ROUTLEDGE

SADOMASOCHISM AND THE BDSM COMMUNITY IN THE UNITED STATES

KINKY PEOPLE UNITE

Stephen K. Stein

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Sadomasochism and the BDSM Community in the United States: Kinky People Unite chronicles the development of sadomasochistic sexuality and its communities in the United States from the post-war period to the present day.

Having evolved from scattered networks of sadomasochists to a coherent body bound by shared principles of "safe, sane, consensual," activists worked to transform popular perceptions of their community, end its routine harassment by law enforcement and win inclusion in American society. Often paralleling the work of LGBTQ activists, people who engaged in BDSM (Bondage and Discipline, Dominance and Submission, and Sadism and Masochism) transformed both their own sexual practices and how outsiders perceived them, successfully changing popular perceptions of them from fascists, murderers, and outlaws to people living an alternative lifestyle. The development of this community highlights the interactions of people of different sexual orientations within a sexual community, the influence of various campaigns for sexual freedom, and the BDSM community's influence on popular perceptions of sexuality and sexual freedom. The text's historical perspective gives depth and texture to a specific dimension of American history of sexuality.

This book will be of interest to students and scholars in the history of sexuality. Its clear and direct approach offers an important and useful chronology of a movement that has long been neglected.

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To Carolyn

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ABBREVIATIONS

AOL	America Online
APA	American Psychiatric Association
APEX	Arizona Power Exchange
ASS	Atlanta SM Solidarity
B&D	Bondage and Discipline
BDSM	A combination of B&D, D&S and S&M
CDG	Chicagoland Discussion Group
CHC	Chicago Hellfire Club
CMC	California Motor Club
COSMOS	Council of SM Organizations
DADS	Denver Area Dominants and Submissives
D&S	Dominance and Submission
DSM	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (of the APA)
FFA	Fist Fuckers of America
GDI	God Damn Independent
GMSMA	Gay Male SM Activists
HELP	Homophile Effort for Legal Protection
IML	International Mr. Leather
IMsL	International Ms. Leather
ISC	Interim Steering Committee of the SSCA
LAAM	Leather Archives and Museum
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Queer
LIL	Living in Leather
LSM	Lesbian Sex Mafia
MAsT	Masters and slaves Together
NCSF	National Coalition for Sexual Freedom
NEA	National Endowment for the Arts

NELA	New England Leather Alliance
NGLTF	National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
NLA	National Leather Association
NOW	National Organization for Women
ORGASM	Oregon Guild Activists of SM
PEP	People Exchanging Power
RACK	Risk Aware Consensual Kink
SDG	Seattle Dungeon Guild
SOBNET	Sexually Oriented Board Network
SSC	Safe, Sane, Consensual
SSCA	Safe, Sane, Consensual Adults
TCC	The Tri-State Couples Club
TES	The Eulenspiegel Society (later officially renamed TES)
VASM	Vancouver Alliance for SM
WAP	Women Against Pornography
WIITWD	What It Is That We Do

INTRODUCTION

E.L. James' 2011 novel *Fifty Shades of Grey* surprised critics—both by its contents, a sadomasochistic relationship between billionaire Christian Grey and recent college graduate Anastasia Steele, and its record-breaking success. Apparently, sadomasochistic sex appealed to millions of readers. This should not have come as a surprise. Surveys showed about ten percent of Americans experimented with spanking or bondage or other forms of what practitioners labeled BDSM, a condensed abbreviation of the most common terms describing sadomasochistic sexuality: bondage and discipline (B&D), dominance and submission (D&S or D/S) and sadism and masochism (S&M, S/M, or SM). Comedians like Stephen Colbert joked about it. Gags, safe words and other BDSM jargon and paraphernalia figured in their punch lines. Popular television shows ranging from *CSI* and *Law & Order* to *Castle, Frasier*, and *Will and Grace* featured BDSM-themed episodes. This sexual knowledge, which facilitated *Fifty Shades*' success, resulted from a concerted, decades-long effort by BDSM activists to organize sadomasochists into a distinct community, reshape their sexuality and end its pejorative characterization by legal and medical authorities. By presenting BDSM as "safe, sane, and consensual" they changed popular perceptions. Instead of dangerous sociopaths, criminals and fascists, sadomasochists became "just another alternative lifestyle," as Rosie O'Donnell declared them in *Exit to Eden* (1994), a film based on Anne Rice's novel.

★★★

BDSM is a sexual practice that combines varying degrees of strong—even painful—sensation, dominant/submissive role-playing, and bondage or other restraint. We owe the terms masochism (the enjoyment of pain) and sadism (the enjoyment of inflicting pain), and sadomasochism (a combination of the two) to

nineteenth-century sexologist Richard von Krafft-Ebing who assiduously categorized sexual activity, demarcating between the normal and the perverse, the latter including fetishism, masochism, sadism and a host of other practices.[1]

Since then, sadomasochists have pushed back against the pathologization of their sexual desires, sought to reclaim these terms and offered their own terminology and definitions. In the early 1980s, members of Atlanta S&M Solidarity (ASS) agreed "the term S&m or SM or sadomasochism in its broadest sense" meant "erotic (sexual) role play involving a dominant ('top') and a submissive ('bottom') that may involve psychological or physical components or both." A decade earlier, Rick Leathers argued the "essence of S&M is the ritual enactment of dominance and submission" involving "pain, humiliation, trust/responsibility exchanges, and controlled assaults on the body to achieve a high intensity of experience." Jay Wiseman, author of *SM 101*, defined it as "the use of psychological dominance and submission, and/or physical bondage, and/or pain, and/or related practices in a safe, legal, consensual manner in order for the participants to experience erotic arousal and/or personal growth."[2]

Writing in mid-1970s as popular awareness of sadomasochism grew, Michael J. Mitchell warned it was a mistake to evaluate sadomasochists "based solely on what is observed." Not only do they make "extensive use of fantasy," but in the "controlled conditions" of their scenes, pain melds with pleasure, "giving sadomasochistic activities a strange, but often exciting sweet and sour quality," a combination of "agony and ecstasy." Pain and subjugation, "played for their erotic value," become "extremely personal forms of communication and interaction," requiring mutual trust and confidence between participants. The submissive (also called bottom, M, slave and other terms) establishes limits. "Some scenes have no pain at all, instead exploring bondage, humiliation, or other techniques." Actions are deliberate, careful and halted by "code words or signals," if needed. "No other expression of passion and intellect," Mitchell claimed, matches sadomasochism "in its capacity to reveal both the saint and the sinner in each individual."[3]

Numerous sexual activities fall under the rubric of BDSM, so many that it would be impossible for all—or even most—to feature in a single BDSM encounter or scene, as they are generally termed. Nonetheless, the above definitions indicate the most common practices: restraint of the bottom by the top, infliction of pain through flagellation or other means, and a hierarchy of dominance and submission. As Anne McClintock notes, BDSM often "plays social power backwards." Sadomasochists assume the roles of CEOs, police officers, teachers and other authority figures and submit to "punishment" inflicted by their social subordinates. Similarly, "SM theatrically flouts the edict that manhood is synonymous with mastery, and submission a female fate." Sadomasochists, Pat Califia declared, were "probably the first group of people in human history who have said power doesn't have to be an evil thing, and the only factor that determines whether or not a sexual act is moral or ethical is consent."[4] BDSM scenes are

usually negotiated in advance—often in quite rigorous detail—as tops and bottoms discuss their interests and establish limits.

In many ways, BDSM is sexual theater. Appearance and symbolism are as important as the experience of pain and other sensations. The context in which scenes take place may be as important as the activities involved. This may include elaborate costuming and detailed role-play. Often, they are essential for bottoms to eroticize imbalances in power and transmute pain into pleasure. Pain outside of an erotic context simply hurts. Psychologist Roy Baumeister determined masochists were not self-destructive. They "may seek pain but they try hard to avoid injury." Most were rather "ordinary people" and no more interested in visiting the dentist than anyone else. On the other hand, sex without elements of BDSM is simply "vanilla." BDSM complicates sex, which BDSM activist Brenda Howard noted, "is why we like it."[5]

Sadomasochists have offered numerous explanations for BDSM's allure. The film *Exit to Eden* connects adult BDSM desires to a childhood spanking, a common trope perhaps originating with philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau who in his *Confessions* (1782) connected his adult interest in flagellation to childhood beatings. Some contemporary sadomasochists make similar connections, though recent surveys indicate BDSM interests generally develop at a mature age. Some sadomasochists find catharsis through intense BDSM stimulation. Others have ecstatic, spiritual or transcendent experiences. Some find it healing or transformative. For many, psychiatrist Robert Stoller concluded, "SM games" can be "acts of freedom" in which "earlier traumatic, frustrating experiences . . . are reconstructed and mastered in the theater of pain." Most sadomasochists simply find it intensifies the sexual experience, in part, by decentering pleasure from the genitals and deeply involving the mind. People engage in BDSM for enjoyment. They find it fun and playful—so much so they are as likely to refer to the elaborately outfitted rooms in which they orchestrate BDSM scenes as playrooms rather than dungeons, to their equipment—no matter how painful—as toys, and the scenes themselves as play, or play parties, if many people are involved. As Staci Newmahr suggests, BDSM is "serious leisure."[6]

Beginning in the early 1970s with the first BDSM organizations, sadomasochists struggled to find palatable terms describing their sexual activities. Most rejected sadomasochism, a term redolent of serial killers and nonconsensual violence, as well as S&M, which seemed too close to sadomasochism. Some suggested SM or S/M, while others preferred dominance and submission (D&S or D/S), which avoided association with sadism and masochism, terms often used pejoratively to imply sadomasochists were either victims or their abusers. Many professional dominants favored B&D (bondage & discipline), a term used commonly in pornographic magazines and personal ads. Discussions over terminology—sometimes heated—continued into the 1990s, driving some sadomasochists to give up in frustration and adopt the acronym WIITWD (What It Is That We Do). Over the same period, the terms "kink" and "kinky" previously

applied to any non-normative sexuality became increasingly associated—though never solely—with BDSM.

When they named their organizations, sadomasochists usually avoided these terms entirely. A few, like the Chicago Hellfire Club, hinted at their sexual nature, but most chose names that hid their purpose, such as Briar Rose, The Eulenspiegel Society (TES) and Society of Janus. Some, like the National Leather Association, used the term "leather" to identify with the larger leather subculture, while hiding their BDSM identity to most outsiders. In later years, many conferences and events also used the term leather, such as the Leather Leadership Conference, even though they focused almost exclusively on BDSM and its practitioners. Embracing the term leather let people avoid publicly declaring their sadomasochism. Similarly, there are numerous leather awards and contests, such as the Leather Leadership Award, and the International Mr. and Ms. Leather contests, most of whose winners are sadomasochists, but no Mr. or Ms. S&M or BDSM award.

This was, in part, a political decision. BDSM practitioners were acutely conscious of their minority status. Even as their organizations grew in size and number, they remained a small, isolated community. As Tony DeBlase, a leading BDSM educator and publisher, explained, identifying as leather allowed him to appeal to a broad sexual population, running the gamut from men who adopted leather and other macho styles of presentation (cowboy, military, police, etc.), but restricted themselves to "vanilla" sex, through men into "rough sex," and on to those into BDSM.[7] This, of course, caused confusion. Some used leather to signal BDSM interests; for others, it was just macho sexual display.

For David Kloss, who won the first International Mr. Leather contest in 1979, leather represented "something that's on the edge," offering "the element of danger by pushing the limits. It represents maximum gratification," while encompassing "a tribal feeling."[8] As a descriptive term, though, leather is both overly broad and too limited. It includes gay and lesbian sadomasochists who identify with a larger leather subculture, but excludes most heterosexual sadomasochists who do not. Leather is best seen as a distinct subcultural identity "centered on the fetishization of leather" with rules for dress, cruising and other behaviors, which create the tribal identity Kloss and other leatherfolk find alluring. Some of them engage in BDSM. Most do not.[9]

In contrast, BDSM is a set of sexual practices involving bondage, pain and dominant/submissive role play, which an increasingly organized BDSM community has shaped around a discourse of consent and safety. Modern BDSM practice is the result of this intense and intimate social construction of sadomasochistic sexuality. While some people who engage in BDSM claim it as part of their sexual identity and see themselves as part of a BDSM community, many do not. Nonetheless, the BDSM community's discourses on consent and safety have influenced these sadomasochists, as well as contributing to mainstream discourse on sexuality and sexual consent.

For simplicity, I have used the term BSDM in this book, even though the term did not enter common use until the mid-1990s—and even later for many gay and lesbian sadomasochists who preferred to identify as leathermen or leatherdykes. BDSM is, nonetheless, the most commonly used term at the time of this writing and has the advantage of including all its practitioners, regardless of gender or orientation. For lack of a better term, the lack of general agreement on a preferred term within the BDSM community and because BDSMer does not roll trippingly off the tongue, I refer to people who engage in BDSM as either sadomasochists or BDSM practitioners.

Appropriate terminology for gay and lesbian community has also changed over time, reflecting growing inclusiveness from lesbian and gay to lesbian, gay, bi- and transsexual, and today's LGBTQ, which includes queer. In that regard, I have tried to use the term in general use at a particular time to avoid implying an inclusiveness not necessarily present in the past—an inclusiveness desperately sought by BDSM activists. Similarly, several prominent members of the BDSM community, such as Pat (later Patrick) Califia, have changed names. I have endeavored to use the name these people used at a particular time.

★★★

While long studied by social scientists, particularly anthropologists and sociologists, sadomasochists have received only passing mention in historical studies of sexuality. Social scientists, in turn, have focused mostly on contemporary BDSM practice, without delineating how it changed over time. Even those who focus their attentions on particular organizations, such as TES or Society of Janus, the world's oldest public BDSM organizations, describe play parties and other contemporary events, but say little about their history.[10] They describe BDSM activities and explain the values promoted by the BDSM community, but do not explore how these developed and changed over time.

This book, *Sadomasochism and the BDSM Community in the United States: Kinky People Unite*, is the first comprehensive history of the BDSM community and BDSM organizations in the United States. It draws on the rich literature of the BDSM community, including books, magazines, newsletters and various amateur publications, as well as the records of major BDSM organizations and activists, particularly Tony DeBlase, a leading figure in several important BDSM organizations and publisher of *Drummer, DungeonMaster* and other important magazines. It explores the development of the BDSM community, which emerged from scattered, loosely networked enthusiasts in the 1950s and developed into a cohesive subcultural community linked by hundreds of local BDSM organizations, annual conventions and a vibrant literature in the 1990s. These organizations facilitated the education and socialization of BDSM practitioners, shaped BDSM practice to emphasize safety, negotiation and consent, and led a surprisingly successful effort to win mainstream acceptance of their sexual activities.

People have engaged in BDSM activities for centuries. Renaissance philosopher Giovanni Pico della Mirandola had friends who enjoyed flagellation. In John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1748), "unmerciful" flagellation drives Mr. Barvile wild with passion. Some erotic works, such as *Exhibition of Female Flagellants* (circa 1777) and *Venus Schoolmistress, or Birchen Sports* (circa 1788), focus entirely on flagellation. By the late nineteenth century, brothels specializing in flagellation operated in cities across Europe. Flagellation literature, the specialty of several British and French publishers, flourished as a subgenre. Sadomasochists occasionally shared their fantasies in the correspondence columns of popular magazines.[11]

How many people engaged in BDSM in these years is uncertain. Historian Lawrence Stone uncovered group sex and sadomasochism among several eighteenth-century families in Norwich, England.[12] Anne McClintock and other scholars have explored the nineteenth-century relationship of Hannah Cullwick and Arthur Munby who engaged in costumed, master/slave role-play, flagellation and other forms of BDSM.[13] Clearly, sadomasochists in these years occasionally found one another outside the walls of brothels and enjoyed long relationships. Yet, they were too few and too poorly organized to form a community. That changed after World War II, as a growing literature catering to their tastes encouraged correspondence networks among sadomasochists. Surprisingly, it was in the United States, not Great Britain or continental Europe, where loose affiliations of sadomasochists first developed into public organizations.

In late 1970, Pat Bond advertised in several New York underground papers, seeking fellow sexual masochists. The respondents met in his apartment and their meetings developed into The Eulenspiegel Society (TES), the world's first publicly advertised BDSM organization. TES, which soon met weekly, became a model for other organizations, particularly the Society of Janus, which formed in San Francisco in 1974. TES, Janus and other BDSM organizations offered places for sadomasochists to meet, learn from one another and build a community based on a shared interest in BDSM, a growing body of knowledge about its practices, and codes of conduct emphasizing consent, negotiation and safety.

A growing BDSM literature, including books and magazines, helped sadomasochists explore their interests and connect with one another. Larry Townsend's *Leatherman's Handbook* (1972) guided gay sadomasochists to leather bars to seek like-minded men. These bars provided a foundation for BDSM sex clubs, which emerged in the 1970s. Several of these, such as New York's Mineshaft, gained international reputations. A multi-room establishment crowded with hot, sweaty men, the Mineshaft offered a venue for every imaginable kink. Places like the Mineshaft attracted people who saw themselves as sexual outlaws who tolerated no barriers between themselves and fulfilling their sexual passions. They offered one of the purist expressions of French philosopher and historian Michel Foucault's conception of *ars erotica* in which the truth of sex is "drawn from pleasure itself, understood as a practice and accumulated as experience." It was in

clubs like the Mineshaft the people developed "new possibilities of pleasure with strange parts of their body—through the eroticization of the body."[14]

Sadomasochism, of course, is just one of the sexual categories that anthropologist Gayle Rubin placed outside the "charmed circle" of acceptability in her landmark essay "Thinking Sex."[15] Activities at the Mineshaft and similar clubs involved many of the others, as well. The participants—mostly men—reveled in these intense, sexual environments, enjoying their outlaw status and the combination of fear and arousal they provoked in others. Most people, though, had trouble reconciling the outlaw image presented by sadomasochists and the reality of their sexual activities, which—contrary to expectations—were generally fairly safe. Journalists, medical professionals and others routinely presented negative portrayals of sadomasochists, describing them as dangerous, murderous or suicidal. So, too, did filmmakers such as William Friedkin whose 1980 film *Cruising* portrayed sadomasochists as serial killers.

Increasingly, BDSM activists sought to tame this outlaw, pleasure-focused world. Resolving the tension between enjoying BDSM as outlaw sexuality and keeping its participants safe occupied much of their attention into the 1990s. They also hoped to win mainstream acceptance—or at least end the routine harassment of BDSM practitioners by legal authorities. Changing popular perceptions of BDSM required erasing BDSM's outlaw image, which further encouraged activists to codify BDSM practice, establishing behavioral norms and rules to follow. They introduced what Foucault labeled *scientia sexualis* to BDSM practice, which they measured, constrained and packaged as wholesome, safe, sane and consensual fun. Instead of intimidating bars and sex clubs, this new generation of BDSM activists offered newcomers a safe, welcoming environment, which prioritized education and socialization over immediate sexual gratification.

Contemporary BDSM sexuality is the result of an intense and dedicated social construction over the past 50 years.[16] In the past, BDSM newcomers sought out experienced practitioners and learned from them, often as submissives. By the late 1980s, though, newcomers were more likely to learn specific skills, such as flagellation, piercing or fancy rope bondage, alongside dozens of others at demonstrations presented by local BDSM organizations or the workshops of BDSM conferences. In the 1990s, they benefited from a growing BDSM literature, including club newsletters, magazines and increasingly specialized books on BDSM techniques ranging from bondage and flogging to electrical devices, pony play, and cock and ball torture (CBT). Several books explored the intricacy of BDSM relationships, ranging from casual play partners to intense, full-time master/slave commitments. Today, of course, one can find a vast amount of practical BDSM information on the Internet. The encouragement for education and the status derived from mastering BDSM techniques is such that Race Bannon, a popular BDSM educator and writer, recently suggested "we're the most overeducated subculture around." Mirroring contemporary debates on college education, Bannon argued for less lecture and more hands-on instruction.

Sadomasochists had lost the "visceral joy" of BDSM and become "slaves to technique." *Scientia sexualis* had displaced *ars erotica*.[17]

★★★

The development of the BDSM community highlights the interactions of people of different sexual orientations within a sexual community, as well as the influence of various campaigns for sexual freedom on the BDSM community, and that community's influence on mainstream perceptions of sexuality and sexual freedom. Operating on society's sexual fringes, often suspect and ridiculed, the BDSM community tests the limits of sexual freedom and expression in both mainstream society and within LGBTQ community, which for many years excluded sadomasochists from its events.

In fact, the BDSM community offers a microcosm of disputes within the LGBTQ community over whether to silence its flamboyant elements to ease integration with mainstream society or insist mainstream society accept their community's diverse members as they are. Seeking acceptance from the larger LGBTQ community, BDSM activists faced the same choices. Should they enforce changes in behavior and appearance to gain acceptance or maintain an unrestrained, outlaw image, which disturbed outsiders? BDSM activists chose the former. Proclaiming BDSM was "safe, sane, and consensual," they systematically reinvented BDSM practices, transformed the BDSM community and worked to change popular perceptions of BDSM.

The BDSM community demonstrates how a minority sexual community can pursue sexual citizenship. A concept introduced by David Evans and advanced by Jeffrey Weeks and others, sexual citizenship involves the interaction of sexual and political life and bridges private and public spheres. While sexual activities themselves are often consummated in private, finding sexual partners is necessarily a public act. It requires free sexual expression, the ability to publicly state one's desires and seek those who share them. No matter how private, sexual activity requires some level of public acceptance.[18] As Evans explained, for most sexual minorities, "commitment to their sexual citizenship rights is chiefly expressed through their 'out' participation in commercial 'private' territories."[19]

Sadomasochists were systematically denied sexual privacy and thus sexual citizenship. Police raided their parties, gathering places and even private homes, arresting participants. Revelation of BDSM interests costs sadomasochists jobs—and even custody of their children. The popular reaction against BDSM was such that psychologists Darren Langdridge and Trevor Butt suggested BDSM is "too sexual" and "too transgressive of normative sexual expectations" to earn citizenship.[20]

Yet, BDSM activists sought exactly that. Paradoxically, as Jeffrey Weeks notes, winning the right to engage in private sexual activities of one's choice requires going public and presenting sustained "transgressive challenges" to institutions and traditions excluding sexual minorities.[21] So, BDSM activists encouraged

people to openly declare their sadomasochistic interests and unite together across lines of gender, orientation and sexual interest. They lobbied government and politicians, engaged in public demonstrations and worked to make their case for inclusion and sexual citizenship. This book chronicles and analyzes this surprisingly successful effort. While negative characterizations of sadomasochism remain common in movies and television, they are balanced by positive portrayals in popular show ranging from *CSI* to *Will and Grace*. E.L. James' BDSM-centered novel *Fifty Shades of Grey* (2011) not only shattered all sales expectation, but helped launch entire categories of "steamy romances" featuring various intensities of BDSM activities.

★★★

Proceeding chronologically, this book traces the development of sadomasochistic practice and the development of a distinct BDSM community in the United States from the end of World War II to the first decades of the twenty-first century. Chapter 1 covers the period from 1946 to 1969 when the first sadomasochistic periodicals appeared and dedicated leather bars emerged. Both facilitated contacts and networking among sadomasochists, which intensified in the 1960s due to growing media coverage and contact magazines, which encouraged sadomasochists to emerge from the shadows.

Chapter 2 explores the 1970s when the first BDSM organizations formed, leather bars flourished and distinct BDSM venues opened. Four foundational BDSM organizations formed in these years: the Chicago Hellfire Club, The Eulenspiegel Society (TES) in New York, and the Society of Janus and Samois in San Francisco. They attracted members from beyond their immediate regions and served as models for the numerous new BDSM organizations formed in the 1980s. Covered in Chapter 3, these new organizations—more than 200 my mid-decade—displaced leather bars as the primary centers of BDSM education and socialization and facilitated the creation of annual BDSM conferences.

BDSM organizations worked together to end police harassment and win political rights, efforts highlighted in Chapter 4 by their appearance at the 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights and the creation of a national organization to lobby on their behalf. By the mid-1990s, most American cities had at least one BDSM organization, which offered educational seminars on BDSM technique, and social gatherings and play parties for members. These organizations reshaped BDSM activities to emphasize consensuality and safety and forged sadomasochists into a coherent, intersectional sexual community whose members fought to legitimize their sexual behavior, end their harassment by the government and win acceptance from LGBTQ organizations and mainstream society.

Political activism by BDSM organizations peaked in the 1990s, the subject of Chapter 5. Working together, BDSM organizations lobbied the American Psychiatric Association to reclassify "sexual masochism" and "sexual sadism" in less

pejorative terms in its *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, raised for funds for sadomasochists facing criminal charges, and worked to change the public image of BDSM by emphasizing these activities were "safe, sane, and consensual." These efforts proved largely successful. In the new millennium, police harassment of BDSM events declined as did pejorative depictions of BDSM. Positive—or at least neutral—portrayals increased in movies and television. Generally, American society evinced a greater understanding of BDSM and its norms, particularly the use of safe words to halt activities in the event of emergency or when pleasure ceased. The growing acceptance of BDSM, combined with the ease of access to information and potential sex partners provided by the Internet, reduced the need for dedicated BDSM organizations and publications. Many disappeared. This paradox of mainstream acceptance and organizational decline is the subject of Chapter 6, the book's final chapter. Surviving BDSM organizations depoliticized and focused almost entirely on the immediate social and educational needs of their members.

Notes

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8 Roy DeLaMar, "Twenty-five Years of Leather," *The Advocate*, 13 May 2003, 16.
9 Peter Hennes, *Faeries, Bears, and Leathermen: Men in Community Queering the Masculine* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 213 footnote 2.
10 See for example Staci Newmahr, *Playing on the Edge: Sadomasochism, Risk, and Intimacy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011) and Margot Weiss, *Techniques of Pleasure: BDSM and the Circuits of Sexuality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011). Other important studies include Thomas Weinberg, *S and M: Studies in Dominance and Submission* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus, 1995); Peggy Kleinplatz and Charles Moser, *Sadomasochism: Powerful Pleasures* (London: Routledge, 2006); Meg Barker and Darren Langdridge, *Safe, Sane and Consensual: Contemporary Perspectives Sadomasochism*