



One of the Children: Gay Black Men in Harlem (Men and Masculinity)

William G. Hawkeswood

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Gay black men, a thriving subculture of the black and gay communities, are doubly marginalized. Along with other black men, they are typically portrayed in the media and literature as "street corner men"—unemployed drifters, absentee fathers, substance abusers. In the larger gay community, they are an invisible minority. *One of the Children*, the first formal cultural study of gay black men in Harlem, not only illuminates this segment of America's gay population but presents a far richer, more diverse portrait of black men's lives than is commonly perceived.

Based on two years' intensive research—during which the author lived in Harlem's gay community—including extensive interviews with fifty-seven community members, this book depicts gay black men's lives in all their social, economic, and cultural complexity. William Hawkeswood takes us from the street into the homes and lives of his subjects. He describes the elaborate network of friends, called "family," that supports these men emotionally and financially, and the community's two-tiered economic structure, comprising gay men and "boys," or hustlers.

Hawkeswood also explores what it means for these men to be both gay and black. In the process, he makes the surprising discovery that while the AIDS virus looms all around them, it has not yet significantly affected the community of gay blacks who choose their sexual partners exclusively from among Harlem's other gay black men.

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