

Heather Love

Queer Method and the Postwar History of Sexuality Studies

This talk traces the roots of sexuality studies in postwar social science, arguing that the flattening, observational approach of researchers in deviance studies and microsociology offers a model for queer critics today. Love considers the case of Erving Goffman, whose account of stigma situates deviance in scenes and interactions, not in people. Goffman exerted a profound influence on works such as Laud Humphreys' *Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places* and Esther Newton's *Mother Camp*. These texts offer an "ecological" view of sex and gender deviance that sets aside affect, motivation, and desire to describe highly specific interactions in concrete settings.

Heather Love is an Associate Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania. Her research interests include gender studies and queer theory, modernism and modernity, affect studies, disability studies, film and visual culture, psychoanalysis, sociology and literature, and critical theory. She is the author of *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History*, the editor of a special issue of *GLQ* on Gayle Rubin ("Rethinking Sex"), and the co-editor of a special issue of *New Literary History* ("Is There Life After Identity Politics?").

