



# **The Bear Book: Readings in the History and Evolution of a Gay Male Subculture (Haworth Gay & Lesbian Studies)**

*John Dececco Phd, Les Wright*

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The Bear Book brings together an impressive range of bear--usually big, hairy men who favor full-face beards and prefer to wear jeans and flannel shirts--viewpoints to explore this unique social and cultural phenomenon that stretches from America to western Europe to Australia! On the personal level, you learn what beardom means to different people in their daily lives, and on a broader level, its cultural implications for not only the gay community, but also society as a whole. As this book moves across the wide spectrum of bear identities, you learn about the defining forces of identity, the significance of differences among masculinities, and the shapings of the bear movement from different viewpoints. The Bear Book is the first compilation of sociological and cultural analytical investigations of the contemporary gay bear phenomenon. To this end, Editor Les Wright brings together both objective and subjective viewpoints to create a forum where bears can speak for themselves. Through their voices, you'll learn about:

- bears and sexual identity
  - gay male iconography
  - socializing on the Internet
  - sexual politics (gender, class, "looks-ism," and body image)
  - gay mass media, the single most powerful force in the current construction of "bears"
  - bears, power, and glamor
  - bear-as-image vs. bear-as-attitude
- Gays, lesbians, lesbigay scholars, bears, and social scientists are sure to find The Bear Book thought-provoking and insightful as it broaches questions such as: Are bears caught up in a utopian-romantic impulse to reinvent themselves? What was radical lesbianism's impact on the bear movement? To what extent are bears only another group of exploited consumers in a fragmented market system? And, is it possible to establish social liberation through enslavement to your sexual passions? For both your pleasure and your education, The Bear Book examines nearly every corner of beardom, including bear history, identity, social spaces, iconography, and its constituency abroad.

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