Odd Couples
Muraco, Anna

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Odd Couples: Friendships at the Intersection of Gender and Sexual Orientation.

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Odd Couples examines friendships between gay men and straight women, and also between lesbians and straight men, and shows how these “intersectional” friendships serve as a barometer for shifting social norms, particularly regarding gender and sexual orientation. Based on the author Anna Muraco’s interviews, the work calls into question two widespread assumptions: that men and women are fundamentally different and that men and women can only forge significant bonds within romantic relationships. Intersectional friendships challenge a variety of social norms, Muraco says, including the limited roles that men and women are expected to play in one another’s lives. Each chapter uses these boundary-crossing relationships to highlight how key social constructs such as family, politics, gender, and sexuality shape everyday interactions. Friendship itself—whether intersectional or not—becomes the center of the analysis, taking its place as an important influence on the social behavior of adults.

“Theoretically important and fascinating to read, Odd Couples adds to the surprisingly scant social scientific literature on friendship. More significantly, it explores friendships between gay men and straight women and between lesbians and straight men in a way that no other work has. Clearly locating her study in the psychological and sociological literature on friendships, family, identity development, and gender issues, Anna Muraco adds to our understanding of gay and lesbian lives and raises provocative questions about gender and sexuality.”

PETER M. NARDI, author of Gay Men’s Friendships: Invincible Communities

“In this extremely engaging and enlightening book, Anna Muraco sheds new light on the intersection of sex and sexual orientation, the complexity of friendship, and its relevance in contemporary North American society.”

BRIAN DEVRIES, coeditor of Gay and Lesbian Aging

ANNA MURACO is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles.

DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Box 90660 | Durham, NC 27708-0660
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