assembling clinical material and in discussing his approach to practice and theory in the myriad case histories and vignettes included in both Volumes 1 & 2 of Against Understanding. To

counterbalance the kind of paring down of material usually carried out to make cases conform to a particular paradigm, the case write-ups presented here include much of the "raw data" so often omitted: verbatim quotes from patients about their lives, backgrounds, dreams, and fantasies; and details about the many obscure, vacillating, and unruly phases of treatment. Fink hopes thereby to allow readers to form their own opinions about the well-foundedness or unsoundness of his formulations, interpretations, and interventions. This second part of a two-volume collection of papers, interviews, and case studies provides the reader with hundreds of illustrations of Lacanian theory in practice, and will be essential for psychoanalysts, psychotherapists, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and counselors.

*Is the Rectum a Grave?* Harvard University Press

Ten years ago 'queer' was a term of abuse; now it is routinely, although controversially, used as self-description. Queer Theory traces the intriguing history of same-sex sex over the last century through the mid-century homophile movements, gay liberation, the women's

movement and lesbian feminism to the new concept of queer. Annamarie Jagose investigates the arguments of the supporters and opponents of queer theory, finding that its strength lies in its potential to question the very idea of sexual identities. By blending insights from contemporary intellectual theories like post-structuralism and from the work of theorists like Judith Butler, Jagose argues that queer theory's challenge is to create new ways of thinking about not just heterosexuality and homosexuality but also such seemingly given fixed notions as 'sexuality' and 'gender', even 'man' and 'woman'. Queer Theory demonstrates a radical, exciting new way of analysing human identity itself.

**Unforbidden Pleasures** University of Chicago Press

This book considers the fascination with the free market and the economic world evident within postwar literature.

**A Discussion of Leo Bersani's "Intimacies" and his Views on Queer Intellectuals** Routledge

A portrait of human devastation in the wake of the Bosnian Wars, "Like Eating a Stone" is a collection of heartbreaking stories as told by the survivors searching

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for family members and their remains.  
Illustrations throughout.

**Why Societies Need Dissent** Harvard University Press

Oxford University Press published eminent literary critic Leo Bersani's first book, on Proust, in 1965, but the work has long been out of print. This new edition comes in response to a recent renewal of interest among philosophers of literature, among others, and features a new preface from the author.

*Friendship as a Way of Life* Univ of California Press

A compelling memoir of a gay man thoroughly familiar with the Japanese homosexual underground, a man anxious for his own health and unsure of the relationship he has left behind in the U.S. *Friendship As a Way of Life* Bloomsbury Publishing

Bold and inventive in style, *City of Night* is the groundbreaking 1960s novel about male prostitution. Rechy is unflinching in his portrayal of one hustling 'youngman' and his search for self-knowledge among the other denizens of his neon-lit world. As the narrator moves from Texas to Times Square and then on to the French Quarter

of New Orleans, Rechy delivers a portrait of many of these essays, he stresses the importance of aesthetics, analyzing works by Genet, Caravaggio, Proust, Almodóvar, and Godard. Documenting over two decades in the life of one of the best minds working in the humanities today, *Is the Rectum a Grave?* and *Other Essays* is a unique opportunity to explore the fruitful career of a formidable intellect.

the edges of America that has lost none of its power. On his travels, the nameless narrator meets a collection of unforgettable characters, from vice cops to guilt-ridden married men eaten up by desire, to Lance O'Hara, once Hollywood's biggest star. Rechy describes this world with candour and understanding in a prose that is highly personal and vividly descriptive.

*Marcel Proust* Palgrave Macmillan

Over the course of a distinguished career, critic Leo Bersani has tackled a range of issues in his writing, and this collection gathers together some of his finest work. Beginning with one of the foundations of queer theory—his famous meditation on how sex leads to a shattering of the self, “Is the Rectum a Grave?”—this volume charts the inspired connections Bersani has made between sexuality, psychoanalysis, and aesthetics. Over the course of these essays, Bersani grapples with thinkers ranging from Plato to Descartes to Georg Simmel. Foucault and Freud recur as key figures, and although Foucault rejected psychoanalysis, Bersani contends that by considering his ideas alongside Freud's, one gains a clearer understanding of human identity and how we relate to one another. For Bersani, art represents a crucial guide for conceiving new ways of connecting to the world, and so, in

*The Freudian Body* Oxford University Press  
Borrowing its title from a 1981 interview of Michel Foucault, *Friendship as a Way of Life* develops the philosopher's late work on friendship into a novel critique of contemporary GLBT political strategy. Tom Roach brings to life Foucault's scant but suggestive writings on friendship (some translated here for the first time), emphasizing their ethical implications and advancing a new and politically viable concept—friendship as shared estrangement. In exploring the potential of this model for understanding not only social movements such as ACT UP and the AIDS buddy system, but the literary and artistic work of Hervé Guibert and David Wojnarowicz as well, Roach seeks to reclaim a politics of friendship for queer activism. The first book devoted exclusively to Foucault's work on the subject, it reassesses Foucaultian queer theory in light of the recent publication of the philosopher's final seminars at the Collège de France. Its provocative thesis returns Foucault's concept of biopower to its

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home in sexuality studies and places queer theory front and center in current biopolitical debates.

*On Wanting to Change* Columbia University Press

"There was a question that had come to trouble me a bit earlier, once I had taken the first steps on this return journey to Reims... Why, when I have had such an intense experience of forms of shame related to class, shame in relation to the milieu in which I grew up, why, when once I had arrived in Paris and started meeting people from such different class backgrounds, I would often find myself lying about my class origins... why had it never occurred to me to take up this problem in a book?" Returning to Reims is a breathtaking account of one man's return to the town where he grew up after an absence of thirty years. It is a frank, fearlessly personal story of family, memory, identity and time lost. But it is also a sociologist's view of what it means to grow up working class and then leave that class; of inequality and shifting political allegiances in an

increasingly divided nation. A phenomenon in France and a huge bestseller in Germany, Didier Eribon has written the defining memoir of our times.

The Hundreds American Literatures Initiative  
The human figure made a spectacular return in visual art and literature in the 1920s.

Following modernism's withdrawal, nonobjective painting gave way to realistic depictions of the body and experimental literary techniques were abandoned for novels with powerfully individuated characters. But the celebrated return of the human in the interwar years was not as straightforward as it may seem. In *Realism after Modernism*, Devin Fore challenges the widely accepted view that this period represented a return to traditional realist representation and its humanist postulates. Interwar realism, he argues, did not reinstate its nineteenth-century predecessor but invoked realism as a strategy of mimicry that anticipates postmodernist pastiche. Through close readings of a series of works by German artists and writers of the period, Fore investigates five artistic devices that were central to interwar realism. He analyzes Bauhaus polymath László Moholy-Nagy's use of linear perspective; three industrial novels riven by the conflict between the temporality of capital and that of labor; Brecht's socialist realist plays, which explore

new dramaturgical principles for depicting a collective subject; a memoir by Carl Einstein that oscillates between recollection and self-erasure; and the idiom of physiognomy in the photomontages of John Heartfield. Fore's readings reveal that each of these "rehumanized" works in fact calls into question the very categories of the human upon which realist figuration is based. Paradoxically, even as the human seemed to make a triumphal return in the culture of the interwar period, the definition of the human and the integrity of the body were becoming more tenuous than ever before. Interwar realism did not hearken back to earlier artistic modes but posited new and unfamiliar syntaxes of aesthetic encounter, revealing the emergence of a human subject quite unlike anything that had come before.

### **City of Night** *Serpent's Tail*

In *The Hundreds* Lauren Berlant and Kathleen Stewart speculate on writing, affect, politics, and attention to processes of world-making. The experiment of the one hundred word constraint—each piece is one hundred or multiples of one hundred words long—amplifies the resonance of things that are happening in atmospheres, rhythms of encounter, and scenes that shift the social and conceptual ground. What's an encounter with anything once it's seen as an incitement to

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composition? What's a concept or a theory if they're no longer seen as a truth effect, but a training in absorption, attention, and framing? The Hundreds includes four indexes in which Andrew Causey, Susan Lepselter, Fred Moten, and Stephen Muecke each respond with their own compositional, conceptual, and formal staging of the worlds of the book.

Like Eating a Stone University of Chicago Press

'Friendship as a Way of Life' is an exhibition project that explores queer kinship and forms of being together. It centres around three ideas that offer perspectives on LGBTQI+ partnerships, collaboration, visibility, sex, intimacy and knowledge: 'Public Relations' (the public expression of private lives and forms of communicating identity); 'Living Arrangements' (spaces and approaches to living/being with 'chosen families'); and 'Intergenerational Kinship' (learning, sharing and support across generations). Presented at UNSW Galleries, Sydney and in the online series 'Forms of Being Together', the project foregrounds how LGBTQI+

communities create alternative networks of support through various creative and resourceful means. This reader features companion texts by Wilfred Brandt, Daniel Marshall, Timothy Roberts, Sophie Robinson and Verónica Tello, alongside artists and collaborators featured in the exhibition project.

**A Concise Companion to Psychoanalysis, Literature, and Culture** Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Since his first publications in the late 1950s, Leo Bersani's work has influenced numerous scholarly fields, from studies of French modernism and realist fiction to psychoanalytic criticism and film theory. It has occasionally helped precipitate the emergence of new disciplinary fields, such as queer theory in the late 1980s. The *Essentialist Villain* is the first book-length study of this impressively rich oeuvre. Mikko Tuhkanen tracks the unfolding of Bersani's onto-ethics/aesthetics, paying particular attention to his persistent references to "essence," a concept central to classical speculative philosophy, which has fallen into distinct disfavor since the emergence of deconstructive thought. Because of his early influences—particularly Gilles Deleuze's philosophy—Bersani remains an ontologist through decades when deconstruction seems

to have all but disallowed any thought of being. Tuhkanen also locates Bersani's thought amidst numerous literary, artistic, and philosophical interlocutors, including Deleuze, Freud, Proust, Laplanche, Beckett, Baudelaire, Genet, Leibniz, and others.