employment rights'' (p. 382). The stage had been set for a more equitable treatment of women in science in America, although, as Rossiter correctly concludes, there were still battles to be fought and won.

Throughout this study, Rossiter presents an evenhanded discussion of the problems faced by women in science and the solutions advocated by them as well as those men and women who supported their efforts. Her elegant prose and cautious and well-documented analysis are strengthened further through judicious use of photographs and statistical charts and tables. Although dealing with one country, the United States, Rossiter raises issues and questions that can and should be applied to any study of the condition of women scientists in other countries, including Canada. Once more, Rossiter has provided a valuable contribution to the growing body of literature about women in science. She has again published a work that acts as a model for those historians studying the conditions of women in science as well as any potentially contentious topic. Once more, Margaret W. Rossiter leaves her reader waiting for the next installment.

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Mark Gevisser and Edwin Cameron, eds. — *Defiant Desire: Gay and Lesbian Lives in South Africa*. New York: Routledge, 1995. Pp. xiii, 376.

During the mid-1950s two South African tabloids, the *Golden City Post* and *Drum* magazine, ran articles about Gertie Williams. Gertie, aka ''Johnny'' Williams, was a Black, cross-dressing, lesbian gangster. The Gertie Williams story is only one of many fascinating historical fragments to be found in *Defiant Desire*, a wide-ranging anthology on lesbian and gay experience in South Africa.

Fragments figure prominently in *Defiant Desire*. In his very useful overview of South African lesbian and gay organization from the 1950s to the 1990s, editor Mark Gevisser explains that ''given the sparse documentation of lesbian and gay history in this country, I have had to construct a narrative from fragments'' (p. 17). Despite the hurdles, Gevisser and several other contributors sketch an outline of lesbian and gay history in South Africa.

Beginning in the 1920s with the migration of people from rural areas into cities and gathering momentum during and after World War II, we begin to see the emergence of homosexual subcultures in urban centres such as Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban. Revolving around bars, private parties, public cruising areas, health clubs, and café-bios, these urban subcultures were populated primarily by white, middle-class, male homosexuals. Among white men, class divisions prevailed, as in the erotic system in which white, middle-class men paid for sex with ''rent boys'' who were usually working-class Afrikaner male youths. White, middle-class lesbian communities also began to form during this period, often organized along professional lines, through venues such as sporting clubs.

Arguments about the crucial roles of urbanization and the war, as well as the

different types of subcultural formations forged by white lesbians and gays, will be familiar to those with a knowledge of North American, British, or Australian lesbian/gay history. Where *Defiant Desire* makes a more original and exciting contribution is in its exploration of lesbian/gay experience in South Africa's Black and coloured communities.

During the years of apartheid, the system of Black migrant labour removed many Black men from their rural homes into the all-male compounds of the diamond and gold mines. The ways in which this setting nourished a variety of homosocial and homosexual relations — most notably man/boy ''marriages'' among the Black miners — have already generated some historical writing. Hugh Mclean and Linda Ngcobo critique and extend this literature. They are suspicious of attempts to reduce these complex relationships to ''situational homosexuality'', and they are eager to see the mining compounds and hostels placed in the larger context of gay sexuality in the Reef townships. Their own interviews reveal an incredibly rich language of homosexual relations spoken by men in the mines and men from the township gay subculture on the Witwatersrand.

Other essays explore the ''moffie'' subculture in the coloured communities of Cape Town. As Gevisser notes, ''the history of 'moffie life' in Western Cape coloured culture is perhaps South Africa's richest and most untold'' (p. 28). ''Moffie'' is South African slang for a male homosexual, and in the Cape coloured communities it refers more specifically to a transvestite. Originally a derogatory term, moffie (much like ''queer'' in North America) has been reclaimed by South African gays. An amazing archival photo essay provides a glimpse of the moffie drag balls held in Cape Town during the 1950s and 1960s, and an article by Dhianaraj Chetty analyzes the preoccupation with moffie ''drags'' in the popular press of the same period.

While the anthology contains some explorations of contemporary lesbian life in the townships and in the Cape, there is a pressing need for more historical work on lesbian experience in Black and coloured communities. Still, from Muslim rent boys to Zulu lesbian *sangomas* (traditional healers), the range of lesbian and gay lives covered by the contributors is impressive. As most all the authors make clear, the stubborn particulars of race, gender, and class in South African lesbian and gay experience hold theoretical and political implications. Among other things, they are brought into sharp relief by the inadequacy of singular notions of gay or lesbian identity, as well as the limitations of a lesbian/gay politics focused on the single issue of sexuality.

Before he died, the gay African-American poet and activist Essex Hemphill wrote about what he called the ''density of silence'' surrounding the history of Black lesbians and gay men. *Defiant Desire* goes some way in breaking that silence.

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