

History is Gay Podcast
Episode 9: Nazi Punks Fuck Off, Pt 2: Claude Cahun

Introduction

Gretchen: Hello and welcome to *History is Gay*, a podcast that examines the underappreciated and overlooked queer ladies, gents, and gentle-enbies that have always been there in the unexplored corners of history. Because history has never been as straight as you think.

♪[Theme music plays]♪

Gretchen: My name is Gretchen.

Leigh: And I'm Leigh.

Gretchen: And in this episode, this is the second part of our two part episode, Nazi Punks Fuck Off.

Leigh: Yeah.

Gretchen: And today we are going to be talking about

Leigh: Claude Cahun, the surrealist genderqueer, anti fascist, Nazi fighter, and my wife-husband-everything-spouse of the week and forever. [laughter] We're still fired up from the last episode.

Gretchen: Oh man, and Oh, man.

Leigh: This is—this is our part two and it's really exciting because they led a really, really, super cool life and Leigh's falling in love a little bit just a— just a smidge.

Gretchen: Right, right I mean, I'm falling in love and I didn't take the lead in research on this episode. [laughter] And I read through being like—Oh my god.

Leigh: Yeah.

Gretchen: I sound fucking amazing.

Leigh: Yeah, sometimes we like write 30 page outlines and it's just like me and Gretchen both going crazy on a Google doc and this time like we each on our own separate parts, like for Magnus Hirschfeld and for Claude Cahun wrote like 15 pages on their own. So we were originally gonna get these two into one episode. Can you believe that?

Gretchen: That— that—that's why this is a two part episode instead of one.

Leigh: Yeah, we have a lot of feelings usually about awesome people who, you know, bash Nazis. So...

Gretchen: Right. There's a reason why we we recently coined the phrase Gayvanclaw, because because— we're raving— we're Big Game Nerd Ravenclaws and we can't stop writing, like 15 page articles on people even though neither one of us are in grad school anymore.

Leigh: Yeah. Or at all! Can I just retroactively like get myself a degree from doing this.

Gretchen: I feel like you kind of deserve to have one. We're doing all of the work for it. Probably more work than most grad students do. [laughter]

Content Warnings

Leigh: Oh man! So yeah— So continuing the discussion from last— last episode, we're going to be, you know, dealing with some some heavy topics like Naziism and fascism. There are mentions of suicide in this episode as well. So as always, we'll give you a marker on our show notes to let you know when that discussion is happening.

And we also want to let you know that many sources that talk about this person do tend to use she/her pronouns. There's some question from some people about, you know, whether or not certain identification is like genderqueer— in between gender is part of, you know, part of the art and the surrealism. And whether or not it's actually part of identity, we're, you know, more inclined to believe that is part of identity because guess what gender is performative anyway, and you'll learn later as we talk about

Claude Cahun that they were also of that mind. So we're going to be using they/them pronouns when we are speaking from our own mouths about Claude Cahun, but there will be sources that use she and her pronouns. So just be aware, we are not to misgendering this person or attempting to miss gender this person we are quoting from sources.

Gretchen: Right and we— the two of us, the decision we made to use they/them pronouns comes from our desire, really, to try and be as respectful as possible from what we can determine of their own self perception. [agreeing noises] And figure it's better to err on the side of being more respectful than— than not. Yes, at least we think that like, yeah, like the same with when we talked about Jemima Wilkinson. It was just one of those, you know, for people who seem to have a perception of themselves outside the gender binary we'd rather be more respectful [agreeing noises] and use they/them.

Historical Context: Dreyfus Affair and 'New Women' in France

Leigh: Yeah. So so with that we've got a little bit of you know, we're not going to focus a lot on historical societal context in this episode 'cause a lot of it really intersects with what we were talking about last episode, but we do have some specific things that I think give some important context to the life of Claude Cahun. So Gretchen, do you want to start off just mentioning about— what was going on at the time that they were born?

Gretchen: Right? Yeah. So the Dreyfus affair was a political scandal from 1894 to 1906. And Cahun was born right around the time of the Dreyfus affair. And the Dreyfus affair was a situation where a Jewish artillery officer was framed by the French government and accused of giving military secrets to the Germans. Maurice Schwob, Cahun's father had been a colleague actually of Dreyfus, the artillery officer who was framed at military school, so there was a connection there. In 1906 the Dreyfuss conviction was annulled by the Supreme Court of Appeals, which sparked a lot of demonstrations in France, some specifically against Cahun's father's newspaper. So again, just context of like anti-semitism, relationship with like authority and government and like a close personal connection to these kinds of political situations that are going on.

Leigh: Yeah. Fast forwarding to later on in Claude Cahun's life is we'll go into— so they later on in life moved to Paris and we wanted to talk a little bit about what was going on in the 1920s in Paris, in France in general, what was going on? So this was the Jazz Age. Paris was like that, you know, this was going on the age of like cafe culture, the Jazz Age, there was the hub of like experimental dance and theatre. Josephine Baker was in vogue. And there was a big kind of backlash after the First World War of a lot of kind of cultural context around gender dynamics changing in France. There were like able-bodied men who were away at war during the First World War. And so much like in the United States, women were able to move into different positions that they had been previously barred from. And so you had this, much like the flapper movement in the United States. You had this emergence of this like new modern woman figure.

In French, it was a *la garçonne*—a feminized with— with two n's— a feminized spelling of like the French word for boy. And masculinity— ideas about masculinity were changing as well. You had many, many men who were wounded from war, like wandering the streets and changing this idea of this like virile, strong, able bodied man wandering around and you know, asserting dominance, things were like, changing kind of all around.

Gretchen: Right, right. And you have things like shell shock. [agreeing noise] So you know, a lot of the soldiers are coming back from World War I with, you know, what we would now know as PTSD, and their ability to kind of participate in those like traditionally masculine like roles was really like, hindered by their experience of war and their trauma and kind of the after effects of that.

Leigh: Yeah, the art scenes in Paris in the interwar period included a lot of movements away from kind of 'traditional' art. You had things like dadaism, surrealism, combined with like a lot of political action and movements towards socialism and communism in certain artists circles, which we'll get into a little bit.

And something that I thought was really interesting and upsetting was that there were a lot of post war anxieties that affected the attitude towards homosexuality specifically, as well. Homosexuality was actually thought of as

a threat to the national body in France. And I have a quote here from a book that we're going to be you know, referencing a lot, which is by Jennifer Shaw on Claude Cahun, and it says the problem, quote unquote:

"problem of homosexuality was linked in the cultural imagination to the trauma of the war and homosexual men together with la garçonne were thought to pose a particular threat to the cultural order."

So backlash and reaction to these supposedly homosexual threats in the reconstruction of France after the war was— They started this movement towards like *le ordre* or a return to order. Sorry for butchering French. [snorts] Expressed in like visual and literary arts through like there were backlash and trying to like, put an emphasis on traditional and like classic art and yet conveniently ignoring the super homoerotic nature of the classics. So that's... fun,

Gretchen: Right, right? I mean, it's a very similar thing that you see after World War II in America with the 50s. [agreeing noises] I mean, it's a very, very similar kind of like the war was so traumatic and as a response, like gender, like people tend to like double down, or at least what we've seen in recent history is that societies tend to like double down on like traditional, what is traditional and often that includes like a very like rigid, binary view of like gender, very rigid, like, roles for like sexual orientation and attraction. So something similar was happening in France in— after World War I that we see in the 50s in the United States.

Leigh: [sarcastic] Whoo!

Gretchen: [sarcastic] Yay!

Leigh: So yeah, so that's the context of we're going to be giving. There's got there's a lot of context that will be giving as we go through Claude Cahun's life. So it's bio time, and that's going to be the majority of this episode, folks. They lived a really interesting and long life so— well, I mean, not super long, but like, super interesting. So strap in, folks, it's going to be a big one. we're going to tell you about the life of Claude Cahun.

Who Were They? Bio Time

Leigh: So yeah, go for it.

Gretchen: Claude Cahun was born October 25th 1894, as Lucy Renee Mathilde Schwob in Nantes, France. Father was Maurice Schwob, a Jewish journalist, mother Marie Antoinette. Oh god...

Leigh: Courbebaisse I think?

Gretchen: Uh— sure. [laughter] suffered from a personality disorder and struggled with mental illness all her life which deeply affected Cahun. And from the outside, it can really be said that Cahun lived a, you know, quote unquote “privileged childhood.” They came from a prominent and intellectual family. But there were actually many difficulties present in their childhood that made Cahun feel like their family was not normal, and that they couldn't live up to the expectations placed on them by their family or their culture. Most prominently was their struggle with their mothers frequent stays in mental hospitals and the anti-Semitic backlash aimed at their father during the height of the Dreyfus affair in a letter to a family friend, quote:

“an Aryan mother, obese, struck by mental illness, according to the psychiatrist, institutionalized, a Jewish father, at the time of the Dreyfus affair, an idealist education, even the thought of normal relationships and activities frightened to my family, who in order to protect me from a world that seemed to me a priori hostile and from a hereditary— heredity that they judge to be a priori fatal. My father could offer me nothing better on my seventh birthday than this. “I am very sorry for having brought you into this world” with real tears in his eyes. I never complained. I expressed myself as little as possible. One couldn't have been more docile, more studious.”

And those are the words of Claude Cahun themselves. And that just like— Ugh

Leigh: What a childhood, right?

Gretchen: Right! When seven years old— your, your father says like, [questioningly] I'm sorry, you were born.

Leigh: Yeah, like well, but to be born into a world that we're like you're fraught with, you know, one of the things about like, their mother and their personality disorders that are often came out in— in ways in which their mother would, you know, in one moment, give them all the attention in the world and the other give completely cold shoulder and would do things like push— push their, their nose up, and try to try to give them like a, like a more area nose and— and, you know, the idea that like they couldn't live up to these certain ideals because of their Semitic heritage and because of a whole bunch of different things. So it was— it was really kind of fraught in the beginning. There.

Gretchen: Right, right.

Leigh: And so Cahun's mother was permanently institutionalized. And at this time their father was working long hours at his newspaper and couldn't adequately care for Cahun. And so they were actually set to live with their maternal grandmother Mathilde from 1897 to 1905. Who, in Cahun's own words— words was both terrifying and loving. And there is where they like developed this deep, deep love for the classics. Their grandmother was blind and so they made Cahun read her— read to her, and, writing to a friend Cahun describes how their grandmother spoke, quote,

"for my benefit, perhaps of the antique of Palestine of the Bible, of Greek mythology of Greece, of Sparta of Homer, of Socrates, these subjects, especially the last, held me under their spell."

End quote, so you get this really, really intense love of the classics, and as you'll see, like, specifically, some certain— certain elements of the classics, that is deeply ingrained in them from the very beginning.

Gretchen: Mm hmm. Right, and they were— they were frequently bullied at school due to ostracization regarding their studiousness. So, you know, people like to pick on the nerd. [agreeing noises] But also they again, anti-semitism, anti-semitic sentiments following the announcement of the Dreyfus conviction, Cahun said one day, tied with jumper up to a tree in the

school yard. I was stoned with gravel. Like— yeah. Kids are so shitty sometimes.

Leigh: Kids are terrible. Egh

Gretchen: Kids are awful.

Leigh: Yeah.

Gretchen: And the thing is, is like, you know that— that was— the hard part is you know that the kids are acting on what they see the society around them doing. Like they wouldn't have felt okay to do that if like the environment wasn't conducive to like, that being in some sense, like acceptable.

Leigh: Yeah.

Gretchen: And that's just— of course, you're going to grow up believing like you're an outsider and you don't really fit anywhere.

Leigh: [snorts] Yeah. So because of the you know, the bullying at school, Cahun's father pulled them from school in France and sent them to England to go to the Parsons Mead School in Surrey. And this was for like a like a year or so until they returned to school in Nantes in 1908. And going to England kind of rejuvenated Cahun. It allows them to, you know, be free from— from all these pressures for a while. And so upon returning to France, they were more encouraged by their father to study all the things that interested them. And it took kind of this like anti-semitic pressure off of them for a little while, and they kind of blossomed.

Gretchen: Mmm. Right.

Leigh: And so with that they dove into literature and poetry, they fell in love with specifically symbolist work, especially influenced by the work of their poet, or their uncle, who was a symbolist poet Marcel Schwob and his compatriots. And so basically, due to their family upbringing, Cahun was able to reserve a classical education that was usually reserved for boys. And so this— from from the start [agreeing noises] affected their outlook toward

the world and like their relationship with femininity, and cultural expectations of young girls and gender. And you'll see that come out, like in every single aspect of their work,

Gretchen: Right, right. I really really love the way Cahun describes it themselves. That their education quote, "taught me at a young age to resist all religious conformity, and even pagan or civic conformity" describing the process of growing up as an "effort to win, her freedom from such expectations." Like, I just love that. Growing up and receiving all of these influences, taught them, like you really see how there's like shaped the person that they became later in life, which isn't just— so cool.

Leigh: Yes. The other thing that shaped them immensely for later in life [laughter] is [sing-song] that gay shit.

Gretchen: Yeah.

Leigh: So I'm like —this lot. Okay, so this is...

Gretchen: This is the cutest of meet cutes. [laughter]

Leigh: This is the best like— their entire lives like, this is the best love story I've ever read. So at age 14, Claude meets Suzanne Malherbe, who later uses the pseudonym Marcel Moore, who was quote, Shaw describes as:

"the woman who would become their best friend, lover, life partner and artistic collaborator."

Gretchen: 14—14 years old, [sighs] like I normally don't really go for the like, 'we were highschool sweethearts and then we got married' like especially in a straight context I tend to think like that's weird.

Leigh: Right yeah.

Gretchen: Why would you— How would you know you're who you going to spend your life with a 14 but like this is like— it's like beautiful love story for ages.

Leigh: And they had even like not super formally met before this. Like they had like met as like tiny baby children because the— because their families were more close, but they didn't know each other. And so they like officially like, met in 1909, because Moore and Cahun's brothers were school friends which led to their their meeting and becoming friends. And Cahun described meeting Moore as a lightning strike like— Fuck! That's so romantic.

Gretchen: This is like soulmates AU, except it's not an AU it's like real life.

Leigh: It just like happens.

Gretchen: It's real life.

Leigh: So what I thought was like really fascinating about this is that Cahun's father, Maurice, starts noticing the attraction between them like right away, like in 1910, but amazingly, he doesn't— he doesn't push cocoon into associations with boys because he feared that they were— that Cahun would inherit their mother's mental illness and didn't want Cahun to like marry and then pass on like a debilitating illness to children. Which, you know, like super stigmatizing in terms of mental illness, but also like, pretty progressive like well you know, I'm not gonna push this kid into like going to try to find a boy. So it is...

Gretchen: Better gay than than just like mentally ill children.

Leigh: Right, I guess. Yeah.

Gretchen: I don't know a lot of people who like yeah, it's like weird. But I also don't know a lot of people would be like, well, yeah, good thing— Good thing they're gay, I guess. [laughter]

Leigh: But so like this actually, in a weird way, gave Cahun freedom from the pressures to conform to heteronormative society. [agreeing noises] They said, to be *a priori* exempt from marriage relieved to me of a distant but oppression threat, true terror and appeared to me immediately is the greatest privilege. So hey, you know, that's— works pretty well.

Gretchen: Right, right don't like even though he didn't push Cahun into marriage but just awesome— Good job, good dad. He did initially discourage their attraction and disapproved of Cahun's desire to become a writer, which led Cahun to pursue the literary path and secret and keep their attractions to Moore in secret because, you know, when you tell teenagers not to do something, the reaction is typically like, well, I guess I just won't tell you!

Leigh: I'm gonna do it and you won't know about it. Right? Right.

Gretchen: Yeah. Um, but like because they had to keep it in secret, they began taking ether, not eating, suffering ill health, and they were basically on the brink of suicide, which prompted Cahun's father to seek medical advice from Moore's father. Which led to him sanctioning their relationship, for the health of his child, as well as giving Cahun position writing a column for his newspaper. Quote:

"Maurice was not a fool. It was he who proposed on the advice of Dr. Malherbe to interest his daughter to Suzanne"

Like Cahun's love for Moore literally saved their life. They were like, I'm— I love this person so much I might die and their dad was like, Okay!

Leigh: Okay.

Gretchen: Then—then have—then okay fine. Go for it go for it.

Leigh: Yeah.

Gretchen: Go for it.

{19:22}

Leigh: And that like— that's. This is not like the only time that this happens in their life to that like their love for one another essentially saved their life, which was really cool. [Gretchen sighs]So fun— fun times they actually— so they become— even though like Cahun's father and Moore's father were sanctioning their relationship, they still you know, carried out their relationship somewhat discreetly, because of societal expectations. But in a wild and fun turn of events eventually when when Moore's father passed away in 1915 and Cahun's father, who had divorced their mother—

actually Cahun's whose father married Moore's mother in 1917, and which now made Cahun and Moore stepsisters. Which actually allowed them to carry out the relationship and live together and show affection publicly, under the guise of sisterhood. So like all these weird, terrible distortions turned into like—

Gretchen: Oh my sister!

Leigh: Oh, well, this is like a grace. [laughs] Yeah.

Gretchen: We're like sisters!

Leigh: We're like sisters

Gretchen: I loved that they used the societal expectations. Just be like—okay, if people like if it's okay for sisters to be affectionate, we'll just go with that and let them think that

Leigh: It reminds me of that part in *Rent* where it's like, "Sisters? We're close." [laughs]

Gretchen: We're just roommates, guys. Sure.

Leigh: Roommates. Yeah, yeah, so Cahun says "this strange coincidence that we were reunited through our family ties seemed to make everything work better." So, pretty cool.

Gretchen: How is this real?

Leigh: I don't know how like an insane biopic has not made— been made of this person life, yet. And like..

Gretchen: Someone needs to make it!

Leigh: We're not even—we're not even anywhere near anything...

Gretchen: We haven't even gotten to their art and fucking with the Nazis yet and we're already like losing our shit over it.

Leigh: Oh god. This I mean like— it's pretty hard to top Anne Bonny and Mary Read but like I think—I think Claude Cahun may be my new favorite

Gretchen: Yep. Yep.

Leigh: This is— this is tough. Alright so moving along— so going into a little bit into their like early literary work in the years between 1913 and 1921 Cahun began developing their identity as an artist and a writer and found themselves primarily influenced by the work of late 19th and early 20th century homosexual male writers like Oscar Wilde and Lord Alfred Douglas and André Gide. All people who were like connected to their uncle Marcel. [agreeing noises]

And so like there was this rejection of traditional female roles and not seeing any image of womanhood that suited Cahun and so they were very interested in these writers, works that reference same sex love And they even— later when they moved to Paris with Moore, they even had like a photo of Wilde and Douglas hanging in their Parisian apartment, which is fantastic.

And they began writing fashion columns for the family newspaper, but personally rejected feminine dress and clothing and shaved their head and started taking self portraits. Which the self portraits are a big, big, big thing.

In 1919, they began officially using the name Claude Cahun, and Suzanne started signing portraits as Marcel Moore, and I thought this was an interesting before settling on Claude Cahun. They had us Daniel Douglas is a pseudonym from Lord Alfred Douglas and Claude Courlis from curlew, which is a bird with a hooked beak and it was specifically referring to their quote, “hooked Jewish looking knows they had inherited from their father.” So there was a lot of like moving between different things and continuing on

Gretchen: So for a while. They basically went by like Claude McJew for awhile.

Leigh: Yeah, basically. [snorts and laughter]

Gretchen: Yeah.

Fun Segment: Word of the Week

Leigh: So this is —this is the period where they kind of have their first foray into symbolist literary works and we're not going to go super into detail about their works and kind of each period of their life, until we get to the like, Why do we think they're gay? section because, whoo boy, there's some doozies. But so the first unpublished manuscript that they signed as Claude Cahun, is something called *Uranian Games* that they wrote in 1913, which leads us to our word of the week this week, which is Uranian.

Gretchen: Uranian.

Leigh: Which actually is a nice thing that in a lovely way, kind of connects back to Hirschfeld, as we were talking about the last episode. Gretchen, do you want— to do you want to lead in with that?

Gretchen: Sure. [sings] Uranian! [Leigh cheering] So Uranian is a 19th century term for a person of the quote unquote “third sex” which again, we talked about with Hirschfeld last time. So someone with a female psyche in a male body, someone who is sexually attracted— so typically like a male who was sexually attracted to men originally, which then evolved to refer to homosexuals in general. It was adopted by by homosexual Victorian poets like Walter Pater, John Addington Symonds, Lord Alfred Douglas, Oscar Wilde. Emphasis was based on classical training, description of the Uranian poetry from Plato. According to Shaw, was characterized by poetic worship of beautiful young men in the idealized context of ancient Greece.

Cahun may have also been aware of the more general ways that the term Uranian and would resonate culturally. The terms Euronism and urning were part of a vocabulary of homosexuality in the interwar years that also included descriptions— pederasty, which again we mentioned last time, inversion and the term the third sex. Oh the word earning, which is spelled U-R-N-I-N-G was coined by a Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, which we talked about last time, in 1864 to 1865, and a series of five booklets which are collected

under the title for *Forschungen über das Rätsel der mann männlichen Liebe*, which is *Research into the Riddle of Male-Male Love*.

Leigh: It's fun to watch Gretchen do German

Gretchen: I like German— I studied German in graduate school also in my former life when I was a classically trained soprano. Way back when— high school— early college. My favorite songs to sing were German art songs. So...

Leigh: Oooh, that's fun.

Gretchen: I don't know why, like everyone I knew love singing French and Italian and Latin and I love German. I just liked— I don't know, maybe I just like guttural noises. [laughter]

Leigh: Das gay.

Gretchen: Anyway.

Leigh: It is really gay.

Gretchen: Anyway, back to urning. [laughter] Urning and Uranian were used in France between the wars the time period between the First and Second World War, together with a variety of other phrases to describe many types of homosexuality among both men and women. Ulrichs derived the term Uranian from the Greek goddess Aphrodite Urania, who was created out of the God Ouranos—his testicles. Therefore it represents the homosexual gender whereas Dionian or what Ulrichs called Dionian derived from Aphrodite Dione which represented the heterosexual gender. So he used two different like names for Aphrodite to refer to homosexual and heterosexual love.

Leigh: Yeah. And this terminology was like— developed and used before even the first public use of the term homosexual right in 1869.

Gretchen: Right, right. So he's already like coming up with like this series of terms to describe it.

Leigh: Yeah. And there's— there's like a whole you know, if you want to go more into Ulrichs, we may do an episode in the future about him, he had this whole like, like, like a whole thing of subtypes of a whole bunch of different types of sexual attraction and third genders and sexual gender variance. And, you know, that had to do with like, your orientation and your sexual behavior and gender characteristics and all of that. Which is all very fun. And you can go look on you know, like, if you want to check out the Wikipedia page on Uranian and it'll tell you all of those kinds of things, or you can wait for a future episode.

Gretchen: Right, which is interesting because a lot of what we see here like— is starting that people are still talking about now. [agreeing noises] And this is you know, over 100 years ago. There were people who are already trying to come up with ways to describe the the differences in intersections between like who you are attracted to, whether or not you are you know, active or passive in terms of your sexual preferences, and then like your gender presentation. Like people are talking about this over 100 years ago and so I read stuff like this and so I think it's really funny when people are like— all these new kids in their in their labels and why does it matter and...

Leigh: [sarcastically speaking like an old person] I don't understand! Derp-de-derp.

Gretchen: And who needs labels? And I'm like, okay, but like people have been talking about this for 100 years so—

Leigh: Yeah.

Gretchen: Fuck off! [laughs]

Leigh: Like, it's fine. Language changes, everything changes, get over it. We'll probably have new ways of discovering and discussing these things in 10 years anyway, so like...

Gretchen: Right.

Leigh: Just go with a flow.

Gretchen: Hint, none of this is new. None of this is new.

Leigh: None of this is new.

Gretchen: [whispers] It's been around forever.

Leigh: [laughs] Yeah, so Uranian—super fun, utilize it in your own works. And we'll talk a little bit more specifically about *Uranian Games* a little bit later.

Gretchen: Can I put that— can I put that down on the census as my like, ethnicity?

Leigh: Is Uranian?

Gretchen: I'm Uranian.

Leigh: Oh my god. [snorts] I like it.

Gretchen: Yes. That's, that's my new— That's my new, like, categorization for myself.

Leigh: Hahahaha.

Gretchen: Because it—I mean it sounds like it's a country.

Leigh: Yeah it really does! It really super duper does.

Gretchen: Anyway, back to Cahun

Leigh: Yes, back to Cahun. So—So yeah, other literary work that they published at this time, their first like, officially published manuscript was *Vues et Visions* from— in 1919. And then they had one called *Idea Mistress* in 1921. Again, we'll go more into these little bit later. But do you want to start talking about their move to Paris?

[Together] Oooh!

Gretchen: huh? Yes, surrealism, exciting things. So they moved to Paris in 1920. With Moore, where they lived in an apartment together for, I mean, almost 20 years, Cahun's work expands from emulating homosexual Victorian writers to broader cultural issues. And now had something to say to a more general audience about the way gender, sexuality and identity play themselves out in the culture at large.

Paris—as you might recall from our earlier discussion— Paris was the epicenter of the art world. It was a hub for literature, experimental art, theater, cinema, dance, it was the perfect place to start expanding and *avant garde* career and exploring a politically focused, experimental art. Cahun and Moore found themselves in the company of many elite artists and socialists in Paris, and their apartment became a salon for these guests. They became friends with and connected with many women artists and writers, many of whom were lesbians like Sylvia Beach, Gertrude Stein, Adrienne Monnier.

Not only were they friends with artists, but they also other intellectual elites, psychologists, sexologist philosophers like— they were kind of right, right in the middle of like— the big—you know, everyone talks about Paris in the 20s and 30s. They were right in the middle of all of that [agreeing noises] Cahun and also started performing in a Paris theatre and their literary career began to take off. And they published more than 10 essays in both *avant garde* and mainstream journals, all with the themes around nonconformity, refusing the law,

Leigh: Like, you know, continuing to explore things like gender and sexuality.

Gretchen: Right.

Leigh: Whole bunch of stuff.

Gretchen: Right. Yeah, their main literary work. So this time, which again, we'll get into more detail later was *Héroïnes* from 1925, which is a series of essays rewriting tales of classic emblematic women in literature and history and you know, general fuckery we've got Sappho in there, our favorite

patron patient saint— though I kind of want to now call Sappho our idea mistress because I—I love that phrase.

Leigh: Yeah. Oh, God, just wait until you hear some quotes from *Idea Mistress*. It's [drawn out] fantastic.

Gretchen: Then you have a *Bedroom Carnival* 1926 which— dude, Cahun had like, such fucking amazing names for their stuff.

Leigh: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

Gretchen: They also have...

Leigh: It's better in French too. Which is great.

Gretchen: I mean, what doesn't sound better in French? *Bedroom Carnival* is a surrealist dream narrative essay focusing on identity and its relationship to role playing, masquerade. Again, we've got themes of performative gender and identity. And *Bedroom Carnival* is a pretty, like seminal work that we will talk to a lot— Talk about a lot more later.

Leigh: Yeah, yeah. At this point— So like the 1920s really marked the beginning of Cahun and Moore as a collaborative artistic relationship. And here's where, you know, if anybody has ever really heard the name Claude Cahun, most likely they've they've heard of, or seen or heard reference to the series of self portraits, that are some of their most famous work. And it's a huge —it's a huge it's a huge repertoire of them. And so sometimes you know a lot of them were taken by Marcel Moore and featuring Claude Cahun, and they're shown in many of them in various guises, such as like an aviator, a dandy, a dog, bodybuilder, vamp, and vampire, angel, Japanese puppet. These these photos explore gender roles, identity, sexuality and the performative nature of all of the above— which is fucking mind blowing because it was more than half a century before Judith Butler was writing about gender as performance.

So Shaw says in her book,

“there's much evidence both visual and textual, that in the many portraits taken of Cahun and the 1920s Cahun and Moore were interested in both questioning identities and the idea of a natural self.”

[agreeing noises] So like many of the portraits feature them looking directly at the viewer with their head shaved, often like revealing only their head and shoulders and eliminating the body from view. Blurring of like different gender indicators and behaviors which like completely undermines this patriarchal gaze.

Gretchen: Right?

Leigh: Yeah, one— one image series that I love and that we'll see if we can put it on the website is like these— these three images. So like the first—like the first image has Cahun dressed up like a marionette doll, with like tons of white makeup hearts on their cheeks covered in like this heavy dress. They have this like head covering and they have this like impassive look and it's all this exaggeration of femininity all around. And then the next image has them like looking straight at the camera with this intense stare— this face almost like resembling a *commedia dell'arte* mask. And their hands are like clasped together in front of their hips, thrust toward the camera with a masculine stance. And it seems like they're, they're topless. It's really— it's really blown out so it's really hard to tell but like it's like this white canvas of their chest with these like dark nipples protruding.

And it's like— it's this very like kind of masculine like daring you to like place me in this box. And then this like third image is they're just sitting here with like that makeup on again with the hearts on their cheeks and they're like dressed up like a comedic bodybuilder and they're mixing all of these different masculine and feminine elements and they're wearing this like light colored shirt with like nipples painted on which like parodies this look of a bare-chested bodybuilder and the text on the chest of the shirt says I am in training don't kiss me, which is then like contradicted by their lips which are like either like a kissy pouty [laughter] form and like the hearts of— it's it's insane there's like we're gonna put it on there

And there's like all these other like images in this series with masks is a common theme like continuing to expand the work that they were doing in

Bedroom Carnival. So they have like all of this stuff all coming together and photo works and literary works. It's a—I'm a little bit in love. [laughs]

Gretchen: It's pretty awesome to look at these images and Like, and it's surrealist. So you're kind of looking at them going like I kind of know what you mean. But also I kind of don't?

Leigh: Yeah.

Gretchen: But whatever it is, is— is really interesting. And I'm thinking about it. Which is just —just like what surrealism is.

Leigh: I'm very confused, but I like it.

Gretchen: Right, right.

Leigh: Yeah. They also had a photo and literary montage called *Disavowals* that they did in 1930, which we'll get more into. And that's actually the space where you see, like, really concretely the, like, the time where Cahun specifically addresses the way that they think of their gender.

Gretchen. Right, right.

Leigh: It's gay and trans and very blasphemous. And I love it.

Gretchen: Right, right. So up to this point, like their— their art had primarily been very like gender— focused on like gender and femininity and— and ideas of selfhood. By the 1930s they shift towards a much more explicitly political form of art shaped by surrealism, war, fascism. So the rise of fascism and anti-semitism in Europe and the social unrest led many intellectuals to feel that a political standard was urgently needed. So Cahun adopted an attitude toward politics, as seen through their own personal perspective. And as I mean as we saw with even Hirschfeld, the personal and political were always intertwined with Cahun and they believed very firmly in individual moral freedom. Which is again, something that they would have inherited from like the Romantic movements. And so they're like, as with Hirschfeld like their—their personal work, so their art was always intertwined with this, like social— desire for like social and political reform.

[agreeing noises] In 1932, they joined the Association of Revolutionary Writers and Artists, I guess, how would how would we say this AEAR?
[pronounced air]

Leigh: Just A-E-A-R, it's, you know, it's— it's the acronym for the French but, you know, I didn't want us to have yet say the very, very long French name.

Gretchen: Right Of course, it's long and probably has a bunch of extra vowels.

Leigh: Yes.

Gretchen: Where they met they met prominent surrealist activists André Breton and René Crevel and participated in a number of surrealist exhibitions and wrote revolutionary manifestos. So at this time, there were close ties between surrealist and anti-fascist, French Communist Party. Cahun's involvement with these groups was integral to the development of a surrealist revolutionary culture. And they published a manifesto against the seizure of power in Germany by the Nazis. According to Shaw, the AEAR raised the most vehement protests against the fascist provocations in Germany, the burning of the Reichstag, organized by the brown shirts, and the terror that presided over the elections of the fifth of March.

Leigh: That's actually the the text from one of the manifestos, which is fantastic.

Gretchen: Right.

Leigh: It also— they also called out like fascism in the cultural realm against artists. And what I thought is really fascinated about this is that like, the AEAR and Claude Cahun, also like was [emphasizes] vehemently against imperialism at home, like declaring French imperialism the enemy. So like they had another track that was titled [laughter] *Against Fascism but also Against French Imperialism*. And it denounced quote, "all capitalist exploiters, French imperialism, and German fascism." So like, just just revolutionary wonderfulness, like 'yeah, those Nazis are bad, but like also we're fucked up. And capitalism sucks!' [laughter]

Gretchen: Yes. Yes.

Leigh: Like, I want—I want Claude Cahun to be here now.

Gretchen: Oh my god. Yeah, right. They would have some things to say. Yep. Some things to say.

Leigh: Yeah. They made several surrealist objects and sculptures in this period. Which you know, if you— if you check out this book, which will link in the you know, in in our descriptions and everything has like all of these works. It's really wonderful, but there's some crazy, crazy like, surrealist objects that they put together this time, like sculptures and wild, wild stuff.

Gretchen: Yeah, yeah. as surrealist have.

Leigh: Very like Dali reminiscent in some ways.

Gretchen: Hmm. Right. Speaking of surrealist, they— they developed a growing satisfaction [correction: dissatisfaction] with— with the Paris surrealist groups and the political tension. So they decided to leave Paris and move to the island of Jersey. And even later on in the 1930s, they broke off from the AEAR to go to other surrealist groups. As the political tensions in France were growing. And Cahun experienced differing opinions on tactics, practices, ideas about various political and surrealist groups in Paris.

Leigh: It's all very complicated, but basically like there were some groups that were like moving closer towards like a Stalinist perspective. And they were—and they were like, No, no, no, no, no, we're going to go over here. We're going to like start my own other group and then you know, —things— like the questions between like Stalinism, Trotsky, you know, like Trotskyist ideas, you know, Leninist ideas like Communism is very complicated, guys. So there were differing opinions and they kind of moved all around when things weren't working in different places.

Gretchen: Right, right. Right. And there was this growing distaste for the heteronormative rules and social conventions, which are enforced in the Paris religious groups themselves, as well as the rising anti-semitism in Paris

because, Nazis Well, not just Nazis also, you know, as Hirschfeld said it was just in the air. And the increasing threat of the Nazis combined with Cahun's like fragile health, that was one of the other reasons they decided to move to Jersey. [agreeing noises] And the last manifesto in Paris that they signed ended with the line, quote:

"there will be no freedom until everyone is free."

Leigh: Like with— that, we hear that all the time, everywhere,

Gretchen: Right, right,

Leigh: Like, this came from them. So yeah, so in March 1937, Cahun and Moore move to the island of Jersey and begin the period of life where they are both super badass Nazi fighters. So following like their general malaise at the situation in Paris, they left and moved to Jersey where Cahun had actually like vacationed as a child. [agreeing noise]

So it was a very familiar place, and it wasn't like too far away. And they purchased this like large property, this— this farmhouse that they named, La Rocquaise, and removed— they essentially like, in the beginning of this period, they removed themselves from the public eye. They went back to presenting themselves as sisters and going by their birth names and like for their first few years on Jersey, they led kind of like a relaxed and quiet life. They were they were actually known in the neighborhood as 'the sisters' and gained a reputation for like [thoughtful noises]— this just kind of reminds me of like, like Grey Gardens, like the weird eccentric sisters living in their big manor house.

Gretchen: [drawn out] Yes.

Leigh: With like, they gained this reputation for like sunbathing in their garden and like the local cemetery. And like walking their cat on a leash.

Gretchen: Oh my gosh. That's the gayest thing ever.

Leigh: It's so fantastic. And they basically like what they were trying to do is they're trying to like eke out this sort of normal existence before these like

storm clouds of war came in. Right like Cahun recalled in their memoir on the occupation of France that basically like, 'I think, from 1937 to 1940, I sensed the coming of war without wanting to believe it,' so they're trying to leave this idyllic life while like knowing that it's clouded by this incoming, you know, terror.

So yeah.

Gretchen: Right, right. Yeah. And in 1940, the British government demilitarized Jersey and evacuated many of the inhabitants to England, but Cahun and Moore stayed believing that there was more potential for anti—anti Nazi resistance efforts if they were there.

Leigh: Because they're amazing.

Gretchen: Like, I love that that's the reason for staying. They're like, well, someone's got to fight the Nazis.

Leigh: Yeah! [snorting laughter]

Gretchen: And in July of that year, the Nazis began aerial bombardment, and were telling the inhabitants to surrender. So—so this is the beginning of some really amazing stuff in their life.

Leigh: [sighs] God, so great.

Gretchen: So Cahun and Moore started resistance against the Nazi order, from moment one of the occupation. Like Moore refused to register as being fluent in German. And Cahun didn't register as a Jew. And all this time they're like listening to like radio broadcasts and like hearing what's going on around them. So they decided to start this like misinformation and counter propaganda campaign. Like Leigh, do you want to tell us more about that?

Leigh: Yes, I mean, like, like one of the things like one article said their— their actions would have been hysterical, if not for the immense ,like, physical danger to them. [agreeing noises] So they start this campaign of creating tracts and flyers designed to spread misinformation and specifically aiming at like morale destruction. They were trying to convince like— didn't —they like they knew they couldn't get to like the most die hard,— hardcore

Nazis, but they figured that not every German soldier was like a fucking anti-semitism— anti-Semite Nazi.

So like the we're trying to appeal to these disillusioned German soldiers and trying to get them to defect from the army. And they did this by like, putting all this information out there, making it seem like all this info was coming from within their own ranks. So they— they wrote fake letters pretending to be disgruntled soldiers and signing them from this personality they called *Der Soldat Ohne Namen* the Soldier with No Name. Cahun used several different like typewriters and typing and writing styles and different papers and different paper weights and like all this stuff to just completely like erase any trace to them.

Gretchen: Okay, like this totally rivals like the drama pirates.

Leigh: Oh, yeah!

Gretchen: This is so extra.

Leigh: This is amazing.

Gretchen: Like so extra.

Leigh: So they like they didn't just stop there. They stole propaganda posters and cut them up into resistance flyers and then they would stuff them inside cigarette boxes and leave them around town for soldiers to like pick up and be like, 'Oh, cool. I found some cigarettes.' Yeah. And then they were like read all of these. They would like dress in disguise. Right?

Gretchen: Oh my gosh.

Leigh: And like, who's gonna suspect— I mean these these people are like in their like 50s by this point and like Cahun is like super frail, with ill health. Like all of the effects of ether in their youth and you know a whole bunch of different things. Right? Like these— like who's gonna suspect little old— two little old ladies wandering around town, putting resistance tracts on tables and on staff cars, on police, like on police cars and like barbed wire fences. They even slipped resistance poems into the pockets of soldiers.

Gretchen: Holy shit.

Leigh: Bold as fuck, like, like, like a bunch of Nazis are gonna be like, 'Oh, yeah, these like weird quirky old ladies. Okay.'

Gretchen: Gotta to be the guy to be the sisters who walk their cat on a leash.

Leigh: Yeah!

Gretchen: They're probably the ones doing it.

Leigh: Ah, god. It's so good. So like— so when when radios were banned by the Nazis, they they were like, 'Alright, fine, have ours' but they like fucking broke their radios that they gave them so that the Nazis couldn't use them and then they secretly bought a bunch more of them and like translated the information and spread it to others on the island. [Gretchen laughs mockingly] Like they just— they did not give a fuck. Like they just continued everywhere. Until like their —their house was actually— So La Rocquaise was requisitioned by Nazis and they were forced to houses soldiers and horses and their barns and their garage.

And there was even— there's even at one point, like one Nazi was staying in their house in a couple of different rooms. And they were like, 'All right, how the fuck do we get rid of this guy?' and like 'We cannot let him into our library or into our bedrooms are anywhere where we have all of this really, really incriminating information. But all of these, you know, these misinformation tracts that we're distributing everywhere.' And so basically, they like whenever he would ask for extra blankets. They'd be like, 'Oh, we don't have any I'm sorry.' And whenever like he asked for them to turn the heat on. They're like, I don't know it doesn't work and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, but like you can go and get some coal. You know, but like our radiator doesn't work. And so—

Gretchen: Oh my gosh.

Leigh: They did their best to like make him as uncomfortable as possible. And he— so he left. He like left I could go like shack up in somebody else's house which was more comfy.

Gretchen: Oh my god. Like, like, seriously like someone needs to make a movie—

Leigh: Right!

Gretchen: Or like mini series. Because this is like—

Leigh: It's insane!

Gretchen: This is the kind of like fucking with Nazis shit that I love watching!

Leigh: It's amazing!

Gretchen: Oh my god! So good.

Leigh: Yeah, so— so like it didn't just— it didn't just stop there at one point, like right outside of like the La Rocquaise property, Nazis were like, basically having slave laborers dig a trench in order to construct a wall. And they started, like smuggling food to the North African, Russian and Spanish slave laborers who were being forced to construct this wall, like they would smuggle food to them, they would visit them they would talk to them— all of which was forbidden, in addition to like taking photos, all over the place which was banned by the Nazis,

One of my favorite quotes is so like, in, in— in the in the late 40s, like the or in the in the early 40s the Nazis started to issue deportations to Germany for the islands inhabitants. And like many of the British on the island were protesting, but like Cahun always thought that the people in Jersey should be doing more to resist the Nazis, right?

Gretchen: Duh! Because they're doing they're doing so much.

Leigh: They're doing so much. And so like when those folks were trying to like make the best of it and say that they'd enjoy the mountains and the lakes and the scenery of Germany, Cahun called them on this like insane bullshit and wrote:

"I recommended to those who believe or believed what they were told that they should take a little tour of the camps full of foreigners in Jersey."

Gretchen: [whispers] Oh my god! Savage

Leigh: That is—

Gretchen: Like so savage.

Leigh: Yeah, that is— That is like that is a put down. That's amazing.

Gretchen: Yep. Yep. So in 1944 Cahun was summoned for deportation. They were summoned to present themselves before the *Kommandantur* in March of 1944. And so the Germans were going through their home so—

Leigh: So they went through—

Gretchen: Oh no so like, yeah, Cahun and like went through their home hid all of the most incriminating possessions. And at the interrogation, Cahun and Moore like, played up Cahun's fragile health, as much as possible, tried to make them look as sick as they possibly could. So of course, they're released, no such look at the second interrogation, though, in July of that year. The Gestapo were— surrounded the house, arrested Cahun and Moore when they were first— when they found enough incriminating information. And were of course, like the Germans were, like, totally shocked that they were behind all of this misinformation campaign. And according to Cahun, actually the Gestapo searched for four years, like they had been able to avoid getting arrested for four years because they were so good at hiding everything.

Leigh: Yeah.

Gretchen: And even then, the Germans like never would have believed that they had anything to do with it. Even when the proof was right in front of them, they couldn't believe it

Leigh: Couldn't believe their eyes.

Gretchen: Yeah, couldn't believe their eyes. So—so they were brought to prison and— and Cahun and Moore like, to the very end, right? Even in the police cars that were taking them on the way to St. Helier prison. They managed to swallow. So here's our you know, here's our suicide warnings. They managed us like even though they were being watched, managed to swallow 20 barbiturate tablets that they like always kept with them while distributing tracts in case of capture. They had like years before made a pact with one another. They— which Cahun writes like

“would we let them deport us degrade us know, with the risk we were running we deliberately opposed importation in case of arrest suicide”

Like this is some like movie fucking shit!

Gretchen: Right?

Leigh: Like, it's, it's crazy. And actually like it was even more complicated than that. They didn't even— They usually had these tablets on them when they were distributing flyers, but they weren't arrested while they were distributing flyers, so they didn't have them on them. But they actually convinced the Nazis to take them back to their house because they needed their medication and grab them.

Gretchen: Oh, my god.

Leigh: Like, what the fuck? [laughter]

Gretchen: [whispers] Oh my god. I love it. I love it. Yeah. So it's just like that their whole life is like playing with other people's perceptions.

Leigh: Yeah, of them.

Gretchen: Like even this is a like, 'Oh, right. They're gonna think where these frail old ladies, we should tell them we need our medication when actually it's our suicide pill.'

Leigh: Exactly! Yeah, so the dose wasn't enough to kill them, but it made them like incredibly sick, both of them and they were both sent to the hospital before being sent into the prison and they both like awoke from like comas and like in extreme illness like a week later, and found that they were separated from one another. And in it— like their ill health like, kept pushing back their interrogation, but like a week, a month, a whole bunch of different things.

Moore actually, like unfortunately attempted suicide in prison once again, believing Cahun was dead. She actually— she actually like tried to slit her wrists, but lived and when Cahun— Cahun also had, you know, like, asked for more medicine, attempted, lived. And when— when Cahun learned that Moore was alive, they actually like resolve to become well and reunite with her.

Like, again. [laughs] Again, their love for one another, like, gave them the resolve to live.

Getchen: Right? Right because they had hoped to die together. When they were— instead of being deported, about like, once they realized each other was alive and isolated from one another, like they decided to live, even though it meant they were isolated until the end of 1944.

Leigh: Yeah.

Gretchen: But of course, like badassess they were still able to communicate with each other. Even though they were in solitary confinement, using a secret postal system by the inmates and sending messages through the ventilation tunnels. I mean, I wanna make a movie!

Leigh: Yeah, yeah, like they were— each solitary confinement cell was like separated by thick walls, but there were these ventilation tunnels that inmates would like pass notes and messages to each other back and forth on pieces of string.

Gretchen: [whispers] Oh my gosh. Someone make this movie!

Leigh: How— How? This is the most entertaining movie that I've never seen. Like what is happening?

Gretchen: Right?

Leigh: We're going to make this movie! Somebody make this movie. Somebody queer make this movie, I will back the shit out of this on Kickstarter, Indiegogo, whatever you want to do. Get the rights. Um, so yeah, so here comes the war tribunals. So the trial of Cahun and Moore took five hours. And in it they learned that the Gestapo had searched forever to try to figure out who was buying the campaign and like still didn't believe it. They were accused of being quote irregular soldiers and Cahun actually writes that their use of like information as weapon was far more powerful than had they been like doing counterinsurgency methods with like actual weapons. [agreeing noises] They said, quote:

"We had used spiritual arms instead of firearms, something which according to the officer, was more serious because with firearms one could measure the amount of damage done whereas with spiritual arms one could never know how far the damage had spread."

So like they've been captured they're, you know, like on the verge of sentencing but they still get this like amazing satisfaction that everything that they did worked and was worth it and had effects. Which, you know, if you're going to be caught by Nazis like what better way than to be like, all right well, guess what? I still got [sing-song] fuck you. It's great. [laughs]

Gretchen: Right? Like I love it. Right?

Leigh: So so in the trial Cahun and more like adamantly refused to deny any of their activities and they were sentenced to death. So like all of their possessions were confiscated and they were asked by German authorities to sign letters appealing their execution order, but they refused— like they refused. Like later on there was—it went— like all—all over the place back and forth, whether or not they were actually going to get a death sentence. But they were like, 'Nope, sorry, you're not deporting us. We prefer the

death sentence la la.' [snorting laughter] So like they refuse to like appeal orders. It was— it's crazy. Like they just refused to be they just refused to kowtow to Nazis at all. And like the Nazis were super frustrated, but they just couldn't get them to submit.

Gretchen: Right, right? I mean, and they were with them for months.

Leigh: They were embarrassed.

Gretchen: Right? Yeah, because these two these— two like seemingly little old ladies like

Leigh: Pulled a fast one— on Nazis!

Gretchen: Right?! oh god they're just like, hashtag goals. So they stayed in prison for months, separated from each other until around January of 1945 when both— they began to suspect that their death sentence wasn't going to be carried out. And in fact, it wasn't— for the fear of public outcry the Germans rescinded the death sentence and in February of '45, they were notified that their sentence had been commuted. Though there was still a chance they could be deported. But by April the Nazis were handily losing the war And German soldiers who were there as political prisoners, some of which Cahun and Moore made new friends with were moved out of the prison and sent to disciplinary camps.

Leigh: This is—yeah

Gretchen: And when all this was happening like that the SS so this *Sturmschützen* and the stormtroopers would like tear off their insignias when they— were— when they like soldiers, German soldiers who were there as political prisoners, when they were deported, they would like tear off their insignias and like their buttons, and they'd be stripped of all their military affiliations. And some other Germans soldier friends would like, rip theirs off before the *Sturmschützen* could and would like, give them to Cahun and Moore as like souvenirs of like their friendship. So like they would have these badges which like Cahun called like dirty birds.

Leigh: Mm hmm like if you look at the insignias it's the bullshit Nazi the eagle—the eagle. Which as a Ravenclaw I'm so offended. Like how dare! How dare you taint my my lovely mascot!

Gretchen: Taint my birds.

Leigh: Yeah, what I love about that, you know, like this dirty birds thing, right? Is that so like in May of 1945 Jersey is liberated and so you know, they liberate the camps and and there are like two photos of Cahun during this liberation. Like one is in a crowd scene where like— a soldier or like a soldier is, you know, being like, hoisted up by a bunch of different people. And one of them is like when they had returned to their home, and Cahun is like standing at the threshold of La Rocquaise and is holding the dirty bird gifted to them by the German soldiers, upside down, between their teeth, and just like steely gaze at the camera. So as— as Shaw says:

"To the very end, Cahun and more continued to resist the Nazi horror."

Gretchen: What!

Leigh: You've just been released from like a prison camp, and now you're going to be like 'all right, but like let me let me flip them the bird one more time.

[Together] They like literally flipped the bird.

Gretchen: Literally flipped the bird at Nazis, Oh, my God. [drawn out] Love it!

Leigh: [laughs] I love it!

Gretchen: So, after liberation, they returned home and they refer to their home no longer as La Rocquaise but 'the farm without a name' so playing off of their role as 'the soldier without a name' that they had during their like anti-Nazi resistance movements. All of their possessions in the home had been burned. The house had been pillaged and destroyed. So they work together with their friends to put everything back in order. They continue to

write in the '40s and '50s, writing memoirs of the war, and continuing to be vocal about the horrors of the Nazi regime and occupation.

Cahun's health continued to fail and they struggled with mental— mental health coming back, Cahun was disillusioned with Jersey and felt alienated from the population who had aided the Nazis. Missed her intellectual cohort in Paris and disliked the influx of tourists, which makes a lot of sense that you know, after like your home literally became occupied by the enemy and you were sent to a camp and then you have all these people coming in and being like, 'Oh,look, the Nazis were here ' it's be easy to be like,Fuck you. I hate you.

Leigh: Yeah, it just it was it was not and was never going to be like the Jersey that they called home.

Gretchen: No, no.

Leigh: So they said they visited Paris again in 1953. To see if they could like reestablish life there. They like stayed in the hotel and their old neighborhood. They met with old friends and André Breton and like inquired about renting an apartment. But unfortunately Cahun became ill while in Paris and so they— they went back to Jersey and Cahun's health took a turn for the worse in autumn of 1954 and was taken to the hospital. And unfortunately passed away on December 8th 1954.

They were buried in a corner of the churchyard where they spent much of their time and their idyllic phase before the occupation. And their gravestone has two stars of David and an inscription chosen by Moore that says:

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth"

Which is like very, very emblematic of Cahun's work. So Moore eventually sold the farm without a name and move to a nearby area on Jersey and stayed there until she unfortunately committed suicide in 1972. She was in a lot of ill health and burdened with pain from arthritis. And I imagine you know, after like losing the love of your life several years ago, like and be on an island where you'd experienced terrible war terrors like,you know, so...It's unfortunate, but I don't blame her and she lived a long life, so.

Why Do We Think They're Gay?

Gretchen: Yeah. Yeah, she did. So with all of that, oh my gosh, we that's all biography guys. Yeah, that is all biography. So now we're going to move in our section— move into our section. Why? Why do we think they're gay? Why, why?

Leigh: Why? Multiple reasons. Like...

Gretchen: Okay, this is one of those where you're just like, how could you possibly— that— literally can't think otherwise?

Leigh: Yeah.

Gretchen: There are no other options.

Leigh: Yeah, I mean, if anything, Claude Cahun, and Marcel Moore like known as like lesbian icons, but we'll talk a little bit about like, why that frustrates me a little bit because there's more nuance to their gender. But speaking of like nuance to their gender, I want to talk about so like, they have this amazing relationship with Moore but there's also this super interesting story about an early attraction and relationship they had to a dude. So Cahun's identification with like, male homosexual poets, early in their life, like didn't just play out in their writing, but also like, actually in life. So in about 1970—in like 1917, they found themselves attracted to a man named Bob while still in love with Moore, who was a farmer and a fisherman and his family lived on Jersey and so like, you know, when they when they vacation there, they would, they would see him. And they developed this attraction to him and developed like a relationship with him even though it never became intimate. And what's so fascinating about this is that the narrative when Cahun tells the story, it veers from like a traditional heterosexual romance as Shaw says:

"Even as she imagined Bob as a love object, Cahun did not conceive her role in this relationship in conventional heterosexual terms. Instead of taking on the stereotypical flirtatious characteristics of a woman, she imagined herself in the guise of a homosexual man."

[agreeing noises] So like they imagine themselves as— as an asthete and teaching Bob the wonders of the classics and the writings of Wilde and Arthur Rimbaud and— and Cahun, like teach —Cahun teaches Bob about poetry, not the other way around. And so in this Shaw says:

"Cahun takes on the role of the dominant male in the relationship, therefore imagining them as a homosexual male couple, rather than a hetero one."

Gretchen: Interesting.

Leigh: Yeah!

Gretchen: Interesting. Hmm.

Leigh: Yeah. And like, Cahun even like personally describes Bob in this way— like:

"This boy incarnated my erotic ideal at the time, he resembled decadent Greco Roman statues, particularly portraits of Antinous. He had in his ferocity, his violence, his easy manner, and the clumsiness of his comportment, in the wildness that inclined him to solitude, something mysterious that irresistibly evoked Rimbaud, for me"

Das gay.

Gretchen: That's super gay.

Leigh: I just imagine like Cahun and just sitting there being like, 'Yes, I am Oscar Wilde.' [Laughing] This is some self insert shit. It's great.

Gretchen: Right, right. And how telling it is that the self insert is in —the self insert of a homosexual male.

Leigh: Yeah!

Gretchen: That's such an interesting...

Leigh: Such a playing of gender and gender roles and like— it just really seems like they were not coming at it from a —from a way that you would expect.

Gretchen: No, not at all.

Leigh: Yeah.

Gretchen: Not at all. So this brings us to— we've been mentioned— we mentioned multiple times that we're going to talk more about their— their literary, photographic and other artistic work. So here's we're going to do that. We already mentioned *Uranian Games*, which is super duper gay references to Oscar Wilde and Lord Alfred Douglas.

Leigh: Yeah.

Gretchen: All throughout.

Leigh: The fun thing about *Uranian Games* is like the title page is is really significant with it. And so I'm going to read this from from the book, but so basically, so it's called *Uranian Games* and so the the hand drawn title page announces Cahun's intention to cross into forbidden territory, it includes not only the words *les jeux Uranien*, but at the lower right, a drawing of a road where a sign looms, it reads, in English, "trespassers will be prosecuted." And so you know, then she goes on to talk about how Cahun drew the obscure term Uranian blah, blah, blah. And then says,

"the sign seems to warn that the act of crossing, trespassing, into the terrain of homosexual love, is fraught with danger. Thus we shall see in her writings, Cahun carefully negotiated that terrain by inserting signposts that would only be legible to those with the right knowledge."

[agreeing noises] So like secret gay shit within!

Gretchen: Yep, yeah,

Leigh: That reminds us of— of somebody in our— in our friend group who— who like found their old journal or their like printout of fics and had like, a warning on it that just said 'don't read, gay shit inside' or something. [snorting laughter] So great.

Gretchen: Right. Which is basically what Claude Cahun was doing.

Leigh: Like, hey, just a heads up. It's some gay shit in here.

Gretchen: It's gay.

Leigh: Yeah.

Gretchen: So that brings us to *Vues et Visions*, which they published in 1919, which address the cultural repression of homosexuality by imagining an alternative. And the images and texts of *Vues et Visions* contrast the everyday images of Cahun's place and time to "her vision", this is quoting Shaw,

"to her what their vision of how they were in a bygone era, or how they might ultimately be in a utopian future, the repressive world of modern France and the fantasized world of freedom."

So you have this juxtaposition of like the world as it is and the world as it could be. And the visions featured illustrations by Moore with very androgynous figures, which, further indicating the homoerotic nature of the text, the natural landscape images were replaced by, quote

"an exotic, sexualized encounter between women."

And notes on the spread the 'Modern Night' contrasted with the 'The Antique Light', featuring two shadows in one, and two white forms in the other. So you have this juxtaposition of images:

"Modernity is dark and repressive: 'The sky, sombre and heavy.' The protagonist dreams about 'two shadows' groping their way down a dark road. The imagined ancient world is the opposite. Cahun describes it as bright new with little shadow. It's a place of 'Eros without arrows.' Here love

is not oppressed and the two 'white forms' symbols of same sex lovers are merged in a golden fog.

So here Cahun and Moore are contrasting the dark, kind of threatening atmosphere of modern France, remember, this is 1919. So this is right around the end of World War I when you're having like, this resurgence of like homophobic tendencies and kind of, like, rigid adherence to gender norms. So that's what the you know, the the image with the two dark forms represents like modern France, and that's contrasted to a vision of the like light and openness of the classical world.

In Cahun's imagination, a place where you, know, the Greek ideals or their perception of Greek ideals of like free love and the prevalence of homoeroticism is like celebrated in the juxtaposition of these two images.

Leigh: Yeah, it's really— it's really fascinating. Like it's just these spreads with one page, like showing this one world and one page showing the other. I wish that I could write read it, but I don't read French

Gretchen: It's just— it's lovely to me, because so often, at least the rhetoric in our society is like, things were better when they weren't gay. And [laughter] in here, you have you have Cahun and Moore being like, 'No, no, no, no things were better when they were.'

Leigh: Yeah. So then you have *Idea Mistress*, which we briefly mentioned before, but this— this piece of writing was primarily like a journey of self discovery, and really like coming to terms with their own, like same sex feelings. And so there's a really great quote from it, it says,

"and my idea mistress for me also, the love that dare not speak its name shall form the only soul of this flawless body, my ideal being."

And so, reading the poems of Douglas of Lord Alfred Douglas right? Cahun recognizes homosexuality as a guiding principle. It says

"I am in her she is in Me and I will follow her always never losing sight of her. She will be the indestructible crown of all my acts"

Gretchen: Dats so gaaaay

Leigh: I mean, that's basically like my guiding light. Like I endeavor to be as gay as possible, in every moment of every day. Gayness will be the indestructible crown of all my acts.

Gretchen: Yep. It can get gayer or I can always be gayer or than I am right now.

Leigh: It's so relatable

Gretchen: And everything I do will be gay. All of it.

Leigh: It's so relatable.

Gretchen: I love it. Right? Exactly, exactly. And that brings us to *Héroïnes* of 1925 which I totally want to read now.

Leigh: Yes!

Gretchen: B-T-dubs.

Leigh: Oh my god.

Gretchen: Please, please read this!

Leigh: I really want to- read, please read this book by Shaw because it gives like this amazing like breakdown of every single person. So this book is like 300 pages of amazing,

Gretchen: Right? It's a series of essays, rewriting the tales of women like: Eve, Penelope, Helen, Sappho, Mary, Cinderella, Beauty, Salome, Judith, Delilah. So you've got like the historical, and fictional and fairy tale characters

Leigh: Biblical, like all over the place.

Gretchen: Biblical! And these these heroines like speak their minds about the roles that they're expected to play, and give voice to, you know, quote unquote, "inappropriate thoughts and feelings and motivations." And according to Shaw, Cahun transforms the stories so that rather than encouraging young girls to grow into selfless, empathetic women, they instead proffer egoistic models of femininity, free from the desire for heterosexual romantic love, or traditional female roles. So like Cahun was like queering—queering like female history and fairy tales and stories.

Leigh: [in a drawn out whisper] Yes.

Gretchen: And like includes the story of Sappho being exhausted and plagued by the many attentions of women who pursue her which, like,

Leigh: She's just like— she's just like, I just want to do my art and all of these women want me. I'm so tired. [laughs]

Gretchen: I'm tired 'cause I get all the ladies.

Leigh: Yeah.

Gretchen: Like shut up, Sappho!

Leigh: It's— Cahun even like rewrites like, you know, like, like Sappho was like suicide saying that it wasn't for a man or a woman or for anything. It was like, I just want to be artistically free! And basically, fakes— fakes like her death and like sends, like sends a mannequin over the Cliff instead of herself! [laughing hysterically]

Gretchen: Oh my God, that's amazing.

Leigh: That's the beautiful. Read. This. Book, y'all. It's great. Um, so yeah, so then we move into *Bedroom Carnival*, which we mentioned was like a big seminal work, which was 1926. And so this whole piece kind of talks about how gender and sexuality, among other aspects of our identity, are Carnival masks. Like who fits, right? What roles that society places on us are ill fitting masks that we try to fit awkwardly on our faces. And so a portion of it said that we make our masks out of quote,

*"cardboard, velvet, flesh, word, the carnal mask and the verbal mask
are worn and all seasons."*

And Shaw mentions that everyone always wears a mask. That Cahun's perspective as an intellectual and sexual outsider who's been forced since childhood to negotiate convention, is able to perceive this better than most. [agreeing noises] Cahun sees that even those things that appear most natural— natural, such as male and female, masculine and feminine, are themselves masks that we wear. Cahun can see this because the masks have never fit them properly. Like Judith Butler who?

Gretchen: What?

Leigh: What? Oh, god.

Gretchen: I love it. love it.

Leigh: All right, right we're here at the end here, folks.

Gretchen: All right, *Disavowals*, 1930 so this is a big, big work, with Cahun and Moore. And they create this like immense photo and literary montage. Which asks readers to rethink social conventions of the 1920s, as well as contemporary assumptions about art. It's at times difficult to decipher. There are themes of homosexuality, desire, narcissism, femininity, sexually provocative and suggestive imagery. You've got religiously blasphemous iconography, treatises on morality, like this is like the surrealism...

Leigh: This is great stuff.

Gretchen: This is like huge, surrealist, like, all of these things intersecting each other. But this is also the piece that most blatantly addresses Cahun's gender identity as something neither masculine or feminine, but something in between. Yeah. Leigh, do you want to? Do you want to quote this?

Leigh: Yeah, so so— so like, *Disavowals* was like very autobiographical, while also being very, very surrealist, and, you know, a treatise on a whole bunch of different things. But so some of the quotes in it are one that says,

"Live and let grow in me, he she or even it, who permitted me still young to understand that I must only, that I can only, touch transformed myself."

And another one:

"Shuffle the cards: masculine, feminine. It depends on the situation. Neuter is the only gender that always suits me. If it existed in our language (right, aka French) no one would be able to see my thoughts vacillations, I'd be a worker bee for good."

Which if you don't know about like drone bumblebees like they don't really have a sex, which is...

Gretchen: Nope.

Leigh: Pretty cool.

Gretchen: Yep, yep,

Leigh: Multi layered! So yeah. *Disavowals*, I mean like there's like an entire gigantic chapter about it in this book. I could not go into detail if I walked into without having an entire different podcast about it.

Gretchen: What is— what is super fitting right now— is you guys can't see us right now. But Leigh is currently wearing a shirt with a bee on it. And it's I just love that.

Leigh: It's a bee and then it says happy.

Gretchen: Yes, bee happy but also worker bees work.

Leigh: Worker bees.

Gretchen: I just—I just that just seem so perfectly fitting.

Leigh: But yeah, I actually— I actually have like a bumblebee tattoo planned, like as specifically as, like a monument to my relationship to fandom and like my gender queerness and whole bunch of fun stuff. So like, Cahun is a person after my own heart.

Gretchen: Yes. The worker bee, bees.

Leigh: Bees?

Gretchen: That's— that's for you guys, TGI. We love you.

Leigh: That's—that's for TGI.

Gretchen: Bee?!

Leigh: Also, that means that I will have bee play permanently on my body.
[laughs]

Gretchen: Yeah! Sorry for those of you who don't get the reference, inside joke.

Leigh: Go to TGI Femslash and you'll get the joke.

Gretchen: Yes! So just in general, you have this amazing quote from Cahun about the refusal to be desirable— a desirable object for the consumption of men.

Leigh: This was a good one I wanted to end on.

Gretchen: Quote:

"all the men who loved me have mistakenly believed that they could cultivate me in a nice little plant for their particular gardens. When I acted freely, they saw me with disgust. At times a cucumber flower growing in a pile of manure; a silly thistle. At others a bizarre cactus in whom pride only seems like vanity; monstrous egoism of the soul."

Leigh: Same Claude, same.

Gretchen: Yep, hashtag— hashtag same.

Leigh: So that's— that's where I wanted to end with this because like just— that's that's my general feelings about men being attracted to me. I know many of my— my friends feel this way as well. [laughter] And it just continues to like emphasize the level at which Claude Cahun was like operating on a different plane, that I love.

Gretchen: Right? Right. And that it's— it's interestingly just like another one of those unifying themes, that like we didn't realize would we put Hirschfeld and Cahun together.. How much they resonated with each other, but that being a theme of like, these are people who were far ahead of their time and unrecognized for the work that they did. Like we so often think of Judith Butler or Kinsey And these are, you know, people who were saying the same things decades earlier and unrecognized.

And it's hard for me not to start to get angry because I think to myself, like, all right, these are both— these are both Jewish, like queer Jewish, like communists of, like— of course, they get overlooked.

Leigh: Yeah.

Gretchen: Like as shitty as it is, there's a part of me that's like, 'well, of course, they get overlooked. And we start focusing on the other people who did this later.' But like [sighs] All right, I'll stop.

Leigh: Well, and the ways in which that like that later work was considered, you know, more palatable, right? [agreeing noises] You know, you had like Kinsey was, you know, a pretty well-up dude in the United States, who had a wife, who right then was, you know, afforded the ability to like, explore his bisexuality, you know. You had like, all of these different factors that give these folks like the privilege to be able to explore those things and bring them out into the mainstream. And you have these two folks who are not in that position.

Gretchen: Right? Right!

Leigh: No wonder it gets swept under the rug, which is sad. But yeah.

Gretchen: Right? And the reason why one of the, again, as we say, almost every episode, the reason why we have this podcast is because like, we have literally been erased from history, and our contributions and stories needs to be recognized, not only for ourselves, because we deserve to be able to, like, take pride in, and like locate ourselves in history, but also because the wider world needs to recognize that, you know, we're— we're groundbreaking thinkers, we are, you know, amazing, compelling, blasphemous artists who, you know, fuck with Nazis, like, that's who we are! Like, it's great!

Pop Culture Tie In

Leigh: So yeah, so with that— so there you know there unfortunately isn't a lot of— you know, we kept saying like, Argh! I really want to move about this! And there's really not a lot. There are a couple of films that I dredged up, you know, just like I don't know, like looking on Wikipedia, there's one called *Playing Apart* by Lizzie Thynne from 2004. *Magic Mirror* by Sarah Pucill, 2013. And *Confessions to the Mirror* by Sarah Pucill, 2016. I think these are all documentaries, but I haven't really been able to find out much about them. I think some of them are like going through the circuits of— of I go into festivals,

Gretchen: Independent films.

Leigh: Yeah, independent film festivals. So like, if you see one of these pop up, try to go to it, if it's in your area. And also, if you live in the San Francisco Bay Area, like I do, there are some photos from like that, you know, those early photo series from Cahun and Moore that are on display as a collection at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. So go check out the MoMA. If you are in the area. I know I'm going to go there and I'll probably like tweet some pictures of me hanging out, checking it out. I get in for free because I work at a museum. So, yay.

Gretchen: Wahoo!

Leigh: Yeah,

How Gay Were They?

Gretchen: Yeah, so that brings us to— brings us to How Gay Were They?

Leigh: How gay?

Gretchen: Our personal ranking system, our personal ranking system of how gay that we say they are so— so, Leigh, how how gay is Claude Cahun?

Leigh: Gosh, you know, I think um I think I want to give Claude Cahun, a goldfish and two canaries out of 10, on the scale of gayness.

Gretchen: Very fitting, fitting.

Leigh: For this surrealist episode. [both laughing] I just like, like using subversive surrealist art to completely deconstruct the very concepts of gender and sexuality, fighting Nazis with misinformation, pretending you're like Oscar Wilde and Salome and painting fake male nipples on a shirt that says, "Don't kiss me I'm in training." I might be a little bit in love. [snorting laughter] Like, it's it's no doubt the Cahun was like gay as fuck. But one of the things that you know, that I do want to address is that I'm frustrated that like a lot of the scholarship on them seems to simply focus on them as like a lesbian icon. Rather than like wholly encompassing the immense complexity with which they approach their understanding of gender.

And while this book that I read is amazing, this one by Jennifer Shaw, I— I'm curious to know why she decided to specifically use she and her pronouns throughout because so many of those quotes that we read specifically went into their nuanced understanding of gender. So like, why not go that extra step? Why not go that extra step to say, 'hey.' And I, you know, I was very surprised to see that the quote, you know, the— the shuffle the cards, masculine, feminine, blah, blah, blah, neuter, the only gender that suits me, was curiously omitted from this book.

Gretchen: [drawn out] Interesting.

Leigh: Which, I am— I love this book, and I really am happy that I found it but I'm, I'm frustrated that that specifically was admitted and that I found that in another article that I read, so. I'm curious as to why that specifically was omitted. And granted, I haven't gone into the appendices where, you know, they specifically like feature some of Claude Cahun's writing but I didn't see anything specifically picking things out from *Disavowals*. So I don't know. Wikipedia uses they/them pronouns, though. So hey, good job folks who edit Wikipedia. Yay!

Gretchen: Yay. Good for you.

Leigh: Yeah. What about what about you Gen? What about you? Gretchen? I was about to say gender. [laughs] I've been thinking a lot about gender lately.

Gretchen: Um, I'm with you. I mean, like— it feels really inappropriate to use like a normal number scale. [laughter and snorting]

Leigh: Like you want to say like a like a melting clock out of 10.

Gretchen: Right. Yeah, I give— I give Claude Cahun four melting clocks. And— and an eyeball made of fire.

Leigh: There you go. [laughs]

Gretchen: Out of 10.

Leigh: Yes.

Gretchen: You guys can decide for yourselves what that means. [laughter] Because it's surrealism! What does it mean?

Leigh: Oh, gosh.

Gretchen: Like who knows? Who know?

Leigh: I don't know. But like four melting clocks is— is pretty intense.

Gretchen: Right? Right. Yeah, that— that you don't mess with four melting clocks. Three? You know there's some leeway but four, no.

Leigh: It's— it's funny because there's like there's one— there's one like surrealist object that they made like one surrealist sculpture that they made in the '30s that is like an eyeball, like as the feature of it and this whole big thing, so like, that's appropriate. It's very appropriate.

Gretchen: Yeah, again. I mean, surrealist had a thing with eyeballs.

Leigh: Yes!

Gretchen: There's like a thing, eyeballs and time. Which is why, yeah, melting clocks and eyeballs. But yeah, I'm totally with you on— on the frustration with the way that scholarship in general seems to deal with their gender because when I was doing research, like pretty much all the articles I could find, labeled them as a lesbian icon. And I do...like it's one of those things where on the one hand, I understand like, there are so few like of...Like there's so few queer icons that it— that like it makes sense to like, latch on to someone that way.

However, I'm with you that Claude Cahun seems to be someone who, who explicitly— like and not just reading into it, but like explicitly grapples with the idea of like gender and performance, and wrestles with and like goes into pretty big detail about their own understanding of their own gender as existing outside of the gender binary.

Leigh: Just rejecting it as like a construct entirely. Along with colonialism, along with imperialism, and fascism and all of these -isms like, right, add on the constructed identity of gender.

Gretchen: Right. So it seems really disingenuous to me, as someone who you know, talks about queer history and, you know, is wading into a lot of queer scholarship, that it seems really disingenuous to me to ignore or downplay that aspect of their work and self conception. Like that's all I'll say. I have other thoughts on it. But like, that's all I'll say. It just seems really

disingenuous when you have someone who's— who's so, so forcefully and explicitly talks about gender as performance, as a mask that someone wears. And that literally like *neuter* is the term that would best describe me to say, 'No, well, they're a lesbian.' I'm like, [questioning noises] are they though?

Leigh: But are they though?

Gretchen: Are they though?

Leigh: [laughs] Especially when they're doing things like you know, pretending that they're a male homosexual Victorian poet.

Gretchen: Right?

Leigh: Really is lesbian, the most accurate term? Or are we limiting ourselves?

Gretchen: Right, right.

Leigh: Anyway. And we could go on and diatribe about...

Gretchen: Oh, gosh.

Leigh: This for a long time.

Gretchen: Right, right. So but, uh...

Leigh: We won't.

Closing and Where to Find us Online

Gretchen: That is— that is it for today's episode, you can find out online individually. Where can— where can our listeners find you?

Leigh: So you can find me online at [@aparadoxinflux](#) over on Twitter and then I guess just for from now until forever hanging out in the MoMA,

[snorting laughter] because I want to stare at these photographs for forever. But if you follow me online I'm usually talking about comics, queer TV and you know, as it intersects with comics right now, talking about how Nazis suck 'cause fuck Comicsgate if any of you know what that means.

Gretchen: Oh, God.

Leigh: Little shout out— shout out right now.

Gretchen: Yeah, punch every Nazi punch every Nazi that is one of my hashtags on Tumblr. So speaking of which, again I'm Gretchen and when I am not talking about awesome queremos from history I am writing nerdy media analysis for [the Fundamentals.com](http://theFundamentals.com) and my personal website gnellis.com currently again *Steven Universe*, *Wynonna Earp* is going to be coming up soon. Which is awesome. I ust fell into the black hole that is *Warehouse 13*, so that's on my mind a lot. You can also find me on Tumblr and Twitter as @gnelliswriter. *History is Gay Podcast* can be found on Tumblr [@HistoryisGayPodcast](https://www.tumblr.com/historyisgaypodcast), Twitter at [HistoryisGayPod](https://twitter.com/HistoryisGayPod) and you can always drop us a line with questions, suggestions, or just to say hi at historyisgaypodcast@gmail.com. We love emails, yay.

Leigh: And if you're enjoying the show, remember to rate review and subscribe. Wherever you get your podcasts, it helps more people find our show. We get to talk to more and more people about awesome stuff and we can expand this awesome community. We want to find more ways to engage with you guys. So you know hit us up on Twitter, leave reviews, talk to us. We have no shortage of things we want to talk about with wonderful, lovely people.

Gretchen: Yes, Yes, we do. So that is it for History is Gay, until next time, stay queer

Leigh: And stay curious.

♪ [Outro music plays]♪