

For, By, and About Lesbians:
A Qualitative Analysis of the *Lesbian Connection*
Discussion Forum 1974-2004

A dissertation presented to
the faculty of
the College of Education of Ohio University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Terry McVannel Erwin

August 2007

© 2007

Terry McVannel Erwin

All Rights Reserved

This dissertation titled
For, By, and About Lesbians:
A Qualitative Analysis of the *Lesbian Connection*
Discussion Forum 1974-2004

by
TERRY MCVANNEL ERWIN

has been approved for
the Department of Counseling and Higher Education
and the College of Education by

Tracy C. Leinbaugh
Associate Professor of Counseling and Higher Education

Renée A. Middleton
Dean, College of Education

ABSTRACT

ERWIN, TERRY MCVANNEL, PH.D. August 2007. Counselor Education

For, By, and About Lesbians: A Qualitative Analysis of the *Lesbian Connection*

Discussion Forum 1974-2004 (652 pp.)

Director of Dissertation: Tracy C. Leinbaugh

This study analyzed 170 issues of *Lesbian Connection (LC)* over a period of 30 years between October 1974 and November/December 2004 to determine what issues appeared to be of importance to subscribers participating in the discussion forum. The study sought to determine whether those issues were related to sociopolitical activities within and outside the cultural discourse of the time; whether those issues had changed over time; and the meanings, contradictions, and effects of those changes.

The analysis was comprised of 4,633 items and letters that fell into eleven categories. These categories, listed from most discussed category to least discussed category over the 30 years of analysis were: Health and Mental Health; Discrimination and Fear; Relationships and Sexuality; Defining Lesbian; Growing Pains; Isolation; Separatism; Networking; Minority Lesbians; Children, Families, and Parenting; and Religion and Spirituality.

The findings suggest that lesbians are clearly impacted by the sociopolitical environment from both within and outside the cultural discourse of the time. Yet, sociopolitical issues that one might assume are important to lesbians such as HIV/AIDS or marital rights were relatively unimportant; none of these issues were among the 25 most discussed items.

While some issues were fluid and changing, others were stagnant and caused much division in the lesbian community over time. Issues often arose when new generations of lesbians began to challenge the ideologies of older lesbians. This constant push-pull environment created a number of lesbian subcultures, making it difficult for lesbians to form a united community.

This study illustrated one way of using a “counterpoint analysis.” While recognizing the essentialism of standpoint theory and the vagueness of queer theory in understanding Lesbian, findings were analyzed from both perspectives. The content and narrative analyses assumed an essential lesbian knowledge, while the semiotic analysis called into question the existence of Lesbian, lesbian community or the lesbian experience. Counseling implications and research recommendations are discussed as they relate to the ten most discussed topics.

Approved: _____

Tracy C. Leinbaugh

Associate Professor of Counseling and Higher Education

DEDICATION

*Dedicated to Martha Erwin McVannel, my partner, role model, and best friend who has
always been the wind beneath my wings.*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation would have never come to fruition without the help of numerous individuals. Dr. Tracy Leinbaugh, my Committee Chair went above and beyond the call of duty. She was my cheerleader, confidant, and unwavering friend. Moreover, when I feared cancer would put an end to all of my dreams, she remained strong and positive, repeating over and over like a drum marching me into battle—“Beat it! Beat it! Beat it!”

Thank you to the other members of my dissertation committee. To Dr. Tom Davis who taught me the importance of “win-win.” To Dr. Dana Levitt who always pushed me to be the best that I can be. And to Dr. Ronald Hunt who gave me the gift of my lesbian herstory. I am convinced that no finer committee of individuals has ever been assembled. (Okay, maybe I’m biased!)

Thank you to those instructors who taught me to love research. To Dr. Gordon Brooks who taught me to enjoy the challenge of statistics (and his exams!). And to Dr. Michael Papa who taught me that research can be cradled in a deep conviction and can give birth to powerful changes in the world.

Thank you to all those amazing librarians who fed my unending desire for knowledge. To Wanda Weinberg who taught me the nuts and bolts of library research. To the ILIAD team at Ohio University—Teresa Winning, Suzanne Mingus and Brian Jimison—who saw to it that I received a copy of every single issue of *Lesbian Connection*. To (Detective) Donna Malaschak at Edison College who would leap tall buildings in a single bound to locate materials that I thought would be impossible to find. And to the librarians at the North Fort Myers Library.

Thank you to those thousands of sisters and friends who participated in this research. To the Ambitious Amazons. You are my heroines! To the contributors to the *Lesbian Connection* discussion forum who shared their darkest valleys, their deepest despair, and their greatest moments of joy with all of us. To those women at the Resort on Carefree Boulevard retirement community—especially Sandy Hall. And to the subscribers to *Lesbian Connection* who read these findings, offered feedback and recommendations, and cheered me on. There's no better validation than receiving an e-mail from a subscriber who "can't wait" to read the next installment of my findings!

Thank you to my friends and family who often ran beside me in this marathon and offered words of encouragement when I thought I might give up. How many times did I say, "I think I've bitten off more than I can chew!" And how many times did you say, "You can do this! You can do this!" To my brother Michael JoAlan Erwin, who has always believed in me. To my former "sissy-in-law" Angela Erwin, who voluntarily edited nearly every word of this dissertation. To my cousin (sister) Crystal Figiel, who has been my steadfast anchor. To my daughters Kris Hrinko and Chris Umfleet who keep me centered. To my granddaughters Katie Hrinko and Jordann Umfleet who remind me what is truly important in life. To my grandmother Reba Rooper, my aunties Janet Hill, Ruth Erwin, and Helen Ellis, and my uncle (father) Leonard Erwin who loved me and believed in me when the rest of my family turned me away.

Thank you to my students who have always taught me more than I could ever teach them. To Mary Matheny-Mize who cradled me in her loving arms from afar when I learned I had cancer. And to Jamie West-Fox who is my role model. I want to be just like her when I grow up!

Thank you to those instructors who have shared their infinite knowledge with me. To Dr. Mary Beth Krouse whose Feminist Theory class opened my eyes in ways I never expected and whose guidance and suggestions were with me throughout the writing of this research.

Thank you to Dr. Donald A. Green and his wife. With the Donald A. Green Memorial Award, I was able to purchase a copy machine that allowed me to reproduce more than 4,500 items and discussions in the comfort of my own home.

Thank you to the Ohio University College of Education Graduate Study Educational Research Fund that provided the financing for advertisements published in *Lesbian Connection* inviting subscribers to provide feedback on my research findings.

Thank you to Dr. Jimmy Orr and his team who gave me my life back. Once you've traveled through the dark valley of cancer, every day shines brighter. There's a reason why we call this moment the "present;" it is truly a gift.

Thank you to my four-legged babies, Bridgette and Chloe who knew when mommy had been sitting too long listening to a cacophony of voices from the past and would demand a potty-break when they knew I needed it more than they did. And most of all to Martha Erwin McVannel for whom there are no words to express my gratitude and love. You are my pinnacle of strength and my knightress in shining armor!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	4
DEDICATION	6
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	7
LIST OF TABLES	19
LIST OF FIGURES	23
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	25
Background of the Study	25
Statement of the Problem.....	30
Significance of the Study	34
Research Question	34
Delimitations and Limitations.....	35
The Problem of Defining Lesbian.....	37
Etymology and Definitions of Terms and Concepts Relative to the Study of Lesbians	42
Butch-Fem.....	42
Coming Out.....	45
Contact Dyke	47
Dyke.....	47
Gay	48
Herstory.....	49
Heterosexism vs. Homophobia	49

	11
Homosexual	50
Lesbian-Only Space	51
Music Festivals	52
Queer	53
Separatism/Separatist	54
Straight	54
Wimmin/Womyn/Womon	55
Summary	55
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW	57
The Construction of Lesbian as Inferior to Heterosexual Women and Men	58
Examples of Theories of Sameness between Women and Men	59
Sigmund Freud	59
Erik Erikson	59
Examples of Theories of Difference between Women and Men	60
Jean Baker Miller	60
Nancy Chodorow	61
Carol Gilligan	61
Sara Ruddick/Sandra Bem	61
Lesbian Scholars	62
The Construction of Homosexuals as Inferior to Heterosexuals	63
Theories of Difference between Homosexuals and Heterosexuals	63
Sigmund Freud	64

	12
Sandor Rado.....	66
Irving Bieber	67
Charles W. Socarides	69
Albert Ellis	71
Edward Sagarin a.k.a. Donald Webster Cory	73
Examples of Challenges to Pathological Constructs of Homosexuality...	75
Alfred Kinsey.....	75
Clellan Stearns Ford and Frank Ambrose Beach.....	77
Evelyn Hooker	79
Thomas Szasz.....	80
Judd Marmor	82
The Construction of Lesbians as Inferior to Heterosexual Women and Gay Men	83
Examples of Historical Constructs of Lesbian.....	83
Empirical Constructs of Lesbian Since the Declassification of	
Homosexuality as a Mental Illness	85
Methodological Problems in Lesbian Research.....	93
Where Do We Go From Here?	98
Conclusion	102
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY	104
Research Question	104
About <i>Lesbian Connection</i>	104
About the Subscribers to <i>Lesbian Connection</i>	107

	13
Pilot Study.....	108
Goals of the Pilot Study	109
Methodology	109
Findings of the Pilot Study	111
Isolation, Safety, and Aging.....	111
Children.....	112
Relationships and Sexuality	113
Health/Mental Health.....	114
Political Issues	115
Discussion and Counseling Implications of the Pilot Study	116
Isolation, Safety, and Aging.....	117
Children.....	119
Relationships and Sexuality	121
Health/Mental Health.....	123
Political Issues	124
Conclusion	124
Methodological Changes in the 30-Year Study	125
Participation of the Editors	135
Researcher-in-Relation	136
Trustworthiness of the Findings.....	137
Description.....	138
Interpretation.....	138

	14
Theory	139
Researcher Bias.....	139
Generalizability.....	140
Confidentiality	140
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS.....	142
Growing Pains: 1974-1979	142
Content Analysis/Narrative Analysis.....	143
Discrimination and Fear.....	143
Defining Lesbian.....	148
Separatism.....	156
Growing Pains.....	161
Isolation.....	167
Relationships and Sexuality.....	173
Health and Mental Health	174
Semiotic Analysis: Defining Lesbian	175
Rising from the Flames: 1979-1989	179
Researcher's Notes.....	180
Content Analysis/Narrative Analysis.....	181
Defining Lesbian.....	182
Relationships and Sexuality.....	189
Discrimination and Fear.....	200
Growing Pains.....	203

	15
Health and Mental Health	208
Minority Lesbians	213
Isolation.....	219
Separatism.....	222
Children, Families, and Parenting.....	227
Religion and Spirituality	229
Networking	233
What Was Not Discussed.....	233
Semiotic Analysis: Defining Lesbian	235
Shifting to the Center: 1989-1994.....	239
Content Analysis/Narrative Analysis.....	239
Relationships and Sexuality.....	240
Growing Pains.....	247
Networking	251
Health and Mental Health	252
Discrimination and Fear.....	256
Defining Lesbian.....	265
Isolation.....	268
Minority Lesbians	274
Children, Families, and Parenting.....	277
Separatism.....	279
Religion and Spirituality	281

	16
Semiotic Analysis: Defining Lesbian	283
Can't We Just Be Normal? 1994-1999	287
Content Analysis/Narrative Analysis.....	288
Health and Mental Health	289
Discrimination and Fear.....	298
Growing Pains.....	307
Relationships and Sexuality	312
Defining Lesbian.....	315
Networking	318
Minority Lesbians	320
Children, Families, and Parenting.....	322
Separatism.....	326
Isolation.....	330
Religion and Spirituality	330
Semiotic Analysis: Defining Lesbian	331
30 Years and Counting: 1999-2004	332
Content Analysis/Narrative Analysis.....	333
Health and Mental Health	333
Defining Lesbian.....	336
Relationships and Sexuality	345
Discrimination and Fear.....	347
Networking	353

	17
Growing Pains.....	354
Minority Lesbians	356
Isolation.....	359
Children, Families, and Parenting.....	360
Separatism.....	361
Religion and Spirituality	362
Semiotic Analysis: Defining Lesbian	365
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION.....	367
Content Analysis/Narrative Analysis.....	367
Counseling Issues Related to Lesbian and Gay Clients.....	369
Health and Mental Health	382
Counseling Implications	382
Child sexual abuse	382
Discrimination and Fear.....	393
Counseling Implications	394
Adolescent lesbians.....	395
Fat oppression	407
Lesbians in prison	414
Relationships and Sexuality	424
Counseling Implications	424
Lesbian bed death	425
Sadomasochism.....	432

	18
Growing Pains.....	442
Counseling Implications	442
Shigella outbreak	442
Defining Lesbian.....	445
Counseling Implications	445
Semiotic Analysis: Defining Lesbian	446
Counseling Implications	449
Directions for Future Research	450
Limitations of the Study.....	454
REFERENCES	458
APPENDIX A: 1974-1979 Tables.....	525
APPENDIX B: 1979-1989 Tables	540
APPENDIX C: 1989-1994 Tables	563
APPENDIX D: 1994-1999 Tables.....	583
APPENDIX E: 1999-2004 Tables	606
APPENDIX F: 1974-2004 Tables	626
APPENDIX G: 1974-2004 Figures	633
APPENDIX H: Correspondence with the Institutional Review Board	651

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
A1: 1974-1979: Discrimination and Fear	526
A2: 1974-1979: Defining Lesbian	529
A3: 1974-1979: Separatism	531
A4: 1974-1979: Growing Pains	533
A5: 1974-1979: Isolation	534
A6: 1974-1979: Relationships and Sexuality	536
A7: 1974-1979: Health and Mental Health.....	537
A8: 1974-1979: Category Totals	538
A9: 1974-1979: Top Ten Items of Discussion.....	539
B1: 1979-1989: Defining Lesbian	541
B2: 1979-1989: Relationships and Sexuality.....	544
B3: 1979-1989: Discrimination and Fear	546
B4: 1979-1989: Growing Pains	549
B5: 1979-1989: Health and Mental Health.....	551
B6: 1979-1989: Minority Lesbians.....	553
B7: 1979-1989: Isolation	555
B8: 1979-1989: Separatism.....	557
B9: 1979-1989: Children, Families, and Parenting	558
B10: 1979-1989: Religion and Spirituality.....	559
B11: 1979-1989: Networking	560

B12: 1979-1989: Category Totals.....	561
B13: 1979-1989: Top Ten Items of Discussion.....	562
C1: 1989-1994: Relationships and Sexuality.....	564
C2: 1989-1994: Growing Pains	566
C3: 1989-1994: Networking	568
C4: 1989-1994: Health and Mental Health.....	570
C5: 1989-1994: Discrimination and Fear	572
C6: 1989-1994: Defining Lesbian	574
C7: 1989-1994: Isolation	575
C8: 1989-1994: Minority Lesbians.....	576
C9: 1989-1994: Children, Families, and Parenting	577
C10: 1989-1994: Separatism.....	578
C11: 1989-1994: Religion and Spirituality.....	579
C12: 1989-1994: Category Totals.....	580
C13: 1989-1994: Top Ten Items of Discussion.....	581
C14: Impact of the “Don't Ask, Don't Tell” Policy on Lesbians	582
D1: 1994-1999: Health and Mental Health.....	584
D2: 1994-1999: Discrimination and Fear	588
D3: 1994-1999: Growing Pains	590
D4: 1994-1999: Relationships and Sexuality	583
D5: 1994-1999: Defining Lesbian	595
D6: 1994-1999: Networking.....	596

D7: 1994-1999: Minority Lesbians.....	598
D8: 1994-1999: Children, Families, and Parenting	599
D9: 1994-1999: Separatism	600
D10: 1994-1999: Isolation	601
D11: 1994-1999: Religion and Spirituality.....	602
D12: 1994-1999: Category Totals	603
D13: 1994-1999: Top Ten Items of Discussion.....	604
E1: 1999-2004: Health and Mental Health	607
E2: 1999-2004: Defining Lesbian.....	609
E3: 1999-2004: Relationships and Sexuality	611
E4: 1999-2004: Discrimination and Fear.....	613
E5: 1999-2004: Networking	615
E6: 1999-2004: Growing Pains.....	617
E7: 1999-2004: Minority Lesbians	619
E8: 1999-2004: Isolation.....	620
E9: 1999-2004: Children, Families, and Parenting.....	621
E10: 1999-2004: Separatism.....	622
E11: 1999-2004: Religion and Spirituality	623
E12: 1999-2004: Category Totals	624
E13: 1999-2004: Top Ten Items of Discussion	625
F1: 1974-2004: Category Totals	627
F2: 1974-2004: Top Ten Items of Discussion	628

F3: 1974-2004: Top 25 Items of Discussion.....	630
--	-----

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
<i>Figure G1.</i> Total number of discussions for the Health and Mental Health category by analysis period.	634
<i>Figure G2.</i> Total number of discussions for the Defining Lesbian category by analysis period.	635
<i>Figure G3.</i> Total number of discussions for the Relationships and Sexuality category by analysis period.	636
<i>Figure G4.</i> Total number of discussions for the Discrimination and Fear category by analysis period.	637
<i>Figure G5.</i> Total number of discussions for the Networking category by analysis period.	638
<i>Figure G6.</i> Total number of discussions for the Growing Pains category by analysis period.	639
<i>Figure G7.</i> Total number of discussions for the Minority Lesbians category by analysis period.	640
<i>Figure G8.</i> Total number of discussions for the Isolation category by analysis period.	641
<i>Figure G9.</i> Total number of discussions for the Children, Families, and Parenting category by analysis period.	642
<i>Figure G10.</i> Total number of discussions for the Separatism category by analysis period.	643

<i>Figure G11.</i> Total number of discussions for the Religion and Spirituality category by analysis period.	644
<i>Figure G12.</i> Total number of discussions for 1974-1979 by category.....	645
<i>Figure G13.</i> Total number of discussions for 1979-1989 by category.....	646
<i>Figure G14.</i> Total number of discussions for 1999-1994 by category.....	647
<i>Figure G15.</i> Total number of discussions for 1994-1999 by category.....	648
<i>Figure G16.</i> Total number of discussions for 1999-2004 by category.....	649
<i>Figure G17.</i> Total number of discussions for the full 30-year study period by category.	650

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

On Friday, June 27, 1969 New York police raided the Stonewall, a Greenwich Village gay bar. During that time, the raiding of gay bars was a routine practice for managing the lesbian and gay population, a group viewed by the general public as a psychopathic aberration (Adam, 1995; Blasius & Phelan, 1997). This raid proved to be different from the typical confrontation between gay people and the police. Lesbians and gay men were grieving the death of their beloved Judy Garland and emotions were running high. To the shock of the New York police, one lesbian put up a struggle when she was arrested for cross-dressing—she wore a black leather men's suit. When police assailed her, hitting her over the head with a nightstick, a riot ensued. No one would have guessed that such a simple act of defiance could have brought about such a revolution. By the end of that weekend, gay liberation was born in the US. Within two years, the gay liberation presence could be found in every major city and campus across the US, as well as Canada, Australia, and Western Europe (Adam; Blasius & Phelan). Gay liberation presses began publishing the *Advocate* in Los Angeles, *Come Out!* in New York City, *Gay Sunshine* in San Francisco, *Fag Rag* in Boston, *Gay Liberator* in Detroit, *Body Politic* in Toronto, and *Come Together* in London (Adam). One of the best-known successes was the gay movement's uprising against the American Psychiatric Association, resulting in the removal of homosexuality as a mental illness from the second edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* published in 1974 (Lerman, 1996).

Within a few short years, the joyous days of the gay liberation movement began to wane, and by the middle of the 1970s, the movement was in crisis. Out of the radical phase grew divisions within the ranks that fragmented the original movement. Central to those divisions was the struggle between lesbians and gay men (Adam, 1995; Blasius & Phelan, 1997). From the beginning of the gay movement, lesbians found themselves outnumbered by gay men, many of whom were ignorant to the concerns of lesbians and more interested in addressing issues of importance to themselves (Adam). Many gay men took for granted the very social conditions that made being a gay man possible (Adam). In order to survive independently, Lesbians needed the same social conditions as other women—equal opportunities for employment and violence-free living conditions. Gay men had financial independence and well-established social networks and lesbians were struggling to gain equal footing. In a short time, lesbians grew tired and angry with gay men who continued to ignore their issues. Many lesbians began to feel that gay men were content with their place of power despite the fact that lesbians were burdened with many layers of subordination (Adam; Blasius & Phelan). Marie Robertson's writings (1982) reflected the mood of the lesbian community at that time: "Gay liberation, when we get right down to it, is the struggle for gay men to achieve approval for the only thing that separates them from the 'Man'—their sexual preference" (p. 177).

Lesbian activism was characterized by intense political debates about what defined a lesbian and what political issues were best aligned with the needs of lesbians. Since lesbians did not have the public bar scene that gay men had, many lesbians came out for the first time amidst the women's movement. They struggled to develop both a

personal and a political orientation in a revolutionary environment that was very different from the conventional lesbian of the time (Adam, 1995).

The Daughters of Bilitis (DOB), a lesbian organization established in 1955, had chosen a cautious stance during the struggle; however, after police interrupted a New York meeting of the DOB, they reversed their stance and began inviting prominent feminists to speak at their meetings. Del Martin, a co-founder of the DOB, joined the National Organization of Women (NOW) and many other lesbians worked behind the scenes for women's rights (Adam, 1995).

In the beginning, feminists were unhappy to be bridled with lesbian issues. When lesbian activist and author Rita Mae Brown confronted heterosexism in the women's movement, NOW President Betty Friedan denounced lesbians as a "lavender menace." Friedan viewed lesbians as a threat to feminist credibility (Abbott & Love, 1978).

At a meeting of the Second Congress to Unite Women in New York in 1970, a group of 20 so-called Radicalesbians doused the lights of a theater meeting. When the lights were raised, the Radicalesbians, wearing t-shirts emblazoned with the words Lavender Menace, presented a list of grievances to attendees. Their bold actions served to liberate the meetings. The following day, workshops that addressed lesbian issues were packed with attendees. Moreover, an all-women's dance was scheduled that proved to be a resounding success. At the close of the conference, lesbians read the following resolutions.

1. Be it resolved that Women's Liberation is a Lesbian plot.
2. Resolved that whenever the label "Lesbian" is used against the movement collectively, or against women individually, it is to be affirmed, not denied.
3. In all discussions on birth control, homosexuality must be included as a legitimate method of contraception.
4. All sex education curricula must include Lesbianism as a valid, legitimate form of sexual expression and love. (Abbott & Love, 1978, p. 115)

Many feminists and closeted lesbians continued to resist the inclusion of lesbian issues in feminist endeavors. Nonetheless, the bold actions of the Radicalesbians led to an enormous mobilization of lesbian forces, resulting in the founding of numerous lesbian feminist publications, including *Ain't I a Woman?* in Iowa City; *Furies* in Washington, DC; *Amazon Quarterly*, *Lesbian Tide*, and *Sinister Wisdom* in Charlotte, NC; *Long Time Coming* in Montreal; *Sappho* in London; and *Usere Kleine Zeitung* in Berlin (Adam, 1995). A series of women's music festivals was born in 1973 and 1974, leading to the rise of internationally known lesbian and lesbian-identified artists including Meg Christian, Cris Williamson, Holly Near, and Margie Adams. Their music was made available to lesbians through Olivia Records, the first grassroots record label dedicated exclusively to the production of music by and for women. That same year, Barbara Grier and her partner Donna McBride, Anyda Marchant, and Muriel Crawford formed Naiad Press, the first publishing company with the express purpose of publishing lesbian literature (Adam).

The first publication of *Lesbian Connection* (*LC*) in East Lansing, MI also rose out of the mobilization of lesbian forces during this time. It was established by a group of nine Ambitious Amazons who reached into their own pockets to finance the first issue. The first flyer mailed by the Ambitious Amazons in August 1974 described the group as “a group of lesbians working out of the Lansing Area Lesbian Feminists. Our politics vary from separatism to integration. We are nine women, ages 20 to 29, comprising professionals, students, welfare recipients, and working women.” (Note: Parenthetical citations for quotations taken directly from *LC* are omitted to protect the confidentiality of the Ambitious Amazons and subscribers to *LC*. Since the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (American Psychological Association, 2001) does not address this issue, direction was taken from *The Chicago Manual of Style* (Staff of the University of Chicago Press, 2003).)

In a letter published in the first issue of *LC*, the editor of *The Ladder*, a publication of the DOB wrote:

We are very impressed with your ambitions, and wonder how on earth you can operate without any money at all . . . When *The Ladder* stopped publishing in August, 1972, we had a paid circulation list of over 3,800 . . . and we still went broke and into considerable debt . . . Surely would like to see you succeed, it's a very good idea.

The editors of *LC* responded, “We are putting L.C. out as cheaply as possible, and hope to be able to continue publishing without charging money for quite a while.” Over the years, this grassroots publication has become the keeper of a rich lesbian *herstory* as

told by their subscribers. Today, *LC* continues to be free to all lesbians, with a suggested donation of \$4.50 per issue. This factor makes *LC* one of the most accessible sources of networking and discussions for lesbians in the world.

This factor also makes *LC* a fount of information for the qualitative researcher and is the reason this publication was selected for study. By opening the pages of *LC*, a researcher can hear the voices of a sizable group of self-identified lesbians speaking over the past three decades in intelligent debates about a wide range of experiences.

Discussions in *LC* offer rich contextual descriptions of social structures, political forces, social movements, and institutions playing out within the ever-changing and deeply personal lesbian experience. These discussions give voice to an invisible and grossly understudied population in ways rarely viewed from the perspective of Counselor. *LC* was selected for this research because it may be the only publication available that gives voice to this hidden population.

Statement of the Problem

Content analyses of scholarly publications in counseling and related fields reveal that homosexuality is grossly underrepresented and ghettoized. Studies and/or articles related to sexual orientation comprised a nominal percentage of the articles published in journals in the fields of psychiatry (.025%) (C. C. Bell & Williamson, 2002); family studies (.005%) (K. R. Allen & Demo, 1995); marriage and family therapy (.006%) (Clark & Serovich, 1997); rehabilitation (.19%) (Harley, Feist-Price, & Alston, 1996); social work (.46%) (Van Voorhis & Wagner, 2002); counseling psychology (.65%-

2.11%) (Buhrke, Ben-Ezra, Hurley, & Ruprecht, 1992; Phillips, Ingram, Smith, & Mindes, 2003) and psychology (<1%) (I.-C. Lee & Crawford, 2007).

Lesbians are particularly underrepresented in the literature (I.-C. Lee & Crawford, 2007). Studies and/or articles related to lesbian issues comprised only 18% of the articles on sexual orientation published in counseling psychology journals (Buhrke et al., 1992) and 20% to 33% of the articles on sexual orientation published in psychology journals (Morin, 1977; Watters, 1986). In an analysis of articles published in the *Journal of Homosexuality*, which publishes scholarly work in the disciplines of law, history, and the humanities, Chung and Katayama (1996) found that overall, articles about gay men comprised 75.7% of the articles, while articles on lesbians comprised 57.6% of the studies. In a trend analysis to determine whether the under representation of lesbians had improved over time, these researchers found little change.

Phillips and her colleagues (2003) echoed the concerns raised by Chung and Katayama (1996). They also found no significant increase in the number of counseling-related articles being published on lesbian and gay issues over time. In an analysis of articles published in counseling psychology journals, they found that articles focusing on gay and bisexual men appeared 3.5 times more often than articles focusing on lesbians. They also found that of the 42 studies that combined lesbian and gay samples, only 60% used gender as a variable. The researchers suggested this may be due to the mistaken assumption on the part of researchers that the lesbian experience is the same as that of gay men.

In a study of the *Journal of Counseling and Development (JCD)*, the flagship journal of the American Counseling Association, researchers found that 1.9% of the articles published between 1978 and 1989 included sexual orientation as a variable. This comparatively high percentage resulted from the publication of a special issue published in 1989 containing 19 articles on homosexuality. Prior to that special issue, the journal had published only 9 articles on homosexuality over a period of 11 years (.7%). EBSCO and PsychInfo searches reveal that only 13 articles have been published in the *JCD* in the 15 years since the special issue. Of those 13 articles, only two articles discussed lesbian issues exclusively (Bridges & Croteau, 1994). One article was published in the special issue on sexual orientation in 1989 (B. C. Murphy, 1989). The other was the pilot study for this dissertation (Erwin, 2006b).

Despite these dismal findings, there is evidence that specialized journals may help change the landscape. One example is the *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling (JLIC)*, the official journal of the Association for Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Issues in Counseling (AGLBIC) which began publication in 2005. In the first 3 volumes of the journal, 29% of the articles published were about lesbians or lesbians and bisexual women; and 18% were about gay men. Nonetheless, the misperception that lesbian and gay issues are the same remains firmly rooted in specialized journals. For example, of the 17 articles published in the first 3 issues of the *JLIC*, 47% studied lesbians and gay men as though they were a single group; some also included bisexuals and transgenderists. Interestingly, despite the fact that these studies assumed there were no differences between lesbians and gay men, the results showed clear indication of differences. For

example, in two articles about bullying, researchers discovered differences between the bullying experiences of lesbians and gay men (Mahan et al., 2006; Varjas, 2006).

Among those articles that do make their way into counseling and counseling-related journals, the five most common topics in counseling literature are homophobia; identity development and coming out; human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS); attitudes toward lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) people; and psychological adjustment. Training students to work with the lesbian and gay population was also especially prevalent (Phillips et al., 2003). This suggests that there is a wealth of information related to the counseling needs of lesbians that remains unknown or understudied.

Research and publications in counseling and counseling-related journals define and inform the practice of counseling. One study found that the most frequently endorsed training on lesbian and gay issues was reading articles (J. A. Murphy, Rawlings, & Howe, 2002). Yet, literature reviews conducted in counseling and related fields show that counselors would have considerable difficulty relying on peer-reviewed journals for the information they need to work with lesbians (J. A. Murphy et al., 2002). The publication of books about lesbian issues is increasing, along with special journals on lesbian and gay issues; however, research specific to counseling lesbians is severely lacking. It is only by researching, writing about, and publishing on lesbian issues from a counseling perspective that counselors can build the knowledge base necessary to provide the best possible intervention to lesbian clients.

Significance of the Study

This study will focus on the experiences, stories, accounts, debates, and explanations of the lesbian readers of the *Lesbian Connection (LC)* over a period of 30 years in what may be the largest group of self-identified lesbians ever studied. These discussions will give voice to an invisible and grossly understudied population in ways rarely, if ever, viewed from the perspective of Counselor. This study will provide counselors with a historical, contextual, holistic, sociopolitical picture of the lesbian experience that moves beyond the confining limitations of the label lesbian to provide insight into appropriate treatment and intervention, and create a foundation upon which future counseling-specific research can be built.

Research Question

While focusing on the experiences, stories, accounts, debates, and explanations of the lesbian readers of *LC*, this research will analyze discussions in *LC* to answer the following question:

- I. Based on the discussion forum of *LC*, what issues appear to be of importance to subscribers participating in the discussion forum of *LC*?
 - A. Are those issues related to sociopolitical activities within and outside of the cultural discourse of the time?
 - B. Have those issues changed over time? If so, how have those issues changed and what are the potential meanings of those changes?
 - C. What are the contradictions within those issues?
 - D. What are the effects of those issues?

Delimitations and Limitations

While the findings of this research are delimited to those individuals who have contributed to the *LC* discussion forum over the past 30 years, it can be argued that a study such as this—one that arches over 30 years of discussions and gives potential voice to more than 30,000 lesbian households—has the potential to develop theoretical generalizations that have widespread implications. It is important to note, however, that while every publication of *LC* states that the publication is “for, by, and about lesbians,” and the editors report taking rigorous steps to assure that contributors self-identify as lesbian (Lisa, personal communication, October 9, 2002), there is the possibility that some contributors to the discussion forum are not lesbian. In fact, the decision to sometimes publish letters by non-lesbians has been a source of contention since the conception of *LC*.

A further limitation is the fact that contributors to the discussion forum may not be representative of all lesbians. One member of the lesbian advisory committee who reviewed the proposal for this dissertation wrote in the margin, “This is a study of lesbians who have the literacy skills, economic resources, and energy to respond—is it a middle-class response?” Moreover, it is impossible to know who is participating in the discussion forum. It is possible that only a handful of lesbians regularly contribute to the discussions.

Group norms may affect the representativeness of the sample. For example, it was common for subscribers to cancel their subscription when they disagree with a stance taken by *LC* or its subscribers. Subscribers have cancelled their subscription when they

disagreed with discussions about separatism, the cancellation the pen pal column in *LC*, the publication of mild pornographic advertising in *LC*, the decision to print letters from bisexual women in *LC*, and discussions about transgender issues in *LC*.

Safety issues may affect the representativeness of the sample. For example, the fear of being outed may preclude certain women from receiving or contributing to *LC*. Moreover, *LC* is greatly influenced by the lesbian-feminist rhetoric and politics of the 1970s and 1980s. This theoretical approach is often accused of essentializing the experiences of white, middle-class women while ignoring the experiences of other marginalized women, including women of color, women living in poverty, and disabled women. Despite efforts on the part of *LC* to be inclusive, this theoretical foundation may discourage the participation of women who do not feel *LC* is representative of her own unique experiences.

The trustworthiness of the findings of this research is limited by the potential for inaccurate or incomplete descriptions of the data, misinterpretations of the data, the failure of the researcher to consider alternative explanations or understandings, and the failure of the researcher to provide transparent descriptions of potential researcher biases. These limitations will be addressed through: (a) meticulous data collection; (b) triangulation of methodology; (c) dissertation committee feedback and member checks; (d) open, honest communication of potential researcher biases; and (e) the articulation of assumptions developed during the course of the research. Detailed information regarding measures taken to assure the trustworthiness of this study is provided in Chapter III.

The Problem of Defining Lesbian

It could be argued that regardless of the theoretical grounding of any research endeavor, defining sexual orientation is an impossible task. Indeed, many researchers have pointed to the inconsistent definitions of sexual orientation as problematic in traditional research approaches to sexuality (Hartstein, 1996; Iasenza, 1989; Kinsey, 1953; Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948; F. Klein, Sepekoff, & Wolf, 1985).

The term lesbian originated from the name of a triangular island once called Lesbos located in the Aegean Sea near Greece. Around 590 BC many young women on the island were students of the poet and musician Sappho. Sappho and her students are purported to have had been sexually intimate (Caprio, 1954; Kinsey, 1953; Wolff, 1971). Subsequently, lesbian is often used to describe women who have intimate sexual and/or emotional relationships with other women. The term is used in an attempt to delineate the differences between female and male homosexuals.

The definition of the term lesbian has seen many shifts and changes over time in the hands of lesbian activists. The Radicalesbians defined Lesbian as “the rage of all women condensed to the point of explosion” (Blasius & Phelan, 1997, p. 396). (Note: The term Lesbianism is offensive to some lesbians because adding the suffix *-ism* emphasizes behavior, in this case sexual behavior. Many lesbians believe their identity as a lesbian goes beyond their sexual behavior. Therefore, the term lesbianism has been replaced in this text with the capitalized word Lesbian. Nonetheless, when the term Lesbian or lesbian is used in direct quotes, it appears exactly as it appeared in the original text.) Martin and Lyon (1972) defined a lesbian as “a woman whose primary erotic,

psychological, emotional, and social interest is in members of her own sex, even though that interest may not be overtly expressed” (p. ix). Darty and Potter (1984) defined lesbian as “women who choose other women as their sexual and affectional partners, women whose self-concepts are independent of their relationships with men, women whose primary energies and loyalties flow toward other women” (p. 1-2). Abbott and Love (1978) defined lesbian simply as “a woman who says she is” (p. 27). Adrienne Rich (1980) and Lillian Faderman (1981) claimed that Lesbian could be understood in terms of a woman-identified experience that included female-female sexual behavior and relationships as well as alliances between women that were not necessarily sexually explicit.

The term lesbian has also seen many shifts and changes in counseling and related fields. As early as the 1940s, Erich Fromm (1997) discussed the complexity of defining sexuality.

The term Homosexual as used in psychoanalysis has come to be a kind of wastebasket into which are dumped all forms of relationships with one’s own feelings, thoughts, or repression of any of these. In short, anything that pertains in any way to a relationship, hostile or friendly, to a member of one’s own sex may be termed homosexual. Under these circumstances, what does an analyst convey to himself, his audience, or his patient when he says the patient has homosexual trends? It does not clarify much in his own thinking, when he uses the term in talking with the patient; his words, instead of being helpful, often produce terror,

for in ordinary speech the word “homosexual” has a much more specific meaning, and in addition a disturbing emotional coloring. (p. 148-160)

Morin (1977) found that homosexuality as a research variable has been misleading, overemphasized, and has resulted in disparate research results. He found three distinct definitions of homosexual in research conducted between 1967 and 1974: (a) homosexual behavior, in which the degree of homosexuality was assessed by sexual history; (b) erotic preference for same-sex objects, in which the degree of homosexuality was defined by physiological responses (such as sexual arousal to nude pictures of individuals from the same sex); and (c) self-reported identity.

Richardson (1985) questioned whether identity was a general state of being (the person is lesbian or gay), a state of desire (sexual orientation), a form of behavior (sexual acts), or a personal identification (sexual identity). Cass (1984) defined Lesbian as

a clustering of self-images which are linked together by the individual's idiosyncratic understanding of what characterizes women as a “homosexual.”

This understanding develops out of an integration of the individual's unique interpretation of socially prescribed notions and self-developed formulations. (p. 110)

Klein, et al. (1985) grappled with the complexity of sexual orientation labels which they defined as a complex web of attractions, behaviors, fantasies, emotional and social preferences, self-identification, and lifestyle preferences. Their research underscores “the inadequacy of the labels heterosexual, bisexual, and homosexual in describing a person's sexual orientation” (p. 45).

Coleman (1988) called for assessments that included not only behaviors, but sexual feelings, dreams, fantasies, and social factors. Iasenza (1989) noted the difficulties in ferreting out the terms sexual orientation, sexual acts, sexual identity, and gender identity as distinct and separate concepts.

In one of the more poignant examples of the impossibility of defining Lesbian, Eliason and Morgan (1996) asked 90 women who identified as lesbian, “What does being a lesbian mean to you?” (p. 52). The answers they received were as diverse and individualized as the women they asked. They found that not only are women who identify as lesbian likely to experience their lesbian identity in diverse ways, they may modify those definitions as their situations change.

The findings of the National Health and Social Life Survey (NHSLS) further illustrate the problems encountered in defining homosexuality based on sexual behaviors vs. self-identification. The NHSLS found that about 5.5% of the women in this study considered the idea of having sex with another woman appealing; 4% said they were sexually attracted to other women. However, fewer than 2% had engaged in sex with another woman in the past year and little more than 4% said they had engaged in sex with a woman some time in their life (Michael, Gagnon, Laumann, & Kolata, 1994). This study also found that while 6% of the men studied indicated they were sexually attracted to other men, only 2% had engaged in sex with a man in the past year, and 9% had engaged in sex with a man since puberty (Michael et al., 1994).

The NHSLS found that 40% of the men who had engaged in sex with another man had done so before the age of 18, but had not engaged in sex with another man since

adolescence. Conversely, most women were adults when they first had sexual contact with someone of the same sex. When respondents were asked whether they considered themselves heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, or something else, only 1.4% of women and 2.8% of men identified as homosexual or bisexual (Michael et al., 1994).

These data illustrate how difficult it is to determine who is, or is not, homosexual.

Different definitions can dramatically change the estimates of prevalence.

Further complicating the difficulty in defining Lesbian is the way in which Lesbian is changed by such factors as race, class, age, size, and ability.

Reflection on the experience of Black women . . . shows that it is not as if one form of oppression is merely piled upon another. . . An additive analysis treats the oppression of a Black woman in a society . . . as if it were a further burden when, in fact, it is a different burden. (Spelman, 2001, p. 79)

These contrasting definitions of Lesbian suggest that there is no fixed lesbian entity about which we can generalize. They suggest that to understand Lesbian, we must constantly go beyond Lesbian—that the making and remaking of Lesbian is a personal, social, and political process. Lesbian as an object of knowledge is always *lesbian-in-relation*.

The impossibility of defining Lesbian leads the researcher to seek alternative qualitative ways of viewing and researching Lesbian—to seek a unique way of conceptualizing Lesbian without constructing an essential object of study and forcing a unification that does not, and will never, exist. In an attempt to create an ever-changing definition of Lesbian, this research will define a lesbian as any individual who self-

defined as lesbian at the moment in time during which she contributed to *LC* amidst the instability, unrest, volatility, and precariousness of an ever-changing definition of Lesbian.

Etymology and Definitions of Terms and Concepts Relative to the Study of Lesbians

Butch-Fem

It is unclear when the term butch-fem began to be used; however, oral histories show that the term was prevalent in the 1930s. Butch-fem couples were particularly dominant in the US in both the Caucasian and African-American lesbian communities from the 1920s through the early 1960s (Nestle, 1990).

Because butch-fem is defined differently by different women, it is difficult to offer a simple definition. A simplistic definition would define butch as masculine and fem as feminine paralleling heterosexuality. However butch-fem couples transformed heterosexual norms into a unique lesbian language with unique rituals of courtship, seduction, and mutual protection. Although butch lesbians may view themselves as the aggressor, butch-fem relationships often developed a nurturing balance. Couples often entered long-term relationships that provided an alternative to heterosexual marriage. In the 1950s, butch-fem couples became a statement about sexual and emotional accomplishments that did not include men (Nestle, 1990).

Butch-fem relationships made a statement via the language of stance, dress, gesture, and comradeship. Butches and fems had their own unique identities that were presented in different ways. During the 1950s, butch women dressed in pants and shirts, and flashed pinky rings that announced their sexual experience. This public display often

exposed them to ridicule and assault. They often adopted men's clothes and wore short "D.A." hairstyle (D.A. is the abbreviation for "Duck's Ass." The hair was combed back around the sides of the head and a comb was used to define a central part running from the crown to the nape at the back of the head, resembling the backside of a duck. The hair on the top front of the head was either worn in disarray with the strands hanging down over the forehead, or combed up and then curled down toward the nose. The wearer used a pomade to ensure the hair stayed in place and frequently ran a greased comb through it.)

One goal of butch women that distinguished her from men in heterosexual relationships was her complete dedication to her lover. Her main goal in love-making was giving her fem partner pleasure (Nestle, 1990).

The fem lesbian could often pass as heterosexual when she was not accompanied by her lover. Therefore, she was often the breadwinner in the relationship because she could get jobs that were available to traditional-looking women. However, she faced the same scorn as her butch partner when they appeared in public. Contrary to gender stereotyping, fems could be aggressive and strong women who actively sought the partner they desired (Nestle, 1990).

During the 1950s and 1960s, the butch-fem community was the public face of lesbianism. In the earlier years, the members of this community were extremely close. Many couples in this community had long-term relationships in which women lived without the financial and social securities of heterosexuality. They cared for each other through illness, death, economic depression, and in the face of rampant homophobia.

Younger butches were often initiated into the community by older, more experienced butches who passed on dress, attitude, and behavioral rituals. This sense of responsibility for each other helped insulate and protect butch-fems from the threats and violence they faced in the bars or on the streets (Nestle, 1990).

The bars were the social framework for working-class butch-fem communities. Here, butches and fems could perfect their styles and find each other. However, during the 1950s, the sexual and social tension in the bars often erupted into fights. Many butches felt they had to protect themselves and their women in the bars as well as on the streets (Nestle, 1990).

Class, race, and region produced style variations among women in butch-fem relationships. For example, the African-American lesbian community in New York used the terms “bull dagger” and “stud” instead of butch. A fem was referred to as my “lady” or “my family.” Butch-fem relationships can also be found among upper class lesbians. For example, Radclyffe Hall, author of the 1928 lesbian classic, *The Well of Loneliness* referred to herself as John in her partnership with Una Troubridge. Butch-fem relationships were also impacted by political and social changes. For example, feminism, open relationships, and non-monogamy were incorporated into the butch-fem lifestyle during the 1970s and 1980s (Nestle, 1990).

During the early 1970s, butch-fem lesbians were frequently ridiculed and ostracized because they were perceived to be imitating heterosexuals. However, during the 1980s, the historical and sexual-social importance of butch-fem lesbians and their

community began to emerge. Nonetheless, many radical feminist lesbians view these relationships as a patriarchal, oppressive, and hierarchical way of relating (Nestle, 1990).

Coming Out

Bozett and Sussman (1990) defined coming out as “a developmental process by which an individual develops a gay identity and acknowledges that identity to the self and discloses it (comes out) to others” (p. 336). Essentialists believe that sexual and gender identities are biological and fixed. Therefore coming out represents the discovery and disclosure of one’s true essence. Constructionists believe that sexual and gender identities are shaped by society, culture, and history. Therefore, coming out represents the decision to embrace an identity within a particular social, cultural, and historical context. This may involve the imposition of certain characteristics, desires, and behaviors on the individual who is coming out (Dynes, 1990).

According to popular myth, the act of coming out did not exist before the Stonewall Riots of 1969. However, John D’Emilio argued in his book, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, that the events of World War II, which catapulted millions of women and men into new social environments “created something of a nationwide coming out experience” (D’Emilio, 1998, p. 24). In his book *Gay New York*, George Chauncey (1994) argued that as long ago as the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, individuals were experiencing the act of coming out. According to Chauncey, the term was a parody on the introduction of young girls into society.

Like much of campy gay terminology, coming out was an arch play on the language of women’s culture—in this case the expression used to refer to the

ritual of a debutante's being formally introduced to, or coming out into, the society of her cultural peers. (Chauncey, p. 7)

Gay men first used the expression to refer to their formal presentation at the large drag balls held across the US in the early twentieth century. Until the 1960s, gay men never referred to coming out of the closet. Instead, they referred to coming out into homosexual society (Chauncey; Dynes, 1990).

After the Stonewall riots, coming out became a central political strategy for the gay liberation movement. A common slogan during the 1970s was "Out of the closets and into the streets" (Dynes, 1990)! This strategy seems to have worked to some extent. Polls suggest that support for non-heterosexual rights is positively correlated with knowledge of someone who is lesbian, bisexual, or gay. Coming out as homosexual or bisexual continues to be promoted each year on October 11, which has been dubbed "National Coming Out Day" by the Human Rights Campaign. Individuals who subscribe to queer theories view the idea of coming out as old-fashioned and retrograde in an age when non-identity is the trend. Nonetheless, even these individuals routinely come out as queer (Dynes).

During the twentieth century, the phrase coming out began to move out of gay culture and into the mainstream. Over the last several decades, coming out has come to refer to an individual disclosing something that was previously unknown about them. It can also mean an individual is moving from the private sector to the public sector (Dynes, 1990).

The existence of the process of coming out is often attributed to a heterosexual society in which one must take a stand against socially endorsed hatred in order to assert one's own preferences, attractions, feelings, and inclinations. For these individuals, social acceptance of homosexuality as natural and normal would likely end the emotional difficulties and significance of the act of coming out (Dynes, 1990).

Contact Dyke

Contact Dykes are women on the mailing list of *LC* who volunteer to provide information about the area in which they live to lesbian tourists or lesbians who are living in or moving to their area. The only qualification to be included in the directory is to have a stable address and a willingness to assist other lesbians. Contact Dykes have full control over how they are listed in the Contact Dyke Directory that is published yearly by *LC*.

Dyke

The etymology of the word dyke is unclear. Conversations with older lesbians have uncovered the folklore belief that the root word of dyke was once hermaphrodite. The word hermaphrodite comes from Greek mythology. Hermes, the god of roads, commerce, invention, eloquence, and cunning is said to have accosted Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty, and was joined with her in one body. Today, hermaphrodite is defined as an animal or plant with both female and male reproductive organs; a homosexual; or someone possessing both female and male principles, androgynous (Cordova, 1985a).

Pre-liberation lesbian culture used the terms butch or dyke to define women who adopted masculine roles. Although these terms were sometimes used synonymously,

colloquial speech often defined a woman who preferred to play the male role as butch and a woman who thought of herself as male (i.e., bound her breasts and/or wore a dildo) as dyke. The word dyke has come to be used as the ultimate threat hurled at women who refuse the advances of men (Cordova, 1985a).

Contemporary definitions of dyke as a strong, independent, aggressive, and self-defined woman recapture much of the original androgynous meaning of the word hermaphrodite. Today, dyke is used proudly by many lesbians and radical feminists (Cordova, 1985a).

Gay

Gay is a Middle English word derived from the Middle French term *gai*, meaning joyful or frivolous. The Middle French burlesque theatre popularized *Gai*. Since women were not allowed on stage during this time period, mock feminine roles were caricatured by men. The term *gai* was used to describe effeminate, pretentious male character roles (Cordova, 1985b).

The Scottish tradition of the word *gai* was more distinctly used to describe someone different. This tradition was not originally negative, but merely implied different from the norm (Cordova, 1985a).

The word *gay* was not used to describe lesbians until it found its way to America. Today, lesbian and sapphic are the preferred terminology in Europe. In the 1920s and 1930s the word *gay* surfaced in the underground male subculture as a term of identification among homosexual men. The expression was used innocently in social conversations to establish mutual identity (e.g., “That’s a gay cuff link you have there”).

Finally, in the late 1960s, the term gay was adopted by the Gay Liberation Movement to affirm homosexuality as a positive alternative lifestyle and to deflect the sexually objectifying term homosexual (Cordova, 1985a).

Herstory

Robin Morgan is credited with coining the term herstory in her 1970 book, *Sisterhood is Powerful*. Herstory is the feminist spelling of history developed in the 1980s to dispense with his story. It was coined to underscore the invisibility of women in traditional historical knowledges and understandings. Because the word history—from the Greek *historia*, meaning an account of one’s inquiries—shares linguistic etymology with the English word *story*, some scholars argue that the word *history* is not masculine (Oxford University Press, 1993).

Heterosexism vs. Homophobia

Heterosexism is defined in this research as “the belief that heterosexuality is the only natural and acceptable sexual orientation and the irrational hatred and discrimination directed at those deemed nonheterosexual” (Simoni, 1996a, p. 220). This dissertation will use the term heterosexism instead of the popular term homophobia. Herek’s (1995) discussion of the differences between the two terms provides the reasoning for this decision.

I avoid the term *homophobia*, which has often been used to describe hostility toward gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals (Herek, 1984; Smith, 1974; Weinberg, 1972). Any single word is necessarily limited in its adequacy for characterizing a phenomenon that encompasses issues of morality, legality, discrimination, civil

liberties, violence, and personal discomfort. *Homophobia* is particularly ill-suited to this purpose, however for three reasons. First, it is linguistically awkward; its literal meaning is something like “fear of sameness.” Second, antigay prejudice is not truly a phobia; it is not necessarily based on fear; nor is it inevitably irrational or dysfunctional for individuals who manifest it (Fyfe, 1983; Herek, 1986b; Nungesser, 1983; Shields & Harriman, 1984). Third, using the term homophobia can easily mislead us into thinking of antigay prejudice in exclusively individual terms, as a form of mental illness rather than as a pattern of thought and behavior that can actually be adaptive in a prejudiced society. (p. 321)

Homosexual

Homosexual has been the most generally accepted term used to describe same-sex sexual orientation for at least half a century. The term is used in all major Western European languages, as well as many others, including Russian and Turkish.

Etymologically, the word comes from the Greek homo- meaning same. There is a mistaken belief, especially among lesbians that the homo- component of the word represents the Latin word for man. For this reason, many lesbians resist using the word homosexual (Dynes, 1990).

The term homosexual was first used publicly in two anonymous pamphlets published in Germany by Károly Mária Kertbeny in 1869. It was likely inspired by the term bisexual, which had been used in botany during the early nineteenth century to describe plants having the sexual organs of both sexes. Gustav Jaeger popularized the term in the second edition of his *Entdeckung der Seele*. Some gay rights activists oppose

the word homosexual as a label imposed on them by the enemy. In truth, Kertbeny was a closeted homosexual (Dynes, 1990).

A number of other terms have been used to describe homosexuality, including Karl Heinrich Ulrichs' *uranianism*, Westphal's *contrary sexual feeling*, and the psychiatric term *sexual inversion*. Other terms used to describe homosexuals include homogenic love, contrasexuality, homo-erotism, similisexualism, intersexuality, transsexuality, the third sex, and psychosexual hermaphroditism (Kinsey et al., 1948). One reason the term homosexual became widely accepted was that it allowed scientists to construct sexuality using opposing terms—heterosexual vs. homosexual (Dynes, 1990).

Lesbian-Only Space

[Lesbian-only space is] the only space in this world where Lesbians focus exclusively on each other, on our ideas, on our desires, on our relations with each other. And, for most of us, it provides us with a much-needed respite from having to deal with men and women who focus their entire beings on men. (Penelope, 1997, p. 786)

Lesbian-only space is a product of lesbian separatist ideologies. In its strongest form, separatism refers to complete social, cultural, and physical separation from anyone who does not identify as lesbian. However, some lesbian separatists live and work in women's space as much as possible without completely excluding men (Dynes, 1990).

While separatists are often viewed as "man haters," separatists say that it is the domineering, aggressive behaviors they hate, rather than men themselves. To avoid these

behaviors, separatists often form communes where they believe the true nature of women can form unhampered by the dictates of patriarchy (Dynes, 1990).

Music Festivals

Women's music festivals arose out of the same movement as *LC*. They serve as North America's "lesbian Woodstocks," where women's music fans and political activists gather to enjoy concerts, comedy, workshops, and crafts. The festivals are greatly influenced by the lesbian-feminist rhetoric and politics of the 1970s and 1980s (M. Stein, 2003).

In 1974, Kristin Lems, a heterosexual feminist activist, initiated the National Women's Music Festival (NWMF), which is considered the first large-scale festival of its kind. The NWMF was significant in that it dared to showcase many new lesbian artists. It was matched in 1976 by the even more radical Michigan Womyn's Music Festival (MWMF) (M. Stein, 2003).

Due to the MWMF's enormous size (close to 10,000 women attended in 1982), its private clothing-optional camping environment, and its longstanding policy of excluding males over the age of five, it quickly gained notoriety as the premier lesbian festival. MWMF accommodates male children over the age of five in a separate camp, entitled Brother Sun and requests that all attendees be born female (M. Stein, 2003).

Festival culture has provided many lesbians a safe and often healing space for a short time every summer. Festivals are credited for popularizing the use of American Sign Language interpreters onstage and other efforts to create an environment where the

needs of all women are met regardless of ability, culture, race, religion, or socioeconomic status (M. Stein, 2003).

Queer

During the twentieth century in America the epithet “queer” was likely the most popular vernacular used to degrade homosexuals. The term queer was also common in England where Cockney rhyming phrases such as “ginger beer” and “King Lear” were used to degrade homosexuals. Nonetheless, older English homosexuals often prefer to use the term queer, believing the term to be value-free (Dynes, 1990, p. 1091).

The current slang meaning for queer likely comes from its mid-eighteenth century definition as counterfeit, such as a counterfeit coin or banknote, with its antonym being straight. The phrase “queer as a three-dollar bill” evolved from this definition of queer. The verb *to queer* meant to spoil or to foul up; the adjective meant queasy. For example, “This muggy weather makes me feel ever so queer.” Queer was also used in a less derogatory sense to mean *fond of*. For example, “He’s queer for exotic cuisine” (Dynes, 1990, p. 1091).

The contemporary use of the term queer, as it will be used in this dissertation, gained popularity in the early 1990s. The term began to be used to describe cultural and theoretical debates that questioned the existence of a lesbian or gay identity. This questioning arose out of gay liberationist and lesbian feminist understandings of identity and the operations of power. Queer theory questioned liberal, liberationist, ethnic, and even separatist notions of identity. It addressed criticisms made of the exclusionist tendencies of lesbian and gay as identity categories by refusing the specificity of labels.

As such, there is no agreement on the exact definition of queer theory. In fact, one might question whether queer theory is, indeed, a definable theory (Jagose, 1996).

Separatism/Separatist

Sandoval (2001) defines separatism as a form of political resistance “organized to protect and nurture the differences that define it through complete separation from the dominant social order” (p. 270). For example, a lesbian separatist might choose to engage in separation from a male-dominated heterosexist social order by living in lesbian-only space, working in lesbian-only space, or patronizing lesbian-owned and operated businesses (See further Lesbian-Only Space).

Straight

In 1864, *The Oxford English Dictionary* defined the colloquial use of straight as honest or honorable (Dynes, 1990). Straight was also used to describe a chaste or virtuous woman. Since at least 1914, criminal argot has used the word bent to describe thieves or stolen goods. The secondary usage of bent, as a synonym for homosexual, has been used in British slang since the 1950s. Straight, as an antonym to bent, had widespread use in homosexual circles before it became a part of the general vocabulary as an equivalent for heterosexual during the 1970s. During the 1960s, straight began to be used as a synonym for sober or drug-free. New usages continue to appear. Nonetheless, there remain three main colloquial meanings of straight: honest or respectable, heterosexual, or drug-free/sober. As with many argot terms these multiple meanings are effective in confusing eavesdroppers, even though this effect fades as the term begins to be used more frequently (Dynes).

Wimmin/Womyn/Womon

The terms *wimmin*, *womyn*, and *womon* are phonetic spellings of woman or women that are recorded in facetious contexts from the early part of the 20th century. They were adopted by feminists in the 1980s because they dispensed with the element man or men (R. Allen, 1999).

Summary

Research and publications in counseling and counseling-related journals define and inform the practice of counseling. Yet, literature reviews conducted in counseling and related fields show that counselors would have considerable difficulty relying on peer-reviewed journals to provide the information they need to work with lesbians. Content analyses of scholarly publications in counseling and related fields reveal that homosexuality is grossly underrepresented and ghettoized in the literature. Lesbians are particularly underrepresented in the literature. It is only by researching, writing about, and publishing on lesbian issues from a counseling perspective that counselors can build the knowledge base necessary to provide the best possible intervention to lesbian clients.

This study provides counselors with a historical, contextual, holistic, sociopolitical picture of the lesbian experience that moves beyond the confining limitations of the label lesbian to provide insight into appropriate treatment and intervention, and to create a foundation upon which future counseling-specific research can be built.

In order to understand contemporary conceptualizations of Lesbian in counseling theory and research, we must first understand the foundation upon which this theory and

research was formed. Therefore, Chapter I has provided the etymology of many terms used to describe and define lesbians. Chapter II provides a review of the historical conceptualizations of Lesbian in counseling research and theory.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Seen from the four points of the compass a great mountain may present aspects that are very different one from the other—so different that bitter disagreements can arise between those who have watched the mountain, truly and well, through all the seasons, but each from a different quarter. Reality, too, has many facets—some too readily disputed or denied by those who rely only on their own experience. Nor can science itself rightly lay claim to finality or the complete comprehension of reality, but only to honesty and accuracy of the additional facets it may be permitted to discover and report. I say “may be permitted” since the human race is familiar with the suppression of truth in both small matters and great. The history of science is part of the history of the freedom to observe, to reflect, to experiment, to record, and to bear witness. It has been a perilous and a passionate history indeed, and not yet ended. (Kinsey et al., 1948, p. v)

To understand the way Lesbian has been conceptualized in historical counseling theory is to understand the way lesbians have been conceptualized into a binary “us vs. them” schema throughout history. Lesbians have been conceptualized as heterosexual women and constructed as inferior to men. They have been conceptualized as lesbian women and constructed as inferior to other women. They have been conceptualized as homosexual and constructed as inferior to heterosexuals. Moreover, they have been conceptualized as lesbian and constructed as inferior to gay men. For those lesbians whose identities arch across and within other marginalized groups, identifying the hidden binary constructs become multiple and complex.

Historical binary constructions of Lesbian have served to maintain the subjugation of lesbians, while at the same time hiding and protecting the agenda of dominant groups. For example, early conceptualizations of Lesbian occurred in response to the first-wave feminist movement when sexologists began to characterize feminism and romantic love between women as abnormal and inextricably linked (Faderman, 1981). Lesbian was constructed to control unruly women who had begun to question gendered power differentials.

This chapter discusses the ways in which historical counseling theories and research have constructed lesbians as inferior to dominant groups and offers recommendations for a theoretical conceptualization of Lesbian that has the potential for providing new, insightful understandings of Lesbian.

The Construction of Lesbian as Inferior to Heterosexual Women and Men

Although early counseling theorists recognized differences between the development of women and men, they generally conceptualized women as the same as men, thereby forcing women into male models of development and characterizing women's development as inferior to men. Feminists challenged theories of "sameness" by highlighting and celebrating those characteristics they believed to be unique to women. However, by conceptualizing all women as the same, feminists marginalized women who did not fit white, middle-class, heterosexual, Christian assumptions about the development of women.

Examples of Theories of Sameness between Women and Men

Sigmund Freud

In keeping with the ideologies of their time, early androcentric or masculinist theories constructed the lives of all women from an understanding of the lives of heterosexual men. These ideas about human development can be traced back to the work of Freud (1962) whose theories of human development imposed adult male erotic feelings on the experiences of women and children. Freud's theories failed to explain anatomical differences between women and men, or the differences in the way women and men related to and interacted with others. He forced women's development into male-centered theories, thereby constructing women as deficient and subordinate to men.

Freud (1962) attempted to resolve anatomical differences between women and men by suggesting that women envied the male penis. He attempted to resolve relational differences between women and men by suggesting that the attachment of female children to their mother resulted in developmental failures. Freud theorized that it was a boy's struggle with the father figure that resulted in the formation of a healthy superego and high moral standards. Since girls did not progress through this Oedipal sequence, their moral development was inferior to men. Freud characterized women as passive and emotional by nature and claimed that women were masochistic, narcissistic, and generally had a lesser degree of justice.

Erik Erikson

Androcentrism in early counseling theories can also be found in the work of Erikson (1968). Erikson, who had also noted differences in the development of women

and men attempted to resolve those differences by forcing women into a male-centered theory of psychosocial development. Erikson believed that while adolescent boys established a secure identity from developing a philosophy of life and choosing a career, girls could not be fully actualized until they followed their natural dispositions to be a wife and mother (Erikson, p. 290). He concluded that identity was preceded by intimacy and generativity for men; however, identity, intimacy, and generativity were unmistakably fused for women. It is noteworthy that although Erikson produced separate theories of development for women and men, counseling textbooks often apply Erikson's theory of male development to everyone regardless of gender with no mention of his separate theory of development for women (e.g., Berk, 1998).

Examples of Theories of Difference between Women and Men

Feminist theorists reacted to androcentric theories by conceptualizing the personality, structure, needs, and values of women and men as different. While this response celebrated women's ways of knowing and being, it also served to reinforce binary constructs of women and men.

Jean Baker Miller

Miller (1986) developed what she referred to as a "new psychology of women." Using the subordination of women as a foundation, Miller's developmental theory emphasized gendered power relations and women's relationality. She theorized that women's development occurred through interdependence and mutuality. Therefore, women's development of self was incompatible with that of men, whose autonomy developed within the dominant and dominating power of a patriarchal society.

Nancy Chodorow

Chodorow (1978) integrated psychoanalytic and object relational theories to analyze the source of gender differences described by Miller (1986). Chodorow argued that *mothering* prepared both genders for their prospective roles in society. Since girls learned to relate to the world as mothers, the relationality of women resulted from being nurtured by a same-sex caregiver and being taught that they were responsible for nurturing others. Boys were not expected to be nurturers and, therefore, became men who devalued the role of women and oriented themselves to the external world.

Carol Gilligan

Building on Chodorow's analysis of mothering as a universal experience for women, Gilligan (1982) suggested that, contrary to traditional theories of moral development, women understood themselves and defined morality relative to relationships and caring. Conversely, men viewed moral issues in terms of laws or impartial justice (Gilligan).

Sara Ruddick/Sandra Bem

Sara Ruddick (1989) claimed that the demands of motherhood led to the development of *maternal thinking*. She argued that what is sometimes assumed to be a maternal instinct is actually a set of attitudes and behaviors arising from the care-giving roles of women. Ruddick's findings were supported by Sandra Bem (1993) who also claimed that maternal instinct was the result of the care-giving roles required of women.

Lesbian Scholars

Most early feminist theorists ignored the lesbian experience (Rich, 1980; Smith-Rosenberg, 1975). Lesbian scholars responded by constructing Lesbian with characteristics associated with femaleness, a practice that continued to support the binary construction of women and men. For example, Adrienne Rich (1980) claimed that Lesbian could be understood in terms of a woman-identified experience which included female-female sexual behavior and relationships, as well as alliances between women that were not necessarily sexually explicit. This created a view of Lesbian that transcended national and cultural barriers as well as time and history.

Lillian Faderman (1981) also conceptualized Lesbian as a woman-identified experience. She believed that

“Lesbian” describes a relationship in which two women’s strongest emotions and affections are directed toward each other. Sexual contact may be part of the relationship to a greater or lesser degree, or it may be entirely absent. By preference the two women spend most of their time together and share most aspects of their lives with each other. (pp. 17-18)

Feminist reactions to androcentric constructs of women maintained the status quo by embracing the very constructs that had kept women subordinate to men for hundreds of years—gender. Likewise, when lesbian scholars attempted to make themselves more visible by embracing stereotypes of women, they too reproduced the very male/female constructs that had for so long maintained the invisibility of lesbians.

The Construction of Homosexuals as Inferior to Heterosexuals

Traditional counseling theories were based on homosexual vs. heterosexual constructs, with homosexuals conceptualized as pathological and inferior to heterosexuals. These ideas went unchallenged until contemporary scholars outside the field of mental health began to uncover findings suggesting that homosexuality was just one point on a continuum of sexual activities. These findings lead sympathetic scholars to question the time-honored practice of drawing conclusions about all homosexuals from the study of clinical populations. When researchers began to study non-clinical samples, they found that they could not discern homosexuals from heterosexuals. These findings revolutionized scientific thought on homosexuality. At the same time, critical scholars began to charge the field of mental health with *policing* or attempting to regulate behaviors in much the same way the church functioned. Throughout all of these historical moments, lesbians were generally hidden and ignored within the construct of homosexuality and constructed as inferior to heterosexuals.

Theories of Difference between Homosexuals and Heterosexuals

Most traditional counseling theories are heterosexist in that they view heterosexual orientation as normal and desirable, while devaluing non-heterosexual ways of being (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 1993). As much as 70% of the psychological research on homosexuality prior to the de-pathologization of homosexuality in 1973 was devoted to three questions: Are homosexuals sick? How can homosexuality be diagnosed? What causes homosexuality? (Kitzinger, 1987). Examples are found in the work of Sigmund Freud (1962), Sandor Rado (1962), Irving Bieber (1988), Charles Socarides (1968;

1975), Albert Ellis (1965), and Edward Sagarin, also known as (a.k.a.) Donald Webster Cory (1975).

Sigmund Freud

Freud's (1962; 1963) theories of homosexuality stood in sharp contrast with earlier medical theories that defined homosexuality as a type of degeneracy. Freud believed that homosexuality could be found in women and men who exhibited no other deviations. He believed a diagnosis was only justifiable if there were serious deviations resulting in impaired function. His ideas distinguished him from other psychoanalytic practitioners who saw homosexuality as a profound disturbance that affected every aspect of their functioning (Bayer, 1981; Marmor, 1965).

Freud (1962; 1963) characterized homosexuality as a natural feature of the libidinal drives of all women and men. He believed that all children passed through a homosexual phase of psychosexual development toward heterosexuality. He theorized that the social characteristics of camaraderie and altruistic love grew out of the unconscious homosexual impulses of an individual who had successfully passed into heterosexuality. Moreover, he believed that bisexuality was a natural disposition that made individuals capable of both homosexual and heterosexual love. Nonetheless, since Freud believed that most normal adults successfully passed through the homosexual stage to become heterosexual, he characterized exclusive homosexuality as inferior to heterosexuality. Freud characterized the failure to pass through the homosexual phase as a *flight from incest*. He theorized that in some cases an absent or weak father caused boys to fall in love with their mother. In repressing their incestuous feelings for their mother,

they repressed their desires for all women. In other cases, the child fell in love with the same-sex parent, and attempted to oust the parent of the opposite sex. In repressing their incestuous feelings for their same-sex parent, they sought a parental figure in others of the same sex (Bullough, 1976).

Although Freud's ideas suggested that homosexuality could be cured, he changed his views later in life and expressed pessimism about the possibility of a cure for homosexuality. His later views may be best illustrated in his famous 1935 "Letter to an American Mother" (as cited in Bayer, 1981; Bullough, 1976; Marmor, 1965).

Dear Mrs. _____.

I gather from your letter that your son is a homosexual. I am most impressed by the fact that you do not mention this term yourself in your information about him. May I question you, why you avoid it? Homosexuality is assuredly no advantage, but it is nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, no degradation, it cannot be classified as an illness; we consider it to be a variation of the sexual function produced by a certain arrest of sexual development. Many highly respectable individuals of ancient and modern times have been homosexuals, several of the greatest men among them (Plato, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, etc.). It is a great injustice to persecute homosexuality as a crime, and cruelty too. If you do not believe me, read the books of Havelock Ellis.

By asking me if I can help, you mean, I suppose, if I can abolish homosexuality and make normal heterosexuality take its place. The answer is, in a general way, we cannot promise to achieve it. In a certain number of cases we

succeed in developing the blighted germs of heterosexual tendencies which are present in every homosexual, in the majority of cases it is no more possible. The result of treatment cannot be predicted.

What analysis can do for your son runs in a different line. If he is unhappy, neurotic, torn by conflicts, inhibited in his social life, analysis may bring him harmony, peace of mind, full efficiency whether he remains a homosexual or gets changed . . . (Jones, 1957)

Freud's view of homosexuality dominated psychoanalytic thinking for nearly 40 years.

Sandor Rado

In the 1940s, Rado (1962; 1965) challenged Freud with making a fundamental error in his assumption that there were both female and male attributes in the psyche (constitutional bisexuality). Based on reproductive anatomy, Rado believed that the pairing of female and male represented natural and healthy sexuality. Although Rado believed that biology directed the nature of sexuality, he did not believe there was an innate biological drive toward heterosexuality. He believed socialization, such as the institution of marriage, provided direction regarding the use of the sex organs. Therefore, an environmental force, such as profound fear or resentment that unseated the heterosexual nature must cause homosexuality. Rado believed homosexuality was an attempt to achieve sexual pleasure when normal heterosexuality was too threatening. While homosexuality could unseat heterosexuality, it could never destroy it unless the individual experienced *schizophrenic disorganization*. Rado pointed to what he perceived

as the practice among homosexuals to select same-sex partners with subjective features of the opposite sex as proof of his theory.

Rado effectively ignored the considerable work available to him that had accumulated in the fields of psychiatry, psychology, anthropology, history, biology, sociology, and medicine that challenged the assumption that homosexuality was an illness. He defined homosexuality as a phobia (Bullough, 1977). In so doing, Rado provided an argument for exploring potential cures for homosexuality. Rado's work at Columbia University's Psychoanalytic Clinic for Training and Research influenced the theoretical and clinical work of many prominent psychoanalysts during that time. By reviving the illness concept of homosexuality Rado effectively destroyed many years of progress toward the depathologization of homosexuality. Among the most prominent researchers to further his cause were Irving Bieber and Charles Socarides.

Irving Bieber

In the early 1950s, Bieber and the New York Society of Medical Psychoanalysts (1988) undertook one of the most ambitious psychoanalytic studies of homosexuality of the time. It was the first attempt ever made to provide scientific evidence that homosexuality was rooted in one's childhood, primarily in the family (Churchill, 1967).

Bieber's study compiled data collected by 77 analysts who completed a 450-item questionnaire covering family, social, diagnostic, and therapeutic issues in patients hand-selected by the therapists. This resulted in a sample of 106 homosexual male patients and 100 heterosexual male patients. Based on their findings, Bieber and his team concluded that a fear of the opposite sex emerged from a triangular family system characterized by a

close-binding-intimate relationship between the mother and son and a defective father-son relationship.

Of the 76 patients studied by Bieber's group who presented as exclusively homosexual, 14 (19%) were successfully converted to heterosexuality. Of the 30 patients who were initially bisexual, 15 (50%) were converted to heterosexuality. Although Bieber did not discuss specific treatment modalities, he later indicated that treatment should emphasize the irrational fears of heterosexuality and seek resolution of those fears (Bieber, 1967). Since no follow-up study was conducted, there is no way to know how many patients remained heterosexual after treatment ended. Therefore, it may have been more appropriate to define his results as a remission rather than a cure (Churchill, 1967). In contrast to the dismal attempts of the Bieber group to cure homosexuality, 97 (91.5%) of the homosexual and bisexual patients showed improvement in other areas of concern.

Despite the fact that 72.6% of the homosexual sample could not be completely cured of homosexuality after hundreds of hours of therapy, Bieber and his colleagues (1988) concluded that Freud was incorrect and homosexuality was curable. They believed this was especially true if the patient was under the age of 35, motivated to change their sexual orientation, had a father who was not detached, had made a prior effort to become heterosexual, and had erotic heterosexual dreams (Bayer, 1981).

Following the publication of Bieber's study, some researchers reported that they were able to replicate Bieber's findings (Evans, 1969; Snortum, 1969). Snortum and his colleagues (1969) found that they were able to discriminate their non-clinical sample of 46 homosexual men from one control group of 21 enlisted men and another control group

of 68 males enrolled in an introductory psychology course in a midwestern liberal arts college. They concluded that a close-binding, controlling mother and a rejecting, detached father played a significant role in the etiology of homosexuality.

Evans (1969) also found that with the exception of the amount of time the parents spent together, and the interests shared by the parents, his findings were comparable to the two earlier studies. In addition, he found that the homosexual group with more desirable family backgrounds tended to identify as more masculine.

Interestingly, Evans (1969) also found that the developmental items on the questionnaire differentiated the two groups better than the parental items. This suggested that there were differences between the homosexual and heterosexual groups with regard to the child's behavioral or personality patterns. This called into question the Bieber team's conclusion that homosexuality was caused by parental behaviors and suggested that the parents may have been reacting to a child who was different in some way from other children. This calls into question the cause-and-effect conclusions of Bieber and his colleagues.

Charles W. Socarides

Socarides (1978) studied at the New York Medical College and Columbia University and served as attending psychiatrist at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Like others whose work was influenced by Rado, Socarides believed that homosexuality was a pathology caused by childhood fears; however, he believed these fears occurred much earlier in life than had been speculated. By pushing the etiology of homosexuality back to a pre-Oedipal phase, Socarides was able to characterize

homosexuality as even sicker than had once been believed. Socarides argued that almost half of all homosexuals had co-morbid symptoms of schizophrenia, paranoia, latent or pseudoneurotic schizophrenia, or manic-depressive disorder. He portrayed the remaining half of homosexuals as obsessive and phobic.

In his book *Homosexuality*, Socarides (1978) reported that during the ten-year period from 1967 to 1977, he provided long-term treatment to 34 overt homosexuals and short-term psychoanalytic treatment to 11 overt homosexuals. He reported that 20 of his patients “developed full heterosexual functioning” and “love feelings for their heterosexual partners” (p. 405-406).

The Socarides (1978) study reported that approximately 50% of his patients were cured of homosexuality; however, there are some serious questions about his findings. Socarides provided little to no information regarding the prior sexual history of his patients, except to say they were overt homosexuals. With the omission of this information, his finding that 20 of his patients developed heterosexual functioning does not provide insight into whether his patients achieved something they did not already possess. Since he categorized Bieber’s sample, which included 30 bisexuals, as homosexual, it is possible that he also categorized bisexuals in his own sample as homosexual. The finding that his patients developed feelings of love for a heterosexual partner is also vague. An individual can love someone without being sexually attracted to them.

Socarides provided no information regarding the type of intervention used with these patients. It is also unclear how many patients Socarides actually treated. On page

405 of his book, he indicated that he treated 55 overt homosexuals; on the next page he indicated he treated 44. Other information in his book suggested he treated 45 homosexuals. Since he reported a success rate of nearly 50%, it must be assumed that he treated 44 or 45 overt homosexuals; had he treated 55, his success rate would have been closer to 36%.

Socarides, along with several other well-known psychiatrists who believed homosexuality could be cured, spoke in opposition to the declassification of homosexuality as a mental illness at the 1973 conference of the American Psychiatric Association in Honolulu. However, his speech fell on contemptuous ears and was met with sneering remarks from the audience. Interestingly, Socarides' son, Richard, is a successful lawyer and gay man who served as a gay liaison during President Bill Clinton's second term (Pettis, 2006).

Albert Ellis

In contrast with the theories of Rado and his proponents, Ellis (1965) believed that homosexuality was a learned condition that could be unlearned, or cured. He drew a distinction between individuals who were exclusively homosexual and those who occasionally had a homosexual encounter. Ellis did not mix words when it came to describing the exclusive or *fixed* homosexual. "The fixed homosexual is a goofer, a short-range hedonist, a self-hater, and a child who refuses to grow up and accept adult responsibilities and rewards" (p. 75).

Ellis (1965) believed that those individuals who could not, or would not, engage in heterosexual sex were neurotic. They suffered from one of the following: (a) a sexual

fixation on individuals of their own sex; (b) a phobia of the opposite sex; (c) an obsession about members of their own sex, or an obsession with the opposite sex that drove them to attempt to become the opposite sex; (d) a compulsion toward homosexual affairs.

Ellis (1965) purportedly developed his theories on homosexuality from his work with over 100 homosexuals who had sought intensive treatment from him and several hundred more who had sought briefer intervention over a period of twenty years. Ellis claimed that homosexuality could be cured using a rational-emotive therapeutic approach. While he admitted that homosexuals were difficult to treat, he reported curing some homosexuals in as little as five weeks.

According to Ellis' rational-emotive therapy, homosexuals were responsible for their emotions and actions and their harmful emotions and dysfunctional behaviors were a product of their irrational thinking. They could learn more realistic views and make those views a part of their identity. This would result in a deeper acceptance of themselves and a greater satisfaction in life.

The homosexual community was incensed with the suggestion that homosexuals were to blame for their condition and could be cured if they simply changed their irrational thoughts. Ellis became "public enemy No. 1 of the homosexual, the whipping boy of the homophile press" (Ellis, 1965, p. 7). At one homophile conference, Ellis told the audience that "the exclusive homosexual is a psychopath" (L. Wright, 1999, July/August)! Someone in the audience shouted, "Any homosexual who would come to you for treatment, Dr. Ellis, would have to be a psychopath" (L. Wright)! Nonetheless, Ellis defended the homosexual's inalienable right to be wrong. He believed that

homosexuals should never be persecuted or punished for their errors. “Because unless we unequivocally accord him this right, we will never help him to correct his mistakes or wrongdoings, and will in fact encourage him to be compulsively mistaken, immoral, or emotionally ill forever” (Ellis, p. 85).

Ellis (1965) chastised American society for discriminating against homosexuals and suggested that the rights of homosexuals should be legally protected. Unfortunately, Ellis’ insulting remarks about homosexuals and his belittling recommendation that homosexuals be looked upon with humorous tolerance tended to overshadow his attempts to crusade for the rights of homosexuals.

Edward Sagarin a.k.a. Donald Webster Cory

Not surprisingly, homosexuals themselves often bought into binary constructs that portrayed homosexuals as sick and heterosexuals as natural and normal. One example can be seen in the work of Edward Sagarin. Sagarin, who published under the pseudonym Donald Webster Cory, was a professor of Sociology and Criminology at the City University of New York. In 1951, he published what may have been the first subjective account of the homosexual male life-style in his book titled *The Homosexual in America: A Subjective Approach* (Bullough, 1976). The data in his study was drawn from his own experiences and those of his partners.

Cory’s (1975) publication was the first widely read non-fiction in the US to present the plight of male homosexuals. He described the persecution and discrimination experienced by male homosexuals, discussed the “sickness” theories of homosexuality, and described the vast diversity among homosexuals. Although Cory believed that most

homosexuals were mentally ill and could be cured if they desired a cure, he made unprecedented arguments for the basic human rights of homosexuals and may have been the first to align the plight of homosexuals with other marginalized groups.

We are a minority, not only numerically, but also as a result of a caste-like system in society . . . our minority status is similar, in a variety of respects, to that of national, religious, and other ethnic groups; in the denial of civil liberties; in the legal, extra-legal and quasi-legal discrimination; in the assignment of an inferior social position; in the exclusion from the mainstreams of life and culture. . . . On the other hand, one great gap separates the homosexual minority from all others, and that is its lack of recognition, its lack of respectability in the eyes of the public, and even in the most advanced circles. (Cory, 1975, p. 13-14)

Although Cory (1975), who is sometimes called the “Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde” of the gay community, provided a vivid description of the marginalization of homosexuals, he departed from the homosexual movement’s efforts for the acceptance of homosexuality in par with heterosexuality. He compared homosexuals to alcoholics, prostitutes, and narcotic addicts. In short, he believed homosexuals were sick, but should be treated with decency. He later wrote, “Dr. Albert Ellis, who has aided immeasurably to shape my own thinking on this subject has given help and encouragement in my own subjective reorientation. But that is another story, and perhaps some day it will be told” (Cory, Preface).

Examples of Challenges to Pathological Constructs of Homosexuality

There was a wealth of historical research in a number of disciplines that challenged the notion of homosexuality as a pathology, including the work of Havelock Ellis, Magnus Hirschfeld, and other researchers in the field of mental health (Bullough, 1977). Nonetheless, the pathology of homosexuality gained increasing acceptance, and research began to focus almost exclusively on the etiology and cure of homosexuality. This research focused exclusively on clinical populations.

In an unexpected twist, researchers conducting studies independent of homosexuality began to uncover findings that were incompatible with pathological assumptions about homosexuality (Ford & Beach, 1951; Kinsey et al., 1948). These findings, along with the revolutionary work of psychologist Evelyn Hooker (1956; 1957; 1958; 1959) and the rise of the gay liberation movement in 1969 were key factors in the 1973 decision to remove homosexuality as a pathology from the second edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (Bayer, 1981).

Alfred Kinsey

One important challenge of mental health's pathological assumptions about homosexuality came from Kinsey and his colleagues who published *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948). Kinsey was a biologist who had previously studied insect taxonomy. Noting the paucity of sex research, Kinsey undertook the largest study of sex since that of Magnus Hirschfeld's to attempt to ascertain the incidence of homosexuality.

Unlike many of the previous research findings that had been based on small clinical samples, Kinsey's findings were based on an in-depth case history study of 5,300

white males over a period of nine years beginning in July 1938. The purpose of the study was to determine what people do sexually, and what factors account for differences in sexual behavior in individuals (Kinsey et al., 1948).

Kinsey (1948) uncovered an unexpected chasm between accepted cultural sexual standards and the actual sexual behaviors of his participants. Among his most startling findings was the fact that 50% of the males interviewed who were single until the age of 35 reported having a homosexual experience between adolescence and the age of 35. Thirty-seven percent of the male population studied reported physical contact to the point of orgasm with other men between adolescence and old age. Although Kinsey has been criticized for interviewing a significantly higher percentage of male prisoners than the general male population, he claimed that these figures were consistent across various sub-populations.

In addition, Kinsey (1948) found that 13% of the men studied reported more homosexual than heterosexual experiences for at least three years between the ages of 16 and 55. Ten percent of the men studied indicated that between the ages of 11 and 55 they had been more or less exclusively homosexual for at least three years. (This finding is frequently quoted by gay activists as representative of the incidence of male homosexuality in America.) Four percent of the men studied reported they were exclusively homosexual throughout their lives following the onset of adolescence. Given Kinsey's finding that only 50% of the population was exclusively heterosexual throughout their adult lives, it is clear that the binary construction of homosexual vs. heterosexual is insufficient in describing actual sexual behaviors.

Kinsey (1948) was surprised by his findings and was faced with a torrent of criticism and disapproval from the American public. Nonetheless, Kinsey believed his findings showed that the generally accepted theory that homosexuality was a pathology was unfounded. What appeared to be normal behavior could no longer be deemed abnormal. Kinsey also rejected the idea of a heterosexual biological drive. He believed that the ability to respond to an erotic stimulus was basic to all species, making homosexual and heterosexual responses perfectly normal. Interestingly, he agreed with Albert Ellis that sexual practices were learned behaviors. However, Kinsey believed these learned behaviors were directed by cultural perspectives of sexuality. Thus, mental health practitioners who labeled homosexuality as a pathology were functioning to police sexual behaviors and assure compliance to acceptable cultural standards (Bayer, 1981).

Kinsey's research, as well as the Kinsey Institute, continues to be the focus of much propaganda from religious groups who make alarmist claims that Kinsey abused children in illegal sex experiments. By linking homosexuality with pedophilia in their propaganda, these groups demonize homosexuality in order to reaffirm the good vs. bad constructs that Kinsey's work challenged (Reisman & Eichel, 1990). Nonetheless, Kinsey's work continues to influence American social and sexual history many decades after the publication of his work (Cory, 1975).

Clellan Stearns Ford and Frank Ambrose Beach

Three years after the Kinsey study was published, Clellan Stearns Ford and Frank Ambrose Beach published the results of a cross-cultural analysis of human sexuality and the sexual behavior of nonhuman primates in their book, *Patterns of Sexual Behavior*

(Ford & Beach, 1951). Their study was based on data derived from the Yale Human Relations Area Files, which provided information on 76 societies. They found some homosexual activity in 49 (64.5%) of the societies for which information was available. In the remaining 27 societies, homosexual behavior was unacceptable and was monitored by strict social policing. Yet, there were indications of concealed homosexual activity in these cultures as well. Ford and Beach found no societies in which homosexuality was the dominant form of adult sexual activity (Bayer, 1981). (It should be noted, however, that Devereux (1937) found records of exclusive lesbian patterns among female Mohave Indians.)

Ford and Beach (1951) also reviewed literature on sexual activities in animals, particularly primates, where they noted limited homosexual behavior in monkeys. Although some researchers claimed this behavior might have been indicative of attempts of one male to achieve dominance over another, Ford and Beach found evidence that homosexual activity in primates was pleasurable. Moreover, they rejected the idea that male-male activity only occurred when females were absent. Adult male monkeys had been observed participating in simultaneous same-sex and opposite-sex activity.

Ford and Beach (1951) concluded that homosexual responsiveness was a normal facet of human sexual behavior. Like Kinsey, they believed cultures regulated sexual behavior. It is important to note, however, that Ford and Beach's findings were not entirely at odds with pathological theories of homosexuality. Individuals in the field of mental health could still claim that homosexuality was the result of an acute disturbance of normal childhood experiences (Bayer, 1981).

Evelyn Hooker

Although Kinsey (1953; 1948) and Ford and Beach (1951) provided revolutionary ideas about homosexuality, it was psychologist Evelyn Hooker who pioneered the research that later proved to be the richest source of material for challenging the pathology of homosexuality. A former student of Hooker, who was a homosexual man, introduced her to his circle of friends—a group of well-adjusted gay men who did not conform to the popular image of tormented and troubled individuals. As these men came to know Hooker, they encouraged her to conduct research on other men like themselves (Chance, 1975, December). Hooker became convinced that research on clinical populations, which included homosexuals in prisons, mental hospitals, or disciplinary barracks in the armed services, failed to provide a full picture of homosexuality and agreed to conduct the research (Hooker, 1957).

Hooker's (1957) study took place in 1954 and was funded by a research grant from the National Institute of Mental Health. Her sample of 30 gay males was drawn from two homosexual rights groups in California—the Mattachine Society and One, Inc. The homosexual sample was matched with 30 heterosexual males by age, intelligence, and educational achievements. Anyone in either of the samples who manifested a pathology was excluded. Subjects were given the Rorschach personality assessment, as well as a combined form of the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), and the Make a Picture Story (MAPS) test.

The judges evaluating the results categorized two-thirds of the homosexual and heterosexual participants as having an average adjustment. More importantly, they were

unable to distinguish the gay men from the heterosexual men. In terms of patterns in sexual behavior and psychological profiles, Hooker (1957) found that homosexuals were as heterogeneous as heterosexuals.

Given the tendency to attribute the etiology of homosexuality to a pathology in the family, Hooker (1957) also examined the families of the gay men studied. Although she did find pathological family patterns in the backgrounds of gay men, having a pathological family did not seem to be a determinant in the etiology of homosexuality. Hooker determined that the cause of homosexuality was complex, and involved biological, cultural, psychodynamic, structural, and situational variables.

Although research before that time had claimed that gay men were promiscuous and unable to sustain long relationships, Hooker (1958) found that two-thirds of her sample had sustained long-term partnerships. While relationship patterns in gay men differed from those found in heterosexual relationships, the fear of intimacy that clinicians had once cited as a sign of pathological behavior in homosexuals may have been simply a normal reaction to a heterosexist society. Hooker believed that elimination of these undesirable traits could only be acquired through the transformation of social attitudes toward homosexuals, not through psychotherapy (National Institute of Mental Health Task Force on Homosexuality, 1972).

Thomas Szasz

At the same time, Szasz (1970) began writing critical essays claiming that one of the key functions of psychiatry was the policing of social and ethical norms in much the same way religion functioned. He claimed that psychiatry was hiding its true function by

defining itself as a benevolent extension of medicine and claiming that deviations from the norm were illnesses.

Szasz (1967) viewed mental illness as no more than a set of tactics used by individuals to deal with their lives. He believed that these tactics were like a language that could be understood and explored. Szasz theorized that individuals who sought psychotherapy did not understand the tactics, or languages they used to cope with their lives. The role of the psychotherapist was to translate that language. In viewing psychotherapy through this lens, there was no room for etiologies or pathologies.

If [mental illness] is a language, looking for its “etiology” is about as sensible as looking for the etiology of mathematics. A language has a history, a geographic distribution, and many other characteristics, but it cannot be said to have an “etiology.” (p. 122)

Szasz claimed that procreation had been used to justify attempts to control homosexual behavior; however, a true of understanding homosexuality meant understanding why a society condemned the behavior. This required an analysis of the values of a society, instead of the laws of nature. According to Szasz, attempts to change an individual’s sexual orientation were not a matter of curing the individual. They were a matter of changing the individual’s values. Therefore, curing homosexuality meant imposing the therapist’s values on the client—not unlike a religious conversion. Despite the fact that Szasz was among the first mental health practitioners to question the idea that homosexuality was a mental illness, his tactics were abrasive to members of his

profession and he was generally viewed a raving mad man by his colleagues (Bayer, 1981).

Judd Marmor

Judd Marmor, a psychoanalyst in Los Angeles, was a favorite among the Hollywood elite. During his tenure as vice president of the American Psychiatric Association, Marmor provided the language and reasoning for conceptualizing homosexuality in a way that softened Szasz's attacks on psychiatry, while at the same time promoting Szasz's ideas.

Like Szasz, Marmor believed that clinicians were instrumental in assisting individuals who deviated from cultural norms in coping with that deviation. However, to change the diagnosis of homosexuality meant that a large number of psychiatrists would be admitting they had made a mistake and had subjected patients to unnecessary trauma and degradation. Marmor was a better politician than Szasz. Instead of launching a confrontational attack on the discipline of psychiatry, Marmor suggested that the classification of homosexuality as a pathology would have to change as social values changed. He suggested that a psychiatric diagnosis that impeded an individual's ability to cope with their deviation from cultural norms was unacceptable. Therefore, psychiatry was obliged to assist homosexuals in their struggle for acceptance. The first step was to eliminate homosexuality as a psychopathology from the psychiatric nosology.

With the evolving acceptance of non-procreative sex and contraception, a better understanding of the complicated nature of sex and sexuality, and the highly organized political strategies of the gay community, Marmor was able to frame this change in such

a way as to save face for psychiatry, effectively depathologizing homosexuality in 1973 (Bullough, 1994). The members' vote to remove homosexuality from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* changed a position held by the American Psychiatric Association for nearly 100 years.

The Construction of Lesbians as Inferior to Heterosexual Women and Gay Men

While the historical account of the construction of gay men as inferior to heterosexual men is rich and descriptive, the historical account of lesbians is little more than a historical side note. Moreover, while the “madness” of women has been the primary focus of psychoanalytic theoreticians and has served to maintain women in a subjugated position to men, lesbians were of secondary concern even in the deliberations of women's mental health (Bowman, 1954; Caprio, 1954; Chesler, 1997; Freud, 1963; Wolff, 1971).

Examples of Historical Constructs of Lesbian

Prior to the declassification of homosexuality as a mental illness, few scientists showed an interest in the study of lesbians. This is not surprising given the fact that women were often classified as little more than children. Lesbian activities were viewed as childish play between women. For those few who did study or theorize about lesbians, this was often secondary to their interest in gay men.

Early scientists who theorized about the etiology of lesbianism often attributed the cause to gender roles such as mothering and motherhood that had gone awry (Bergler, 1949; Freud, 1962, 1963; Marañón, 1932). Over time, as discussions about the subjugation of women became vogue, theorists began to develop theories that attributed

lesbianism to the subjugation of women (Adler, 1982; Beauvoir, 1974). Later, when feminism began to be viewed as threatening, sexologists began to fuse feminism and lesbianism and characterize both as pathological (Faderman, 1981).

There were very few studies of lesbians prior to the declassification of homosexuality as a mental illness. Karl von Westphal, a professor of psychiatry in Berlin, conducted what was perhaps the first study of lesbians in a case history of a young woman who dressed as a boy. She had purportedly preferred boys' games since childhood, and was sexually attracted to other women (Bullough, 1976; 1977).

Other studies conducted during this time found astonishingly high rates of same-sex feelings and encounters between women. Researchers reported that between 28% and 50% of women studied had intense relationships or feelings for other women (Davis, 1929; Kinsey, 1953). Moreover, between 8% and 26% had sexual encounters with other women (Davis, 1929; Dickinson & Beam, 1934; Hamilton, 1929; Kinsey). It is unclear why these findings are so high. Perhaps the invisibility of women and the blithe views of women's relationships made it easier and more acceptable for women to love other women.

Some researchers believed same-sex attraction among women was a type of rehearsal that prepared women for their adult roles as mothers and wives (Hamilton, 1929). Therefore, it is not surprising that researchers believed treatment for lesbianism should include specialized training in domestic activities so that girls felt more secure in performing and supervising them in the home (Henry, 1948). As seen in the study of gay

men, later studies of lesbians often attributed lesbianism to inadequate parenting (Caprio, 1954; Chideckel, 1935; Henry).

Empirical Constructs of Lesbian Since the Declassification of Homosexuality as a Mental Illness

With the declassification of homosexuality as a mental illness in 1973, the door was opened for the development of non-pathological theories about homosexuality. Nonetheless, lesbians continued to be constructed as inferior to, or less important than, other groups. For example, in a groundbreaking study funded by the National Institute of Mental Health's Task Force on Homosexuality, Alan Bell and Martin Weinberg (1978) sought to study the development of sexual preference in lesbians and gay men. Their sample was comprised of more than twice as many gay men (686) as lesbians (293). Although lesbians and gay men were studied as separate groups, it was clear that the study of gay men was a priority.

First, because of their greater number and visibility, the problems and adaptations of homosexual men were of greater interest to the sponsor of our study (the National Institute of Mental Health) than were those of lesbians. Second, since our Chicago pilot study had only to do with homosexual men and since others' research in this area has been chiefly confined to men, it seemed important for us to have a large enough sample of homosexual men to be able to compare our data with those of other studies. Finally, we supposed that it would be an easier task for us to find more male than female respondents because homosexual men tend

to be more openly engaged in the gay world than are their female counterparts. (p. 34)

Literature reviews of articles and research published in the field of counseling and counseling-related disciplines show that binary constructs of lesbians and gay men continued in empirical research despite the declassification of homosexuality as a psychopathology.

Morin (1977) reviewed psychological research conducted with lesbians and gay men published during the eight-year period prior to the declassification of homosexuality as a mental illness from 1967 through 1974. He found evidence of heterosexual vs. homosexual constructs, which he labeled *heterosexual bias*. He recommended a reconceptualization of homosexuality in empirical research by revisiting the way in which questions were formulated and data was collected and interpreted. Morin also found evidence of gay male vs. lesbian constructs that presented lesbian issues as inferior to those of gay men. During the period studied, research on gay men outnumbered studies of lesbians 4 to 1.

The historical practice of presenting men as the “gold standard” by focusing on male samples and generalizing those findings to women would suggest that the research in Morin’s (1977) review likely generalized research findings from the study of gay men to the lesbian population. However, since Morin’s research focused on heterosexual bias, he did not evaluate the literature for androcentrism. Interestingly, Morin’s own research suggests that the practice of generalizing research findings from gay men to lesbians may have been so commonplace that he failed to see it in his own rhetoric. As the following

quotation shows, Morin believed there were clear differences between lesbians and gay men.

First, the finding that there are approximately four times as many studies of homosexual males as of lesbians supports both the contention that homosexuality is seen as a more serious “problem” in males for a variety of reasons and the contention that lesbians, and to a large extent women in general, have been ignored in research. Findings from research that has employed both lesbians and homosexual males tend to emphasize the uniqueness of the experiences of the two groups. Generalizations of findings from one group cannot be reasonably applied to the other. (p. 632)

Although Morin’s rhetoric claimed that lesbians and gay men were different, all of his recommendations assumed that the future research needs of lesbians were the same as those of gay men, thereby maintaining the position of lesbians as inferior to, or less important than gay men.

Using the same methodology as Morin (1977), Watters (1986) reviewed empirical research published after the declassification of homosexuality as a mental illness from 1979 to 1983. He found that the average number of studies on homosexuality had nearly doubled from 17.4 to 33.2 studies. Moreover, he reported that heterosexual bias appeared to be improving. This was based on his finding that the research on homosexuality was moving away from etiological and pathological themes and toward themes that normalized the homosexual experience. Despite these improvements, Watters found that

researchers still appeared to be more interested in the study of men; there were 2 to 3 times more studies of gay men than lesbians.

Buhrke, Ben-Ezra, Hurley, and Ruprecht (1992) reviewed publications on lesbians and gay men published in the six journals most frequently referenced by counseling psychology professionals during the 12-year period from 1978 to 1989. They found that 43 out of 6,661 articles (.65%) addressed lesbian and gay issues. Among those 43 articles, 8 (18%) focused on lesbian-related issues, 12 (27%) focused on gay male-related issues, and 23 (51%) focused on both lesbians and gay men.

Buhrke and her associates (1992) concluded that the imbalance between the study of lesbians and gay men was no longer evident in counseling research. One might question whether the shift away from separate studies of lesbians and gay men and toward combining the two groups is truly an indication of equity.

To their credit, Buhrke (1992) and her colleagues were the first reviewers to highlight problems with generalizability, sampling, and research design in research on homosexuality. They also discussed the heterogeneity of homosexuals. These types of critical discussions laid the foundation for later questions about the existence of a true homosexual identity.

It is not surprising that researchers found a dramatic increase in articles on HIV/AIDS in gay men in the late 1980s. In a review of articles published in the three leading journals in family studies between 1980 and 1993, Allen and Demo (1995) noted an increase in the study of gay men with HIV/AIDS in family studies beginning in 1988. The human immunodeficiency virus gave new life to the good vs. bad, heterosexual vs.

homosexual constructs that had maintained the pathology of gay men, indeed all homosexuals, throughout the history of counseling theory. This shift in the research was followed by a small increase in the study of lesbian and gay relationships and families. This provided some foresight into the gendered binary constructs of marriage and family that are currently being played out today. These studies generally marginalize gay men.

Allen and Demo (1995) found that 12 (.5%) of the 2,598 family studies articles studied presented findings from empirical research conducted with lesbians and gay men. An additional 77 (2.96%) articles mentioned issues relevant to lesbians and gay men. To determine whether the paucity of research on homosexuality was unique to family studies, Allen and Demo also reviewed six leading journals in psychology, sociology, and human development. They found that only 15 (.3%) of the 5,465 articles published addressed issues relevant to lesbians and gay men. Allen and Demo constructed lesbians and gay men in terms of heterosexual vs. homosexual, while at the same time recommending a move away from research that reduced lesbians and gay men to their sexual orientation.

In their review of cultural diversity in rehabilitation literature published between 1984 and 1994, Harley, Feist-Price, and Alston (1996) found that only three (.19%) articles out of the 1,601 articles reviewed addressed sexual orientation. These researchers categorized lesbian and gay issues as just one of a number of potential multicultural distinctions. This emerging practice of reclassifying homosexuality as a multicultural group served to create a growing group of others who could be subjugated to dominant groups, even within the lesbian and gay community.

Clark and Serovich (1997) were the first reviewers to add bisexuality to their focus. In their review of 13,271 articles published in 17 marriage and family therapy journals between 1975 and 1995, they found that 77 articles (.58%) addressed lesbian, gay, or bisexual issues, or sexuality orientation. Like Allen and Demo (1995), Clark and Serovich noted a shift toward more articles on HIV/AIDS in the late 1980s.

Bell and Williamson (2002) reviewed 7,976 articles published in *Psychiatric Services* between 1950 and 1999 to determine the percentage of articles addressing the counseling needs of special populations. They found that only two articles (.025%) addressed the counseling needs of lesbians and gays. One article was published in 1996 and the other was published in 1999. They recommended that the journal devote a special section to lesbian and gay issues in the near future. As with many researchers conducting a content analysis of counseling and counseling-related journals, these researchers marginalized the unique counseling needs of lesbians by categorizing their counseling needs as the same as those of gay men.

In a review of the social work literature published between 1988 and 1997, Van Voorhis and Wagner (2002) found that 77 (3.92%) of the 1,964 articles addressed homosexuality; two-thirds (51) of those articles addressed HIV/AIDS in gay men. These researchers were the first to call for an evaluation of the way in which binary constructs of homosexuality and heterosexuality protects heterosexual and patriarchal power and privilege.

Like Allen and Demo (1995), Van Voorhis and Wagner (2002) also found a trend toward the study of homosexual families. Interestingly, all of the articles published on

homosexual families focused on lesbian samples. There were no articles published about the families of gay men. This finding suggests that gendered male vs. female stereotypes are evident in the literature on homosexuality as recently as 1997.

Chung and Katayama (1996) conducted a content analysis of 144 LGB studies published in the *Journal of Homosexuality* between 1974 and 1993. The *Journal of Homosexuality* publishes scholarly work in the disciplines of law, history, and the humanities. The most frequently studied groups were gay men (34.7%) followed by lesbians and gay men (24.3%) and lesbians (20.1%). Overall men were studied in 75.7% of the studies and women were studied in 57.6% of the studies. In a trend analysis to determine whether the under representation of women had improved over time, Chung and Katayama found little change.

Phillips and her colleagues (2003) echoed this concern. These researchers reviewed 5,628 articles published in eight major counseling psychology journals between 1990 and 1999. They found 119 articles (2.11%) with a significant focus on LGB issues; 33 of these articles were published in special issues or sections. A little more than half (64) of those articles were empirical.

In terms of gender, Phillips and her colleagues (2003) found that 42 (62%) of the 68 studies published (one article presented findings from 5 studies) combined lesbians and gay men. Among these studies, 25 (60%) used gender as a variable in the analysis. The researchers concluded that there continues to be a mistaken assumption on the part of researchers that the lesbian experience is the same as that of gay men. Overall, the articles focusing on gay men or gay and bisexual men were almost 3.5 times the number

of articles focusing on lesbian women only. Recall Morin's (1977) findings that research on gay men outnumbered studies of lesbians 4 to 1. His research was conducted on articles published before the declassification of homosexuality as a mental illness. Thus, the relative percentage of contemporary articles about lesbians vs. gay men (3.5 to 1) has remained virtually unchanged since the period just prior to the declassification of homosexuality as a mental illness in 1973 (4 to 1).

In addition, the researchers found that there was no significant increase in the number of articles being published on lesbian and gay issues between 1990 and 1999; the percentage of articles on these issues was steady over time (Phillips et al., 2003). Phillips and her colleagues also noted that contemporary studies failed to take into account the differences in attitudes toward gays, lesbians, and bisexuals (D'Augelli & Rose, 1990; Hogan & Rentz, 1996; Mohr & Rochlen, 1999; Phillips et al., 2003; Schiffman, DeLucia-Waack, & Gerrity, 2005; Simoni, 1996b).

Lee and Crawford (2007) studied psychological research between 1974-2001. They found that research on lesbians and gay men constituted less than 1% of the research reviewed. They also found that lesbians were significantly less likely to be studied than gay men. They concluded that the male continues to be a normative category even when coupled with sexual orientation. Moreover, research that included lesbians tended to study topics of sociocultural oppression for many women, such as aging, appearance, and weight. Thus, research tends to reinforce ideologies of conventional femininity in conjunction with ideologies of heterosexuality. Nonetheless, this group of topics has declined over time.

Methodological Problems in Lesbian Research

Content analyses of scholarly publications reveal that homosexuality in general, and lesbian issues in particular, are grossly underrepresented and ghettoized in the research. Moreover, the research that has been conducted often fails to meet rigorous research standards. Researchers who have conducted content analyses have offered valuable suggestions regarding the methodological changes that must occur to meet rigorous research standards. They have also offered valuable guidelines for the direction of future research on lesbian issues.

In an analysis of research in psychology over a 7 year period between 1967 and 1974, Morin (1977) offered several recommendations for future research. He recommended that researchers give higher priority to life-style issues including: (a) the dynamics of lesbian and gay relationships; (b) development of a positive identity; (c) variables associated with self-disclosure to others; (d) advantages and disadvantages of degrees of identity and commitment; (e) problems faced by lesbian and gay children and adolescents; (f) issues of aging; and (g) civil liberties. Morin also believed research should look more closely at the nature and meaning of attitudes toward homosexuality. He believed it was important to discuss methods for changing negative attitudes toward homosexuality. He also believed research should focus on social activism.

Watters (1986) evaluated counseling psychology research from 1979 to 1983 to determine whether progress had been made since Morin's (1977) earlier study. Watters echoed Morin's earlier call for additional research on identity, relationships, the advantages and disadvantages of self-disclosure, and issues faced by lesbian and gay

teens and the elderly. While research had begun in these areas, there remained a dearth of information on these issues. In addition, Watters recommended more comparative studies between homosexuality and heterosexuality on physiological and psychological dimensions. Like Morin, Watters saw value in research that studied attitudes toward homosexuality. He believed it would be beneficial to continue investigating the causes of homosexuality. He also believed it was important to look at the systems for describing homosexuality, as well as factors that “predispose, influence, precede, or affect the origin of sexual orientation” (p. 42).

Buhrke, Ben-Ezra, Hurley, and Reprecht (1992) provided a contextual investigation in their analysis of six counseling psychology journals over a 12-year period from 1978-1989. Based on their findings, Buhrke and her constituents recommended that current research address several issues of relevance to gay people including the impact of HIV/AIDS, ethnic minority and multiple minority issues, parenting and family issues, and career-related issues. Key methodological concerns included: (a) lack of representativeness; (b) small sample sizes; (c) inattention to ethnicity, invisibility, and polyculturalism; (d) inadequate geographic representation; (e) over-reliance on students and other individuals affiliated with universities as convenience samples; (f) assumptions that samples from lesbian and gay bars, organizations, or social events were homosexual; (g) failure to assess sexual orientation in samples presumed to be heterosexual; (h) failure to develop hypotheses based on counseling and psychological theory; and (i) a high reliance on self-report measures.

Allen and Demo (1995) recommended that sexual orientation be included in large-scale research that would contribute to knowledge that is more inclusive of all families. They believed relevant questions should be included in general population studies that would address the multiple contexts in which sexual orientation was expressed and experienced in families. Allen and Demo believed that researchers should use language that affirmed the complexity of the lesbian and gay experience, but did not reduce lesbian and gay people to their sexual orientation. These researchers also recommended detailed research of lesbian and gay families that would shed light on the intersections of sexual orientation and gender in families, including the ability of gay families to cope with stigma.

Chung and Katayama (1996) recommended that samples be more inclusive, especially with regard to women and bisexual men and women. They found that homosexuality was assumed in one-third of the studies reviewed and heterosexuality was assumed in almost one-fourth of the studies using heterosexual participants. Thus, the researchers recommended that heterosexuality and homosexuality be clearly defined and assessed. Specifically, they recommended a 2-by-2 multidimensional model for assessing sexual orientation. They recommended that researchers determine what constructs they are studying (e.g., sexual identity versus sexual orientation). Finally, they recommended that researchers follow the accepted standard format for reporting findings on empirical research (i.e., Introduction, Methodology, Results, and Discussion).

Harley, Feist-Price, and Alston (1996) conducted a content analysis of five rehabilitation journals between 1984 and 1994 to determine cultural diversity. They

reported that research on sexual orientation was one of several research deficiencies in rehabilitation literature.

In a review of social work journals between 1988 and 1997, Van Voorhis and Wagener (2002) found that articles on homosexuality focused overwhelmingly on intervention geared toward assisting lesbian and gay male clients in adapting to heterosexist environments or assisting social workers in becoming more sensitive in their work with lesbian and gay male clients. They noted that this is only the first step in addressing heterosexism. They warned that the individualistic focus of literature on lesbians and gay men subtly blames the victim while leaving institutional practices that perpetuate heterosexism intact. Their analysis revealed a strong need for articles that discussed the ways in which assimilation protected heterosexual and patriarchal power and privilege. In their review of 17 marriage and family therapy journals from 1975 to 1995, Clark & Serovich (1997) also emphasized the importance of critically examining underlying assumptions with regard to sexual orientation.

Phillips and her colleagues (2003) studied LGB-related articles published in eight major counseling psychology journals between 1990 and 1999. They noted that while sampling procedures were improving and researchers were noting the limitations to generalizability due to sampling procedures. Nonetheless, convenience sampling, snowball sampling, or a combination of the two continued to be used frequently in research on homosexuality. They also noted that many studies of homosexuality failed to take gender into account. They recommended that scholars refrain from assuming that

lesbians, gays, and bisexual women and men represent a homogenous population or that the attitudes toward them are the same (Phillips et al., 2003).

Phillips and her colleagues (2003) also found that half of the empirical research in counseling journals failed to articulate how their research was based in theory. Moreover, with the exception of identity development, theory-based research failed to test LGB-specific theories.

These researchers noted a paucity of research on LGB people of color and bisexual women and men. Additionally, 18% of the studies reviewed failed to provide information about the race/ethnicity of their sample. They recommended that Caucasian researchers cultivate ties with people of color, actively recruit LGB people of color, describe the racial/ethnic composition of their sample, and build theory regarding the experience of multiple identities. Other neglected topics included LGB people with disabilities, transgender people, and family and parenting issues (Phillips et al., 2003).

Phillips and her colleagues (2003) noted increased methodological diversity in counseling research related to LGB people. They applauded the increase in qualitative designs and highlighted their importance in building theories. They also noted that quantitative research was constrained by a lack of validated instruments for measuring LGB-related constructs, especially in the area of attitudes toward LGB people. Finally, these researchers noted the importance of considering constructionist ideas, such as queer theories, in the study of sexual orientation. They noted the importance of challenging dichotomous essentialist models of sexual orientation.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Within the past 15 years, research on homosexuality has entered a new phase with the emergence of queer theories (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994a). Queer theories developed parallel with feminist poststructural theories and emerged from humanities-based cultural studies. These theories mounted a charge against traditional epistemologies and broadened the focus of research and theory on homosexuality. In contrast with previous research on lesbian identity, the underpinnings of homosexuality and heterosexuality have become the focus of study. Through a queer lens, the researcher investigates the reality of the experience versus the experience itself (Gamson, 2000; Kong, Mahoney, & Plummer, 2002). While feminist poststructural and queer theoretical epistemologies are well-known in other disciplines, many counselors have not begun to tap into the potentials of queer theories.

Queer theories challenge the authority of a normal lesbian or gay identity. They reason that the construction of a normal lesbian or gay identity has marginalized anti-identities or other categories of identity (e.g., transgender, bisexual, sadomasochism, or butch-fem). Moreover, queer theories challenge that normal lesbians and gays have undertaken the task of policing or regulating non-heterosexual identities.

The non-specificity of queer theories protects them from the criticism that earlier theories were essentialist or exclusionist (Jagose, 1996). Like feminist poststructuralism, they are sourced to the work of French historian Michel Foucault (1978) who argued that homosexuality was a modern formation. Foucault noted that while homosexual behaviors were present in nearly all early cultures, concepts of homosexuality as pathological are a

modern construction. He highlighted the fact that without the construction of homosexuality, heterosexuality fails to exist.

Foucault argued that power was not a fundamentally repressive force (M. Morris & Patton, 1979). Therefore, individuals with marginalized sexual identities are not victims. Since Foucault did not think power was repressive, he did not believe liberationist standpoint strategies brought about transformation. He believed that lesbian and gay identity politics merely replicated irresolvable differences (Jagose, 1996).

Perhaps the best known theorist to discuss the risks and limitations of identity is Judith Butler (1990). In her book, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Butler discussed how gender operates to privilege heterosexuals. She argued that feminism works against its own goals when it uses *woman* as its focus because woman is a fictional construct that serves to reproduce normal sex, gender, and heterosexual desire. Butler argued that instead of using the common strategy of normalizing same-sex desire, activists should argue against any commitment to gender. In so doing, there are no core or essential representations of gender.

Butler (1990) argued that heterosexuality is normalized by the repetition of normative gender identities. These identities are enforced through prohibition, taboo, ostracism, and even the threat of death. These naturalized identities can be contested through parody. For example, the practice of “drag”—wearing clothing and behaving in ways typical of one sex by a member of the opposite sex—might be viewed as a model for deconstructing common assumptions about the naturalness of gender. Butler warned,

however, that gender identity is much more complex than putting on or taking off clothing.

By highlighting the way in which individuals *perform* their identities, Butler's (1990) work denaturalized sexes, genders, sexualities, bodies, and identities. She believed identity categories were instruments of regulation. Therefore, she questioned homosexual as a natural identity, as well as the political strategies of coming out and gay pride. Instead, Butler called for a more precarious state of identity.

Although these theoretical ideas developed within academia, they are just one part of the context of queer theories. The activism and theories that arose out of the HIV/AIDS epidemic also led to the generation of queer theories. For example, the HIV/AIDS epidemic brought a shift in the emphasis away from sexual identities and toward sexual practices. Moreover, it created a shift in political coalitions. Political activism began to include non-homosexual people with HIV/AIDS, bisexuals, transsexuals, sex workers, health care providers, and parents and friends of gays. This resulted in a shift away from an essential gay identity. In short, the need for resistance against the construction of HIV/AIDS as a gay disease called for a radical revision in lesbian and gay identity politics. Identity politics had failed to attend to the differences within the HIV/AIDS movement. Moreover, it had failed to collaborate with other liberation movements. Queer theories addressed the historical failures and limitations of identity politics (Jagose, 1996).

Queer theories are a form of resistance to whatever is constituted as normal. It has no consistent set of characteristics; it is always ambiguous and relational. This makes the

concept of queer difficult to study; however, its ambiguity makes it attractive to gay activists because it calls into question sexual identity by deconstructing the systems that maintain those identities. Moreover, since queer can only be a self-identification, queer cannot be used as an empirical label to describe a subject's characteristics.

Queer theories have many opponents, with lesbians being among the most vociferous. Lesbians are suspicious that queer theories conceal a generic masculinity. They fear that queer theories will continue to submerge and silence lesbians, maintaining their invisibility.

Opponents of queer theories have raised concerns about the complicated vocabulary and complex models of analysis used in queer theories. They believe queer theories are elitist and inaccessible to individuals outside the academy. Opponents of queer theories also raise concerns that the ambiguous term queer will be seized by deviant sexualities who will attempt to claim oppression and undermine the hard-won battle for respectability. Moreover, some lesbians, especially older lesbians, view the term queer as offensive and fear the word will bring with it the hate, discrimination, and violence queer once embodied (Jagose, 1996).

Proponents of queer theories believe that a lesbian identity serves to reinforce heterosexual supremacy because heterosexual cannot exist without the presence of a homosexual identity. They argue that proponents of lesbian identity are attempting to use common sense to defend their identity when common sense is nothing more than a social construction that preserves the superiority of heterosexuality. Proponents of the term queer see its use as an act of reclamation by removing it from its historical heterosexist

context. They argue that the conflicting meanings of queer are one of its most valuable characteristics.

Proponents of queer theories believe that academic work is no less effective than long-recognized means of political activities, such as pickets, rallies, marches, lobbying, and petitioning, which are signs of the assimilation of lesbians and gays into mainstream culture and values. Moreover, they believe that limiting theoretical perspectives to only those that are understood by non-specialists would limit the effectiveness of the theories.

Conclusion

To understand the way lesbians have been conceptualized by traditional counseling theories is to understand the way lesbians have been departmentalized and ghettoized to a dominant group throughout history. Counselors must seek new theoretical epistemologies that challenge binary constructs which serve to maintain the subjugation of lesbians. In the words of Alfred Kinsey,

The world is not to be divided into sheep and goats. Not all things are black nor all things white. It is a fundamental of taxonomy that nature rarely deals with discrete categories. Only the human mind invents categories and tries to force facts into separated pigeon-holes. The living world is a continuum in each and every one of its aspects. The sooner we learn this concerning human sexual behavior the sooner we shall reach a sound understanding of the realities of sex. (1948, p. 639)

Queer theories provide a framework for illuminating insidious hierarchies of power and determining who benefits from those constructs. It is the goal of this study to

provide counselors with a holistic, sociopolitical picture of the lesbian experience that moves beyond the historical views of Lesbian. Therefore, queer theories will be used alongside traditional qualitative methodologies to provide a richer and more insightful analysis of the findings. Chapter III provides specific information regarding how this will be achieved.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology that was used for collecting and analyzing the data for this research. It describes *LC*, including its discussion forum and subscribers. The findings of the pilot study are presented along with its methodological limitations and the changes that were made in the full 30-year study. Finally, information regarding the steps that will be taken to assure the trustworthiness of the findings and the confidentiality of *LC* subscribers are discussed.

Research Question

While focusing on the experiences, stories, accounts, debates, and explanations of the lesbian readers of *LC*, this research will analyze discussions in *LC* to answer the following question:

- I. Based on the discussion forum of *LC*, what issues appear to be of importance to subscribers participating in the discussion forum of *LC*?
 - A. Are those issues related to sociopolitical activities within and outside of the cultural discourse of the time?
 - B. Have those issues changed over time? If so, how have those issues changed and what are the potential meanings of those changes?
 - C. What are the contradictions within those issues?
 - D. What are the effects of those issues?

About *Lesbian Connection*

LC is the longest running publication for lesbians in the US. It was launched in October 1974 by a lesbian collective living in Lansing, MI. *LC* was designed to create

grassroots lesbian networks and provide a discussion forum for lesbians. Its founders used only their first names or the *nom de guerre* “Ambitious Amazons” (M. Stein, 2003).

The Ambitious Amazons published *LC* for ten years with only a donated typewriter until a special fund drive raised enough money for the purchase of two computers. The Ambitious Amazons taught themselves to use an offset printer and printed *LC* in-house on an antiquated offset printer for many years. For the first seven years, *LC* was produced completely by volunteer labor. In 1981, workers began to be reimbursed for their work. Since each woman was considered equally valuable, all workers, regardless of their responsibility, were paid the same wage (M. Stein, 2003).

From the beginning, the Ambitious Amazons insisted on adherence to lesbian feminist principles in the creation and production of *LC* and were committed to making the magazine inclusive of all lesbians. The lesbian feminist principles of the collective led them to encourage the inclusion of a wide variety of voices; thus, *LC* is written in large part by its readers. In the view of the Ambitious Amazons, women are the experts of their own lives. Reader contributions are edited only for clarity and length and the only restriction is that the content must be lesbian-positive. *LC* is also egalitarian in its outreach and has been free to lesbians from the beginning of its publication (M. Stein, 2003).

In November/December, 2004, *LC* published the 30th anniversary edition of *LC*. At that time, two of the original Ambitious Amazons still remained on staff, assisted by six full-time staff members, and a group of volunteers. The publication continued to be free to lesbians with a suggested donation of \$4.50 per issue or \$27.00 per year.

As of the anniversary edition, the Ambitious Amazons have published 27 volumes and 170 issues of *LC*. *LC* is published under the auspices of “Elsie” (*LC*) Publishing Institute, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation. *LC* currently has several regular features and each publication includes a letter from the Ambitious Amazons and staff.

The Articles & News feature provides news of special interest to lesbians from around the world. The Letters feature provides an outlet for readers to ask questions, express opinions or ideas, or share information with other readers. The Responses feature provides the opportunity for readers to respond to letters or other items in the publication. Together, the Letters and Responses features make up the *LC* discussion forum that was studied in this research.

LC prints a Directory of Contact Dykes annually in the March/April issue of their publication. Contact Dykes are women on the mailing list of *LC* who volunteer to provide information about the area in which they live to lesbian tourists or lesbians who are moving to their area. The only qualification to be included in the directory is to have a stable address and a willingness to assist other lesbians. Contact Dykes have full control over how they are listed. The first Contact Dyke Directory, published in 1974, contained 15 listings. The March/April 2004 edition contained 1,500 listings from 28 countries, 8 Canadian provinces, and every state in the US.

The first publication of *LC* was comprised of sixteen 8 ½” x 11” typewritten pages that were stapled at the top left-hand corner. The pages were folded in half for mailing, with numerous staples placed around the outside edges to protect the confidentiality of subscribers. Its original run was four hundred copies, on a budget of

\$110. To keep costs down, the Ambitious Amazons asked other lesbian groups to reproduce and distribute *LC* to lesbians on their mailing lists (M. Stein, 2003).

The publishers also tried to stretch dollars in other ways. They pushed a 1,000-copy mimeograph master to print 3,000 copies, and held fundraisers, potluck dinners, and dances to raise funds for *LC*. Their hard work paid off. In the two months between the first and second volumes, circulation tripled. By 2003 they were printing 25,000 copies and the cost of producing and mailing the issue was \$70,000 (M. Stein, 2003).

As of the anniversary issue, *LC* is center stapled to create a 7" x 10" booklet. The inside pages are white with black computer-typeset print. The cover is slick cardstock featuring a color print of lesbian art, crafts, or photography on the outside of the cover and full color advertising on inside of the cover. *LC* is now delivered in a plain brown manila envelope. The return address reads: "Helen Diner Memorial Women's Center, Ambitious Amazons, PO Box 811, East Lansing MI 48826." To protect the privacy and safety of its readers, no other identifying information is printed on the envelope.

About the Subscribers to *Lesbian Connection*

The November/December 2000 issue of *LC* published the most recent analysis of *LC* subscribers available. The editors reported that approximately 20,300 separate households received *LC* and 2,000 issues were mailed in bulk packages of five to places offering to distribute *LC*. This included bookstores, centers, coffeehouses and restaurants, bed and breakfast inns and guesthouses, and individual women who took them to activities in their area.

The ten largest cities and towns on the mailing list and the number of subscribers in descending order were as follows: Toronto, Ontario, 417; Columbus, OH, 285; Chicago, IL, 260; Lansing, MI, 242; Indianapolis, IN, 199; Minneapolis, MN, 195; New York, NY, 193; San Francisco, CA, 186; Madison, WI, 169; and Ann Arbor, MI, 153.

The top 10 cities represented 5,878 of *LC* subscribers. An almost equal number of subscribers (5,427) were from cities with only one or two *LC* subscribers. Nearly two dozen subscribers made up only one or two subscribers from their entire country (Antigua, Antilles, Belgium, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, El Salvador, Finland, Guatemala, Nepal, Nigeria, Paraguay, Russia, Sweden, Hong Kong, India, Mexico, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Singapore, and Zimbabwe).

Nearly 1,300 of *LC* subscribers lived in 43 countries outside the US, as well as US territories/commonwealths (Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands). The top ten countries outside the US and the number of subscribers were: Canada, 1,066; England, 43; Germany, 39; Australia, 27; New Zealand, 21; France, 15; Japan, 11; Switzerland, 9; Scotland, 7; Israel, 6; and Netherlands, 6.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to test the methodology and to determine the usefulness of *LC* discussions in providing a sociopolitical picture of the lesbian experience that would be helpful to counselors. The pilot study was rooted in the conviction that positivist science can never fully represent the reality of the lesbian experience. Grounded in standpoint theory, the pilot study assumed that the group position of lesbians in the hierarchy of political power produced a shared experience and

a unique body of knowledge for lesbians. The pilot study sought to define that experience and knowledge, thereby allowing counselors to understand the context of Lesbian in a heterosexist world.

Goals of the Pilot Study

Focusing on the experiences, stories, accounts, debates, and explanations of the lesbian readers of *LC*, the pilot study sought to answer four questions.

1. Based on the discussion forum of *LC*, what issues appeared to be of most importance to lesbians?
2. How were those issues relevant to the counseling student, the counselor educator, the counselor supervisor, practicing counselors, the counselor consultant, and the counselor researcher?
3. Did the findings of the pilot study support, modify, contradict, or add to the current body of research on lesbian issues in counseling?
4. Did the findings of this pilot study warrant a complete study of *LC* over the past three decades from 1974 to 2004?

Methodology

A content analysis was conducted on 12 issues of *LC* published during the two-year period beginning with Volume 23, Issue 3, November/December 2000 and ending with Volume 25, Issue 2, September/October 2002. Content analysis is rooted in the work of Bernard Berelson (1952). It is a standard methodology in the social sciences for studying the content of communication and involves studying the manifest or surface data

by isolating, counting, and interpreting themes, issues, and recurring motifs within the text. This method relies heavily on quantification of the data (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994b).

Content analysis enables the researcher to study large amounts of textual information and systematically identify its properties. Yet such amounts of textual information must be categorized according to a certain theoretical framework, which will inform the data analysis, providing at the end a meaningful reading of the content being studied. In this case, the theoretical framework was standpoint theory which assumes that a group position within the hierarchy of political power produces a shared experience and unique body of knowledge (Hill Collins, 1998). The pilot study sought to describe that shared experience and unique body of knowledge, thereby allowing counselors to understand the context of Lesbian in a heterosexist world.

The data was comprised of 88 discussions and 253 responses. Working from the most recent issue to the oldest issue, letters published in the Responses section of *LC* were matched with the letter(s) published in the Letters section or other item published in *LC* that prompted the response. All of the responses were stapled to the original letter or item that prompted the response with a card indicating the year, month, volume, issue, and page number of the *LC* in which the original letter or item appeared. The card also had a space for the total number of general responses, editor's notes, and updates as well as several lines for noting possible categories into which the discussion might be placed.

Once all of the letters or items and their responses were matched and stapled together, they were grouped into categories by themes and concepts and arranged in a continuum from items of discussion receiving the most responses to items of discussion

receiving the least number of responses within each category. Each discussion was then catalogued by category into a table in a continuum from items of discussion receiving the most responses, to items of discussion receiving the least number of responses. The table included the total number of discussions in the category, the location of the letter or item that prompted the discussion, the topic or title of the letter or item that prompted the discussion, the total number of original letters or items that prompted the discussion, the total number of responses by type of response (i.e., general response, editor's note, update), and the total number of responses overall.

Through an examination of the key discussions in each category and an examination of discussions receiving the most responses overall, a contextual description of the lesbian cultural arena was created. Finally, broader significance to the field of counseling was developed.

Findings of the Pilot Study

During the content analysis of the *LC* discussion forum, five concepts, or themes of importance to lesbians were identified: (a) isolation, safety, and aging; (b) children; (c) lesbian relationships and sexuality; (d) physical and mental health; and (e) political issues.

Isolation, Safety, and Aging

There were 19 items of discussion and 47 responses from readers regarding issues related to isolation, safety, and aging. Contributors to discussions in this category frequently indicated that *LC* was their only connection to other lesbians. Conversations centered around: (a) safe places for lesbians to live where there is an active lesbian

community; (b) assistance and exchanges of information for lesbians seeking assisted living and retirement communities; (c) the isolation of lesbians working in nontraditional trades; (d) the difficulties of meeting other lesbians—including the loneliness and isolation of lesbian teens, older lesbians, lesbians of color, lesbians living in poverty, and homeless lesbians; e) lesbian celebrations—including crowning ceremonies (celebrations of the wisdom and knowledge of aging lesbians) and vision quests (spiritual retreats to nature); and (f) assistance and information exchange for aging lesbians living on fixed incomes or lesbians living in poverty.

The most discussed issue in this category surrounded the May/June 2000 mailing of *LC*. Following the mailing, the *LC* editors and staff learned that the company handling mailings in Canada had placed small white stickers on them that read, “Lesbian Connection CPM #1733370.”

The editors of *LC* go to great measures to protect the safety and privacy of their subscribers by mailing the publication in a manila envelope bearing no specific information regarding its contents. Understandably, they were upset that many of their Canadian subscribers had been inadvertently outed by this incident. The editors wrote letters of apology to every woman involved in the incident offering their assurance that this would never happen again.

Children

There were 7 separate items of discussion and 17 letters addressing issues faced by lesbians who have or want children in their families. The two most frequently

discussed issues addressed the isolation experienced by many lesbian mothers and discussions about in vitro fertilization.

Other items of discussion in this category included: (a) exchanges of information for lesbians seeking children through assisted reproductive technologies; (b) comfort and encouragement for lesbians trying to conceive; (c) exchanges of information for lesbian mothers seeking to adopt; (d) a letter from a case worker seeking adoptive lesbian families; (e) a letter from a lesbian couple seeking feedback from other lesbian couples who were raising the children of relatives; and (f) a letter describing the Bat Mitzvah experience of the daughter of lesbian mothers.

Relationships and Sexuality

There were 21 items of discussion, 75 responses, 2 editor's notes, and 2 updates in the Relationships and Sexuality category. The most discussed issue in this category was also the most discussed issue over the two years reviewed in this research. In the September/October, 2000 issue of *LC*, a couple wrote regarding their dog's participation in their sex life. This letter prompted outrage from many readers. Nonetheless, some readers expressed gratitude for an uncensored discussion forum for lesbians. Others were more alarmed by the vicious letters from readers than by the letter that prompted the criticism.

Another item in this category that received a large number of responses was from a woman who was considering canceling her subscription to *LC* because she had entered into an intimate sexual relationship with a man and believed she could no longer identify as lesbian. The writer discussed issues surrounding the labeling of sexuality and

wondered whether her isolation from the lesbian community, recovery from a breakup, and the fact that she had just turned 30 and wanted to conceive a child were related to her four-month relationship with a man. Every response from the readers of *LC* offered support and comfort. In a follow-up letter, the writer indicated she had put the past behind her and no longer questioned her identity as a lesbian.

There were 19 additional discussions in the Relationship and Sexuality category. Discussions included exchanges of information regarding various relationship issues including: (a) how to maintain healthy lesbian relationships, (b) commitment ceremonies, (c) issues surrounding changing or combining surnames, (d) same-sex intimate abuse, (e) claiming a disabled partner on income taxes, (f) sex between adolescent girls and older women, (g) sex between adolescent girls and children, (h) attraction to straight women, (i) inappropriate vs. appropriate advertising related to sexuality in *LC*, and (j) the death of a partner.

Health/Mental Health

The Health/Mental Health category contained 15 items of discussion and 62 responses. One of the most discussed issues in this category was a letter from a reader considering weight-reduction surgery. In addition, the July/August 2001 To Our Health section of *LC* contained three letters from readers suffering from chronic fatigue syndrome and fibromyalgia. These readers were seeking information and support from other subscribers in dealing with these illnesses. These letters received an equally large number of responses.

Other items of discussion in this category included: (a) smoking and alcohol, (b) sexual harassment from a female physician, (c) migraine headaches, (d) Asperger's Syndrome, (e) breast cancer, (f) suicide, (g) genital herpes, (h) psychologically abusive parents, (i) fibroids, (j) pap smears, (k) colon cancer, and (l) Epstein Barr Syndrome. Also included in the discussions was a survey conducted by www.gayhealth.com, which found that the top five health concerns of lesbians were depression, breast cancer, cervical cancer, menstrual pain, and estrogen replacement therapy.

Political Issues

The Political Issues category was comprised of discussions that highlighted the ways in which the life of a lesbian woman is politically delimited and determined by an oppressive system. It was made up of 26 items of discussion and 53 responses.

The item of discussion receiving the most responses in this category came from a reader asking for help with frustration, confusion, and rage resulting from her encounters with sexism. Another highly discussed issue in this category was the perception of a growing sense of apathy in the lesbian community. Some respondents expressed concern about the deterioration of lesbian-only spaces; others criticized the ideologies of separatist lesbians. Writers expressed concern over the rapid dissolution of lesbian organizations and bookstores, the paucity of environmental and political awareness and activities in the lesbian community, and the general decline of feminism. They also expressed the need for more lesbian philanthropists.

Several readers wrote to express anger that lesbian causes continue to be ignored by some gay men, while at the same time lesbians are expected to join the ranks of gay

men in solidarity with their concerns. Similarly, lesbians wrote to discuss the exclusion of lesbians from historical accounts of women. For example, the Women's Museum in Dallas, Texas ignores the role lesbians have played in women's history.

Readers wrote about numerous attempts from others to silence lesbian voices and make them invisible. For example, a rap song protesting the sexist lyrics of male rappers was banned and a lesbian family's rainbow flag was taken from their home.

Subscribers discussed the oppressive prison system in the US. They wrote about the pain of being unfairly discharged from the armed services. They wrote about issues of gun control, the plight of women in Afghanistan, and Rosie O'Donnell's coming out. They debated whether lesbians choose their sexual orientation or are born lesbian. They criticized the editors of *LC* for using the female pronoun when reporting on the Teena Brandon ruling. (Teena Brandon, who identified as a female-to-male transgender man, was murdered in a vicious hate crime.) In addition, they mourned the loss of lesbians in the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center.

Discussion and Counseling Implications of the Pilot Study

The pilot study found that counselors seeking to conceptualize counseling intervention in the context of the lesbian client's world could gain invaluable knowledge and information from *LC* discussions. Most prevalent in these discussions were issues related to isolation, safety, aging, having and raising children, health concerns, mental health concerns, relationship issues, lesbian sexuality, and political issues.

Isolation, Safety, and Aging

Many lesbians indicated they lived in isolation and fear for their safety. The experience of being outed in their community could compromise their physical and emotional safety. This was particularly a concern for lesbian women living in rural communities. In addition, isolation was the most common factor arching across all categories in the pilot study. Lesbians faced the potential for violence or death simply for being who they were.

The findings suggested that it is important for counselors to be aware that in addition to the oppression of being a woman and a lesbian, their clients may also face multiple oppressions that serve to build additional walls of isolation. These barriers might be created as a result of adolescence, aging, race, poverty, disability, size, culture, language, or appearance, to name a few. The pilot study findings suggested that counselors should assess for all sources of isolation and provide contextually-based intervention that is sensitive to the many levels of marginalization faced by their clients.

The findings highlighted the fact that it is imperative that counselors continually assess the safety of their clients. All precautions should be taken to maintain the physical and emotional safety of clients seeking counseling, particularly when counseling in rural areas where the simple act of cashing a client's check at a local bank or acknowledging her at the grocery store can serve to compromise her confidentiality. Moreover, counselors should speak frankly with their clients about what will and will not be discussed with third party payers, such as insurance companies.

For the rural lesbian, the counselor may be the only individual in her community who knows she is a lesbian. Therefore, counselors must be aware of the resources available in their area where lesbians can find support from other lesbians or allies. Lesbians may be willing to drive long distances to find the support of other lesbians. Thus, counselors should also have knowledge of the resources available to their clients in surrounding areas, particularly in larger cities where there may be more active lesbian communities. Whenever possible, counselors should have first-hand knowledge about resources before providing a referral. Counselors should also be aware of safe ways for isolated lesbians to connect with the lesbian community via the internet or periodicals such as *LC*.

Counselors can take measures to let lesbians in their community know that they are allies. This can be achieved through simple measures such as using lesbian symbols on office doors, brochures, advertising, and business cards. Counselors can use inclusive language that does not presume the sexual orientation of their clients. An example would be using the word “partner” instead of “boyfriend” or “husband.” Counselors can also create an inclusive environment in their offices. For example counselors might have lesbian-identified literature or books on their bookshelves. Counselors can encourage frank, open discussions about any issue of concern to their client by creating a safe atmosphere of support and acceptance.

The pilot study findings suggest that it is crucial that counselors working with lesbian clients respect their client’s choices, especially in regard to coming out to others. Counselors should work with the client at whatever level they are in the coming out

process. To attempt to force a client to come out to others could be a physical or emotional death sentence. Counselors should remember that lesbians with compounded levels of isolation due to other marginalizing factors may need the support of their non-lesbian family and friends who may reject their lesbian identity. Only the client can make this difficult, life-changing decision.

Children

Counselors working with lesbians who want or have children must explore their own issues of heterosexism, specifically their ideas about lesbian families with children. Unless they can fully support, validate, and advocate for the lesbian client who wants children or has children, they cannot adequately provide for the most basic needs of their client.

In the pilot study, lesbian women with children often found that having children resulted in further isolation from the lesbian community. This was due, in part, to their perception that the lesbian community was generally intolerant of children. Some believed that families with children had more in common with other families with children, whether that family was lesbian or straight. This isolation was also related to the struggle of lesbian couples facing miscarriages, fertility problems, or difficulties with adoption.

Spending time with lesbians who had children was painful for those who had been unsuccessful in bringing children into their families. Many readers of *LC* were attempting to have children via in vitro fertilization, a process that requires a large financial investment. The pain of watching other lesbian couples conceive and give birth to

children, coupled with the financial strain and the emotional roller coaster produced by hormone treatments can affect every aspect of a lesbian's life.

In addition to the isolation of lesbian women with children and the emotional and financial strain of lesbian women wanting children, there is the additional strain of cultural attitudes toward lesbian mothers within the lesbian community. The pilot study found that some women in the lesbian community believe that women using in vitro fertilization to have children are arrogant in wanting to carry on their own lineage. However, this assumption ignores cultural, political, legal, and religious barriers erected to prevent lesbians from adopting. Adopted children are sometimes ripped unexpectedly from the arms of loving straight parents; it is not unreasonable to expect there is a greater chance of this occurring for lesbian families. There is clear and consistent evidence of courts seizing children from lesbian households or subjecting them to various "closet rules" that require a lesbian mother's partner to be absent or sleep in a separate bed when the child is visiting. Courts may disallow the child from staying overnight with their lesbian mother. Or they may order that the lesbian mother lose visitation if she lives with someone of the same sex (Adam, 1995).

Readers wrote to challenge misperceptions about adopted children. They underscored the fact that although some children awaiting adoption may be unhealthy, abused, or exposed to drugs, they are, nonetheless, children. These children are no less worthy of the happiness, joy, and love awaiting them in lesbian families.

Counselors should be prepared to help their clients discuss the unique issues faced by lesbians using assisted reproductive technology to achieve pregnancy, or lesbians

seeking to adopt. This may include discussing potential barriers to adoption and challenging the misperceptions clients may have about adoption. No matter how lesbian clients seek to bring children into their family, the counselor should not expect their clients to educate them about that process. Consultation and/or referral to professionals with experience and knowledge of the medical, legal, psychological, and sociocultural issues surrounding the creation of lesbian families is crucial. Whenever possible the counselor should seek to build interdisciplinary teams that include medical and legal professionals to assure quality and continuity of care. The counselor should always be prepared to advocate for their client in whatever capacity necessary to assure their client's rights and needs are protected and supported as they seek to build families of love.

Relationships and Sexuality

Debates regarding how a lesbian woman is defined are not unique to the lesbian feminist movement. The debate continues today. During a time when the political goal of many lesbians appears to be normalization, *LC* readers were outraged when a couple described allowing their dog to lick their nipples during lovemaking. Many readers were angry with the editors of *LC* for failing to use their editorial power to quash any suggestion that lesbians are sick.

Lesbian women live in a culture that tells them how they must speak, look, act, and behave, especially how they are to behave in bed. They are surrounded and impounded by a culture that exalts positivist research as the only true research that can

define how they should be. Moreover, they are surviving a history rooted in the idea that lesbians are criminal or pathological.

The findings of the pilot study suggest that counselors must be aware of their personal prejudices about sexual expression. They must be comfortable with their own sexuality, and comfortable discussing lesbian sexuality. They must be keenly aware of sociocultural controls that attempt to define sexuality in dichotomies of good and bad. Counselors must be positioned to help lesbians see the hierarchies of power that allow sexual actualization only through heterosexual marriage. In addition, they must be aware of the political structures that deny the validity and respectability of non-procreative sex.

Lesbians often struggle with self-identification and labels. In a culture that values rigid classification systems, lesbians who have fluid, changing sexual expressions may find themselves outcast by both the heterosexual and lesbian worlds. It is important for counselors to help lesbian clients celebrate their unique ways of knowing and being in the world. All clients can benefit from learning to resist cultural attempts to label their sexuality.

For those clients who value exclusive, monogamous lesbian relationships, counselors should be aware that some relationship issues are the same, regardless of the sex of the partners. Lesbians face the same hard work as heterosexuals in maintaining healthy, loving, long-term relationships. Moreover, they face the same stressors of partner abuse, infidelity, injury, illness, and death.

Differences between heterosexual and lesbian relationships are rooted in heterosexist and homophobic attitudes that pathologize lesbian relationships and isolate

lesbians from support systems when their relationships are struggling. Moreover, our legal system denies lesbians the rights and privileges their heterosexual counterparts enjoy. The lesbian client's counselor may be their only source of emotional support and advocacy when a relationship is strained or dissolving.

Health/Mental Health

The findings of the pilot study suggest that lesbians are deeply concerned about their health. They need accurate and dependable information about issues including obesity, drugs and alcohol abuse, smoking, suicide, cancer, and general health issues specific to lesbians. Counselors can help by forming alliances with health care providers to assure their clients receive the information they need to live healthy, productive lives. Counselors must be comfortable in their role as advocate for lesbians who are not receiving quality health care services, particularly for lesbians struggling with issues of poverty. Mental health assessments should include a thorough evaluation of past and present health concerns and evaluate the quality of healthcare the lesbian client is receiving.

Counselors can be prepared to provide intervention and support to lesbian clients facing a myriad of health and/or mental health concerns. Counselors should be cognizant that lesbians who are rejected by their families or friends may create *families of choice*. Those chosen families should be validated and integrated into the counseling environment as therapeutic systems of support for lesbians struggling with health and/or mental health issues.

The current system of mental health care in our country can effectively brand a lesbian as pathological for the remainder of her life. Thus, counselors must use caution to determine whether their heterosexist ideologies are interfering with their ability to assess, diagnose, and provide appropriate treatment to their lesbian clients.

Political Issues

The pilot study found that the political issues faced by lesbian clients are broad-based and systemic. Some readers of *LC* expressed the need for effective ways of dealing with the rage they experience as a result of their marginalization. The findings suggest that lesbians may find themselves isolated from the lesbian community when they do not agree with certain political ideologies or “measure up” to a given set of lesbian ideals. They may feel overwhelmed and frustrated by what appears to be growing apathy in the lesbian community as evidenced by the dissolution of lesbian bookstores, meeting places, and community centers. Lesbian women may feel angry with gay men who place demands on them for solidarity behind gay issues while ignoring lesbian issues. They may fail to see themselves included with heterosexual women in historical celebrations of women. Lesbians may find their voices silenced at the hands of oppression. Counselors can validate feelings of anger and subordination, help lesbian clients find positive ways of channeling their rage, and join the cause to end the subordination of lesbian women.

Conclusion

The pilot study concluded that discussions in *LC* provided findings that were extremely relevant to counselors. The findings, which were published in the *Journal of Counseling and Development*, (Erwin, 2006b) added to the current body of research on

lesbian issues in counseling and suggested that conducting a study of discussions in *LC* over the full 30 years of publication could further add to the current body of knowledge in the field of counseling.

Methodological Changes in the 30-Year Study

In addition to the content analysis used in the pilot study, there are generally two other possible approaches to analyzing and interpreting documents such as the discussions published in *LC*—narrative analysis and semiotics (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994b).

Narrative analysis arose from Siegfried Kracauer's (1953) critiques of Berelson's work in content analysis. Kracauer argued for a hermeneutical approach that involved the analysis of the latent or deeper data within the text. This involved reading documents as narratives or stories, and conducting an interpretive analysis of the narrative, temporal, and dramatic structures of the text.

Kracauer (1953) believed that simple quantification, as in content analysis, would result in inaccurate interpretation, especially when applied to voluminous amounts of data. He wrote,

The pilot study is, in fact, a model of qualitative exactitude and circumspections. But in the fuller study which follows, the development and testing of these rich hypotheses is entrusted to systematic quantification, in which both infrequencies are deemphasized, and the original overtly impressionist and accurate insights are not developed for lack of the very spirit in which they were conceived. (p. 641)

Kracauer (1953) eloquently described the concerns that rose out of the pilot study. While codifying and counting narratives in *LC* over a period of two years resulted in interesting information, the relatively small amount of data allowed the unique characteristics of the discussions to rise to the surface. Moreover, since the pilot study analyzed current discussions, the discussions were analyzed within their historical context. It was feared that using the same methodology for 30 years of data could result in the loss of important details and would fail to place the discussions within their historical and sociopolitical context.

Semiotics is rooted in the work of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. Saussure believed that words have no inherent meaning; a word is only a representation of something. It must be combined in the brain with the thing itself in order to form a meaning or sign. Saussure believed that in dismantling signs we can come to an empirical understanding of how humans make meaning of the world around them (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994b).

When semiotics is used to analyze and interpret documents, such as in the case of discussions in *LC*, it can become a tool for uncovering messages or discourses within the text that might otherwise be taken for granted. Thus, it can uncover different levels of meaning, as well as hidden motivations behind those meanings. When viewed through a queer lens, semiotics can be used to focus on the cultural discourses that define and maintain sexuality. (For a further discussion of queer theories see *Where Do We Go From Here?* in Chapter II.)

Many researchers making recommendations regarding the ways in which research on lesbian issues in counseling might be improved have begun to call for an analysis of the ways in which we define and maintain sexuality (See Methodological Problems in Lesbian Research in Chapter II); however, the pilot study had failed to analyze these hidden texts.

To address the concerns that arose from the pilot study, methodological and theoretical triangulation was developed for use in the full study. Specifically, content analysis was maintained to manage the sizeable amount of data, thereby isolating, counting, and interpreting themes, issues, and recurring motifs. The content analysis was supplemented by a narrative analysis which analyzed the narrative, temporal, and dramatic structure of the text within its historical context. Both the content analysis and narrative analysis were rooted in standpoint theory.

In addition, a semiotic analysis grounded in queer theories was conducted to explore the hidden sociopolitical structures influencing the text. Specifically, it sought to uncover how lesbians defined and redefined Lesbian over the course of the discussions. This triangulation of methodology addressed the concerns that arose out of the pilot study and strengthened the validity of the conclusions drawn from the research (Neuendorf, 2003).

The 30-year study also sought to address many of the other methodological problems, research standards, and directions for future research discussed in Chapter II (See Methodological Problems in Lesbian Research). This research drew its findings from a large sample of lesbians with diverse geographic representation and a high degree

of representativeness. It did not draw its findings from convenience samples, or samples obtained via lesbian bars, lesbian organizations, or lesbian social events. The study took into account the differences between lesbians, gay men, and bisexual women and men and did not assume that these groups were homogenous. It allowed the discussions to guide the direction of the research. Therefore, any and all of topics of importance to lesbians could potentially become the focus of the research. The study clearly articulated the theoretical and methodological triangulation used. Moreover, it gave voice to lesbians of all shapes, sizes, colors, religions, ethnicities, and abilities, to name a few.

The 30-year study analyzed 170 issues of *LC* over a period of 30 years from the October 1974 premier issue to the November/December 2004 30th anniversary issue. The procedures for conducting the content analysis were relatively unchanged from the pilot study. Working from the first issue to the most recent issue, responses to letters published in the Responses section of *LC* were matched with the letter published in the Letters section of *LC* or other item in *LC* that prompted the response (e.g., cover art, advertising, letter from the editor). All of the responses were stapled to the original letter or item that prompted the response with a card indicating the year, month, volume, issue, and page number of the *LC* in which the original letter or item appeared. The card also had a space for the total number of general responses, editor's notes, and updates as well as several lines for noting possible categories into which the discussion might be placed.

Once all of the letters or items and discussions were matched and stapled together, they were grouped into four five-year analysis periods (1974-1979, 1989-1994, 1994-1999, 1999-2004) and one ten-year cluster (1979-1989). (The decision to combine the

1979-1984 and 1984-1989 discussions came about when a break in publication during this time was discovered.) Next, they were grouped into categories by themes or concepts and arranged in a continuum from items of discussion receiving the most responses, to items of discussion receiving the least number of responses within each category. Each discussion was then catalogued by category in a table in a continuum from items of discussion receiving the most responses, to items of discussion receiving the least number of responses. The table included the total number of discussions in the category, the location of the letter or item that prompted the discussion, the topic or title of the letter or item that prompted the discussion, the total number of original letters or items that prompted the discussion, the total number of responses by type of response (i.e., general response, editor's note, update), and the total number of responses overall. To protect the identity of the contributors, the location of the original letter or item prompting the response(s) was removed from the tables in the published version of the tables seen in the appendices of this study. The content analysis detailed the most discussed topics in each category, the most discussed topics in each analysis period, and the most discussed topics over the full 30-year analysis period.

Next, a narrative analysis was conducted. This entailed preparing a written narrative detailing the most discussed topics by category within each analysis period. The narrative presented the historical context of the discussions along with key quotations from the letters and responses to help the reader gain insight into the tone of the letters. (The Ambitious Amazons made their extensive library of lesbian history available to me during my visit there so that I could provide the historical context of the discussions.)

Additional discussions in *LC* that helped to further illustrate the types of concerns raised, the tone of the discussions, or contradictions within each category were also presented in the narrative analysis.

Finally, a semiotic analysis was conducted using queer theories to trouble or critique the findings by seeking different ways of locating, understanding, and interpreting them. This entailed ferreting out discussions within each analysis period that illustrated how Lesbian was defined and redefined over time. A pattern in the way the definition of Lesbian changed over time was evaluated with an eye toward understanding the meaning of those changes. A key area of interest was the binary distinctions relative to the changing definition of Lesbian.

As each five-year analysis was completed, it was made available to *LC* subscribers online (www.geocities.com/elsie_study). The Ohio University College of Education Graduate Study and Educational Research Fund helped finance display ads that were published in *LC* inviting subscribers to participate in member checks. In one case, a hard copy of the findings was mailed to a subscriber who preferred this method of reviewing the findings.

One subscriber indicated she was offended that I inserted [*sic*] when a writer abbreviated *LC* differently than was used in this manuscript (e.g., L.C., LC). She wrote,

I appreciate sticking to a style as much as the next person (journalism grad, still have the AP Stylebook memorized), but I think when you adhere so strictly to such a convention when studying an “indigenous” publication (by lesbians, for

lesbians), you run the risk of insulting the very people you're studying. . . . Let us call our publication what we call it without comment.

The respondent's feedback struck a chord with me. I, too, had a nagging discomfort regarding what felt like an ongoing critique of subscribers' spelling, punctuation, and grammar. At times, adding [*sic*] felt like a commentary—that something was *sick*. Consider, for example, the following quote. “We received your Winter Catalog and were amazed to find that you advertise PORNOGRAPHY [*sic*].” (*LC* capitalizes the topic of letters so that subscribers can easily find responses in subsequent issues.)

After reviewing the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA) guidelines, I decided to remove [*sic*] from all quotations unless I believed a reader might be confused by something in the quotation. Thus, as much as possible, quotations are presented in their original form.

Another respondent who gave feedback suggested that I link readers to another web page instead of a Microsoft Word document. She felt respondents might be concerned about potential viruses embedded in Microsoft Word documents. In response, I converted all analyses and tables on the website into Portable Document Format (PDF) and provided a link to a free Adobe Reader download.

Some respondents offered to provide copies of *LC* for my research and others wrote to offer support and encouragement. One subscriber wrote,

You report on compiling so much data is impressive. It brought back many memories. And it shows how little we have changed over the years...isolation still exists and so does mental health problems due to isolation. Only now, straight

folks talk a good politically-correct line but their actions point out how little real change has occurred with how they view lesbians. How long did it take you?

When will the rest be done? Never give up the good fight for reality! Studies like yours really point out the realities in today's world as we look upon the past.

Thanks for sharing!

As the study progressed, various issues arose that required making changes to the basic methodology. The following changes were made as the research progressed. As I began the 1974-1979 analysis, I realized that interweaving the findings of the narrative analysis with the content analysis would result in a richer and more detailed analysis than two distinct analyses. The content analysis gave structure to the findings, while the narrative analysis provided data that would have otherwise disappeared from the content analysis. An example of the mutual benefits of interweaving the narrative analysis and content analysis can be found in Sammy's coming out story in the Isolation category during the 1974-1979 analysis period. Since Sammy's letters only attracted three responses, her story would have been lost to the most discussed items in the content analysis of the Isolation category. However, by weaving the narrative analysis into the content analysis, Sammy's story adds depth to the content analysis, while the content analysis contextualizes Sammy's experiences.

In the pilot study, I made the decision to exclude discussions about the summer music festivals published in the Festival Forum section of *LC*. However, I discovered discussions about other gatherings such as dances and conferences published in the Responses section of *LC*. It made no sense to omit music festivals from the analysis when

other gatherings were included. Therefore, I made the decision to include discussions in the Festival Forum in the 30-year study.

During the 1979-1989 analysis, I discovered that the publication of *LC* was sporadic during this time. There was the equivalent of two years of publications for analysis. Therefore, I made the decision to combine the 1979-1984 analysis with the 1984-1989 analyses. However, when I began analyzing the results, I discovered that the combined analysis covered such a long period of lesbian history that it became difficult to characterize the overall mood of the time period studied. For example, sexual exploration was a topic that subscribers generally discussed in a productive, respectful manner in 1979; however, by 1989 these discussions had become fiery and passionate. There was a clear shift in subscribers' views. To deal with these shifts, the year the item was published is provided to help the reader see when the shifts occurred within the ten-year analysis period.

Another challenge presented itself when I found instances in which a response to a letter set off another set of responses on a different topic. Since my goal throughout this research was to present the discussions with as little interference from the researcher as possible, I was uncomfortable deciding which topic was the most important to readers. Thus, discussions that changed topic mid-stream were categorized based on the topic of the original letter or item that prompted the discussion.

In the pilot study, I found that the issue of isolation arched across many of the discussions. This often made it difficult to determine whether a discussion should be placed in the Isolation category or some other category. Since I had consistently placed

items in categories based on what appeared to be the key topic of the letter, I maintained these guidelines for discussions about Isolation. Thus, if the key topic of a letter was about isolation, it was placed in the Isolation category. If the key topic was about some other issue, then it was placed in the appropriate category based on the topic of discussion. As the study progressed, I referred back to previous analyses to see where similar discussions had been placed in the past to assure consistency throughout the full 30 years of analysis.

During the 1989-1994 analysis, I discovered that comprehensive scholarly accounts of lesbian history generally stop in the late 1980s, making it difficult to contextualize discussions between 1989 and 2004. Historical accounts published after the late 1980s generally focus on key events or historical snapshots that often enmesh lesbian history with that of gay, bisexuals, and transgender people (e.g., Aldrich, 2006; D'Emilio, 2002; Faderman, 2007; Kort, 2005; Neil Miller, 2006; Samar, 2001; Schneer & Aviv, 2006) or focus on specific groups of lesbians (e.g., Esterberg, 1997; Gagehabib & Summerhawk, 2001; Garden, 2007; Gordon, 2006; Jennings, 2007; Krieger, 1983; Rothblum & Sablove, 2005; A. Stein, 1997; Willett, 2000). To address this problem, I turned to the Articles and News section of *LC* which includes current news clips that may be of interest to *LC* subscribers. An overview of the news items relative to each category was presented to help the reader place the discussions in their historical context.

Finally, during some analysis periods, some categories did not contain enough discussions to warrant maintaining the category. However, to omit the category would have obscured the patterns of discussion making it difficult to see how they changed over

time. Therefore, once a category was established, it was maintained in subsequent analyses.

Participation of the Editors

The editors of *LC* were invited to actively participate in this research based on a feminist participatory model. This research model is a reciprocal rather than hierarchical relationship between the researcher and those being researched. The model recognizes that both parties bring to a project their own specific knowledge, skills, and resources (Renzetti, 1992).

Renzetti's (1992) research provides an excellent example of participatory research. In her study of lesbian partner abuse, Renzetti was responsible for disseminating findings among academics, social service providers, and other practitioners, and the participants in her study were responsible for disseminating the findings within the lesbian community. A similar offer was made to the editors of *LC*; however, due to time constraints, they were unable to participate as fully in this research as had been hoped. They responded,

While we're happy to have you do this project, we as a staff would not be able to participate a heck of a lot due to time constraints. We'd be happy to make past issues available to you, give you a tour, perhaps conduct a short interview or two, but that would be about all we could do.

Due to the time constraints of *LC* staff, the researcher made one face-to-face visit with *LC* staff at the *LC* offices in Michigan. This visit took place near the beginning of the study and sought a contextual understanding of the development and progression of

LC over the past 30 years. Other, briefer correspondence via the telephone and e-mail occurred to request additional information. In addition, the Ambitious Amazons and other *LC* staff were invited to review and provide feedback on the findings of the research.

Researcher-in-Relation

It is important to discuss the fact that although letters and responses published in *LC* were submitted for public scrutiny, some readers may feel that others cannot interpret the true meaning of their contributions. Their point is a good one. Research is not a uniquely individual enterprise. I was not passively interpreting the discussion forum of *LC*. The reading and interpretation of the discussion forum was a negotiation between me and the text, and was profoundly influenced by particular contexts and historical conjunctures.

It was not possible for me to be fully present in the language of the readers. The interpretations are partly mine and partly that of the individuals participating in the *LC* discussion forum (Orner, 1992). There are things that I can never know about the experiences, oppressions, and understandings of the participants in this research.

I approach this research as a middle-aged, white, Appalachian, vegetarian, middle-class, disabled, fat, lesbian, feminist, student, researcher, counselor, and political activist. I feel a special kinship with *LC* because I came out as a lesbian the year *LC* began publication. Nonetheless, it is impossible for me to assume a position of authority, of having privileged access to authentic experience or appropriate language to speak for all individuals who have contributed to *LC*. My self-interested interpretations will be at

once partial, multiple, intersecting, contradictory, and predicated on the absence and marginalization of other voices.

The depth and density of qualitative research centers me within the complexity of the study. I recently wrote about the experience of conducting the pilot study for this research in the Student Focus column of *Counseling Today*. The following excerpt illustrates the effects of being an insider within this research.

I read the first category of letters from lesbians who were living and dying in isolation and fear for their lives. The voices from the letters began to well up inside of me [in a] cacophony [of voices]. . . . Contemplating the counseling implications for lesbians living and dying in isolation and fear, I began to feel a weight on my chest that eventually pushed the air from my lungs in [an] . . . eruption of heart wrenching sobs. How could counselors possibly begin to meet the needs of lesbians living and dying in isolation and fear? . . . (Erwin, 2003)

Over the course of the pilot study, I developed an intimate relationship with the anonymous women who had contributed to *LC*. No doubt, this relationship had a direct effect on the trustworthiness of my findings.

Trustworthiness of the Findings

There are several potential threats to the trustworthiness of this research project including description, interpretation, theory, researcher bias, and generalization (Maxwell, 1996). Several precautions were established to minimize these potential threats.

Description

A threat to description trustworthiness occurs when the collection of descriptive information is inaccurate or incomplete. To minimize this threat to trustworthiness, written correspondence from the editors and all data collected by the researcher was carefully preserved in its original form. I also maintained a field journal throughout the collection of the data where personal reflections and information that might be helpful in the data analysis was carefully documented (Maxwell, 1996).

Interpretation

A threat to interpretation trustworthiness occurs when the researcher imposes her own meaning onto the data rather than the perspective and meanings of the participants. The best way to avoid this threat is to solicit feedback on interpretations from the participants through a member check (Maxwell, 1996). Thus, feedback regarding the validity of the interpretations was solicited from an informal advisory committee comprised of a diverse group of women living in a lesbian retirement community in southwest Florida. Feedback was also solicited from past and present subscribers or contributors to *LC*, as well as past and present editors and staff members working for *LC* by publishing findings on the internet and providing the means for confidential feedback via e-mail. (In one instance, a subscriber requested and was provided a hard copy of the analysis.) Finally, rich, descriptive quotations from the contributors to *LC* that gave credibility to the conclusions drawn from the interpretations of the research were included in the findings.

Theory

Threats to theoretical trustworthiness occur when the researcher fails to note discrepant data, or to consider alternative explanations or understandings (Maxwell, 1996). To minimize threats to theoretical trustworthiness, a triangulation of analysis—content, narrative and semiotic analyses—was used to form a framework for discussing inconsistencies, discrepancies, or alternative explanations. The content and narrative analyses were grounded in standpoint theory. The semiotic analysis was grounded in queer theories.

The dissertation committee for this project was also constructed to minimize threats to theoretical trustworthiness. This interdisciplinary group was made up of professionals from the fields of counseling and political science and included individuals who have a particular interest in women issues, lesbian issues, or multicultural issues. Committee members were experienced researchers who value rigorous methodology and added credibility to the descriptions, conclusions, explanations, and interpretations developed from this research. Moreover, feedback from the informal advisory committee, as well as *LC* subscribers, editors, and staff also assured that discrepant data or alternative explanations were explored.

Researcher Bias

Qualitative research is not interested in eliminating a researcher's theories, preconceptions, or values. It is interested in how those theories, preconceptions, or values have influenced the conduct of the researcher and the conclusions they have drawn from the data (Maxwell, 1996). Therefore, the threat of researcher bias was addressed through

open, honest communication of potential biases. The earlier discussion of the researcher-in-relation provides a transparent description of the potential biases I bring to this research project. Transparency of research assumptions are also key to controlling for researcher bias. Thus, my assumptions or reactions were articulated and described in Researcher's Notes in Chapter IV as appropriate.

Generalizability

While the very nature of qualitative research precludes its generalizability in the traditional sense, it can be argued that a study such as this—one that arches over 30 years of discussions and gives potential voice to more than 30,000 lesbian households—has the potential to support theoretical generalizations that have widespread application. Nonetheless, as discussed in Chapter 1, there are important limitations to the generalizability of the findings.

Confidentiality

Lesbians around the world continue to live in fear for their lives. As a researcher, I assumed an ethical responsibility to uphold the right of every lesbian to make informed choices about what others know about her personal life. One contributor to *LC* provided a succinct discussion of this issue.

Whom I choose to share personal and intimate details of my life with should be only up to me. . . . Some may call this internalized homophobia, cowardice, bad for the movement, paranoia, etc., but these are my choices—fully informed, fully considered and fully mine. Thank you *LC* for respecting my privacy and my (and my family's right to self-determination)!

During the course of this research, every precaution was taken to support the ideologies of *LC* and to protect the identities of *LC* contributors. This included removing all identifying information from quotations extracted from letters published in *LC*, including the exact location of that quote. For supporting documentation for this approach, see *The Chicago Manual of Style* (Staff of the University of Chicago Press, 2003).

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to analyze discussions in *LC* to determine what issues appeared to be of importance to subscribers participating in the discussion forum. This study sought to determine whether those issues were related to sociopolitical activities within and outside of the cultural discourse of the time; whether those issues have changed over time; and the meanings, contradictions, and effects of those changes. This chapter presents in detail the analyses described in Chapter Three. The discussions are presented in four five-year clusters and one 10-year cluster for a total of 30 years of discussions. (A lull in publication during the 1980s prompted the decision to combine the 1979-1984 and 1984-1989 clusters.)

Each cluster includes an Introduction, and the results of the Content, Narrative, and Semiotic Analysis. Researcher's Notes are presented for each analysis as appropriate.

Growing Pains: 1974-1979

During the five-year span from October 1974 to October 1979, the Ambitious Amazons published 32 issues of *LC* and two catalogues. A third catalogue was imbedded in the final issue in 1979. During this time, the Ambitious Amazons had hoped to publish eight issues per year, for a total of 40 issues; however, the many obstacles they faced during the first five years of production meant losing the equivalent of one full year of publication. These obstacles became an allegory for the growing pains experienced by the lesbian feminist revolution during the late 1970s.

Content Analysis/Narrative Analysis

In categorizing the findings of the pilot study, I discovered five categories of discussion: Isolation, Safety, and Aging; Children; Relationships and Sexuality; Health and Mental Health; and Political Issues. Three of these five categories—Isolation, Relationships and Sexuality, and Health and Mental Health—continued to be useful in categorizing discussions during the first five years *LC* was published. In addition, Aging was eliminated from the original Isolation, Safety, and Aging category. Since the term Safety Issues, which was used for the pilot study seemed inadequate in describing the fear many lesbians felt during this time, the category was renamed Fear and was combined with the Discrimination category. The final categories for 1974-1979 from most discussed categories to least discussed categories are as follows: Discrimination and Fear, Separatism, Defining Lesbian, Isolation, Growing Pains, Relationships and Sexuality, and Health and Mental Health.

Discrimination and Fear

The Discrimination and Fear category was the most discussed category during 1974-1979. This category includes discussions about discrimination experienced by lesbians from within and outside the lesbian and feminist movements, acts of resistance in the face of discrimination, and fear resulting from discrimination and violence against lesbians. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Discrimination and Fear category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table A1.

The gay liberation movement was at its peak from 1969 to 1972; thus, *LC* began publication just as the movement began to see a reactionary trend make its way across the US (Adam, 1995). In June of 1977, Miami became the first major Southern city to pass a civil rights ordinance that prohibited discrimination based on sexual orientation. The ordinance had been in place for only six short months before it was repealed. Similar repeals took place in other cities during this time and the US saw a surge in violence against homosexuals. Television shows resurrected unflattering lesbian and gay stereotypes and public officials felt emboldened to falsely characterize lesbians and gays as sexual predators and threats to family values. The assassination of openly gay public official Harvey Milk on November 27, 1978 became a lasting symbol of the reactionary trend of the late 1970s (Adam; Rutledge, 1992).

Despite the high visibility of Milk's assassination, there were no ongoing discussions about his death in *LC*. As will become evident, many lesbians felt strongly that lesbian issues were separate from those of gay men. The silence on Milk's assassination may be evidence of separatist ideologies in the lesbian community during this time. Despite the silence on Milk's assassination, there was a plethora of letters about evangelist singer Anita Bryant. Not only was Bryant's so-called Save Our Children (from homosexuality) campaign the most discussed item in this category, it was among the top five items of discussion between 1974 and 1979.

In 1977, Bryant began a series of successful campaigns against ordinances that prohibited discrimination against lesbian and gay people. She believed that the fight for gay rights was a national gay conspiracy that threatened family values and that anti-

discrimination laws would legalize child molestation, gay recruiting, and boy prostitution (Adam, 1995; Bull & Gallagher, 2001; Herek, 2003; Streitmatter, 1995). In a full-page ad taken out in the March 20, 1977 edition of *The Miami Herald*, Bryant wrote,

Homosexuality is nothing new. Cultures throughout history have dealt with homosexuals almost universally with disdain, abhorrence, disgust—even death. . . . The recruitment of our children is absolutely necessary for the survival and growth of homosexuality. Since homosexuals cannot reproduce, they must recruit, must freshen their ranks. And who better qualifies as a likely recruit than a teenage boy or girl who is surging with sexual awareness. (cited in Rutledge, 1992, p. 103)

Many *LC* readers wrote to describe the dark shadow of fear and violence spawned by Bryant's campaign. One reader wrote,

I am struck . . . with the desperate feeling that for every step forward, we take two steps backward. . . . With each new day, I experience a deeper, more profound terror at having to leave my home and go out to earn a living in a world that does not welcome me. . . .

Despite the increased violence that grew out of Bryant's campaign, some readers felt that lesbians should attempt to understand and educate her. One reader wrote,

She is ignorant and doesn't understand, and instead of ridiculing her, we should try and help her understand. She thinks that we are a threat to her children, and it is a natural reaction for any mother to protect her young. . . .

Not everyone agreed that lesbians should be more tolerant and understanding of Bryant's motives. One reader wrote a so-called "bona fide hate letter" to Bryant.

i read a report of your being in fear of your safety because of your existence of hate. well, you sour bitter orange you had damn better be in fear of your entire life –you and all your followers. i and others like me will destroy all your disciples until there is a life of peace and love and growth and industry . . .

LC also published information on the so-called Gay Guerillas. These women encouraged readers to resist Bryant, who was the spokeswoman for Tropicana Orange Juice, by taking a sharp object, such as a nail, to the supermarket and puncturing cartons of Tropicana Orange Juice.

In response to the outpouring of hatred toward Bryant, one reader wrote, I personally fail to see how such an expression of hate and violence can ever result in a 'life of peace and love.' . . . Do we as lesbians want to be associated with love and peace and tolerance? Or do we want to be known for our hate and violence?

Regardless of the mixed feelings toward Bryant in the lesbian community, Bryant did have a faithful following among white, heterosexual women. *LC* reported that *Good Housekeeping* magazine chose Bryant as the most admired woman of the year in 1978.

Discussions in this category also focused on discrimination experienced from within the lesbian and feminist movements. During this time many women believed that lesbianism was the highest expression of women's solidarity. While some of these women simply declared themselves "political lesbians" without actually becoming

sexually involved with other women, others began experimenting with same-sex sexual encounters. Lesbians viewed this experimentation as a form of sexual tourism that exploited lesbians and ignored their day-to-day hardships (Adam, 1995). One highly discussed item in this category describes the sexual exploitation experienced by one lesbian who became a member of the National Organization of Women (NOW).

You go to a couple of meetings and discover that, instead of being shunned because you are a lesbian, you are actually sought out by straight women. They make you feel like a celebrity. Before you know it, one of them, generally a suburban housewife, is calling you on the phone, asking you to lunch, and complaining to you about her lousy sex life. This goes on until one day you get THE BIGGIE... that's the phone call she makes to tell you she's home alone, in bed (or on the couch or whatever), naked, and breathless for you. . . . you begin to think you're in love with this poor neglected woman, and make the emotional commitment to her. You don't find out until a month or two later (when she tells you she really is just experimenting with her sexuality) that all you have been to her is a guinea pig... a rest from the old man.

Many lesbians also reported experiencing hatred, violence, and discrimination at the hands of their own families. *LC* provided a forum for lesbians to discuss and make sense of this familial hostility by publishing letters subscribers had written to their families.

There was extreme pressure within the lesbian movement during this time for lesbians to come out or reveal their sexual orientation to others. Letters from lesbians

who remained in the closet out of fear sparked a plethora of responses from other frightened lesbians. One reader wrote,

Most lesbians are not visible, and most lesbians are not ready for individual visibility. There are more of us in the suburbs and urban areas who are in the bars and not directly confronting the media, and most of them CANNOT. I want to be able to—and I want support, but the fact is that despite what I may wish for myself, and wish to do for me and my sisters—I am scared, and that is no less a reality than the desire to do it all.

Defining Lesbian

The Defining Lesbian category was the second most discussed category during the 1974-1979 analysis period. This category includes debates about how lesbians define and celebrate themselves and their community. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Defining Lesbian category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table A2.

Lesbian feminists wanted to create new institutions and to shape a women's culture that embodied woman-based (non-male) values. This so-called Lesbian Nation was not necessarily a geographical community, but could be a state of mind powerful enough to divert the country, and perhaps the world from its dangerous course. It would be nonhierarchical, spiritual, and free of the jealousy that comes from wanting to possess another human being, as in monogamy or imperialism. It would be free of racism, ageism, classism, economic exploitation, and sexual exploitation. It would be pro-woman and pro-children (Faderman, 1991).

Despite these noble ideologies, lesbian feminists were oftentimes overzealous in pressuring other lesbians to behave in certain ways (Faderman, 1991). Letters from lesbian feminists that were published in *LC* suggest that a real lesbian should practice woman-based religions, refrain from eating meat, avoid imitating heterosexual roles in their relationships, practice some form of separatism from men, and so on.

Generally, lesbian rhetoric during this period called for self-determination—a woman was a lesbian if she said she was. However, male-to-female transgenderists who self-identified as lesbian were often vehemently rejected by lesbian feminists. In fact, this issue was the second most discussed item during the entire 1974-1979 period. It drew so many letters over such a long period of time that the *Ambitious Amazons* found it necessary to implement a new policy requiring readers to respond to an item within 45 days of publication if they wanted their letter to be published.

Since the terms transsexual and transgender can have different meanings for different people, it is important to discuss terminology. In many contemporary circles primary transsexual is defined as an individual who

has had a lifelong experience of gender dysphoria, an unhappiness with anatomical sex often accompanied by feelings of intense envy of the opposite sex.

This can occur in both males and females who can be either heterosexual or homosexual . . . Gender orientation and sexual orientation are separate and distinct phenomena. (Niela Miller, 1996, p. xiv)

A secondary transsexual is often defined as an individual whose “desire for transition arrives later in life. Childhood is free from gender dysphoria” (Miller, p. xiv).

Transgenderists are persons who “choose to live in the other gender role” (Miller, p. xiv). The individual being discussed in the following debates was living in a gender role that differed from her biological sex. Today, we might refer to her as transgender; however, the women participating in the following debates refer to her as transsexual.

In 1973, Olivia Records was established by ten women who had lived and/or worked in lesbian feminist collectives. Collectives were cooperative endeavors that opposed hierarchies; all work was shared and everyone was given the opportunity to learn a new skill or hold different jobs in the company. Olivia Records ultimately became the leader in women’s music, with some albums selling in the tens of thousands. They sponsored nationwide tours that attracted vast audiences of women. Their influence aided in the proliferation of large annual women’s music festivals across the US. These festivals were modeled after the hippie “be-ins” of the 1960s where counter-culture crowds in various stages of undress would dance, get high, and listen to music (Faderman, 1991).

The women who established Olivia Records attempted to operate the company as an alternative economic institution. They opposed male societal values and paid women in their company based on need. Thus, a bookkeeper with six children would be paid more than a musician who had inherited the family fortune. There were to be no stars and no greenhorns, only cultural workers (Faderman, 1991).

Olivia believed the company belonged to the women who supported it. Thus, they attempted to include their patrons in the formation of company policy. However, because the lesbian community is so diverse, Olivia’s decisions inevitably offended someone.

Such was the case in 1976 when Olivia Records unwittingly hired a male-to-female transgenderist. When the Olivia collective discovered her chromosomal sex, they refused to fire her and published the following statement in *LC*.

Our daily political and personal interactions with her have confirmed for each of us that she is a woman . . . We reasoned that . . . because [she] decided to give up completely and permanently her male identity and live as a woman and a lesbian, she is now faced with the same kinds of oppression that other women and lesbians face. . . . we saw no way to communicate the situation to the greater women's community without [this individual] being objectified.

In an Open Letter published in *LC*, one reader lashed out Olivia Records, accusing them of intentionally concealing their employee's transgenderism from patrons. She wrote,

It is one thing to believe you are female and to undergo a physical change to resemble the female. It is a very different thing to invade women's space as [this individual] has invaded you. [This individual] was a person with a penis and . . . that the penis affected the way the world acted towards him. . . . He was afforded a great deal of privilege. He was spoken to by the schools, the government, the church and the media, as we born female were not. He was expected and permitted to take his mind seriously, to feel his potential, to grow in a greater, fuller way than females. Being a human begins at birth, in the mind, in the body, in the subconscious, long before one is aware of oppression. [This individual's] experience was not my experience. It was not your experience. We are women because we grew up female, perceiving and being perceived female.

That a man can go anywhere he wishes, even be taken wholly into the female realm, is a devastating injustice. By admitting [this individual] into Olivia, you have permitted men yet one more . . . privilege—to enjoy the sisterhood that is all we have. And what is . . . ultimately treasonous, is to dupe your sisters by not telling us what you did. There are no women's businesses, no women's concerts, no sacred places for us so long as women like you commit such deception and accept men, even former men, into our private midst. . . .

Twenty women responded to this letter. While the writers were generally evenly split in their opinions, slightly more respondents disagreed with the writer.

As lesbians sought to create a Lesbian Nation, language became an important manifestation of political awareness and a tool that might raise consciousness. For example the spelling of woman and women was changed to womyn, wimmin, or womben to eliminate the root man. History was changed to herstory, hurricane became hisicane, and country became cuntry. It was especially important to reclaim lesbian from psychiatric and moral entanglements. Harmful words used by opponents to vilify lesbians were given a proud association. Previously taboo words, such as dyke were reclaimed in much the same way African-Americans had reclaimed Black. However, the vocabulary of earlier lesbian subcultures was typically rejected as counter to lesbian feminist politics; words such as butch and femme were struck from lesbian feminist vocabulary. Moreover, since gay didn't include lesbians any more than mankind included women, it was also omitted from lesbian feminist vocabulary (Faderman, 1991). Given the great emphasis placed on language, it is not surprising that language was a highly discussed item in the

Defining Lesbian category as well as the top ten most discussed items overall during this time period.

In an article published in *LC*, one of the Ambitious Amazon discussed words she felt should be erased from lesbian vocabulary. These words included chick, girl, homosexual, gay, and lesbian/feminist or lesbian-feminist. According to the author, good substitutes for these terms included Amazon, dyke, woman, and lesbian. She wrote, “Everytime I listen to a lesbian call herself gay or lesbian-feminist or any of the others, I sadly realize how very far away we are from even the semblance of a unified lesbian community.”

Several women wrote to say they found the term dyke offensive. One of them wrote, “Frankly, I am averse to hostile people, and dyke seems like a hostile word to me. Same goes for butch . . .”

Several women wrote to defend the terms lesbian/feminist or lesbian-feminist. One woman wrote, “‘Feminist’ is not a word to be taken lightly, it implies commitment, study and struggle, much as ‘Lesbian’ requires strength, awareness, and courage. The combination is powerful . . .”

Another highly discussed item in this category was a survey conducted by *LC*. While the survey was written to obtain readers’ opinions about *LC*, the findings most relevant to this discussion are the demographics of *LC* readers.

In the late 1970s, it was extremely difficult to find lesbians to participate in research endeavors. Bell and Weinberg (1978), who published one of the largest studies of homosexuality during this period, were only successful in securing 293 lesbians to

participate in their study. Yet, out of 6,000 surveys distributed by *LC*, over 1,000 surveys were returned. One woman wrote,

You crazy, wonderful, overworked idiots! I couldn't believe your survey form. A lot of my professional life has been spent on survey research, and you couldn't have designed a worse format. Everything about it was likely to put off reader participation and make tabulating the answers difficult. It's a good thing I wasn't around during its genesis, because I'd have advised you to forget the whole thing. I am ecstatic to find out that LC's truly extraordinary readership knocked all my professional assumptions into a cocked hat.

The *LC* survey was completed by lesbians living in 48 states and the District of Columbia; only North Dakota and Hawaii were not represented. *LC* also received surveys from women in Canada and France. According to the Ambitious Amazons, the geographical distribution of the surveys approximated the *LC* mailing list at that time.

Based on the findings of this survey, the average *LC* subscriber who participated in the study was in her twenties. This meant that she had grown up during the "flower child" era and had learned to approach living with zeal and optimism (Faderman, 1991). She lived in the city and had identified as a lesbian for anywhere from six months to four years. She had never been married and did not have children. She was not a member of any other minority group. She was in a monogamous relationship with another woman, but generally believed that neither monogamy nor non-monogamy was preferable in a relationship. She had completed between one and three years of college and worked full-time in a white-collar job where she made less than \$5,000 annually.

The average subscriber defined herself as a lesbian feminist and her political alliances were generally formed with lesbians and heterosexual women. Like many lesbian feminists, she was disillusioned with a male-created world and dreamed of curing its ills. She likely viewed the Vietnam War as a fruitless endeavor. She was deeply concerned about ecological problems. She was troubled by the high unemployment rates during the late 1970s. She was caught up in the wide-ranging unease that remained from the 1960s. She believed American culture was on a course for disaster and drastic measures were needed to reverse that course. Since she believed that male greed, egocentrism, and violence were the causes of this disastrous course, she also believed that only a woman's culture could change the course of America (Faderman, 1991).

On the other hand, the survey results suggest that the average lesbian was almost as likely to believe that all men and women should work together for common goals. She may have been a working-class lesbian in a butch-fem relationship and balked at other lesbians who characterized her as heterosexist and accused her of imitating heterosexual relationships. Or she may have been a middle-class lesbian who believed radical lesbians were generally naïve and gave lesbians a bad name. She may have made peace with the "establishment" which had many rewards to offer her if she was willing to practice discretion.

However, since radical lesbian feminists felt freer than working- and middle-class lesbians to present themselves in the media, their voice became the voice for all lesbians, a fact that working- and middle-class lesbians abhorred. The radical lesbian was likely to believe that heterosexual women were not to be trusted and that lesbians must work

together with other lesbians to form a Lesbian Nation. Like many true believers in a cause, she may have been destined for fanaticism. She pressured other lesbians to behave in ways she felt were best for the lesbian movement (Faderman, 1991).

Given these extreme ideas about the ways in which lesbians should expend their energy, it is not surprising that separatism was a hotly debated issue during the late 1970s. So much so, in fact, that it became a distinct category of its own.

Separatism

The Separatism category was the third most discussed category during the 1974-1979 period studied. This category includes debates about the best way to align lesbian energies to achieve the goals of the lesbian community. The debates generally focus on nationalism vs. integration. Nationalism refers to directing lesbian energies toward the formation of a separate community (e.g., gay-only, lesbian-only, or women-only).

Integration refers to the formation of an integrated community of marginalized individuals (e.g., lesbians, gay men, transgenderists, feminists, or racial and cultural minorities) working together toward a common goal. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Separatism category are presented here.

For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table A3.

During the lesbian and gay revolution that followed the Stonewall riots in 1969, many activists came to believe that the only logical solution for achieving justice for lesbians and gays was through gay nationalism. Post-Stonewall radicals insisted that lesbians and gays would never gain equal rights until they successfully built a society completely separate from straight America (Streitmatter, 1995).

The first tangible proposal to create a gay nation materialized six months after the Stonewall Rebellion. In December of 1969, the so-called Gay Liberation Front in Los Angeles proposed to take over Alpine County in Southern California. Their plan centered on the town of Paradise. Members of the Gay Liberation Front proposed to turn this tiny resort town, with a population of 367, into the first all-gay city in the world. While the idea of a gay nation was attractive to many lesbians and gays, not all supported the idea and eventually the Stonewall Nation proposal became no more than a running joke in the lesbian and gay community (Streitmatter, 1995).

The idea of a gay nation was not the only separatist debate during this time. Gay men generally believed that lesbian concerns could simply be woven into the gay movement; however, many lesbians disagreed. They believed that the issues and values that defined lesbian oppression were so distinct from those of gay men that lesbians and gay men should create two separate movements. Lesbian activists pointed out that regardless of their sexual orientation, gay men were irrefutably linked with the key problem faced by lesbians—men (Streitmatter, 1995).

Other lesbians saw the debates from a different perspective. They believed homophobia was a powerful force that superseded gender differences. These women believed that society's utmost injustice was its treatment of homosexuals, a fact that created an irrefutable bond between lesbians and gays. As such, they believed that lesbians squaring off against gays would weaken both movements. Nonetheless, even these women admitted that lesbians faced economic oppression, a pernicious form of discrimination from which gay men were generally exempt (Streitmatter, 1995).

Lesbians who sought to separate themselves from the gay movement and join the feminist movement faced still another struggle for representation. However, by the mid-1970s, lesbians had, for the most part, challenged and overcome resistance to lesbian participation in the feminist movement.

As is typical of most political movements, feminists also evaluated nationalist vs. integrationist strategies. Integrationist feminists favored the inclusion of women, gay men, and other marginalized individuals in a massive front against patriarchal capitalism. Nationalist feminists aimed for a matriarchal culture wherein lesbianism was the highest expression of women's solidarity and struggle. Many nationalist feminists declared themselves political lesbians without necessarily becoming sexually involved with other women. However, the initial euphoria of the feminist movement eventually wore off and lesbians soon discovered that heterosexual women who claimed to be nationalists were more interested in their own concerns than those of lesbians. Had the Equal Rights Amendment been ratified, it would have done nothing to protect lesbians. Abortion rights and birth control were not high priorities for lesbians. Clearly, lesbian issues had once again been pushed aside.

This led to still another split that resulted in lesbian separatism. Lesbian separatists sought to create a new, separate Lesbian Nation based on feminine traditions of mothering and nurturance (Adam, 1995). This utopian world was largely based on socialist ideas altered to fit lesbian feminist doctrine (Faderman, 1991).

During the course of these events, competing ideas about the best tactics for achieving lesbian goals were hotly debated and often resulted in considerable

fragmentation of lesbian energies. Nowhere was this more evident than in discussions found in *LC*.

The most discussed item in this category, and the third most discussed item overall during this period was an article titled “Some Further Thoughts on Separatism.”

The author wrote,

There is no doubt but that the “male” is responsible for the plight of “female” today. . . . My idea then is to suggest that in our effort to separate from males, let us not carry it a step further and isolate ourselves from straight females. We have an ethical responsibility to these women to offer them guidance and direction. . . . I think it is important to disseminate material through the media informing other women about lesbianism. Studies show that more and more straight women are experiencing bisexuality, and I think, given the proper social atmosphere, they would become dykes. . . . Imagine what it would be like if most of American women were lesbian!

Some subscribers agreed that lesbians should form political alliances with heterosexual women. One woman responded,

Everything conspires to widen the chasm between woman and woman. Divide and conquer still works remarkably well and we all fall into the great divide. Mother against daughter, class against class, black against white, young against old, beautiful against ugly, Lesbian against non-Lesbian.

Other subscribers believed it was crucial for lesbians to separate from heterosexual women. One woman shared a bad experience with straight women.

I used to share a two-bedroom apartment . . . with three other women. . . . We got acquainted and learned to love each other by living together. But then my roommates/sisters got boyfriends. The boyfriends objected to a “freak” living so close to their women. . . . I had lost three sisters and a place to live. The moral is simple: Lesbians must get away from men to regroup and muster our womanenergy, and straight women are right in the bargain. . . .

Despite the radical political movements of the 1970s that attracted large numbers of lesbians, there were many middle-class lesbians who did not join the movement. These women remained closeted and viewed the movement as superfluous to their lives (Faderman, 1991). One of those women made the following appeal.

Where are you—you middle-of-the-roaders? From what I’ve read in LC (and maybe I haven’t read enough yet), most of you are either politicians or separatists. Aren’t there any of you out there who are just plain ordinary, everyday lesbians who enjoy living in a peaceful existence? . . .

Her letter prompted a flurry of letters from other such lesbians, making it the second most discussed item in this category and the sixth most discussed item overall during this period. While most respondents supported her view, other subscribers questioned the neutral stance of “middle-of-the-road.” One contributor wrote, “How any woman could continue to ‘roll with the punches’ passively living a closet lie . . . is beyond my understanding.” Another reader wrote, “Don’t let that middle class-middle-of-the-road-cop-out DISILLUSIONMENT set in or you’ll be in the death march with men.”

Women on both sides of the separatist issue had passionate feelings. Several subscribers felt so strongly about the separatist debates that they canceled their subscriptions. One subscriber wrote,

I am one of those plain, ordinary women who happen to love other women; a rather non-political type. I have been interested in learning the views of such women, and now I have had enough of that. . . . Since I do not care to read any more of that line of thinking, I do not want to receive your publication any more.

Growing Pains

The Growing Pains category was the fourth most discussed category during the 1974-1979 analysis period. This category includes items of discussion about the struggle to grow and survive faced by *LC*, lesbian publishers, lesbian musicians, women's festivals, and the lesbian movement in general. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Growing Pains category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table A4.

As discussed earlier, the gay liberation movement was at its peak from 1969 to 1972. *LC* began publication about the time the movement began to see a reactionary trend make its way across the US. As we have seen, discussions in *LC* generally paralleled the sociopolitical environment of the late 1970s. Similarly, the publishing struggles faced by the Ambitious Amazons were also influenced by this environment. In fact, the entire 1974-1979 period could easily be characterized as a time fraught with growing pains.

The single most discussed topic in this category as well as the 1974-1979 period overall was whether or not *LC* would offer a pen pal service. This may seem like a trivial

item to have received so much attention; however, isolation was a key problem for lesbians during this time, especially those living in the hinterlands of the US. Following an offer to forward mail to isolated women, the Ambitious Amazons found themselves inundated with pen pal requests. They wrote,

We decided that we will not include such requests in future issues of L.C. This decision was based on the simple fact that no one in our collective . . . had the extra time or energy to coordinate the extra mail and forwarding of letters. . . .

Some readers were so angry about the decision to ditch the pen pal column that they canceled their subscriptions.

The 1970s saw a proliferation in women's publishing. Women's publications grew out of a general distrust of establishment press; lesbians wanted to have control over what was written about them. Lesbian and feminist publishing houses were run collectively with decision-making shared by a group of women instead of hierarchical leadership. Readers found this new generation of books exhilarating. Not only were characters re-created through their love for another woman, they created women's communities and cultures that mirrored lesbian feminist ideologies. These books became so popular that mainstream publishers began bidding for books that dealt with lesbianism (Faderman, 1991).

Despite the popularity of lesbian- and feminist-identified products, the late 1970s saw the downfall of many lesbian and feminist enterprises. Most of these endeavors were grassroots initiatives in which women relied solely on each other for funding and labor. Facing competition from mainstream companies, along with vandalism, arson, and other

reprisals from reactionary groups, the struggle to survive was too much for many women to overcome. As publishers began to fail, lesbian writers felt the repercussions.

Following the sabotage of Diana Press, a feminist publishing company, an author who had a contract with the collective to publish her first novel wrote an open letter to Diana Press which was published in *LC*. In her letter, she discussed the publisher's decision to renege on their contract to publish her novel.

I write this letter neither to cause division in the women's movement nor to engage in public debate with Diana Press, but to caution women writers and inform women in general. I most definitely deplore the vandalism of Diana Press; I, too, am its victim. But the vandalism does not excuse their behavior toward me. . . . Diana Press exerted a double control over me: they could break a legal contract with little fear of legal reprisal because if I attempted to receive compensation from a feminist press, especially after the vandalism, I might be branded a traitor to feminism.

Diana Press published the following response in the next issue of *LC*.

[The author's] accusations that we broke the contract is true, but it was not an action we took lightly At the time, there was nothing else we could do. The contract specified a publication date of December 31, 1977. The book was destroyed by vandalism on October 25, 1977. We could not meet the terms of the contract, and since we had already invested a great deal of time and money and energy in her book, our inability to fulfill those terms meant that we took a considerable loss. Her contract was only one of three that could not be fulfilled.

That was the reality of the situation, a reality that [the author] refused to understand. . . .

Several other authors wrote to describe similar experiences with Diana Press. Some readers responded by sharing stories about “rip-offs” from lesbian, feminist, or gay organizations; however, most readers generally took a neutral stance on the Diana Press issue. Many expressed dismay to think that any group of women might victimize another woman.

Youthful inexperience and inability to compromise unbridled enthusiasm led the Lesbian Nation to eventual failure, but the lesbian feminist movement was not without its successes. The movement changed the meaning and image of lesbian through greater visibility and promoting self-affirmation through lesbian feminist music and literature. Women’s music was perhaps the most effective enterprise undertaken by lesbian feminists. Women’s music attracted large crowds at concerts and women’s festivals held around the country; this music brought self-affirming lyrics about lesbian politics, lesbian love, and lesbian unity into the homes of vast numbers of lesbians. The music, inspired by the folk art tradition of the 60s, helped to create lesbian communities by bringing women together and proselytizing for the cause (Faderman, 1991).

At the first National Women’s Music festival, held in Champagne, Illinois in 1974, performers who appeared too professional received a cold reception. Lesbians wanted to see their own image on stage—performers who were human and made mistakes like everyone else. It was politically incorrect to reflect male professionalism, which was believed to represent artificial and destructive barriers to the possibility of

women creating a shared vision. As such, the second most discussed item in the Growing Pains category was a letter critiquing lesbian and/or feminist musicians who viewed themselves as stars of the lesbian stage. The writer had witnessed or heard about many instances in which lesbian or feminist musicians had been dishonest or generally thoughtless and inconsiderate of their audience. She wrote,

If we treat musicians as stars it's inevitable that they'll be affected by it. Do we want these lesbians to be our leaders? . . . Is it fair to put performers into a special class, where they can do no wrong, or perhaps can't do anything right? . . . What do we really want lesbian culture to be? Why aren't we supporting those lesbians who want to play only for other lesbians, and whose music validates and speaks of both the joy and the pain of our lesbian lives? Instead we seem to be creating stars out of performers whose music says very little and who don't want to be publicized as lesbians. . . .

In response, lesbian musicians wrote to provide insight into the challenges of being a performer. Readers wrote in support of constructive criticism. They added their critique of women's music and made suggestions for improving the situation. One woman reminded readers that "WIMMIN'S MUSIC is in its infancy now and is growing every day, but I think we are all experiencing growing pains. . . ."

Women's publishing and music were not the only organizations facing growing pains. *LC*, which grew from a circulation of 400 to a circulation of 9,000 in five short years, also had its share of growing pains. There were many debates about their policy to make *LC* free to lesbians. In the past, such idealism had meant that similar endeavors had

gone under after only a year or two of publication (Faderman, 1991). However, despite the fact that finances were a constant concern for the Ambitious Amazons, they stuck behind their commitment to make *LC* free to all lesbians.

In several instances, *LC* fell into the hands of the wrong people. *LC* published several letters from individuals who were offended at having received what they referred to as “filthy trash.” More than once they were threatened with a law suit if they did not remove someone from the mailing list. The Ambitious Amazons also had many problems with subscribers failing to update their addresses. While this seems like a miniscule problem, it proved quite costly for the Ambitious Amazons. These women were donating enormous portions of their free time to a project that was constantly on the verge of bankruptcy. At one point, only 20% of the readership had contributed money to *LC*. On another occasion, \$100 in checks to *LC* bounced.

The Ambitious Amazons were criticized for editing readers’ letters and for their decision to maintain the confidentiality of contributors. They faced press breakdowns and returned mailings from the Post Office. They were vandalized twice. They had problems with *LC* falling into the hands of groups who sent hate mail to Contact Dykes or male prisoners who wrote letters to Contact Dykes impersonating lesbians. They received letters from subscribers asking them to mediate with businesses that advertised in *LC* and had not honored their agreements with customers.

It is not surprising that the Ambitious Amazons took many publishing breaks to regroup during this time. At one point, they wrote,

For the past few months some of us had been feeling pretty depressed about LC for a variety of reasons. The pressure of putting out LC had become unbearable and we had each reached a point of feeling overworked and underpaid (in this case no pay at all). We weren't at all sure if this was the sort of life any of us wanted to lead . . .

By 1978, only two of the original Ambitious Amazons remained on staff and the outlook for *LC* was uncertain.

Isolation

The Isolation category was the fifth most discussed category during 1974-1979. This category includes items of discussion that underscore the isolation experienced by lesbians and initiatives to overcome that isolation. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Isolation category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table A5.

Before the rise of lesbian feminism, which resulted in increasing numbers of lesbian-identified publications, rap sessions, music festivals, concerts, and bookstores, it was extremely difficult for lesbians to meet other lesbians. The bar scene was perhaps the best opportunity for meeting other lesbians. Many lesbians were uncomfortable with frequenting these bars, which were often seedy establishments located in dangerous sections of town. As such, *LC* played an important role in connecting isolated lesbians with other lesbians. It also played an important role in the coming out process for many lesbians.

In March of 1977, the Ambitious Amazons published their first catalog for lesbians. The catalog was a compilation of flyers from lesbian and all-women groups interested in participating in cooperative advertising. The catalog was a collection of flyers about lesbian-identified books, magazines, journals, gathering places, bookstores, organizations, art, crafts, gifts, music, film, jewelry, therapy, repair services, health care, and vacation spots. Many readers thanked the Ambitious Amazons for providing this important resource to their readers. The Ambitious Amazons received so many letters of praise for the catalog that it became the most discussed item in the Isolation category.

While organizing the materials for the Isolation category, a series of letters began to unfold that told the story of the important role *LC* played in one woman's identity development. Although one cannot know with any certainty that the same woman wrote these letters, there are identifying features, such as the woman's city and state, which suggest one woman wrote them all. The letters provide a great deal of insight into one woman's fight to end the isolation she was experiencing. She will be referred to here as *Sammy*.

In Sammy's first letter to *LC*, she wrote,

If you ever get to feeling like you're not accomplishing anything, think of the women who are isolated like myself. Your paper is like a breath of fresh air to me. Here I am growing towards coming out, growing towards consciousness raising, and I'm stranded. As far as I've been able to discover – there is nothing, no movement, no centers, not even any bars for me to make contact with lesbians in my area. . . . I was wondering if in your listings of contact dykes you had

someone who is in or maybe who is familiar with [my area]. Keep up the good work! It's keeping my sanity together.

The Ambitious Amazons were so moved by Sammy's plea for help that they wrote an Editor's Note at the end of her letter asking readers to provide them with information about Sammy's area. The following issue, Sammy sent another plea for help.

Being isolated . . . is getting to be really too much for me to cope with. . . . I can't go on much longer. . . . if any of your readers have dealt with this situation – how, exactly did they manage the first contact with the local lesbian scene? I'm willing to put the time, effort, and energy into organizing – anything – but it takes more than two to participate. If anyone knows of a good way to “get the word out” short of putting up a sign outside my house I'd be interested to hear about it.

In the next issue of *LC*, Sammy discussed the important role *Ms. Magazine* had played in her life prior to *LC*. In this letter, Sammy also challenged a reader who expressed fear of joining the lesbian/feminist movement. Sammy wrote,

Someone has to fight the issues, fight for our civil rights so that we're not dragged off to jail for loving women, persecuted at work, denied housing, and the million other ways that we can be oppressed. These freedoms are not handed to us on the proverbial silver platter; they are much fought for and hard-won . . . As long as I'm forced to be in closets, as long as I'm forced to hide my feelings, lie, put up a front for the straights at work, etc., as long as I'm not able to meet and socialize in public places – my life just cannot be “peaceful.” Someone has to force the issue . . . I have a feeling before too long . . . that someone will be me. Not because I

look forward to the prospect of losing my job or jail, but because I'm finding it more and more intolerable to compromise myself everyday, in everything I do.

In this letter, Sammy also described her "poisonous, destructive relationship" with a married woman. She indicated that she could not end the relationship for fear of being completely isolated and alone.

I just couldn't stand the thought of total isolation . . . Where do I find the strength? It's not in a bottle, and it's not in patriarchal religion. It's from you, all my lesbian sisters. . . . It's only second-hand contact, but that's better than nothing when I feel myself slipping, when I feel myself getting crazy. Sometimes I feel like I'd just like to let go, but I know that if I did, I'd only be placing myself in the hands of all the "competent professions" who would try to brainwash me into heterosexuality when in truth, my lesbianism is one of the strongest, most positive forces of my life. In the last two years, I have made the most progress in so many areas – which would have never happened as long as I kept my mind shut to the real me. Anyway, if I really let go, no one would take care of my two cats.

Sammy also wrote to *LC* asking for feedback from readers regarding coming out to her mother.

I'd desperately like to come out to my mother, but I don't know. She's 48, overweight, and a heavy smoker. She's on heavy medication for high blood pressure. Would it endanger her health if I told her? I don't know the specifics of her condition, but I do know she takes a large number of various pills every day. I guess the situation at home is still a stress-laden one. Could this be the straw that

breaks the camel's back? Mom was always one to throw a fit about something, and then deal with it. I'd hate to be the cause of a fatal "fit." Anyone who could guide me here, I'd appreciate hearing from you.

A few months later, things had begun to improve for Sammy. She wrote, "I have fantastic news . . . I know a lesbian in [my town] who would like to receive your paper. Besides me, I mean." In this letter, Sammy discussed their plans to organize a "Gay Womens Society." She asked for advice from other readers regarding getting this organization started.

Some time later, Sammy wrote about speaking with a Contact Dyke who informed her of a lesbian dance in the Contact Dyke's area. Sammy attended the dance and wrote about her first experience connecting with the lesbian community.

It was absolutely fantastic. It was a terrific reaffirming, rejuvenating experience. Maybe from this new facet of my life I will gather the strength to continue my struggles here in town, or if nothing else – just keep it together til I can move, even though I don't want to. But I'm still in there punching for now.

A short time later, Sammy announced what she called her "coming out party" at work.

It was really frightening at first. During the first part of that meeting, I was busy trying to figure out where I could go to apply for work. I absolutely knew that I wouldn't finish out the week at Ma Bell [telephone company]. Surprise! I'm still there a month later.

After coming out at work, Sammy was falsely accused of making passes at other women at work and some co-workers refused to speak to her. Nonetheless, she reported “So far I’ve been really lucky – I haven’t run into any real ‘homophobia’ yet.”

Several months later, Sammy wrote one final letter to the Ambitious Amazons. She signed this letter with her first and last name and full address. She also asked to be listed as a Contact Dyke in *LC* where she also included her phone number. She wrote,

In the space of one year, I have turned into a completely different person, a much more likeable person (who even likes herself now), and a lot of that is due to contact that you’ve helped me establish. Please, don’t any one of you Ambitious Amazons ever feel unappreciated or unneeded, cause that is just not true! You are much loved! Thank you for everything you’ve done for me.

The following letter from another reader provides a fitting summary to the role *LC* played in ending the isolation for so many women like Sammy.

It’s the damndest thing and I should be ashamed to admit it, but I cry every time I read *LC*. I don’t know whether to blame it on the weather, the possibility that I might be getting close to the “change of life” . . . or on those letters that you print from lesbians in isolation who depend on you for some contact, no matter how fragile, with other lesbians. I suspect that it is probably the latter. I think those letters are a reminder to me of how grateful I would have been through the years to have had the same opportunity.

Relationships and Sexuality

The Relationships and Sexuality category was the sixth most discussed category during the 1974-1979 analysis period. This category includes discussions about lesbian relationships, sexuality, and sexual intimacy. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Relationships and Sexuality category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table A6.

In seeking to develop a Lesbian Nation, lesbian feminists left no stone unturned. Even sex was scrutinized to assure political correctness. Lesbian feminists believed that men had ruined heterosexual sex by objectifying women and being goal-oriented; men thought in terms of couples and orgasms. In their minds, this meant that lesbians had to establish new relationship guidelines. One of the goals of radical lesbians during this period was to create a culture in which no individual possessed another, as in monogamy and imperialism (Faderman, 1991).

The most discussed item in this category was an article published in two parts titled “Can Lesbians Be Friends?” In the writer’s opinion, lesbians were socially conditioned to find and keep a lover. Therefore, all lesbian friends were viewed as potential lovers. This made the formation of friendships between two lesbians a nearly insurmountable endeavor. She wrote,

When I read about women trying to form lesbian communities and organizations I wonder if we’re jumping ahead of ourselves. . . . I’m afraid that until we change our basic attitudes about lovers and friends, until we remove some of the

emphasis on sex and sexual involvements and thus also reduce the amount of jealousy and possessiveness, and until we validate the importance of non-sexual friendships, we'll still be developing the same relationships as always . . .

Many readers wrote to thank the author for putting their own thoughts into words. Interestingly, when this article was published a second time in celebration of *LC*'s tenth anniversary, subscribers wrote to say that this issue continued to be a valid concern in the lesbian community.

Health and Mental Health

The Health and Mental Health category was the least discussed category during 1974-1979. This category includes discussions relevant to health and mental health issues in the lesbian community. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Health and Mental Health category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table A7.

For several decades, gay bars were the only place where young, working-class lesbians could be their authentic selves. Unfortunately, bar personnel often had to push drinks to keep the bar in business. This, along with the potential for women to use alcohol to cope with the stigmatism of homosexuality and the economic struggles of single women, created a fertile environment for the development of alcoholism in the lesbian community. The drug culture in the US during the 1970s may have also served to further enhance the problem. Despite attempts by the lesbian feminist movement to provide alternative means for meeting other lesbians via rap groups, coffeehouses, bookstores,

and restaurants, the bar scene remained a firmly rooted establishment in lesbian culture (Faderman, 1991).

There was a dearth of reliable research on lesbians and alcohol available during this time period. Perhaps the most frequently cited research on lesbians and alcohol was that conducted by Fifield and her colleagues (1975). These researchers found that one-third of the lesbians studied abused alcohol. Although this study was fraught with methodological problems, the discussions in *LC* suggest that alcohol abuse was a serious concern in the lesbian community. When *LC* published a two-part article titled “Lesbians & Alcohol,” they were inundated with responses. One woman wrote,

My lover and I have very many problems and your article helped me realize that our problems stem from drinking—our addiction to alcohol. . . . I have had a drinking problem most of my life and I’ve gone to AA and similar organizations, but they didn’t help me.

Another reader issued a call to action.

Although the individual must make the most important steps to resolving her own problem, supportive organizations and centers in the Lesbian community could also be vital forces in the entire process in the battle against the disease of alcoholism. The problems of one lesbian are the problems of all lesbians.

Semiotic Analysis: Defining Lesbian

In 1974-1979 as lesbian political alliances shifted, discussions in *LC* began to show a shift in how lesbians defined themselves. During the early years of the movement when lesbians were politically aligned with gay men, they defined themselves in terms of

their sexual orientation. When lesbians began to shift their alliances toward feminism, lesbians began to define lesbianism as the ultimate expression of feminism. For example, one subscriber wrote, “If feminism is about seeking [our] . . . ‘woman self’, I don’t see how any non-lesbian can call herself a real feminist. . . . what we call ‘feminists’ today are actually only ‘women’s rights activists’ . . .”

When lesbians became disillusioned with the feminist movement and shifted toward lesbian separatism, Lesbian was redefined as complete separation from all heterosexuals and gay men. With each political shift, some lesbians remained true to certain political stances, while others shifted their definition of self to parallel the most current focus of lesbian politics. This created tensions within the lesbian community, with lesbians pressuring one another to become real lesbians—a mirror of themselves. One woman wrote, “You seem to be saying that the only ‘real lesbian’ is the lesbian separatist, a claim that I find arrogant and insulting.”

There was also evidence of the Ambitious Amazons attempting to find balance within their own ranks. During a surge in letters supporting lesbian separatist ideologies, the Ambitious Amazons wrote, “Some of the Ambitious Amazons strongly disagree with . . . separatism. We would like to hear some other views on this subject. Send your ideas for our next issue . . .” On another occasion, a reader complained that the Ambitious Amazons were using Editor’s Notes inappropriately to express their opinions on controversial issues discussed in *LC*.

Early in the analysis period, the Ambitious Amazons published a letter written by a woman who identified as bisexual. One reader was outraged that a bisexual woman had

been given a voice in what was supposed to be a lesbian-only publication. The Ambitious Amazons agreed and published the following statement.

We're very sorry that we caused a lesbian to feel betrayed by a publication that is for lesbians. Your criticism is justified because the opinions and feelings of bisexuals shouldn't be given space in Lesbian Connection. . . . When we were working on the last issue and got the letter from the bisexual woman we thought that we should include it as an example of where bisexuals are at in terms of lesbian politics. In retrospect we agree with you that in this case we made the wrong decision. . . . Again let us reiterate – Lesbian Connection is a lesbian newsletter.

Thus, although the Ambitious Amazons repeatedly reminded readers that many women in their collective did not agree with separatist ideas, the Ambitious Amazons held firm to the practice of lesbian separatism within their publication.

There were many lesbians who did not align themselves with any political ideology. These were the middle-of-the-road lesbians whose voices were heard in the discussions found in the Separatism category. These women, who desperately needed the support of other lesbians, were clearly overwhelmed by the pressures to be a real lesbian (read lesbian separatist). One letter from a twenty-year-old woman illustrates the alienation many lesbians felt during this time.

Thanks a lot for frightening and alienating me just when I need your help the most. . . . I'm sure there must be many like me: living in small reactionary towns, working in dull or mediocre jobs to pay the rent, relaxing (?) with straight friends

after work. I have no gay contacts whatsoever; the only lesbian I ever talked to in my life . . . worked for the Lesbian Hotline . . . I want desperately to come out of the closet and be with others like me, but everything I read seems to tell me that to be a good lesbian I must renounce the straight world and my straight friends (many of whom I value and intend to keep), march in the streets, write poems of rage. I'm not ready for all these things; I haven't reached your state of consciousness yet; I haven't had the experiences that led you to that consciousness. I haven't had the support or encouragement of other lesbians. Right now, I can no more relate your politics to my own life than I can an Eskimo's.

Isn't there some kind of halfway house for people like me with one cautious foot out of the closet? Someplace I can go or a group I can join where I can grow without pressure and learn what it's like to be a lesbian in a lesbian community? I want a Lesbian Nation, too, but you're running faster and faster and leaving me further and further behind. If this is incoherent, it's because the words are rushing out of my heart in a jumble. I'm so afraid I won't fit in with you, and if I don't then I'll never have a home anywhere. I need you—help me understand you! Understand me!

Throughout the process of defining and redefining lesbian, the Ambitious Amazons continued to maintain that a lesbian was a woman who defined herself as such. However, as we have seen, those definitions were as varied as the women who called

themselves lesbian. Moreover, as in the case of male-to-female transgender lesbians, self-identification as lesbian was always subject to approval from real lesbians.

Rising from the Flames: 1979-1989

Following the publication of the December 1979 catalog, it was nine months before *LC* arrived on subscribers' doorsteps again. The Ambitious Amazons wrote a Special Letter assuring their subscribers that *LC* planned to continue publishing. "We've taken so long to come out with this issue for one main reason . . . we've been writing an application for tax exempt status," they explained. Despite this long hiatus, the *LC* circulation grew to 10,000 and the Ambitious Amazons continued to receive 30 to 50 letters a day.

Over the next 11 months, *LC* presses fell silent once more. During this time, the Ambitious Amazons faced a number of challenges. A one-page letter arrived on subscribers' doorsteps that explained, "[We've undergone] five moves, many personal conflicts, and the ending of an eight-year relationship for two of us." Worst of all, on July 19, 1981 the Lesbian Center where *LC* was housed went up in flames. In a Special Bulletin that accompanied a full issue of *LC* the following month, the Ambitious Amazons wrote,

Around 8 a.m. a staffer stopped by the Center, discovered it filled with smoke and called the fire department. Four trucks responded and the fire was brought under control in about two hours. . . . The flames and heat had been so intense that they blew out windows, and melted glass beer bottles and the refrigerator. . . . Luckily, the press remained relatively intact . . . We don't have insurance since the costs

for business coverage were more than we could afford . . . We're planning fundraisers . . . so we can begin to replace what all was lost. . . . Despite everything, we still remain the Ambitious Amazons . . .

Being the resilient women that they were, the Ambitious Amazons published a full issue of *LC* one month after the fire. However, following this post-fire publication, *LC* presses fell silent once more. It was nine months before another publication reached its subscribers. During this break in publication, the Ambitious Amazons learned that their landlord did not plan to rebuild the structure that had housed *LC*. They had been paying \$225 a month for rent and were stunned to find that this was nearly one-fourth the going rate for a space of similar size. This meant they must rent a much smaller space than before.

After moving what was left of *LC* into its new location, the Ambitious Amazons had to rebuild the press and platemaker. One of the four Ambitious Amazons became ill, leaving even more work for those who remained. Despite what amounted to an annual publication of *LC* for three years, the Ambitious Amazons received continued to receive subscriptions. Following the May 1982 edition of *LC* the newsletter finally returned to regular publication. *LC* saw an additional increase of 4,500 subscribers during this time for a total of 14,500 individual subscriptions and a press run of 18,000 by the end of the period.

Researcher's Notes

Some of the discussions during this time period touched me in such a way as to offer some personal insight into the richness of my culture as a lesbian and provide

personal validation of my findings. For example, while discussing the *Shigella* outbreak at the 13th annual Michigan Women's Music Festival in 1988 (see the Growing Pains category), I frequently had to translate terminology and explain festival culture. In so doing, I felt a deep sense of connection, pride, and validation. While analyzing discussions about sexual patterns in lesbian relationships, my partner and I discovered that some of our own concerns were being voiced by contributors to these discussions. Interestingly, these two topics were the two most discussed items during the time frame studied. This provided satisfying personal validation that the research was capturing data that, at least for me, was representative of issues important to *LC* subscribers.

Content Analysis/Narrative Analysis

The categories used in the 1974-1979 analysis continued to be useful during the 1979-1989 analysis. In addition, four more categories were added. These categories illustrate the shifts that began to occur within the lesbian community during the 10-year period studied. The additional categories were Minority Lesbians; Children, Families, and Parenting; Religion and Spirituality; and Networking. The final categories for 1979-1989, listed from most discussed category to least discussed category, are as follows: Defining Lesbian; Relationships and Sexuality; Discrimination and Fear; Growing Pains; Health and Mental Health; Minority Lesbians; Separatism; Isolation; Children, Families, and Parenting; Religion and Spirituality; and Networking. The following is an analysis of discussions by category from the most discussed category to the least discussed category.

Defining Lesbian

The Defining Lesbian category was the most discussed category during 1979-1989. This category includes debates about how lesbians define and celebrate themselves and their community. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Defining Lesbian category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table B1.

During the 1980s, young lesbians entering the lesbian scene often took their rights for granted and made light of lesbian feminism. Many described themselves as girls, reintroduced makeup and sexy clothes, and were often difficult to distinguish from heterosexual women. With this shift in language and dress, lesbianism and bisexuality became chic. Many female entertainers began to glamorize the sexy rebelliousness and allure of sexual encounters between women (Faderman, 1991).

During this time, Madonna and Sandra Bernhard made it known that they were “an item” and began incorporating lesbian material into their shows. Lily Tomlin and her long time companion, writer Jane Wagner began incorporating lesbian characters into Tomlin’s work. The androgynous performance styles of Melissa Etheridge and kd lang skyrocketed them to fame (Faderman, 1991).

Older lesbians who were still embroiled in their dream of a Lesbian Nation were shocked by these young lesbians who did not seem to understand or appreciate the hard-won rights they enjoyed. They were also intolerant and distrustful of the increasing numbers of bisexual women in the lesbian community. Given the climate of the 1980s,

the following letter published in 1986 sparked a torrent of responses, making it one of the top five discussions during this period.

About five years after I came out, I found myself extremely attracted to a man. . . . I remember thinking . . . “Maybe I’m normal!” I pursued the relationship and . . . I swore I’d never do that again . . . Now when, every couple of years, I am attracted to a man I simply wait for the feeling to pass. I remember what it was really like . . . and I am very happy being a lesbian.

In the past year I have seen at least a dozen women who called themselves lesbians “go straight.” . . . I asked some of them why, and they answered that they feel safer with a man. They told me of the pain of lesbian relationships and implied that if they are to suffer like that, they might as well be with a man. . . . These women maintain their ties with the lesbian community and I feel betrayed. It seems to me they are taking all our glorious womyn-energy and using it for men and they are using us for emotional sustenance while they live safely. . . . I do not trust these women who don’t seem to know what they want . . . I do not appreciate that the details of my lifestyle are becoming increasingly known to men. I feel invaded somehow . . .

Many writers wrote to echo the concerns raised by this subscriber. Some subscribers felt that bisexuality was a plot to destroy lesbianism. One subscriber wrote, “I believe this pressure to accept fucking, femininity, pregnancy, motherhood, and other heterosexist activities . . . is a direct attack on Lesbianism, and it reflects the reactionary tendencies of het [heterosexual] politics today.” Another writer noted an “increasing

pressure to assimilate into het society. That pressure is the het world's threatened reaction to the Lesbian Power movements of the late 60's and 70's."

Many bisexual women responded to the concerns raised by *LC* subscribers. They explained that gender was secondary to their feelings of intimacy. One woman wrote, "We should love people because of who their spirit is and not what their genitals look like." They also denied that they were sleeping with men because it was easier or safer. One woman wrote, "I did not get involved with a man because it is safer—I feel quite safe within the lesbian community."

Despite their decision to sleep with men, bisexual women assured lesbians that they continued to maintain the lesbian community's secrets. One woman wrote, "I have been there for women and have tried to maintain the confidentiality of lesbian culture and lifestyle. This has always been sacred to me and not to be shared with men." Another wrote, "I am not reporting the details of the wonderful insides of the lesbian community to anybody. I am not selling out to Playboy or telling . . . 'what lesbians do'."

Nonetheless, some bisexual women believed, "Lesbianism has been secret long enough—all information will bring light to myths and falsehoods. I have always been a woman who prefers dialogue to silence."

Interestingly, some women who maintained intimate relationships with men continued to identify as lesbian. One woman wrote, "After 1½ years with him, I still identify myself as a lesbian. . . . The only time I wish he was a woman is when I would like to take him to lesbian activities . . ."

Many bisexual women expressed fear of being rejected and ostracized by the lesbian community.

I have been scared that any Lesbian would just look at me and somehow be able to tell that I was (shudder) “one of them” and that, somehow, the word would spread around the whole lesbian community. Suddenly, lesbians would be turning away from me in disgust, doors would be slammed in my face, and no self-respecting lesbian would ever speak to me again.

Along with the charged emotions on both sides of this issue there was a genuine fear that a bisexual woman might introduce HIV/AIDS into the lesbian community. One woman wrote,

I work at the Department of Public Health in a large city and my concerns about women and AIDS have prompted me to write. Please, women who decide to sleep with men, stay with your decision and do not weave between men and the lesbian community. . . . The fact is that I have had patients die with AIDS, women and children, even lesbians. Yes, LESBIANS! . . . Although lesbians are considered the safest (from AIDS) sexually active group in the world, we're not immune.

Lesbians do get AIDS . . .

Despite the fact that many radical lesbians found bisexuality abhorrent, by the end of the 1980s there were as many as two dozen bisexual support groups in the US and lesbian newspapers began to give significant space to bisexual women (Streitmatter, 1995).

Another highly discussed item in the Defining Lesbian category was a letter published in 1985 titled, “What Happened to Feminine Gay Women?” The contributor wrote,

Why do women in a homosexual relationship tend to make themselves look like men, act like men, dress like men and play the role a man has always played? . . . Somebody, somewhere forgot to tell women that being gay mainly means the change of your sexual partner and not the overall change of a female’s image to a male’s image. . . .

Don’t gay women enjoy the modesty and self-respect for their bodies and the body of the women they are with? At some gay festivals it is almost a common practice to walk through the gates and somewhere between setting up camp and celebrating their unity they strip down to their shorts. Sitting bare chested seems to make them feel more equal to a man’s privileges and yet strips them of their modesty and self-respect. . . . Come on sisters, be what the goddess intended you to be—women! Let the world know there is a noticeable difference between the two sexes—at least in looks! . . .

Sure, when my lover and I helped two sisters build their barn I was clad in jeans and a t-shirt. But, after my shower, I sat in slacks and a blouse, sipping my beer from a glass. My torn fingernails were polished, I had on a soft sweet perfume that my woman had chosen for me. . . . How many gay women out there turn to admire a woman passing by in a dress, high heels and curled long hair? . . . Try it – you may like it!

Many subscribers questioned the writer's definition of woman. One subscriber wrote, "You want lesbians to 'be what the goddess intended women to be—women,' but you proceed to describe yourself as Revlon, Max Factor, Chanel No. 5, and Calvin Klein intend women to be." Another wrote, "By using various 'beauty aids', a woman is endorsing the male-perpetuated myth that women's bodies are not okay just by themselves." Another subscriber wrote,

WE ARE WOMEN, and we don't need or want the commercial props, painted nails, high heels, and make-up that you seem to equate with womanhood. . . . I have all the evidence of my own womanhood I need: 30 years of menstruation, a clitoris, vagina, breasts, and now, menopause. I'm satisfied that I'm a "real woman," and defy anyone to tell me otherwise!

Some subscribers did not believe they were emanating a pre-described image of lesbian. One woman wrote, "I didn't change my outward appearance to suit someone's definition of gay or dyke or butch or lesbian, but to suit my inward appearance I have of myself."

One woman reminded the writer that her ideas were not new.

"Try it—you may like it!" sounds as though she's proposing radically new behaviors and modes of dress for the rest of us . . . She seems to think that femininity is something that's never before "occurred" to Lesbians. . . . I was raised in this society, too, and I had ample opportunity to have femininity shoved down my throat by every heterosexual authority figure who had a shot at me. I

don't need to have it offered to me all over again by some "gay woman" as though it were a precious gift.

The letter also brought back painful memories for many subscribers who had never quite "fit in."

I was flooded with my own memories of growing up a female—in a male's world. . . . I know I broke my mother's heart a thousand times as she watched me struggle with the desire to be myself and also be socially acceptable. And through the years I was hurting—I knew I wasn't graceful, or petite. . . . I was sneered at by the "Polly Purebreds," and I was last to be asked out on dates. . . .

Some respondents were angry because they felt the letter writer was simply trying to pass as a heterosexual woman.

Are you aware that there are some Lesbians who can't pass? Do you care? Or is our existence an embarrassment to you? Does our size, weight, height, which looks like a "male image" to you, repulse you? Having been queer-baited as a child, having felt ugly and uncomfortable in my high school formal, I know what it's like to want to look like everyone else but not be able to be convincing. My life would've been a lot easier if I had been able to pass. . . .

These letters led to two more topics that continued the discussion for well over a year. The first topic came from a woman who was "frequently mistaken for a man."

Several women wrote to offer suggestions and comebacks for handling the situation. One subscriber suggested that the writer should simply start using the men's restroom.

Another thought the writer got what she deserved. "I cannot understand why a woman

who cross-dresses and has a very short haircut gets so upset and indignant when she is mistaken for a man in women's RESTROOMS . . .”

The second topic arose when a woman indicated she found bare-chested women “a highly frustrating experience of ‘look but don’t touch.’ I regard it as ‘teasing.’ As a lesbian I find women’s breasts to be highly erotic, and I think women who do not are not really lesbians . . .”

Many women responded to explain why they choose to go bare-chested in lesbian-only spaces. One subscriber wrote, “Each woman’s nudity represents our reclaiming of our beauty not as sex objects but as goddesses.”

Many women were angry that they were accused of teasing other lesbians. One woman wrote, “It’s sad and frustrating that society tries to harness us with SHIRTS AND BRAS etc., and when we are able to free ourselves we are called a tease by our sisters.” Another lesbian wrote, “At a women’s festival we are not on display to be lusted over; we can get that on any street from the men.”

Clearly, the shift in defining how a lesbian dressed and behaved during the 1980s created much discord between radical lesbians and younger lesbians entering the lesbian community. This discord also translated into differences about how a lesbian behaved sexually, making Relationships and Sexuality the second most discussed category during this period.

Relationships and Sexuality

Relationships and Sexuality was the second most discussed category during 1979-1989. This category includes discussions about lesbian relationships, sexuality, and

sexual intimacy. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Relationships and Sexuality category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table B2.

For heterosexual men and women and gay men, the 1970s was a time of widespread sexual exploration. There was a proliferation of x-rated movies and bookstores. Gay men began taking out personal ads in the newspaper to find sex partners. Heterosexual females sought multiple orgasms. Moreover, heterosexuals were turning to “how to” books to improve their sexual prowess (Faderman, 1991).

According to some researchers, lesbians appeared to be less interested in the sexual revolution than heterosexuals and gay men. Heterosexual researchers reported that as a lesbian relationship matured, women became increasingly disinterested in sex. This phenomenon was labeled *lesbian bed death* (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983).

Concerns about disinterest in sex over time was the second most discussed topic overall during the 1979-1989 period studied. In 1987, one woman wrote the following.

I need advice: I think my “lover” is celibate. . . . Two years ago we moved in together. Before then, our sexual relationship was the best I’d ever known. Now it seems there is no sex at all, and, what’s worse, there is no romance or passion. It is becoming detrimental to me, and my behavior is ruining our relationship. . . . I have gained weight, I hate myself, and all I do is cry. I’ve taken to fits of rage. She doesn’t come near me, and if I ever reach out to touch her, she either freezes up or actually pulls away. . . . I become depressed and introverted, sometimes for days. . . . I am overtaken by rage and slam things around. I hate myself, feel

worthless, and can't understand why friends still like me. . . . She's afraid to start any kind of kissing or foreplay for fear that it might turn into lovemaking. I said that it's plain to me she's just not interested in me at all, and that we should get separate apartments while we still have some sort of friendship left. She doesn't want to do that. It frustrates me so much to have her call me her "lover"—we haven't kissed in six months; she has no right to call me her lover!

We've discussed non-monogamy, but . . . I'm not about to jeopardize a solid friendship with a lesbian sister for some frivolous immediate gratification. . . . To top it all off . . . [she] did sleep with another woman. She tried to explain how she thought it would help get the feeling back. It didn't . . . She thinks she might be an incest victim, although she can't remember the details. We've talked about therapy, but there's no money for it.

Many subscribers identified with the writer's concerns and expressed alarm regarding lesbian bed death. One woman wrote,

I suspect there are A LOT of lesbians out there who have experienced the gradual, inexplicable death of passion. My lover of four years and I broke up in September. We still loved each other deeply; when we did make love it was very good. We weren't angry with each other . . . Instead it was as if our sexual feelings for one another had fallen deeply asleep. We still loved to cuddle, we still depended on each other for hugs and play and for a listening ear, but sexually—nothing. . . . This went on for six months to a year. Finally, we got honest with

each other and let go. But it's difficult to let go of a lover when there's no anger to push you away. . . .

Why does lust die? How can we keep it going when we see it yielding to coziness and a good night's sleep? (I'm not complaining about coziness, but can't we have some passion too?) . . . We have both begun sexual relationships with other women, but for me at least, there's a nagging question: "So how long will this last?"

Along with discussions about lesbian bed death, many women wrote to highlight the additional problems that can arise when a woman has experienced incest. Survivors of incest wrote to offer support, suggestions, and reading materials. One subscriber wrote,

I recognized the push-pull sexuality that is common to victims of incest. As an incest survivor myself, I know that once I admitted I was in love with my lover, I started to pull away sexually. It's too much like family; too much like incest. . . . Even though there is "no money for therapy," many good books . . . can help the woman understand what her lover is going through. They could also join (or start) a self-help support group. . . .

However, some subscribers disagreed with the implication that survivors of incest need special treatment. One woman wrote,

Can we PLEASE stop going on about the "special treatment" which incest survivors are always being said to need and which is often described as so tiresome and draining for their lovers? It seems to me that what a survivor needs is what anyone needs: respect, tenderness, not being pushed around, feeling safe. I

don't like the implication that "normal", "healthy" women should be willing and able to put up with rude, insensitive, egotistical, selfish lovemaking. So there.

Some readers took the opportunity to define and defend the practice of celibacy.

One woman wrote,

I think you've got the wrong word for your situation. CELIBACY is a voluntary state, a choice not to participate in a sexual relationship. It can be a healthy, positive choice for oneself. It can channel one's energy toward healing or creativity, or simply be a period of self-examination. I think what you're describing is not celibacy, but rather sexual dysfunction.

When one respondent asked for letters from women in long-term relationships about their sexual longevity, the picture began to change. The responses cast a shadow of doubt on the phenomenon of lesbian bed death. One subscriber wrote,

Yes, women in long-term monogamous relationships can and do ENJOY SEX. . . with each other! My lover and I have been together nearly 17 years, and while our relationship has gone through many changes, a good, healthy sex life has been the one constant. Intimacy has provided our "marriage" with a strong base—one that has helped us overcome the difficulties of creating a life together.

However, keeping the sexual spark requires commitment and imagination. We send each other sexy cards, call each other from work to deliver erotic messages, watch x-rated films together, shower together before and after sex, have sex at different times in different places and in varying positions. Making space and time for sex in a busy life is vital.

Indeed, many lesbians had begun exploring creative ways of expressing their sexuality. Borrowing from the techniques used by heterosexuals and gay men during the 1970s to spice up their sex lives, some lesbians began demanding the freedom to enjoy such activities as pornography and safe role-playing in the bedroom. They argued that until women were free to explore their sexuality, they would never be completely free.

Nichols (1987) recommended that lesbian couples introduce tension or barriers into their relationships to revive sexual desire.

To find such ways of introducing new barriers, we can look to our gay brothers. By experimenting with new sexual techniques, through the use of sex toys and props, through costume, through S/M (which maximizes differences between partners), by developing sexual rituals with our partners, by introducing tricking into our relationships, we may be able to find other barriers that enhance sexuality once limerance is gone. (p. 108)

To compensate for a woman's tendency to blend sex and love, Nichols defined two different types of love—*romantic* or *committed*. By *tricking*, she was referring to romantic sexual encounters outside the primary committed lesbian relationship. Nichols' "opposites attract" argument supported a return to butch-fem relationships, if only through role playing in the lesbian bedroom.

Cultural feminists believed that women's culture was superior to patriarchal systems that exaggerated the importance of sex. Therefore, they tended to minimize the importance of sex. They insisted that non-sexual intimacy in an equitable partnership between two women was preferable to the disequilibrium that men brought to a

relationship. As such, they were intolerant of male/female role playing, sexual violence or role playing, and pornography (Adam, 1995; Faderman, 1991; Streitmatter, 1995). Cultural feminists responded to the new ideas developed by Nichols and other sexual radicals by waging an all-out war, sometimes called the *lesbian sex wars* (Adam; Faderman; Streitmatter). They formed groups such as Women Against Violence in Pornography and Media and Women Against Violence Against Women.

During this time, hotbeds of debate sprung up at every lesbian gathering. The Cambridge Women's Center barred a support group for lesbian sadomasochists saying it did not support feminist principles (Adam, 1995). Angry confrontations erupted at the Michigan Women's Festival when two Chicano women attempted to form a group interested in publishing a pornographic magazine for lesbians. Cultural feminists demanded that the producers of women's music festivals establish a "code of feminist ethics and morality" to stop sadomasochistic discussions and behaviors at the festivals (Faderman, 1991).

In 1987, seminars at the Midwest Women's Festival were disrupted by women who wanted to attend discussions and demonstrations on sadomasochism. At the same time, festivals that advertised discussions about sadomasochism were boycotted by cultural feminists. In some cases, festival attendance plummeted by as much as half. Eventually, cultural feminists managed to secure the support of NOW, who passed a resolution condemning pornography and sadomasochism as exploitive and violent (Adam, 1995; Ehrenreich, Hess, & Jacobs, 1982; Faderman, 1991).

Despite this resistance, a number of publications responded to the call for sexual freedom. The most notable were *On Our Backs*, *Bad Attitude*, and *Yoni*. (A yoni is a representation of a woman's vulva worshiped as the symbol of a goddess (Pickett, 2000).) Other publications included *Lesbian Contraction: Journal of Irreverent Feminism*, *Hag Rag: New Rage Thinking* and *Lesbian Ethics*. Interestingly, mild pornography had been advertised in *LC* catalogs for several years and had gone virtually unnoticed until the rise of the lesbian sex wars in the late 1980s. *LC* received so many letters of protest that these ads were the third most discussed issue overall during the 1979-1989 period studied. One subscriber wrote,

I never thought I'd be using a "THIS INSULTS WOMEN" sticker on a Lesbian Connection ad. Just because it's made "by and for women" doesn't mean it respects women. . . . This is the first time I've been disappointed in LC. Please, we see this shit so much in the straight world—no more!

Some subscribers were so upset they cancelled their subscriptions to *LC*. One woman wrote, "After my long relationship with LC, I'm asking you to please cancel my subscription. I, too, am appalled; it is debasing. I hope you receive lots of outraged mail and reconsider your position!" Another woman wrote, "The exploitation of women I was exposed to in the WINTER CATALOG was extremely offensive to me. I can't believe you've stooped that low. Please cancel my subscription."

Several lesbian enterprises also asked to stop receiving *LC*. One business owner wrote,

Here's our solution to the WINTER CATALOG (the porn): We threw out all the issues once we realized what was in them. We spend 12 hours a day in our vegetarian restaurant/feminist bookstore and we don't want such offensive materials in our home! We may support the right of women to buy such trash, but we don't want to sell it or take contributions for it. It pollutes our space. So, if there are future issues with such ads—please don't send them!

The Lesbian Information Service in Leicester, England wrote, "We received your Winter Catalog and were amazed to find that you advertise PORNOGRAPHY. It is against our policy to support pornography, and we therefore wish to cease exchanging publications with you."

Nonetheless, many women wrote in support of including the voice of all lesbians in *LC*. One woman wrote,

To those who urge you to CENSOR LC by leaving out S/M stories, ads, etc: I don't like S/M either, but I have developed a clever way of dealing with the problem. Whenever I come across something I feel uneasy about, I DON'T LOOK. I don't need the editors of LC, or anyone else, acting as parent substitutes for me, deciding what I should and should not see. I have had enough of choices being made for me by others acting in my "best interests." LC, treat me like an adult. If it's of interest to lesbians, ANY lesbians, then print it. Let me be the judge of what I want to internalize. It's a big job, but I think I can handle it.

Generally, subscribers were evenly split on the issue of pornography, with one group adamantly opposed to pornographic advertising in *LC* and the other group calling

for a “live and let live” position that respected the diversity of all lesbians. Interestingly, there was only one letter from a woman who actually practiced sadomasochism. She wrote,

I must comment on all the ANTI-S/M garbage a lot of womyn seem to be spewing out. I am an outrageously happy S/M dyke. I do what I do for fun and excitement in my own life. It's up to me to make my own choices just as it is for every other Lesbian Womyn. What my lovers and I do in my bedroom, kitchen, basement, bathroom, etc, is our business, and nobody else's. I feel isolated enough by society without having other Lesbians try to shove me back into a closet about my sexuality. . . . Don't put yourself in a locked room and please don't put me in one.

It is interesting to note that a discussion about sadomasochism took place ten years earlier at the beginning of the publication of *LC*. These discussions were in response to an article titled “About S & M—Some Feedback Please.” The contributor wrote, “Please let's have some sharing of ideas on this issue from womyn who feel different ways about S&M.” While this letter received fewer than half the responses seen ten years later, it sparked many long, thoughtful letters from women on both sides of the issue. No one cancelled their subscription or wrote accusatory letters to the Ambitious Amazons. However, by the end of the 1980s, sexual exploration had become such a divisive topic in the lesbian community that subscribers were no longer able to discuss it in a productive, non-condemning way.

Perhaps as interesting as what was discussed in the Relationship and Sexuality category during the 1980s is what was not discussed. Some historians noted that monogamy and marriage was “in” among lesbians in the 1980s (Faderman, 1991; Streitmatter, 1995). Indeed some 2,000 same-sex couples gathered at the Internal Revenue Service during this time for an immense marriage ceremony, complete with wedding gowns and tuxedos (Streitmatter). Historians speculated that the focus on marital rights for same-sex partners was due, in part, to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. They reasoned that although lesbians had the lowest incidence of HIV/AIDS, its impact was more frightening to them than to heterosexuals because they had watched the agony and death of their gay male friends. Lesbians saw first-hand the importance of medical benefits for one’s partner, the need to be released from work to care for one’s partner during an illness, and the importance of being recognized as a family member by hospitals and other medical care providers (Faderman; Streitmatter).

Streitmatter (1995) believed the Sharon Kowalski case also brought the need for partnership rights to the forefront of the lesbian and gay community. Kowalski was severely disabled in a car crash in 1983. She remained in the care of her partner, Karen Thompson, until Kowalski’s homophobic parents obtained a court order and subsequently removed her from her partner’s care in 1985. Thompson fought professional opinions and lawyers for six years for legal validation of Kowalski’s desire to return to their home. In 1990, Kowalski’s father resigned as her guardian and guardianship was awarded to a third party. Thompson and Kowalski were finally reunited in 1991 (Adam, 1995).

The lesbian and gay press reported that when Kowalski learned to use an electric typewriter, she typed, “Help me, Karen.” When she saw her lover after many years of separation, she typed “I love you” (Streitmatter, 1995). Interestingly, despite what appeared to be high-profile issues pushing the lesbian and gay community toward the need for legal recognition, discussions about marriage and domestic partnerships, HIV/AIDS, or the high profile Kowalski case were relatively non-existent in *LC*.

Discrimination and Fear

The Discrimination and Fear category was the third most discussed category during the 1979-1989 period studied. This category includes discussions about discrimination experienced by lesbians from within and outside the lesbian and feminist movements, acts of resistance in the face of discrimination, and fear resulting from discrimination and violence against lesbians. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Discrimination and Fear category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table B3.

By the end of the 1980s, many radical lesbians began developing more moderate stances. As the mood of the lesbian community began to shift toward moderation, many lesbians who had previously been closeted became a more visible presence in the lesbian community (Faderman, 1991). However, this shift in ideals did not come easy. There are clear indications of discord between older and younger lesbians in both the Discrimination and Fear category during the early 1980s and in the Defining Lesbian category during the mid-1980s. For example, in 1979 an eighteen-year-old subscriber

wrote the following article titled, “Sister, Can You Spare the Time?” This article received so many responses that it was the fourth most discussed item overall during the 1980s.

I am damned lonely because the women in every center, every coffeehouse, every meeting look upon me with a skepticism that is almost disdain. . . . Their actions speak clearly: You are young and we are older. We’ve been through it all before. We don’t want the responsibility of leading you by the hand. . . . I am hurt by the rejection of my sisters, the woman-loving-women whom I so desperately need acceptance from. . . . How will I learn if there is no one to teach me? . . . I’m looking for one, just one sign of support. Sisters . . . I need you. Is that so much to ask?

The Ambitious Amazons reported that they received over 30 responses to this letter. (For the purposes of this study, “over 30” was interpreted as 31 responses.) Six of those responses were published in *LC*. Five of the six published letters were from younger lesbians who shared similar experiences. One subscriber wrote,

Young dykes who are politically active or are separatists (like me) have a very difficult time. Less radical or apolitical wimmin often laugh when they hear an angry young dyke, assuring her that “it is a phase” and “you’ll calm down as you grow older (wiser).” In turn, “older” separatists and radical wimmin are hesitant to trust a young separatist, fearing too, that it is “a phase.” . . .

I moved away from home at 15 . . . Dykes who are in that situation are very often in danger of being forced to see a counsellor, or the-rapist [therapist],

or being incarcerated in detention homes (prisons) or mental institutions for being dykes, as wimmin under 18 have few legal rights.

Despite the outpouring of letters from other young lesbians who shared similar experiences with the writer, one respondent blamed the writer for her situation. She wrote, “The lady is not sticking up for herself and has little faith in her own ability to contribute to women’s activities or I seriously doubt she would be encountering such difficulties in joining in with the grownups.”

The conservatism in the lesbian community described by young lesbians was also experienced by the editors of *LC* during the mid-1980s. They described setting up a table to solicit subscribers for *LC* at the National Women in Law Conference in Detroit where they “ended up feeling like the dread ‘Lavender Menace’.” When they set up a table at a women’s dance the last night of the conference, they were asked to leave because some women were “very upset” that they were there. They faced even more barriers when they attended the National Women’s Music Festival and the East Coast Women’s Music Retreat.

Clearly, lesbians continued to live with fear and discrimination. Subscribers described being physically assaulted by parents when coming out to them. They warned other lesbians about the Queer Watch bulletin board established by a former KKK member for the collection of names and addresses of so-called queer establishments and homosexuals. Teachers wrote to discuss their concerns about losing their jobs if they didn’t remain closeted. Readers discussed an incident on the Appalachian Trail in which one lesbian was killed and her partner was critically wounded.

Lesbians took whatever measures they believed necessary to protect themselves from this ongoing violence. This included turning their backs on other lesbians, lying to their families about their sexual orientation, and remaining closeted in the workplace. One vivid example of the ongoing fear was the way *LC* arrived on the doorsteps of its subscribers. The issue was folded and clamped shut with a barrage of staples to prevent anyone from peeking inside and possibly seeing the word lesbian. The Ambitious Amazons developed a coding system to determine which subscribers wanted extra staples to assure as much privacy as possible. Subscribers whose address labels were marked with an *E* received extra staples—10-15 staples per issue.

Growing Pains

The Growing Pains category was the fourth most discussed category during the 1979-1989 period studied. This category includes items of discussion about the struggle to grow and survive faced by *LC* and other lesbian publishers, lesbian musicians, women's festivals, and the lesbian movement in general. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Growing Pains category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table B4.

Throughout the history of the Michigan Women's Music Festival, there have been certain festivals that stand out—the “year of the tornado” or the “year of the rains.” But no festival stands out more than what has been dubbed “the year of the shits” by festival attendees. At the 13th annual festival in 1988, epidemic numbers of women developed Shigellosis. The *Shigella* epidemic was the single most discussed item during the 1979-1989 period studied.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2006), Shigellosis is an infectious disease caused by *Shigella*. It causes diarrhea, fever, and stomach cramps that begin a day or two after exposure. Symptoms usually resolve in five to seven days. In some individuals, particularly young children and the elderly, the diarrhea can be so severe that the individual has to be hospitalized. A severe infection with high fever can also be associated with seizures in children under the age of two. *Shigella* is present in the stools of infected persons while they are sick and for a week afterwards. Most infections are the result of the bacterium passing from the stools or soiled fingers of one person to the mouth of another person. This occurs when basic hygiene and hand washing habits are inadequate.

The Ambitious Amazons reported that they received 69 letters about the *Shigella* outbreak at the Michigan Women's Music Festival. Only nine letters and 17 responses were published. One editor of *LC* provided the following information based on a phone call with one of the festival coordinators.

On Monday, two days before the festival opened, a large number of the workers got sick (approximately 100). The coordinators first assumed it was food poisoning, given the heat wave and the fact that most everyone seemed to get sick at the same time. . . . Two of the workers went to the hospital . . . to find out exactly what was wrong with them, but the test results weren't available until Friday.

Before then, some precautions were taken. . . . [And] a sign was posted at the entrance to the Orientation Tent (where they assumed everyone coming in

would see it) that said there was a high incidence of gastro-intestinal sickness among the staff, so everyone needed to be careful about hygiene and washing their hands. . . .

On Friday the diagnosis came back—it was shigella, a highly contagious bacterial infection. The County Health Department was notified of the outbreak among the staff. They approved of the measures already taken, and didn't really have any further suggestions. On Friday afternoon (for the first time in the history of the festival) an emergency meeting of all area coordinators at the festival (approx 50-75 women) was called to get the word out that it was shigella. ([A festival coordinator] said that the staff was never told to refrain from talking about it with regular festi-goers). . . . Signs were posted at the Community Center and Womb, and announcements about shigella were made from the stages . . .

After the festival, a survey for the CDC was sent out to 1/3 of the festival's list (the festival women did the mailing—the CDC was not given the mailing list). . . . When we talked to the CDC they said the results weren't completely tallied, but they estimated 40% [of attendees contracted *Shigella*]. . . . Most came down with it on Monday or Tuesday after the festival . . .

For many women, the festival is a time of renewal. They report feeling a sense of coming home to a place where they do not have to hide who they are—where they can trust the women around them to provide a safeguard from the outside world. In fact, festival workers often shout “Welcome home!” to festival attendees as they enter the gates of the festival. It is not unusual to see women so overwhelmed by a sense of

belongingness and safety that they enter the festival gates weeping. Following the *Shigella* outbreak, many women believed the festival coordinators had failed to protect them. This resulted in a sense of betrayal that lasted long after the symptoms of Shigellosis subsided. Given the conflicting reports on the incident, it is unclear whether or not that sense of betrayal was justified. One attendee wrote,

We both became ill with shigella the last day of the festival and spent the next 24 hours in the Womb. [The health care facility at the festival is called the “Womb.”] It was then we found out how uninformed we had been. . . . It affected us to the point that we had to ask friends to pack up our camp and drive us home on Monday. We were unable to work the rest of the week, were on antibiotics for 10 days and did not begin to feel truly well for several weeks. Still, we feel we were lucky compared to womyn we know who ended up in emergency rooms on their way home; or got sick after they got home and didn’t even know the name of the bacteria or what to do about it; or developed an allergic reaction to the antibiotics; or were quarantined in their homes by the public health service and prevented from working until they had tested negative for shigella.

Why weren’t we told as we arrived that over 100 of the workers had gotten sick with something that was extremely contagious and serious enough to send at least one womyn to the hospital? Why weren’t we told that many of the workers were taking antibiotics as a preventative? Why did we hear from two different workers that they were told not to discuss details of what was happening? Because, as one said it would “panic” the festival-goers? A worker in

the Womb told us that discussion of possibly cancelling the festival was immediately cut off when raised at a workers meeting. Is that because, like the rest of the culture, the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival put economic priorities above the health of womyn?

Some women were so upset by the incident that they made the decision to no longer attend the festival.

We both got sick the Monday after the festival. Luckily we got home before it struck. We had the most severe and long-lasting diarrhea, aches, chills, fever, weakness, disorientation and sweats that we've ever experienced. . . . Now, six days later, we are still weak. Due to the high fever, [my partner] has fever blisters over 75% of her lips and many blisters in her mouth. . . . We do not want the festival to die, but . . . we will never attend another festival and we will recommend that others do the same.

Despite the conflicting reports, several women wrote to support the festival coordinators, to deflect the blame away from festival coordinators, or to refute the claims that festival attendees were not notified. One woman wrote,

I don't know where those wommon were that didn't hear about SHIGELLA at the festival. I saw notices posted at the porta janes by RV camping, the Twilight Zone, the Showers, at Orientation, and heard announcements at the Night Stage. The wommon doing traffic was even telling us to please use the bleach water . . . [Port-A-John is the brand name of the portable toilets used at the festival. These toilets were dubbed Port-A-Jane by festival attendees. The Twilight Zone is an

area reserved for campers who tend to be up late creating noise that might disrupt others who are trying to sleep.]

The epidemic emphasized the fear and vulnerability experienced by lesbians during this time period. One woman expressed concern that the outbreak was a planned attack on the lesbian community. Other women expressed concern that the festival coordinators had given personal information about attendees to the CDC.

One scholar of lesbian and gay history noted an increase in the development and strengthening of resource networks in the lesbian community during the early 1980s (Streitmatter, 1995). The response of lesbian community to the *Shigella* epidemic is a vivid illustration of his findings. During the epidemic, the lesbian community saw a surge in activity aimed at assuring that all lesbians were informed about Shigellosis and how to treat it. In the Cincinnati area, a flier published by the Crazy Ladies Bookstore warned,

ATTENTION WOMEN! The "Michigan" disease (shigella?? a bacteria) has been declared an epidemic by the Center for Disease Control (CDC). It's highly contagious three days before you get it and three days after. CDC says to avoid tetracycline and ampicillin. Use sulfa-based drugs (ie, Bactrim and Sulfatrim).
GO TO THE DOCTOR!

Health and Mental Health

The Health and Mental Health category was the fifth most discussed category during the 1979-1989 period studied. This category includes discussions relevant to health and mental health issues in the lesbian community. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Health and Mental Health

category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table B5.

The most discussed item in the Health and Mental Health category was an article published in 1984 titled “The Importance of Therapy.” In the letter, the subscriber described the difficulties she had faced finding a therapist.

I’ve been very burned in my search for a decent, competent and caring therapist, and sometimes it’s been fellow lesbians at fault. I’ve been [to] a so-called women’s support group organized by a “counselor” where one woman ran out in hysterics and no one followed her; the counselor had a “sit outside the group and watch” attitude. She seems to be in the business to make as much money as easily and effortlessly as possible. This is one of several negative experiences I’ve had on my way to finding a good counselor. . . . I’m now in the slow process of learning to trust my therapist, and I can tell that I’ve now got someone I can really work with. . . . Mine is straight and happens to be a lot better than the lesbian ones I’d checked out, so keep an open mind.

Several subscribers wrote in support of the benefits of therapy. A social worker wrote to offer guidelines for selecting a therapist. According to the contributor, these guidelines were gleaned from an article by Marny Hall titled “Lesbian Families: Cultural and Clinical Issues” published in the September 1978 issue of *Social Work*.

Guidelines should relate not to the helping person’s level of education, theoretical framework, or years of experience. Rather, they would focus on two issues. The first – the professional helper’s degree of comfort with the lesbian’s life style. . . .

The second issue to consider is conceptual: is the practitioner able to see the ways in which the client's problem is both affected by and separate from her sexual orientation? . . . A lesbian would do well to interview that person [regarding] 1) the extent of her reading works by lesbian authors, 2) whether she has discussed these issues with friends and colleagues, 3) whether she has become aware of and experienced lesbian culture and is aware of lesbian support networks and resources that would be useful to lesbian clients, and 4) whether she has had contacts with lesbians who are not clients.

LC was not the only publication to discuss the difficulty lesbians had in finding therapists they could trust. In the fall of 1985, *Lesbian Ethics* published a series of letters from lesbians who had been sexually abused by their lesbian therapists. Editor Jeanette Silveira began the series by publishing a fictitious story about a well-known therapist who had advised her client to leave her lover and move in with the therapist. This provoked a flood of letters from readers who had such experiences (Streitmatter, 1995).

A second topic of discussion arose when a subscriber sent this response to the original letter.

I have a friend who is a "therapy junkie" – she has never not been in therapy since she was 18. Yet this friend . . . has one habit that therapy has never cured her of, nor even adequately addressed in my opinion. She is into self-mutilation. When she feels particularly self-hating and/or destructive, she takes a knife and cuts into her own flesh.

Her letter sparked many responses from women who had either practiced self-mutilation or knew someone who did. Many of the women who had practiced self-mutilation in the past reported that therapy had helped them find less destructive ways of expressing their pain or anger.

Alcoholism continued to be a highly discussed topic during this time period. However, the topic tended to shift away from discussions about drinking problems in the lesbian community and toward viable treatment options for lesbian alcoholics. Faderman (1991) described the lesbian community's response to what appeared to be ongoing alcohol problems as the "clean and sober" movement in the lesbian community. She found that popular self-help groups began to adapt to the unique needs of lesbians by toning down their patriarchal Christian emphasis. During the 1980s, Boston had eighty weekly AA meetings specifically for lesbians, and San Francisco had ninety such meetings. Living Sober began to target and attract lesbians and gay men. Residential programs that targeted lesbians began to spring up across the country. In fact, lesbians who might not otherwise have been in need of recovery began to find support within this movement as well. For many of them, the clean and sober culture replaced the bar culture (Faderman, 1991).

The following one-sentence letter published in *LC* in 1987 received so many responses that the letter was tied with therapy for the most discussed item in this category. "Perhaps you could ask for letters from Lesbian atheists who have figured out how to work the AA program without believing in god/goddess and without blaming themselves for being alcoholic (a genetic condition)."

Many subscribers wrote to offer support and suggestions. Some readers explained their belief that one's higher power could be "love or a force for good, the program, nature, the universe, or anything that suits your concept of something greater than yourself." Others wrote about overcoming alcoholism by finding a higher power within themselves. One reader provided information about a Gay and Lesbian Atheists and Agnostics AA meeting in the writer's area. Another reader provided information and resources gleaned from an article published in *American Atheist*. Moreover, several Jewish lesbians wrote to describe problems they had experienced in 12-step groups that focused heavily on traditional Christian beliefs.

A retired counselor theorized that since the traditional 12-step program was "written for men, by men, it works better for men."

I think men in recovery welcome "permission" to see themselves as less than "ALL POWERFUL" (the macho creeds!). Women, however, do not need to be reminded, again, of their imposed "powerlessness." This may be why turning to a "Higher Power" outside of ourselves is so difficult, because even if not stated bluntly, it's assumed to be "male."

The counselor wrote of her plans to create a 13-step program for women which would "delete the focus on 'powerless and guilt' and encourage women to 'reconnect' with their 'Greatest, most High Power,' that which lies within themselves."

Discussions that made their way into the Health and Mental Health category were interesting and insightful; however, equally insightful are the topics that were *not* priorities to lesbians. The HIV/AIDS epidemic was the single most important historical

event to take place in gay male culture during this time. By the end of the decade 100,000 Americans had died from HIV/AIDS; 90% were gay men (Streitmatter, 1995). While HIV/AIDS was at the forefront for gay men; this was not so for lesbians. A picture published in *Lesbian Contradiction* in the fall of 1986 provides a lasting image of the lesbian community's view of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The picture depicted lesbians protesting the increased violence against the gay community carrying signs that read "NO to AIDS Hysteria," and "NO to Increasing Anti-Gay Attacks." At the same time, wire coat hangers—symbolic of abortion rights—hung from their collars and belts (Streitmatter). Clearly, HIV/AIDS was only one of many concerns for lesbians in the 1980s. Discussions in *LC* during this time provide insight into the relative importance of HIV/AIDS to the lesbian community. Letters about therapy, alcoholism, Epstein-Barr, endometriosis, breast reduction surgery, and breast cancer received more responses than the two letters in this category that discussed HIV/AIDS.

The one thing lesbians did share with gay men was the response of the medical community to lesbian and gay health issues in the 1980s. Research conducted during this time suggested that lesbians were three times more likely to develop breast cancer than their non-lesbian counterparts, yet the response of the medical community was virtually the same as its response to HIV/AIDS—silence (Streitmatter, 1995).

Minority Lesbians

The Minority Lesbians category was the sixth most discussed category during the 1979-1989 period studied. This category includes discussions by and about minority lesbians. Here, minority is defined as lesbians who differ by culture, class, ethnicity, race,

religion, age, or ability from the dominant group. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Minority Lesbians category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table B6.

During this time professionals interested in the study of homosexuality generally believed that lesbians were more alike than different. This led to stereotyping of lesbians that was perpetuated within the lesbian community. Many lesbians believed that women who loved women were cast from the same mold (Faderman, 1991).

Minority lesbians had been slow to organize because they needed the support and protection of the minority community to which they belonged. Aligning themselves with the lesbian community meant being cut off from the lifeline of their communities. However, with the emerging acceptance of feminism in the 1970s, a safe environment was created for minority women to begin organizational efforts. As minority lesbians became visible in the 1980s and began to demand inclusion in the lesbian community, it was necessary to redefine lesbian once again to embrace the diverse subcultures within the lesbian community. This integration did not come without its own unique set of struggles. However, by the end of the 1980s there was a proliferation of groups established to meet the special needs of diverse lesbians. These included collective groups for lesbians of color as well as specific groups for Latina, Chicana, Asian, South Asian, Japanese, and Black lesbian groups (Adam, 1995; Faderman, 1991).

Some minorities, such as disabled lesbians and fat lesbians, had begun the fight for inclusion as early as the 1970s and these efforts continued into the 1980s. Organizational efforts resulted in groups such as Fat Dykes and magazines such as *Dykes*,

Disability, and Stuff. Disabled and fat lesbians incorporated the reasoning and language of the gay liberation movement into their own fight for recognition and acceptance. For example, lesbians with disabilities referred to themselves as “differently abled” and fat lesbians referred to their movement as “fat liberation.” Since lesbianism was, within itself, a challenge to generally accepted ideas about normal, disabled and fat lesbians felt that lesbians were obliged to join them in their fight against preconceived ideas about normal appearance and abilities (Faderman, 1991).

Letters from differently abled lesbians who had experienced ableism at the 1982 Michigan Women’s Music Festival were the most discussed item in the Minority Lesbians category during this time period. One woman discussed the many obstacles faced by disabled women attending the festival.

Why were there women to unload trucks of soda and beer, and no one to empty differently-abled toilets? Why wasn’t there one working extension cord for a respirator but there were hundreds of working cords for the stage? Why was I asked at the gate, as I sat in my wheelchair in my special van, if I could walk! My answers to such questions must have gotten passing grades, for I was deemed eligible to camp in the isolated, “special,” segregated area for disabled women. Why did I risk my life to be in a place where women not only could not meet my needs, but where the power structure at the top invalidated them over and over again?

[One performer] . . . did not stop her performance when cameras were flashing - causing epileptic women to have seizures. Why did the coordinators for

the disabled have to get clearance . . . before an announcement could be made to stop the flashing? . . . Differently-abled women are in a position now of risking their lives to continue to attend, or of giving in to the ableism . . .

One of the producers of the festival wrote the following response to the many concerns raised by differently-abled women.

We agree that the site used for the 1982 festival was not prepared adequately enough to be a functionally accessible site. We are committing ourselves to working throughout the winter with the womyn who coordinate the differently abled area at the festival and with womyn who offer feedback about these facilities. . . . This festival . . . is held in an isolated environment within a rural, primitive setting, and due to this we are faced with being 20 miles from the nearest full-care medical facility. Combining this with the variety of personal medical needs that any participant might have, it is at this point impossible for us to state that this event is a totally accessible gathering. We will continue dialog on how to increase the accessibility each year, and we encourage womyn to write us with their ideas, feedback and suggestions. . . .

Another woman who was believed to be experiencing schizophrenia during the 1982 festival was removed from the festival and taken to a local hospital for a psychological evaluation. This resulted in an outpouring of angry letters from women who had experienced abuse at the hands of mental health professionals. Many women wrote to demand that the festival issue a statement that “no womyn will ever be forcibly removed from the land and handed over to the Psychiatric establishment.” [Festival

attendees refer to the space where the festival is held as “the land.”] The following is an excerpt from a letter written by the woman who had been removed from the land.

Saturday night . . . [at the] ending of the concert with the Latin Rhythm . . . they invite women to dance. I’m a Latin myself. I feel my whole body flowing, I have to express my joy. I feel like dancing, dancing. Suddenly I feel the arms of 6 or 7 women holding my body with their physical strength and raping my joy energy with obscure forces inside them. They are choking me. I go crazy. I begin to shout. . . . I ask why they did that to me. They answer that I was too near the stage. They let me go. Later I sleep but I feel evil, death nearby.

Sunday . . . I see a woman in the womb healing women’s bones. I feel that I might have a vertebrae displaced in my neck. I receive treatment and feel deeply released, relaxed. I cry silently. Other women tell me to lie down. They take my hand. I think they want to help. They say I need help. I answer that I’m OK. They surround me. Now, I recognize the guardians of the night state who have just arrived to “help” me. I shout, “Not out of this land, not to a man’s hospital.” They take me against my will and put me in a van. I ask help from women watching the scene. No one moves. They take me to a hospital . . . They make me be examined. The hospital decided I’m OK and they let me go. Women decide I’m not OK. They leave me alone . . . promising me they will send my friends and my things. Five hours later no one has come. It’s getting dark. I’m cold. I begin to walk. A family from Vietnam takes me back to the land.

I had never in my life been taken to a hospital for psychiatric treatment for the simple fact of letting my emotions out. I was not dangerous to anyone. I was not hurting myself. I was just feeling in me the healing energy of 9000 women. How can women take other women to men against their wills? Women in the States pretend they are open to other cultures, and imitate them. But when they really have someone from a different culture inside their circles they put these people into mental hospitals because they act differently from their norms. They are repeating the same patterns as the dominant patriarchal culture.

The producers of the festival issued the following statement about the incident. This is an attempt to clarify the circumstances under which a woman was, against her wishes taken off the site and to a hospital during the 1982 MICHIGAN WOMYN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL. First of all I would like to make a public apology and communicate our real regret about how this situation was dealt with. We are trying to safeguard against this happening again. Over the years there have been several womyn attending the festival who came into emotional crises, and we have been committed to dealing with these situations amongst ourselves. . . . Whether it be due to our post-festival exhaustion or our plain inexperience, we have felt inadequate in our ability to deal with a woman whose reality at the time is both unfamiliar and potentially dangerous to herself and the womyn with her. Still we have tried to see it through and have done the best we could. We have researched possible care facilities that we could trust and have come up with no local possibilities. We have tried to lay plans for the future and have quite

honestly realized that we will have to deal with the situations the best we can as they arise.

Clearly how it was dealt with at this year's festival was not the best way. The womyn working in the womb who made the decision to take this woman to the hospital were in all earnestness concerned with her welfare and were acting under a stressful and immediate situation. . . . [Afterwards] there were many long meetings . . . about what happened . . . It was clear what should not be done in the future. The difficult part is to know what to do to be of help to a woman in crisis . . .

Isolation

The Isolation category was the seventh most discussed category during 1979-1989. This category includes items of discussion that underscore the isolation experienced by lesbians and initiatives to overcome that isolation. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Isolation category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table B7.

The most discussed item in this category was a letter from a woman who was having difficulty meeting other lesbian women despite the fact that she lived in a large city. She wrote,

I am 31, single and live in a large, conservative city. The only way for single Lesbians to meet here is through the bars, which I hate, so I tried answering the personal ads in a local gay paper. It was a big mistake. One woman seemed

attractive and nice, but turned out to be like Glenn Close's characters in "Fatal Attraction." She sent me more than ten letters a day, and at night she stalked my apartment building. Another woman was into stereotypical Lesbians, and when I told her I wasn't, she got pissed off and said, "All Lesbians are either butch or femme." I ended up not seeing her anymore, either. So I've learned my lesson about Lesbian personal ads. . . .

Several women who lived in the same city as the writer responded to offer alternatives to bars and personal ads for meeting women. Others suggested that she refrain from judging all lesbians who place personal ads based on her personal experiences. Still others offered alternative resources for personal ads. One subscriber wrote to explain that "Glenn Close in 'Fatal Attraction' was a borderline." She recommended that the writer, "Run, don't walk, from the nearest borderline."

Women who had been diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder wrote to express their outrage with the writer's characterization of their illness.

Those who wish to avoid danger, "incorrigible" borderlines had better stay away from other "monsters" as well, like epileptics, diabetics, physically challenged womyn, addicts (active or recovering, including alcoholics), incest survivors (among whom multiple personality and other psychoses are relatively common), manic depressives, and above all, amateur therapists; who confidently diagnose womyn they've never even met.

By the mid-1980s, the hysteria over HIV/AIDS had generated another powerful antigay backlash in the US. Nowhere was this more evident than in the military. During

this time, lesbians and gay men were being discharged at a rate of a thousand a year (Streitmatter, 1995). Articles about military-sponsored witch hunts and the fear and isolation of lesbians in the military made their way into *LC*. In a 1983 article titled “Uncle Sam Doesn’t Want You,” one woman indicated the military sentenced her to six-years of hard labor in a maximum security prison because she was lesbian. Another lesbian was dismissed from a college ROTC program after four years in the Army where she attained the rank of sergeant and received two medals. Forty other women reported that they were harassed and investigated by military officials who suspected the women were lesbians. These military officials threatened to discharge them and/or inform their parents of their lesbianism if they did not sign statements that incriminated other women.

In 1987, one subscriber wrote, “I just want you to know that being a lesbian in the military is not exactly a bowl of cherries. . . . I would like to hear from other lesbians in the service.” Some respondents wrote to warn her to be discreet; however, others encouraged her to send for books and catalogs and to seek out other lesbians serving with her. One respondent who had been offered a three-year full scholarship in exchange for eight years of service in the Army asked about the risk of being found out. She wrote, “I would like to serve my country, however, I am not sure if the potential pain is worth the effort.”

Most women who responded described their experience in the military as a positive one despite the many precautions they were required to take to protect their military career. One woman wrote, “I am presently in the Army and love it. I live off post with my lover. Unless you want the military to know about your lifestyle, they don’t have

to. Take advantage of the scholarship and have a great experience in the Army.” Clearly, the experiences of lesbians in the military were diverse and contradictory.

Separatism

The Separatism category was the eighth most discussed category during the 1979-1989 period studied. This category includes debates about the best way to align lesbian energies to achieve the goals of the lesbian community. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Separatism category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table B8.

During the 1974-1979 period, separatism was the third most discussed item overall. However, in the current analysis, separatism did not make it into the top ten discussions overall. Clearly, the push to form a separate Lesbian Nation had given way to new ideologies. One subscriber provided the following commentary on the plight of the separatist movement.

“Woman space” is out of style nowadays, and those who plan women-only events face personal attacks, not only from men and straight women, but also from lesbians. I find it depressing that pioneers of lesbian liberation are called bigoted and regressive on this issue by women who were barely old enough to read when *SISTERHOOD IS POWERFUL* was published. . . .

When the issue of separatism did arise, it became a source of contention between minority women and radical lesbians. Minority women refused to affiliate themselves with the lesbian-feminist movement—especially lesbian separatism—because they believed lesbian separatism shared many of the same components as racism (Faderman,

1991). Their rejection of separatism placed them at odds with radical lesbians who continued to believe that women must live and work separately from men to remain unhampered by the dictates of patriarchy.

In the early 1980s the Sisterfire music festival, sponsored by Roadwork in Washington, DC, was established to provide a forum for the celebration of women of color. Although Sisterfire scheduled only women musicians, it was open to male attendance. An incident in 1987 involving the exclusion of men at one craftswoman's booth set off a spark of debate in the lesbian community. One subscriber provided the following version of the incident.

I [heard] that a woman applied for a booth to sell women's erotic sculptures, and stated on her application that she would show only to women. . . . She and the woman helping her told men that their booth was for women only. No one gave them a hard time until two black men got angry at being denied entrance. The women (white) responded angrily and the situation quickly deteriorated into a shouting match, culminating in one man's striking a woman. She told me he hit her on the chest and put his hands around her throat. Apparently Sisterfire security stepped in at this point and separated everyone. The man was heard by at least one observer to say "the only reason that bitch is still alive is because I'm under control." The assaulted woman felt she was not being adequately protected, but the security woman refused to call the police.

Roadwork's response was to let the men stay on the grounds, and to tell the women they could not re-open their booth unless they allowed men in. I have

a lot of questions about how this was handled. . . . I was shocked that Roadwork would go to such lengths to vindicate the violence of men, and appalled that they would ignore the right of women to be free of that violence at a festival of women's culture. I'd really like to hear some answers from Roadwork about this. Roadwork's response was published in *LC*. The following is an excerpt from that response.

Accounts of the exact sequence of events and dialogue varied considerably. Where Roadwork staff found clarity and consistency in the accounts, we made decisions based on our policies. Where there were inconsistencies, our decisions were based on what was fairest to all involved. Because of the discrepancies in the reports and because we were confident in our ability to keep the grounds secure and safe, no one involved in the incident was asked to leave.

In our conversations with the two vendors, they clearly stated that they were aware of the politics of Sisterfire, and knew that the festival was open to women and men. They told us they had always stayed away from Sisterfire because they didn't agree with such politics. They said they only came this year because we had accepted their application, on which they'd stated they show their work to women only. Subsequent review of their application revealed no mention of this fact. . . .

Sisterfire does not condone violence against women or people of color. We firmly believe that discrimination against men played a central role in

initiating this incident and that racism played a role in escalating the exchange between the women and the men. . . .

One subscriber challenged Roadwork's portrayal of the craftswomen as aggressive and racist.

I am horrified at your defense of the men who harassed lesbians at SISTERFIRE.

In all of the accounts I have heard, not once have I heard a version that echoes yours. Your attempts to call this an incident of racism are a transparent effort to divert the issues; these women made it very clear that their work was for women only, not for whites only. The public isn't as stupid as you seem to think. . . .

Although discussions about separatism had clearly diminished in the 1980s, separatist issues continued to create conflict in the lesbian community. Interestingly, one separatist issue described by several historians was glaringly absent from discussions in *LC*. Some historians report a reunification of lesbians and gay men in the 1980s (Adam, 1995; Faderman, 1991; Streitmatter, 1995). They attributed this to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. According to Faderman, the epidemic caused lesbians to reexamine the hostility between the lesbian and gay communities and conclude that the "in-fighting" was injurious and nonproductive. When members of the right wing began using HIV/AIDS as an excuse to condemn all homosexuals, it became crucial that lesbians and gay men ban together. Faderman, characterized the 1987 National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights as a lasting symbol of this unity. The march drew 650,000, making it the largest Civil Rights March in American history—larger than either the 1963 Civil Rights March or the 1969 Vietnam protest.

In addition, Streitmatter (1995) reported that gay men began to take to heart the criticisms of lesbians during the 1970s, and national lesbian and gay organizations began making an effort to address the concerns of lesbians. Moreover, lesbian and gay publications committed themselves to giving lesbians equal voice, even when this decision had a negative impact on sales.

Given the atmosphere described by these historians, it is especially noteworthy that there was little evidence of this reunification of lesbians and gay men in *LC* discussions during this period. The only evidence of this unification that can be gleaned from the discussions is a letter written in 1986 about the loss of “a gay male friend to AIDS.” Although several subscribers wrote to share their own stories of losing people they loved to HIV/AIDS, one subscriber’s letter illustrates the fragmentation that remained between lesbians and gay men despite the HIV/AIDS epidemic. She wrote,

My first reaction was: Who cares?! My second response was: have I picked up Lesbian/Faggot Connection? Lesbian/Bi Conn?? . . . I don’t expect to pick up my eagerly awaited LC to read about some MAN, dead or alive. It’s bad enough when I have to wade through articles about Lesbian mothers who can’t bring their BOYS onto Women’s Land – our last Sanctum Sanctorum away from the BOYS of the world! – without having your pages taken up with UN-lesbian tales. I am disappointed, LC!

Faderman (1991) speculated that only a small minority of lesbians shared the writer’s resentment. According to her, these lesbians believed that men’s issues always took precedence over those of women, regardless of their sexual orientation; had the

tables been turned and HIV/AIDS had first appeared in the lesbian community, gay men would have turned their backs on lesbians. However, an article published in *Lesbian Contradiction* suggests that resentment toward gay men was widespread during this time. In a review of Cinty Patton's *Sex and Germs: The Politics of AIDS*, Adams (1986, Fall) writes:

I find Patton's discussion off the mark. To cite one telling example, throughout the book she uses the expression "lesbian and gay" community or movement without any suggestion that there is anything problematic about the male/female unity implied by this usage. In my experience that just isn't a true picture of lesbian (or what I know of gay male) reality. Most of us, of both sexes, most of the time, feel little in common except that the homophobes hate us all. Whether our separateness is something to be celebrated or something to be overcome is an unresolved point of political contention, especially among feminist lesbians. We can't just gloss over the reality of this political struggle. (p. 20)

It is unclear why lesbian history as told by the subscribers of *LC* and other lesbian periodicals differs from that of historians. Whatever the reason for this historical disparity, the unity between lesbians and gay men noted by historians was clearly absent from discussions in *LC*.

Children, Families, and Parenting

The Children, Families, and Parenting category was the ninth most discussed category during 1979-1989. This category includes items of discussion from subscribers who have or want children in their families. The most discussed items and/or discussions

that illustrate the overall tone of the Children, Families, and Parenting category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table B9.

Although lesbians have always been mothers, prior to the 1980s children generally became a part of lesbian families after their mothers ended a heterosexual marriage. The presence of these children—especially male children—often made the lesbian community uncomfortable since this was inconsistent with the all-women environment that was held dear by many lesbians. However, by the 1980s, an increasing number of lesbians began to pursue motherhood outside of heterosexual relationships and this choice saw increasing levels of acceptance in the lesbian community (Faderman, 1991; Streitmatter, 1995).

The most discussed items in this category were two letters requesting information about adoption and alternative insemination. Subscribers responded to offer information and advice. When the issue of male children made its way into the conversation, the conversation took a radical shift. One respondent wrote,

I would like to hear from others who have conceived boys. Although gender selection was available (\$200 per vial), we chose to believe I would conceive a girl. It was quite a shock when my Amnio results came back. Somehow the information that I had a very healthy boy baby did not help me understand why.

Most respondents believed that raising male children provided “the opportunity to help create a man with a feminist consciousness and an attitude of non-oppression toward any group.” However, all subscribers did not agree with the conjecture.

It amazes me time and again that MOTHERS OF SONS truly believe they can raise a male to NOT be an oppressor. I have news for you – the way the power structure is set up, that male will get nothing but reinforcement from society that he’s number one. You are only fooling yourself if you think there is such a thing as a “feminist male.” Also, it is NOT “our” obligation to teach males how to respect wimmin – let them teach themselves! Just how long must wimmin go on “stroking” men before we wise up?

This letter was met with an outpouring of responses from subscribers who found the writer to be “every bit as absurd as the Christian fanaticism about homosexuality.”

Religion and Spirituality

The Religion and Spirituality category was the tenth most discussed category during 1979-1989. This category includes discussions about religious and spiritual beliefs and practices as they relate to lesbians and the lesbian community. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Religion and Spirituality category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table B10.

During the late 1970s when lesbians were working to create a Lesbian Nation, much attention was directed toward incorporating matriarchal-based religions into the movement (Faderman, 1991). As such, there was some discussion about religion and spirituality during the 1974-1979 analysis; however, there were not enough discussions to support creating a separate category. Therefore, these discussions were incorporated into the Defining Lesbian category (see Table A2). During 1979-1989, these discussions

remained in the periphery; however, they were numerous enough to justify creating a separate category for them.

Since the thirteenth century, lesbians and gay men have faced hostility from Christian, Jewish, and Islamic organizations which were the primary sources of antigay ideologies. Historically, these institutions subjected lesbian and gay people to death, mutilation, harassment, and imprisonment. By the 1980s, liberal congregations began to call into question these antigay positions. Nonetheless, conservative religious organizations such as the Protestant, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic churches were locked into medieval theologies and continued to persecute gay people (Adam, 1995).

The 1980s saw a proliferation of responses to the spiritual needs of lesbian and gay people (Adam, 1995). Independent gay churches were renowned for providing services aimed at addressing the unique needs of the lesbian and gay community. Services included telephone hot lines that provided support and information to the lesbian and gay community and support groups for parents and alcoholics. Movements within organized religion can be found as early as the 1960s (Adam).

Troy Perry, a minister who had been expelled from the Pentecostal church, founded one of the most well-known ministries for the gay community in 1968. This ministry grew from a congregation of 12 in Los Angeles into the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC). By 1983, there were 195 MCC congregations in 10 countries ministering to the religious needs of lesbian and gay people (Adam, 1995).

Despite this outpouring of response to the spiritual needs of lesbians and gay men, some contributors to *LC* continued to believe they must choose between their faith and the women they loved. The writer of the most discussed letter in this category described her dilemma as “conflicting loves.”

Nearly three years ago I met and fell madly in love with a very special woman . . . Ours was an exceptionally passionate relationship, with a deep mutual love. But I met [her] three months after having been received into the Catholic Church, and the timing couldn’t have been worse. For the next two and a half years, I lived in a virtual hell trying to choose between my love for her and my love for the Church (which accepts constitutional homosexuality, but does not permit sexual contact). . . .

Experience, prudence, and God finally made me accept the fact that peace for me, like it or not, would only come from ending the relationship . . . for good. Yet the fire of my love for her burns on; when I let myself think about it, the pain is unbearable.

Most of the subscribers who responded to conflicting loves encouraged her to consider that “to reject love is to reject God.” Some readers suggested that the writer seek out a local MCC for spiritual support, others recommended books about religion and homosexuality. Some readers defined traditional religions as “woman-hating, body-hating, male-dominated, authoritarian institution[s]” that were “emotionally crippling and intellectually absurd.” They recommended that the subscriber listen to her inner voice or

explore female- and earth-based spiritual ideologies. However, one reader recommended that she continue to practice her Roman Catholic faith.

Do not be discouraged by those who say the solution is to leave the Church. The Church is a body of people, not merely an institution. We needn't leave because we, along with many heterosexuals, dissent on certain matters regarding sexuality. Church teaching will only change if we have the courage to remain, to say what we believe, and to pray that our leaders are someday moved to a more enlightened and compassionate view.

Another item that received nearly as many responses as conflicting loves was an article titled "I Hate Christmas." The subscriber wrote,

Why are Christian-born lesbians celebrating the birth of a man responsible for starting the bloodiest religion in the world, which has persecuted gay people more than any other, promoted racism, genocide, and slavery, and has woman-hatred as its backbone having murdered 9 million of us as witches. . . . Christmas hurts us, makes us hate ourselves more for being dykes, especially if we're not in a couple. I stopped celebrating in most ways a few years ago because I believe it is anti-Semitic to add to the celebration. . . . It isn't easy not to celebrate either. It increases our aloneness, having to stand out, explaining to our friends, families, or children why we don't.

Several respondents wrote to say they were moved by the letter and wanted to thank the writer for putting their feelings into words. One woman wrote, "I'm seriously thinking of sending copies of your letter to my friends as my 'Christmas' card."

Networking

The Networking category was the least discussed category during 1979-1989. This category includes discussions in which subscribers requested information from or provided information to other subscribers of *LC*. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Networking category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table B11.

Some historians found that networking among lesbians intensified during the early 1980s. This may have been due to ongoing attacks from religious groups, and the chaos created by the HIV/AIDS epidemic (Streitmatter, 1995). Lesbians felt they were under attack and needed to look to themselves for strength. This analysis of *LC* also noted a group of discussions that suggested there was an increase in networking during this time, albeit small. Subscribers wrote letters seeking information about lesbian movies, a lesbian sorority, and a music group. They exchanged information about lesbian vacation spots, offered advice on checking for radon (radon is a radioactive gas that can be a health hazard), and encouraged other lesbians to purchase and use smoke detectors.

What Was Not Discussed

Events that were not discussed in *LC* and fell within the eleven categories during 1979-1989 were included in with those categories. However, one event fell outside those categories. That was the practice of outing that became popular during the 1980s. Outing was the practice of revealing the sexual orientation of lesbians and gay men in positions of power and prominence. *OutWeek* magazine was at the center of this phenomenon (Streitmatter, 1995).

Michelangelo Signorile's "Peek-A-Boo" column in *OutWeek* outed superstars Michael Jackson and Whitney Houston, actors Tony Randall and John Travolta, political figures Ronald Liz Smith of the *New York Daily News* and James Revson of *Newsday*, the head of Twentieth Century-Fox Barry Diller, talk show host and entertainment mogul Merv Griffin, and millionaire Malcolm Forbes (Streitmatter, 1995). When *Silence of the Lambs* debuted portraying a psychopathic killer as gay, Signorile aimed fire at Jodie Foster. He wrote, "TIME'S UP! If lesbianism is too sacred, too private, too infringing of your damned rights for you to discuss publicly, then the least you can fucking do is refrain from making movies that insult this community" (Signorile, 1991, February 20)!

While outing may seem like the gross invasion of an individual's privacy, it was no less invasive than court sanctions that supported the policing of gay bedrooms. Or the government's half-hearted response to a medical epidemic that was killing gay men by the thousands (Streitmatter, 1995).

Given the popularity and controversies behind the outings that took place during the 1980s, it was somewhat surprising to find that there were no discussions about it in *LC* during this time. It is difficult to determine why public outings were seemingly unimportant to subscribers of *LC*. It may have been that lesbians did not experience the impact of government policing of their sexual behaviors to the same extent as gay men. Or that they were not threatened by the HIV/AIDS epidemic to the same extent as gay men. Thus, there was less reason for lesbians to support, participate in, or even discuss this controversial political tactic.

Semiotic Analysis: Defining Lesbian

During the 1980s, lesbians continued to proclaim a lesbian's right to self-identity—a lesbian was someone who said she was. Yet the practice of denying certain women—in this case bisexual women—the right to identify as lesbian continued into the 1980s. The topic of bisexual women was especially touchy and many of the letters about bisexual women held a vicious tone. One woman wrote, "I am a True Lesbian. I live, I exist, I thrive for women." Another subscriber wrote, "Lesbians do not welcome sperm into their bodies—this is a heterosexual act. Lesbians do not choose to get pregnant, any more than Lesbians fuck with men." A third subscriber wrote, "Lesbian is a title of honor, not a word game; a Lesbian is a woman-loving woman, not a woman who feeds off the Lesbian community and fucks with a man."

Recall that during the late 1970s the editors of *LC* received a letter from a woman who felt betrayed because *LC* had printed a letter from a bisexual woman. The editors apologized profusely and declared *LC* a lesbian-only publication. They promised this would never happen again. Nonetheless, 1987 the Ambitious Amazons caved in to the bisexual movement that was gaining momentum during this time and published letters from bisexual women a second time. Many subscribers were furious with their decision. One woman wrote,

I am deeply angered at your decision to print HETEROSEXUAL women's responses in the last issue of—what is this publication called? These women are heterosexual, no matter what their memories/longing/posturings might be. Why

are these women still receiving a publication supposedly “For, By, and About Lesbians”?

Another woman claimed that, “Lesbians have to defend our lives and our identities everywhere – even in our own publications.”

In anticipation of these concerns, the editors of *LC* introduced the issue containing letters from bisexual women with the following statement.

This issue we’ve included responses . . . from some women who are involved with men. We strongly believe in LC being ‘for, by and about lesbians.’ However, it seemed to us that in order to understand the phenomenon discussed it would help if some of these women answered the questions themselves. We’re not sure we made the right choice by making an exception in this case, but you can be sure we gave it a lot of thought.

This change of heart on the part of the Ambitious Amazons is one example of the way in which the policies of *LC* shifted as ideologies within the lesbian community shifted.

Recall that in the late 1970s, radical feminists believed being lesbian was the ultimate expression of feminism and did not necessarily include sex. During the 1980s, some lesbians expanded this idea to bisexual women. One woman wrote, “Lesbianism goes much deeper than sex. It is an emotional attachment, a sexual attraction, and a social binding and interaction of woman and woman. Lesbianism is also a political stand, an educational responsibility, a religious issue, and a spiritual ecstasy.” By removing sexual behaviors from the definition of lesbian, this argument allowed room for bisexual women

to define themselves as lesbians who slept with men. One subscriber explained it this way,

Lesbianism isn't something one DOES, but something one IS. I think much of the present confusion over "EX-LESBIANS?" comes from the fact that many women define Lesbianism as something they DO – namely have sexual/emotional relationships with another woman. . . . Women who define themselves as Lesbians because they “sleep” with women may later change the gender of their partners and become “ex-lesbians” – impossible if one defines Lesbianism as something one IS. I had no choice as to the way I felt – I do have a choice as to whether I want to act on my feelings. So, some of the women who opt for men may be Lesbians, but they find that being with men has advantages; or they may not actually be Lesbians, but may have for a time chosen to be with women, in preference to men.

Despite the rigid definition of Lesbian maintained by many radical lesbians, the militancy in the lesbian community began to diminish. This shift from radicalism to moderation opened the door for a less rigid definition of lesbian; however, some lesbians lost rank in this shift. During the 1970s, the radical lesbian movement had glamorized “working with one’s hands” as analogous to building a lesbian nation. However, by the 1980s the lesbian community began to de-value women who worked in blue-collar jobs. Blue-collar lesbians wrote to *LC* about the classist attitudes of lesbian yuppies or so-called *luppies* (Faderman, 1991).

For these middle-class luppies, the world had become a less threatening place to be. They were able to create a space for themselves in which they were neither out nor closeted. This meant that many lesbians were not interested in direct confrontation with the heterosexual world.

During the 1980s, middle-class women had educational and economic opportunities available to them that earlier lesbians had not. There was a proliferation of career women who identified as lesbian. This resulted in a number of organizations devoted to lesbian career women. These organizations focused on middle-class interests such as estate planning, purchasing real estate, having and raising children, and traveling for business or pleasure. Clearly, by the end of the 1980s, the definition of Lesbian was aligning itself more closely to mainstream middle-class ideologies (Faderman, 1991).

Moreover, as minority lesbians began to demand inclusion in the lesbian community, it was necessary to redefine Lesbian to embrace the diverse subcultures within the lesbian community. As lesbians began to realize that one's sexual orientation did not guarantee that they would have shared commonalities, the need for a definition of lesbian that embraced diversity-within-unity became clear (Faderman, 1991).

Thus, during the 1980s, the definition of Lesbian was pulled in two directions. Majority lesbians attempted to align the definition of Lesbian with White, Protestant, able, middle-class values, while minorities attempted to diversify and expand the definition of lesbian to include women from all races, cultures, religions, abilities, and classes.

Shifting to the Center: 1989-1994

In June 1990, the Ambitious Amazons saw their offices go up in flames a second time. They wrote,

On the night of June 7th, a male youth shooting off fireworks in a nearby parking lot accidentally started our building on fire. The fire department responded quickly, and the blaze was contained in a matter of minutes, but not before an estimated \$25,000 damage was done. [A worker] was in the building at the time, but thankfully she escaped unharmed. However, her car, which was parked next to the building, was completely destroyed. . . .

All told, it could have been much worse. . . . luckily most of the first floor was relatively untouched, and that was where the 18,000 copies of the July/August LC were sitting, almost ready to be mailed. In spite of the fire, we managed to get those issues finished and delivered to the post office on June 15th as scheduled (we certainly *can* be Ambitious sometimes). . . .

Despite these ongoing challenges, *LC* continued to grow. By the end of the 1989-1994 period studied, there were 18,000 households on the *LC* mailing list in the US and 250 subscribers from other countries. The Ambitious Amazons also sent approximately 2,500 copies of *LC* to bookstores for distribution.

Content Analysis/Narrative Analysis

The eleven categories used for the 1979-1989 analysis remained unchanged in the current analysis; no new categories were added. The discussions are presented in order from the most discussed category to the least discussed category as follows:

Relationships and Sexuality; Growing Pains; Networking; Health and Mental Health; Discrimination and Fear; Defining Lesbian; Isolation; Minority Lesbians; Children, Families, and Parenting; Separatism; and Religion and Spirituality.

As discussed in Chapter III, comprehensive scholarly accounts of lesbian history generally stop in the late 1980s, making it difficult to contextualize discussions between 1989 and 2004. To address this problem, an overview of the news items relative to each category was presented to help the reader place the discussions in their historical context.

Relationships and Sexuality

The Relationships and Sexuality category was the most discussed category during the 1989-1994 period studied. This category includes discussions about lesbian relationships, sexuality, and sexual intimacy. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Relationships and Sexuality category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table C1.

News items relative to this category focused almost exclusively on the fight for the basic rights of same-sex partners and their families. This included city-based initiatives such as domestic-partner registration in San Francisco, CA and Madison, WI as well as state-based initiatives such as the drive to legalize same-sex marriage in Massachusetts. Companies, including Avis and Fireman's Insurance Company, began to treat same-sex consumers the same as married couples. Many employers, such as Lotus, the U.S. Department of Housing, and Levi Strauss extended employee benefits to partners of lesbian and gay employees or allowed employees to take sick leave to care for

their partners. Despite this victory, lesbians and gay men soon learned that they were required to pay additional taxes on these benefits.

At the same time, other companies were refusing to recognize lesbian and gay partners. One woman was denied sick leave to care for her injured lover. Another woman filed suit in federal court charging that AT&T violated its own policies when it refused to award her the benefits from her deceased partner's pension plan.

Lesbians and gays were realizing many legal victories during this time. The New York State Supreme Court ruled that a gay man must be allowed to take over the lease of his deceased lover's rent-controlled Manhattan apartment. Martina Navratilova settled out-of-court in a palimony suit brought by her former partner, Judy Nelson. Nelson received the couple's \$1.3 million home in Aspen, CO. Further details were not released. The Georgia Supreme Court reversed a lower court's ruling that property agreements between lesbian couples were unenforceable because such relationships were immoral and illegal under Georgia law. The Hawaii Supreme Court ruled that the state's ban on gay marriages may violate the state's constitution.

Interestingly, discussions in *LC* do not follow the same pattern as the news items. As discussed earlier, historians generally attribute the beginning of the marital rights movement to the 1980s (Faderman, 1991; Streitmatter, 1995). However, discussions about marriage did not appear in *LC* until the early 1990s, and even then these discussions were not among the most discussed topics. Why the disparity? Perhaps the publication schedule of *LC* meant that discussions were not published in a timely manner. Or perhaps marriage was not as important to lesbians as it was to gay men. Recall that

historians believed the focus on marital rights for same-sex partners was due, in large part, to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Since lesbians had a low incidence of HIV/AIDS, perhaps the importance of being recognized as family by hospitals and other medical care providers was less important to lesbians than gay men.

Nonetheless, during this time one of the Ambitious Amazons and her partner had a Commitment Ceremony with over 200 friends and family members in attendance. Perhaps certain subcultures of more politically active lesbians were seeking marital rights during this time, making it appear that marriage was a key issue for all lesbians.

While the reason lesbians were not discussing marital rights is unclear, relationship issues were clearly important to lesbians. The Relationships and Sexuality category had more discussions than any other category during this time period and the top five items of discussion in this category were among the top ten items of discussion overall during 1989-1994.

The most discussed item in the Relationship and Sexuality category was prompted by a letter from a subscriber who wrote, "I am writing for your ideas/suggestions on financial arrangements between long-time companions." She described a significant disparity between her partner's income and her own which had created some difficulties in their relationship.

Some respondents described financial arrangements that included both individual and joint arrangements, with each woman contributing a percentage of her income to a joint account. For example, one couple "deposited 70% of our paychecks" into a joint account for joint expenses while keeping "the other 30% in our own accounts for savings

or personal expenses.” Other respondents indicated they pooled their money “just as most married couples do.”

Financial advice from subscribers included putting all agreements in writing, reading publications that address money management and legal issues for lesbians, and contacting a lawyer. Several respondents discussed the fact that they “value unpaid work (eg, housework, shopping, gardening, care of our companion animals, schoolwork, volunteer work) equally with paid work” and warned that lesbians must “rid ourselves of the patriarchy’s value judgments” about work and financial arrangements.

The issue of sadomasochism arose early in the 1989-1994 analysis period making it the second most discussed item in the Relationship and Sexuality category as well as the second most discussed item overall. This was the final time sadomasochism made its way to the list of most discussed items, signaling an end to the sex wars of the 1980s (see 1979-1989 analysis). Over time, sexual exploration met with only mixed success. While many lesbians were curious about the novelty of exploratory sex and were intrigued by the idea of claiming the right to be as sexually adventurous as men, interest soon began to fade. With dwindling interest and growing concerns about contracting HIV/AIDS, the radical sex movement eventually dissolved into the background of the lesbian community (Faderman, 1991).

The third most discussed item in this category, and the fourth most discussed item overall was hirsutism. Hirsutism is the excessive growth of thick dark hair in locations where hair growth in women is usually minimal or absent. The subscriber wrote,

I am feeling sad, angry, hurt, and very desperate. My problem? Hirsutism, or excessive facial hair, caused by a pituitary-related hormone problem. Most of the time, you wouldn't know by looking at me that I have to shave every morning. . . . My hirsutism has been a source of isolation and emotional pain. . . . Aren't there other sisters somewhere who have a lot of facial hair? Are your friends and lover(s) supportive? Do you hide in your tent, like me, to shave alone at festivals? Do you refuse to let your lover touch your face, or is this no big deal in your life? Several subscribers indicated they shared the writer's pain and embarrassment.

One subscriber wrote,

My heart went out to you . . . Every morning I get out the tweezers and a high-powered magnifying mirror and pluck for 20 to 30 minutes, as well as shave my moustache. My shadow isn't severe, so I try covering it up with foundation, even though I hate wearing *any* makeup. . . .

Many subscribers wrote to assure the writer that facial hair should not be a deterrent to a fulfilling relationship. One woman wrote, "In regards to lovers: after getting over the initial shock, most have enjoyed playing with my beard." Another wrote, "My lover of twelve years SHAVES every morning. She's cute when her chin is scratchy and also when it's smooth. That's because it's *her* chin." One subscriber indicated that she was actually attracted to women with facial hair. She wrote, "I have an incredible weakness for chin hair. So, to all you women out there with beards, know that there is at least one woman who is looking at you with desire and appreciation!" Some subscribers

wrote to recommend possible solutions to the problem while others suggested seeking self-acceptance.

The fourth most discussed item in this category, which also made it into the top ten discussions overall was a letter from a subscriber who did not like sex. She wrote,

I am a woman who doesn't like sex, but I do want to get romantically involved with someone. My problem is that I'm having a hard time finding others who are interested in a non-sexual love relationship. Are there others out there who feel the same way? Does anyone have any suggestions?

Many women responded to assure the writer that there were others, like her, who did not like sex. They offered the writer a number of suggestions for finding others like herself, including asking the universe for what you need through prayer, meditation, or "a ceremony suited to your own beliefs." Another subscriber suggested that she might meet other lesbians who didn't like sex "in a non-threatening atmosphere such as your local Metropolitan Community Church, where values tend to shift to higher things." One subscriber suggested, "Perhaps this is a good opportunity to start a club."

Several women indicated they could not understand how anyone could be disinterested in sex.

As a lesbian who *likes* sex, touching, and eroticism, I can't understand what's so bad about it so long as I set boundaries and have a healthy attitude. Once you do find someone who wants the same relationship, what will you do if you (or your lover) change after a period of time? Perhaps it's best you get to know yourself first before making someone a part of your life. . . .

One woman challenged the lesbian community's unquestioning acceptance of the importance placed on sex. It is interesting that while this woman warned against "buying into" heterosexual propaganda about sex, she had "bought into" questionable research findings about lesbian bed death to support her claim that sex does not come naturally for women.

In psychology we learn about "man's three primary needs" – to eat, to drink, and to have sex. The latter may be essential for man, but is it really for women? . . .

We should be suspicious of the incredible propaganda men (and their female collaborators) use to make us believe that (hetero)sexuality and sexual intercourse are inevitable and natural. . . . What men see as good and healthy for women is usually only beneficial to them and heteropatriarchy, while being dangerous and destructive to us. . . .

Why do so many lesbian couples not engage in sex, especially a couple of years into a relationship? Why do so many women, including lesbians, fake orgasms? . . . All this supports the claim that sex does not come naturally, but requires coercion and getting used to.

So all you dykes who don't like sex: Be proud of yourselves for not having accepted the programming of women into sex objects, body parts and sex-crazed fembots! . . .

The fifth most discussed item in this category, which also made it into the top ten discussions overall during the 1989-1994 period was from a woman having what she viewed as an embarrassing problem during sex. She wrote, "I've finally gathered my

courage to write and see if others have the same problem I do. Once in a while I am incontinent (leak urine) when I reach orgasm. . . .”

A number of subscribers wrote to explain that the writer was probably experiencing female ejaculation. One woman wrote,

Are you sure you're not EJACULATING? Female ejaculation has been studied in recent years. I am an ejaculator and have observed it in several partners. The liquid we excrete is not urine, although it has the same consistency and comes through the urethra. It is believed that the Skene's glands are the female equivalent of the male prostate and that stimulation of the Graffenburg, or G-spot (where the Skene's glands are located), can produce ejaculatory fluid. . . . Your gynecologist may not be aware of ejaculation in womyn. It's controversial and not really in the mainstream yet.

Growing Pains

The Growing Pains category was the second most discussed category during the 1989-1994 period. This category includes items of discussion about the struggle to grow and survive faced by *LC*, lesbian publishers, lesbian musicians, women's festivals, and the lesbian movement in general. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Growing Pains category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table C2.

News items related to the Growing Pains category included stories about the accomplishments of long-term lesbian endeavors such as the tenth anniversary of a women's music program on public radio station WFBE in Flint, MI, as well as new

endeavors such as Olivia Records' first lesbian cruise. Although some alternative music labels, such as Redwood Records were facing financial woes, the overwhelming representation of lesbian nominees for Folk Album of the Year at the New Music Awards in New York showed just how far lesbian musicians had come since the early days of the lesbian movement.

Many lesbians were working to assure lesbian history was protected. Barbara Grier and Donna McBride of Naiad Press donated their private collection of books to the foundation for the Gay and Lesbian Center in San Francisco. Other lesbians were providing funding for lesbian endeavors. Astraca, a nationwide lesbian foundation, awarded five grants of \$11,000 each to emerging lesbian writers. Two lesbians were among the four activists chosen to receive awards of \$25,000 each from the Anderson Foundation for their work on lesbian causes. The Combined Federal Campaign agreed to allow federal government employees the opportunity to support the National Center for Lesbian Rights. Artists successfully won the right to self-expression when the National Endowment for the Arts agreed to pay over a quarter of a million dollars to settle a lawsuit brought by four lesbian, feminist, and gay artists whose grant applications had been rejected because they were controversial.

While news items suggest that lesbian endeavors were growing and thriving, this was not the case for all such endeavors. There is clear evidence that traditional lesbian businesses had begun to fall prey to more mainstream businesses. As a result, this time period saw a plethora of bookstore closings, festival cancellations, and an overall slump in women's music. For *LC* to be approaching its 20th anniversary was a truly amazing

feat. By this time, work on *LC* had grown from an all-volunteer endeavor to one in which half of the Ambitious Amazons were able to purchase homes from the money they earned keeping *LC* alive. The Ambitious Amazons wrote,

You know, it sure is strange sometimes to think about the fact that the four of us (not an MBA or even a bachelor's degree among us) are running a quarter-million dollar business. In our personal lives we agonize over buying a \$20 item, but at work we consider purchases in the six-figure range (eg, buildings that list for \$135,000). Seems kind of ironic, doesn't it? When we started LC back in 1974, there were many who said we were crazy to think we could create a nationwide lesbian network that would survive on donations. Yet, 17 years later, LC is bigger and stronger than ever. Believe in your dreams – LC is living proof that they can come true.

As *LC*'s success continued, mainstream America began to take notice. *LC* was reviewed by the *Library Journal* and was mentioned in an article in the *Wall Street Journal*. The *Wall Street Journal* wrote,

Lesbian Connection, an 18-year-old national magazine favored by older women, credits new lesbian-owned businesses for much of its 52% growth in advertising in the past five years. The magazine's publisher, a collective based in East Lansing, Mich., called Ambitious Amazons, reports that listings for bed and breakfasts and guesthouses – its fastest-growing classified advertising category – more than tripled to 72. Display ads for travel cruises and safaris – a category that didn't even exist five years ago – are plentiful, too.

Despite the success of *LC*, the Lesbian Center where *LC* was produced closed its doors after 20 years. The Ambitious Amazons wrote the following about the center's closing.

Over the years the Center's been in three different locations, has survived two fires as well as several break-ins and occasional harassment (like the anonymous phone caller who threatened to show up with a 12-gauge shotgun). . . . There were only a handful of lesbian centers in existence when we opened ours, and at that time we hoped that there soon would be lesbian centers throughout the country. That never happened, but it's interesting to note that at least two of those original centers (in Seattle, WA and Atlanta, GA) still exist today. As for us, we just can't compete with the several new gay bars and one lesbian-owned bar, as well as the conflicting events put on by other lesbian groups in town.

The most discussed item in the Growing Pains category was a group of responses to letters in the *LC* Festival Forum, which was comprised of letters published in *LC* about the summer music festivals. These letters were also among the top ten items of discussion overall during the 1989-1994 time period. The key issues of concern were sadomasochism, racism, and separatism. Since these issues are addressed in the Relationships and Sexuality, Minority Lesbians, and Separatism categories, they will not be addressed here. However, it is important to discuss the fact that many subscribers expressed concern regarding the overall tone of these letters during a time when many traditional lesbian endeavors were struggling to survive. The following is an example of the types of concerns expressed by *LC* readers.

If I see one more article or letter on the Michigan Womyn's Music FESTIVAL, I'm going to explode. Thousands of womyn go to the MWMF [Michigan Women's Music Festival] each year, then some spend the next 12 months writing to LC to bitch. LC is becoming nothing but a year-round mouthpiece for these sad, angry womyn. Isn't there anything else going on in lesbian American besides musical events in Michigan?

Networking

The Networking category was the third most discussed category during the 1989-1994 analysis period. This category includes discussions in which subscribers requested information from or provided information to other subscribers of *LC*. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Networking category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table C3.

There were no news items relative to the Networking category, which was comprised of discussions about a hodgepodge of subjects. The most discussed item in this category was also one of the top ten most discussed items overall during this period. The item was a letter from a reader seeking to connect with other lesbians who had been adopted. She wrote,

I'm an adoptee who's currently in search of my birthparents. Are there other dykes out there who've had this experience? I'd love to hear any advice/search techniques you might like to share. Also, if you *have* found your birthparents, did you tell them you're a lesbian? What was their reaction?

Adopted subscribers wrote to share their experiences seeking their birthparents. While some subscribers were still waiting for the right time to come out to their birthparent(s), others who had come out to their birthparents reported neutral or positive responses. One adoptee wrote, “Her response was essentially: Thank you for sharing, but you don’t have to tell me *everything*!” Another adoptee wrote, “She was supportive and said she’d love me no matter what.”

Birthmothers who had given their children up for adoption also wrote to share their stories. Some birthmothers had shared their sexual orientation with their children, while others had not. One birthmother wrote, “They are struggling with it, but for the most part are accepting.” Birthmothers who did not share their sexual orientation with their children wrote to explain the reason for their decision. One birthmother wrote, “I have not come out to my son yet and may not since he is a fundamentalist.”

Health and Mental Health

The Health and Mental Health category was the fourth most discussed category during the 1989-1994 analysis period. This category includes discussions relevant to health and mental health issues in the lesbian community. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Health and Mental Health category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table C4.

News items and articles related to the Health and Mental Health category focused almost exclusively on breast cancer and HIV/AIDS. *LC* reported that at that time 45,000 women in the US were dying each year from breast cancer—more than the total number

of HIV/AIDS deaths in the US in the previous decade. Although 20% of the women who died from breast cancer each year were lesbian, the medical community was virtually ignoring this epidemic. Another news item reported on a study by the National Cancer Institute that found that the breast cancer rate for lesbians was two to three times that of heterosexual women. Moreover, 45% of lesbians were not having regular gynecological checkups that included breast exams and mammograms. The National Cancer Institute reported that lesbians were less likely to bear children and more likely to have higher levels of body fat and alcohol consumption than heterosexual women. These factors contributed to this increased risk for breast cancer in lesbians.

In response to this escalating problem, the Breast Cancer Coalition was created to advocate for health improvements in the area of breast cancer. The coalition's current project was to apply pressure on the Blue Cross/Blue Shield insurance company to reexamine its decision to limit mammogram and screening coverage reimbursement to women over the age of 50. At that time, research showed that 25% of all women who developed breast cancer were between the ages of 40 and 49. The Lesbian Health Project of Los Angeles also began conducting a National Lesbian and Bi Women's Health Survey to study breast cancer in lesbians.

Ironically, when the American Association of Physicians for Human Rights attempted to publish a full-page ad in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) warning physicians about the negative medical consequences of homophobia, the ad was rejected because it was not scientific. Nonetheless, JAMA accepted ads extolling the health benefits of Cocoa Crispies and fast food. On a more positive note, *LC*

reported that the delegates at the American Medical Association's national convention voted to ban discrimination against lesbian and gay members of the association.

LC also reported on the results of a study presented at the International Conference on HIV/AIDS containing some alarming results. In a survey of 370 women who identified as lesbian, 25% said they had sexual intercourse with men in the last three years. Nearly one-fifth of the younger women studied (ages 18-24) reported having intercourse specifically with gay or bisexual men. Close to half (47%) of the women who were having sex with men said they did not always use condoms. Women who identified as bisexual were even more likely to have intercourse with gay/bisexual men (34%), and 58% of those women reported that it was often unprotected sex. Nonetheless, *Outlook* magazine, a publication for lesbians and gay men, published an article in which the author concluded that safe sex practices may not be necessary for lesbians all the time. In response to the paucity of research about lesbians and the conflicting information published about lesbians and HIV/AIDS, the Equity League sponsored a nationwide letter-writing campaign to urge the CDC to study female-to-female HIV transmission.

The most discussed item in the Health and Mental Health Category was a letter from a woman who had experienced satanic ritual abuse. This letter was among the ten most discussed items overall during the 1989-1994 time period. She wrote,

For me, as a ritual abuse survivor, the lesbian community is no longer a safe retreat. I can no longer go to gatherings where women are casting circles or drumming because they are both too reminiscent of my abuse. I refuse to be around people who deny my experience by saying that only men are perpetrators

– because that was not my case. Also, many of the lesbian feminists I’ve met just don’t want to believe that what I lived through was real. I’ve been asked by more than one woman if I was sure my flashbacks weren’t “past life experiences!”

Several survivors of satanic ritual abuse wrote to tell their own stories of recovery and applaud the writer for her courage to share her experiences.

Also among the most discussed items in this category was a group of letters about chronic fatigue immune deficiency syndrome (CFIDS). Discussions about CFIDS were among the top ten most discussed items overall during the 1989-1994 time period studied. According to the CFIDS Association of America, CFIDS is characterized by debilitating fatigue and problems with concentration and short-term memory. It is also accompanied by flu-like symptoms including joint and muscle pain, un-refreshing sleep, lymph node tenderness, sore throat, and headache. A distinctive characteristic of CFIDS is extreme discomfort after exertion, including a worsening of symptoms that requires an extended period of recovery (CFIDS Association of America, 2007).

The subscriber who initiated the discussion about CFIDS wrote, “I was recently diagnosed with CFIDS . . . I understand CFIDS is already considered epidemic among Lesbians. Perhaps this is due to sexual transmission.” The subscriber indicated that she based her conclusions on a book she had read. She described taking a number of precautions to contact women she had been sexual with since contracting CFIDS, as well as measures to prevent transmission to her current partner, including abstention from kissing.

Many readers responded to correct the writer's misperceptions about CFIDS. One subscriber who had read the book from which the original writer drew her conclusions provided the following quote from the book: "The mode of transmission is unknown. . . . There is no evidence that CFIDS is contagious or transmissible . . ." Other subscribers, including the Ambitious Amazons recommended sources of information about CFIDS and many suggested dietary changes, herbs, and other natural interventions for CFIDS.

Discrimination and Fear

The Discrimination and Fear category was the fifth most discussed category during the 1989-1994 analysis period. This category includes discussions about discrimination experienced by lesbians from within and outside the lesbian and feminist movements, acts of resistance in the face of discrimination, and fear resulting from discrimination and violence against lesbians. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Discrimination and Fear category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table C5.

News items relative to the Discrimination and Fear category focused on a wide array of issues. Many told stories about the harassment and murder of lesbians. For example, after advertising a Portland Lesbian Choir performance, one choir member found a note tacked to her door that read "Make no mistake, you won't live to see graduation." When she called the police and campus security, the officers blamed her for including her name in the advertisement. In another incident published in *LC* a lesbian and a gay man were killed in a house fire in Oregon after their home was hit by a fire

bomb. They died after several weeks of harassment by a group of Skinheads, who had attacked and beaten the gay man three weeks prior to his death. Finally, the offices of the Campaign for a Hate Free Oregon were vandalized. These incidents came in the midst of the far right campaign to enact an anti-gay initiative in Oregon. Inspired by the passage of Colorado's Amendment 2, similar anti-gay initiatives were underway in at least six other states including Arizona, California, Idaho, Florida, Michigan, and Washington.

In Detroit, MI a man ended his long and bitter dispute with the lesbian couple who lived next door by shooting them to death in their driveway. In California, a police officer with the Sacramento Police Department was subjected to so much anti-lesbian harassment that she had to quit her job. She was subjected to homophobic graffiti, vandalization of her squad car and personal car, theft of her paperwork, a dead rat in her locker, and abusive phone calls. After two explosions, three bomb threats, and threats of harassment from a local anti-pornography group, the owner of a lesbian-owned bookstore in Lancaster, PA decided to close.

Meanwhile, Donald Wildmon, president of the Mississippi-based American Family Association called for a boycott of Levi Strauss products. Levi Strauss had begun extending health benefits to the domestic partners of its employees and stopped funding the Boy Scouts of America following its ban on gay troop leaders and scouts.

At the same time, the nation's only toll free lesbian and gay teen hotline was overwhelmed with calls after its number was flashed on the screen during a segment of ABC's 20/20 which focused on suicide among lesbian and gay teens. The hotline director

reported a 1600% increase in calls and expressed concern that the higher phone bills could jeopardize their entire program.

In response to the growing violence against lesbian and gay people, the US House and Senate passed a Federal Hate Crimes Statistics Act that would require the Justice Department to collect and study national data on crimes of prejudice committed because of race, religion, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Previously, Senator Jesse Helms had attempted to attach a four-part anti-gay amendment to the bill.

On the international stage, after a 12-year struggle, Amnesty International agreed to include people who were imprisoned because they were homosexual in its widely recognized list of prisoners of conscience. The 12-nation European Community took its first stand on lesbian and gay rights by adopting a Code of Practice that condemned workplace harassment of lesbians and gays in European Community countries.

The most discussed item in the Discrimination and Fear category was the plight of Brenda and Wanda Hensen, a lesbian couple who were attempting to establish Camp Sister Spirit, a feminist educational and cultural retreat center in Ovette, Mississippi. The purpose of the center was to offer such services to residents living in this tiny town of 1,200 including a food bank, escort services to reproductive clinics, a crisis hotline, counseling and referral services, a clothing closet, and advocacy in women's child custody cases (Chesler, 1994, Fall; McAughey, 2006, February 5).

The Hensons purchased a 120-acre pig farm for their project in July 1993 for \$60,000. They believed the isolated rural location was perfect for their work. However, their dream turned into a two-year struggle that was not unlike Mississippi's Ku Klux

Klan lynching era 30 years earlier. In hindsight, this might have been expected.

Mississippi is the only state that never ratified the 13th Amendment to the Constitution in 1865, because slave owners were not remunerated for freed slaves. The Mississippi Senate did not vote to abolish slavery until February 1995—130 years after the rest of the country (Chesler, 1994, Fall; McAughey, 2006, February 5).

Opposition to Camp Sister Spirit was spearheaded by a group of Southern Baptist Ministers and the Mississippians for Family Values. Members of the opposition terrorized the two women. Their puppy was shot, stuffed with sanitary napkins, and draped over their mailbox with a note that read, “Die Bitch.” They faced drive-by shootings, burnings, intimidation, violence, bigotry, hate, and law suits. This eventually prompted U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno to send federal mediators from the Justice Department’s Community Relations Service to attempt to mediate the problem. Eventually, in July 1995 Judge Frank MacKenzie ruled against a nuisance suit filed by the Mississippians for Family Values and declared camp Sister Spirit a legal retreat (Chesler, 1994, Fall; McAughey, 2006, February 5).

During the height of the violence, the Hensons published a letter in *LC* begging for support from the lesbian community. They wrote,

These people are dangerous. We who are here desperately need the support of the lesbian nation! We need womyn who can come to the land, as well as money to pay for legal fees and to make the land secure.

One reader reminded other readers that lesbians living in rural America faced unique challenges that were often overlooked by the lesbian movement. She wrote,

What [the lesbian movement] has done has mostly benefited the white yuppie gays and lesbians. There are very few minority and rural gays and lesbians whose lives have changed in any meaningful way as a result of the movement. . . . And now that two scruffy-looking, but principled dykes from Mississippi are fighting for some meaningful change, the gay and lesbian community is going to just sit back and watch. I'm sick and tired of the regionalism that is going on here. We may not look the way you want us to look and we may not talk the way you want us to talk and we may not be liberal enough for you, but we are smart, caring, compassionate women who deserve better than we have gotten from the rest of the country. We want your support, but if you aren't going to be there for us, we will fight this battle alone.

One woman who had traveled to Mississippi to support the Hensons wrote about her experiences in *LC*.

Several times a week I woke up in a cold sweat to the sounds of men yelling and screaming at the gate or shots being fired, thinking, "Is this *it*? Will they stay out at the boundaries or come in and kill us?" After a while the shots would stop. But then it would take a long time for my heart to stop pounding and my ears to stop straining for more signs of danger. Eventually, I would sleep again, only to dream of men attacking, and war. In the morning we would gather at breakfast, bleary-eyed from lack of sleep, and go about our work again, giving thanks for being alive! (This all brought back vivid memories of my childhood in Holland during WWII when I woke up with my heart pounding as soldiers with bayonets searched

our house and took my father away.) I have left the land now, but my sisters are still under siege behind the iron gate, and I pray for their well-being and stamina to keep putting up with this harassment until they can live in peace. What happened to liberty and justice for all?

Despite a general outpouring of sympathy, some *LC* subscribers were not supportive of the Hensons. One couple wrote,

We have finally had enough of the glorification of the very dangerous SITUATION IN MISSISSIPPI . . . The Hensons' own personal and financial choices and miscalculations in no way warrant the Lesbian community's unquestioned allegiance or the elevation of the Hensons to the status of cultural heroines. . . .

Another highly discussed topic in the Discrimination and Fear category was the notorious "lesbian serial killer," Aileen Carol Wuornos. Wuornos, a truck-stop prostitute, killed seven men along the highways of central Florida between 1989 and 1990. During her trial, she pled self-defense, telling graphic stories of being raped, sodomized, and tortured at the hands of the men she killed. She also told stories of a poverty-filled childhood marked by incest. Curiously, she eventually recanted her testimony and maintained that she was never a victim of any violence. She admitted to robbing the men and killing them to cover the robbery. Wuornos was sentenced to death in 1992 and spent ten years on death row before being put to death on October 9, 2002 (Krum, 2001, August 2; Reynolds, 1992).

What is interesting about this case is the reaction of the general public. Typically, women slated for execution receive an outpouring of sympathy and protest from the public. This included female killers Karla Faye Tucker of Texas who was the first woman to be executed since the Civil War and Susan Smith, the South Carolina woman who drowned her two sons. Demonstrations on behalf of Tucker went on for weeks and the jury could not bring themselves to put Smith to death. Anti-capital punishment groups also campaigned for a stay of execution, petitioned for clemency, and held candlelight vigils for Oklahoma bomber Timothy James McVeigh. Yet, public outcry was conspicuously absent when Wuornos was on death row. Some believe this was because Wuornos did not fit the feminine role of a gentle, maternal woman who was incapable of violence (Krum, 2001, August 2).

Some subscribers were sympathetic to Wuornos. They described the conditions under which many marginalized women were imprisoned in the US. One subscriber wrote,

Aileen is a lesbian, she is a sex worker, she is poor, she was sexually abused as a child, she was brutally attacked by several of her Johns, and she killed six of her tricks in what she calls self defense. The Boy's Club calls it murder. What else could it be? After all, she is a lesbian, therefore, she must hate men enough to kill them. She is a sex-worker, so she deserves whatever happens to her in her tricks. Finally, she is poor. This puts her at the mercy of the system and the public defender's office. If trash journalists on a TV show like Dateline can unearth evidence supporting Aileen's innocence, why couldn't her lawyers? . . .

Where was/is the womyn's movement for Aileen? Where is the Queer movement? Will she die in the electric chair and be forgotten, or worse, just be remembered as a poor psycho man-hating dyke prostitute?

Some *LC* readers disagreed with the premise that Wuornos was treated unfairly.

One subscriber wrote,

I have never understood why women, especially lesbians feel the need to defend criminals who happen to be female and sometimes lesbians. Aileen is a serial killer who brutally murdered other human beings and got pleasure from it. The fact that her victims were men does not justify her crime. She has lent credence to the "lesbians are scum" mentality that most heteros have. Aileen is to lesbians what Jeffrey Dahmer is to gay men.

Another high profile issue during the early 1990s was the case of Boy Scouts of America vs. Dale. James Dale had been an exemplary Boy Scout from the age of eight until his eighteenth birthday when he was invited to become an assistant scoutmaster of Troop 73. While attending school at Rutgers University, Dale took part in a seminar on the needs of lesbian and gay youth. He was abruptly expelled from the Boy Scouts in 1990 after officials saw coverage of the seminar in a local newspaper. Officials eventually told Dale that he was expelled because the Boy Scouts forbids membership to homosexuals.

After being denied a hearing by the Boy Scouts, Dale filed suit against the Boy Scouts of America and the local Monmouth Council charging that the organization violated New Jersey's anti-discrimination laws. New Jersey Superior Court Judge Patrick

J. McGann dismissed Dale's suit. He characterized Dale as immoral, criminal, and a poor role model. He portrayed the Boy Scouts as a "quasi-religious" organization that was not a public accommodation.

The intermediate appeals courts disagreed and reversed the finding based on their belief that the Boy Scouts was a public accommodation open to all boys. The New Jersey Supreme court unanimously upheld that decision. However, in June of 2000, in a 5-4 vote, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the findings of the New Jersey Supreme Court (Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, 2000, September 1).

Amid the escalating controversy over the Boy Scouts' ban on homosexuality, the Girl Scouts issued a statement endorsing personal privacy. While the statement suggested that lesbians would not face discrimination in the Girl Scouts, a number of *LC* subscribers described experiencing considerable intolerance in the Girl Scouts.

Despite the ongoing discrimination and fear experienced by some lesbians during the early 1990s, there was also evidence that the danger was subsiding, at least for some lesbians. For example, when *LC* began publication in 1974, letters published in *LC* revealed no information about the contributor except the town and state in which she lived. However, during the early 1990s, the Ambitious Amazons made the decision to start printing a subscriber's first name, town, and state unless the contributor specifically asked them not to do so.

There were a number of other events relative the Discrimination and Fear category playing out on the national stage that were virtually ignored by discussions in *LC*. This included the presidential election of Bill Clinton, who supported lesbian/gay

civil rights and responsible HIV/AIDS policies; the defeat of several anti-gay initiatives; the election of pro-gay candidates to the U.S. Congress; the defeat of several anti-gay candidates; and the victory of a number of openly gay candidates. It is interesting that the pattern of discussions in *LC* was becoming increasingly myopic. There was little focus on issues taking place on the world stage with the exception of those events that were specific to individual lesbians.

Defining Lesbian

The Defining Lesbian category was the sixth most discussed category during the 1989-1994 analysis period. This category includes debates about how lesbians define and celebrate themselves and their community. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Defining Lesbian category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table C6.

There were no articles or news items relevant to the Defining Lesbian category. The most discussed item in this category, and the third most discussed item overall during this period echoed concerns raised about transgender lesbians in the 1974-1979 analysis. The controversy surrounded a woman who was expelled from the 1991 Michigan Women's Music Festival because she was believed to be transgender. A friend of the woman wrote,

This year at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, a friend of mine was expelled from the land on the suspicion that she was a transsexual. This incident revealed that transsexuals are officially not permitted at the festival; that any woman at the festival can be challenged at any time regarding the details of how she achieved

her womanhood; and that women can be evicted by security people without recourse. . . .

If transsexuals are to be excluded, the policy should be clearly stated, and it should be enforced in a fair and uniform way using objective criteria. But, is this possible? . . . (In my friends case, ID showing a female identity was not sufficient.) Must we all bring chromosome tests with us to the front gate? Should security women have the right to ask us to drop our pants?

In response to this issue, festival organizers published a letter clarifying their stance.

In the simplest terms, the Michigan Festival is and always has been an event for womyn, which we define as womyn-born womyn. We respect everyone's right to define themselves as they wish. It's unfortunate that our choice to offer the Michigan Festival as an event for womyn-born womyn is being construed by some as a position on the merits of people making individual choices on how to live. We mean only to define who this event is for. We hold dearly our right to make this determination, and we believe that it is the right of every other womyn's institution and community to define these issues depending on their own particular needs and concerns. . . .

When it became clear this summer that there was a known transsexual man attending the event, the festival security staff took much time and care to make sure this difficult situation was dealt with as respectfully as possible. We

provided local housing at our expense, offered transportation to the airport, and refunded the festival ticket. . . .

Respondents to what was coined the “peek in your pants” policy were in favor of allowing male-to-female transgenderists to attend women’s festivals by a margin of three to one. This showed increasing tolerance of transgender people compared to the 1974-1979 period when readers were evenly split on the issue. One proponent wrote,

Aren’t we hurting our own fight for freedom by sinking to the same line of thoughts and practices that we ourselves seek to overcome? The KKK [Ku Klux Klan] believes they have the right to hold functions that are for whites only. The people of Indiana believed that they had the right to have school systems free of persons with AIDS. If the Michigan Festival producers can justify their discrimination by stating that it is their right, then they must admit that the rest of the world has the same right to discrimination against us. . . .

What makes a woman is her own definition of herself, how she feels about herself and how she relates to others. Saying that a transsexual woman was not “born a woman” is like saying that a woman who married a man and had children were not “born lesbian.”

It is noteworthy that although the issue of male-to-female transgenderists attending women’s festivals was the most discussed item in this analysis period, there were no discussions about Teena Brandon, the female-to-male transgenderist who was raped and murdered by John Lotter and Marvin Thomas Nissen in Humboldt, Nebraska on December 31, 1993.

Another important topic relative to the Defining Lesbian category was *LC*'s creation of Lesbian of the Year thank you cards. One of the Ambitious Amazons wrote, I . . . have had mixed feelings seeing all the attention Pat Parker received this summer after her death. . . . It's great to see all this, and she definitely deserved it, but somehow it strikes me as a little too late. . . . I think she would have been shocked by all the attention she's been receiving. . . . It's sad to think that so many lesbians, who've been out there doing things for the lesbian movement for years, may feel unappreciated. . . .

[The Ambitious Amazons] thought about presenting a "Lesbian of the Year" award to recognize, in a positive way, the work lesbians are doing. It seems like a great concept, but we balked at the idea of trying to figure out the details of how to do it. After discussing it for quite a while, we came up with an alternative – the enclosed Thank You card. It's for you to send to whatever lesbian you think deserves it. . . . Perhaps you could let us know whom you sent your card to . . . we'd love to hear why you chose them.

Over the next two years, *LC* published information about 115 lesbians who had received thank you cards from subscribers to *LC*.

Isolation

The Isolation category was the seventh most discussed category during the 1989-1994 analysis period. This category includes items of discussion that underscore the isolation experienced by lesbians and initiatives to overcome that isolation. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Isolation category

are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table C7.

The most prominent discussions in the Isolation category focused on lesbians in the Gulf War. There was also a number of news items published in *LC* about lesbians in the military. On the ruling in the case of former Army Captain Dusty Pruitt of Long Beach, CA, a federal appeals court in San Francisco said that the U.S. Army would have to prove that there is a rational basis for its ban on lesbians and gay men. Army National Guard Colonel Margerethe Cammermeyer, a decorated Vietnam veteran and winner of the Nurse of the Year award, headed to court to file suit against Department of Defense officials, charging them with violating her constitutional rights. It was reported that Barbra Streisand and Glenn Close were teaming up to produce a made-for-television movie based on her story.

According to the Pentagon's 1991 figures, the total number of lesbian- and gay-related discharges from the military had decreased by 926 the previous year. This figure had peaked at 1,832 in 1984. However, as in previous years, the figures showed that women were twice as likely as men to be discharged due to offenses related to their sexual orientation. Enraged over the military's persecution of lesbians and gays, student activists at Harvard persuaded their Undergraduate Council to overturn its decision to invite the ROTC back onto campus. The ROTC had been banished from campus after students protesting Harvard's role in the Vietnam War shut down the university.

The U.S. Supreme Court announced that it would not review two lower court decisions, thus upholding the right of the military to ban lesbians and gays from the

military. When the Gay and Lesbian Military Freedom Project tried to publish ads in the *Army Times*, *Air Force Times*, and *Navy Times* praising lesbian and gay service members, their ads were rejected because, “There aren’t any gays in the military.”

In other countries, Canada’s defense department announced that Canada had ended its long-standing policy of prohibiting lesbians and gays from serving in the military. Within a month of the Canadian decision, Australia also lifted its ban on gays in the military.

The most discussed item in the Isolation category was a group of letters to and from lesbians fighting in the Gulf War. The Gulf War, which lasted from August 2, 1990 - February 28, 1991, was a conflict between Iraq and a coalition force of approximately 30 nations led by the US and mandated by the United Nations to liberate Kuwait. The Ambitious Amazons wrote the following about the Gulf War.

This is the first cover letter we’ve ever written for LC while the US is actively engaged in a war. It is a strange, sobering and somewhat unreal experience. In the last issue of LC, we printed two letters from women who had been deployed to Saudi Arabia. Typical of the lesbian community’s willingness to act in a crisis, we’ve received a number of letters and phone calls from women asking if we could help them send letters of support and friendship to lesbian soldiers.

Unfortunately, we don’t know any safe way to do this. If you have somehow managed to be reading this issue in Saudi Arabia, know that there are many lesbians thinking of you now. If you’d like to get letters from them, write us (and please let us know what kinds of things are okay/not okay to say). Of course, our

greatest hope is that the whole thing will be over before our next issue comes out two months from now.

Some lesbians in the military responded to share their experiences. One subscriber who had been deployed to Saudi Arabia wrote the following.

My dearest friends – You, along with many other ♀♀, are in my thoughts today (December 25th [1990]). I send you the very best wishes for a new year filled with love, happiness and peace. I’m presently in Saudi Arabia for the Gulf Crisis, leading a platoon of 53 soldiers (13 women) that deploys out to the desert for 35-40 days at a time. I’m very proud to be one of the many strong ♀♀ over here doing my job and out-performing my male counterparts. . . . My sister forwarded my Winter Catalog to me – that brightened my spirits *soooo* much! I even thought about taking the Olivia Cruise when I get out of this hellhole, just so I can see some water instead of all this sand. (I don’t dare go outside right now because we are in the middle of a sandstorm.) There are many ♀♀ here, and we have our ways of finding each other – we get together once or twice a month to laugh and talk about “family things” [“family” is a code word for lesbian or gay people]. My girlfriend of five years is also over here with a medical unit. I miss her dearly! I miss you all, too, and look forward to coming back to the states where I am at least recognized as a human being.

This letter sparked much debate among subscribers about the merits of the Gulf War. One subscriber wrote,

Your assumption that we'll all welcome you back in sisterhood, after you've agreed to be a party to the slaughter and suffering of *over 100,000* women, children and men of Iraq, has me irate. You have my support if you're planning to reflect on, and begin to hold yourself accountable for, the devastation of human misery visited upon the Middle East by the outfit you're proud to serve. . . . I'll listen to your story, and try to understand how you see things, but I don't know a single Lesbian who would tie a yellow ribbon on her car antenna for you.

Several subscribers wrote to express dismay over what they considered a "cruel, uncaring, racist, classist letter." One reader wrote,

Many women of color and poor women joined the military as their only means to an education, and they never expected to end up in the Middle East. The military's oppression of gays and lesbians is infamous, only adding to the hard ride for sisters shipped overseas. While I do not support war, invasion, or US military policy, I have friends and loved ones who endured humiliation and harassment in Saudi Arabia and I gladly welcome their safe return. . . . All of us have been forced, through economic and oppressive circumstances, to work for employers we detest. . . . Be aware that the army has always fed off lesbian energy and then pressed charges – an issue just as worthy of our concern. The thousands of lesbians who served will be the ones tying yellow ribbons for their sisters – but not on car antennas; lots of poor women who turned to the army for scholarships simply cannot afford cars.

The fear of being discovered a lesbian by military officials continued to be a theme in the Isolation category. One subscriber expressed concern that the writer had received a copy of *LC* while serving in the military.

The last thing we need is for the military to get hold of LC! Look how many women list their names and addresses. . . . I suggest that we take special care to keep our LC's and other such publications safe, even to the point of destroying them after reading them. . . . The freedom we have now came only after long, hard struggles, and the winds of history have bitterly shown us that we could again be swept away. Let's guard our resources.

It is interesting that despite the many letters to and from lesbians fighting in the Gulf War, there were no ongoing discussions about the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy. The Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy was introduced as a compromise measure in 1993 by President Bill Clinton who, while campaigning for the Presidency had promised to allow all citizens to serve in the military regardless of their sexual orientation. This policy prohibited anyone who had sexual or romantic contact with a person of the same sex from serving in the U.S. armed forces. It prohibited any homosexual or bisexual from disclosing her/his sexual orientation, or from speaking about homosexual relationships while serving in the U.S. armed forces. The policy required that lesbians, gays, and bisexuals in the military hide their sexual orientation. Moreover, commanders were not allowed to investigate one's sexuality.

One of the few discussions about the policy came from the Ambitious Amazons. In the spring of 1993, they wrote,

We don't know about you, but we're feeling a bit overwhelmed by the nightly discussions on the news and talk shows about gays in the military. Notice how it's mostly men doing the talking, and that even with all this coverage, lesbians are still pretty much invisible?

It is unclear why there were no noteworthy discussions about the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy in *LC*. Perhaps, as the Ambitious Amazons suggested, gay men were the primary focus of the debate. It is interesting to note, however that compared to gay men, lesbians were discharged from the military at a disproportionately higher rate. While women made up approximately 30% of all gay discharges, they comprised approximately 14% of the armed forces overall (See Table C14) (Servicemembers Legal Defense Network).

Minority Lesbians

The Minority Lesbians category was the eighth most discussed category during the 1989-1994 period studied. This category includes discussions by and about minority lesbians. Here, minority is defined as lesbians who differ by culture, class, ethnicity, race, religion, age, or ability from the dominant group. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Minority Lesbians category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table C8.

News items published in *LC* relevant to the Minority Lesbians category were predominantly about African-American lesbians. During this time the lesbian community grieved the loss of several Black leaders. Lesbian feminist poet Pat Parker died of breast cancer. Audre Lorde, who often introduced herself as a "black, Lesbian, feminist,

warrior, poet, mother” also died of breast cancer during this time. A record turnout of over 700 gathered in Long Beach, CA for the Sixth Annual National Black Gay and Lesbian Conference dedicated to the memory of poet Audre Lorde and poet Donald Woods who died from HIV/AIDS.

At the same time, other women were waiting in the wings to take up the mantle. Sherry Harris became the first open Black lesbian to win a political office in U.S. history. For the first time in its 14-year history, the Atlanta Association of Black Journalists honored a lesbian. Sabrina Sojourner, a Georgia-based freelance journalist received an award for her piece titled “Accepting Difference.”

There were clear struggles within the Black community to deal with lesbian issues. In what appeared to be a last minute attempt to avoid legal action, the publishers of *Essence*, a leading magazine for Black women, said they would reverse an earlier decision and allow a Black gay organization to place an ad in the magazine. Linda Villarose, senior editor at *Essence* magazine, co-authored a column with her mother about Linda’s coming out as a lesbian. Reader response was so overwhelming that *Essence* printed a follow-up article chronicling the avalanche of positive responses to the first article, as well as a handful of negative letters.

The most discussed item in this category was an incident that occurred at the Michigan’s Women’s Music Festival. The following letter describes the incidence from the standpoint of one lesbian attending the festival.

I was appalled at the divisive issues that seemed to be the focus of the 14th

Michigan Womyn’s Music Festival. The most overt inanity was the WWTMC’s

[We Want the Music Collective/Corporation] public chastisement of [a musician] for her introduction to a song she dedicated to her nanny. She stated that, in the south, white people with money often hired black womyn to care for their children. However much we may wish that this hiring was not done along racial lines, [she] was merely stating a fact. It's unfortunate that some of the womyn of color . . . were listening so intently for the possibility of racism that they couldn't see that [her] song was a tribute to someone she loved. The next night, [a well-known lesbian performer] read the WWTMC statement, which not only condemned [the musician], but also contained the ridiculously inappropriate assertion that the WWTMC does not condone or promote slavery . . .

Many women wrote to express their opinions on this issue. One woman responded,

To the defensive white lesbians: You can feel righteous and hurt, and you can have "your side of the story," but the whole idea is that your emotions and thinking have been SHAPED BY RACISM! You're stuck in a racist world view you passionately deny is racist! . . . We perpetuate racism by denying it, getting angry at those who name it, and stubbornly defending our own white culture. . . . Relax your defense, LISTEN, and learn. Anything less is inexcusable.

Many southern women saw the condemnation of the performer's statement as another incident in a series of personal attacks from women living in the northern US. One woman wrote,

I will no longer be a martyr for mistakes made in the past. Northern ♀♀, I urge you to make connections with your southern sisters and learn about our culture. We are not the backward idiots that some seem to think we are. Many times when I've told sisters that I was from Mississippi they have reacted with amused glances and talked down to me. Maybe some of you would like to share the joke, because I still don't get it.

Children, Families, and Parenting

The Children, Families, and Parenting category was the ninth most discussed category during the 1989-1994 analysis period. This category includes items of discussion from subscribers who have or want children in their families. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Children, Families, and Parenting category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table C9.

News items related to the Children, Families, and Parenting category published between 1989 and 1994 focused almost exclusively on court battles to adopt or gain custody of children. Court rulings tended to be inconsistent and contradictory.

There were a number of victories for lesbian parents. In Montpelier, VT, a judge gave custody of an orphaned toddler to his mother's companion of twelve years, rather than to blood relatives. A lesbian couple in Washington, DC successfully adopted each other's children. A New York judge granted a lesbian's petition to adopt her lover's biological children. A lesbian in Boulder, CO was awarded custody of a six-year-old even though the girl was conceived by the ex-lover. The Supreme Court of Vermont

permitted a lesbian to adopt the child born to her partner through alternative insemination. A Minneapolis judge awarded two lesbians joint legal custody of the biological child of one of the women.

Despite these many victories, some lesbian parents faced devastating losses in court rulings. A superior court judge in Los Angeles ruled against a lesbian who sought visitation rights and joint custody of a child born to her partner through alternative insemination. A lesbian couple lost a custody battle with a gay man who provided sperm for artificial insemination which produced the child. The man had signed a Sperm Donor Recipient agreement based on a model form provided by the National Center for Lesbian Rights in San Francisco. He agreed that the women would have sole custody of the child and he would have no rights as a parent. When the donor began violating the agreement and expecting the child to call him Dad, the couple sued asking for a ruling that the man was not the father. The judge ruled in favor of the man.

The most discussed topic in the Children, Families, and Parenting category was a letter from a *LC* subscriber about compulsory motherhood. This issue was one of the top ten items of discussion overall during the 1989-1994 period. She wrote,

When I came out in 1985, I naively believed the question of my becoming a mother had been settled for all time. Today, however, I find that not only are many gay women becoming pregnant or adopting children, but in some circles, it is becoming almost as compulsory for us as it is for straight women. The fact is, I am disgusted when women who can barely make ends meet whip out their sonograms. Children aren't social experiments, and I think it is as irresponsible as

can be to bear children when you can't afford to, just to "have the experience of motherhood." . . . If you are planning to go on welfare after the baby comes, then you're not grown up enough to be having one. If you can't afford to be inseminated or to adopt, maybe you should rethink the idea. . . . Nobody is entitled to have children and present society with the responsibility of feeding, clothing and/or raising them.

Readers were evenly split on the issues raised by the letter. Subscribers who disagreed believed that there was more to motherhood than financial security. One subscriber wrote, "Let me just say that the capacity to love is what makes a good parent, nothing more and nothing less. Wealth doesn't make a good parent." Subscribers who agreed with the letter-writer were resentful of lesbian mothers who intended to rely on welfare to support their family. One contributor wrote, "I am *not* here to subsidize those who *choose* a lifestyle they can't support because they figure I should pay for it. Forget it!"

Separatism

The Separatism category was the tenth most discussed category during the 1989-1994 analysis period. This category includes debates about the best way to align lesbian energies to achieve the goals of the lesbian community. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Separatism category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table C10.

As discussions about separatism diminished, so too did the news items and articles. These news items highlighted the ongoing divisions between lesbians and gay

men and lesbians and feminists. One news item reported that several women on the editorial staff of *The Advocate*, a national magazine that caters to gay men, either resigned or were fired. Two of those women filed lawsuits charging the magazine with sex discrimination and sexual harassment. Another news item reported that the NOW agenda for the next decade excluded lesbian rights, economic security for lesbians, freedom from homophobic harassment and violence, equal housing for lesbians, custody rights for lesbian mothers, legal recognition of lesbian relationships, or any other issues important to lesbians.

The most discussed topic in the Separatism category was also among the top ten most discussed topics overall during the 1989-1994 period studied. The issue surrounded mothers who brought male children to women-only music festivals. One subscriber described an incident that had occurred at the East Coast Lesbian Festival (ECLF).

A multi-racial couple coming to their first festival brought along their 16-month-old son, and Saturday morning they awoke to signs plastered all over their cabin saying such things as, "BABY PRICK GO HOME," "HAVING A BOY HERE IS NOT RESPECTING LESBIAN SPACE," AND "DON'T FEED MALES, DON'T BREED MALES."

A meeting was planned to discuss the separatists' actions and a statement was prepared, but festival organizers refused to allow it to be read on stage because it had the word *boy* in it. At dawn, signs advertising the meeting were posted. They were removed. More signs were put up and again ripped down. Nevertheless, over one hundred lesbians attended. Many points were raised, and a

new statement was written. This one was read by the MC on the day stage to applause and cheers. A separatist writer then read a rebuttal. . . . The family will probably not return, with or without their son, and I will miss them.

While respondents had different opinions about the presence of male children at women's festival, most agreed that the tactics used by separatists were cruel and did not represent the lesbian community at large. One subscriber wrote,

I am happy that Separatist politics still exist, but I'm discouraged about the form they're taking. . . . This sort of community infighting, called "horizontal hostility," is a common occurrence. It happens when an oppressed group (in this case lesbians) feels frustrated and impotent, and lashes out at the nearest person who will not oppress them further in return. Let's do each other a favor and ask ourselves where we are headed and why.

Religion and Spirituality

The Religion and Spirituality category was the least discussed category during the 1989-1994 analysis period. This category includes discussions about religious and spiritual beliefs and practices as they relate to lesbians and the lesbian community. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Religion and Spirituality category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table C11.

There was only a handful of news items and articles relative to this category. One news item discussed a four-page statement from the Vatican reiterating church teachings that homosexuality is "an objective disorder." The Vatican wrote, "There are areas in

which it is not unjust to discriminate to take sexual orientation into account, for example, in the consignment of children to adoption or foster care, in employment of teachers or coaches, and in military recruitment.” The Vatican also stated that the rights to work and housing can and must be “legitimately limited for objectively disordered external conduct.” It concluded that “the public morality of the entire civil society” was at stake and it was “inappropriate for Church authorities to endorse or remain neutral” toward any lesbian or gay civil rights legislation. In an unusual step, several bishops dissociated themselves from the church’s position.

In another story, 50 Brethren and Mennonite lesbian, bisexual, and supportive women gathered in Indiana for a retreat—the first of its kind. Many women felt that the church had been inhospitable and their sexuality and spirituality, two integral aspects of their lives, had been polarized by the church. They made plans to continue building a support network and to compile an anthology of their stories.

The most discussed topic in the Religion and Spirituality category was a letter from a subscriber about the *LC* Winter Catalog. She wrote,

I love catalogs and I like to see what dyke artists and merchants are doing.

However, I just hate CHRISTMAS bullshit, particularly when it’s disguised as “seasonal.” Many of us in this country who are not Christians have always known that LC’s so-called “Winter Catalog” was really a Christmas catalog for dyke merchants. All that crap about seasonal gift-giving for solstice and Chanukah has always been transparent. I see by your last cover (a charming drawing of a cozy room with a Christmas wreath) that you have finally blown through the bullshit

hypocrisy of insisting that this issue is not a Christmas catalog. So how about cutting the crap and calling your “Winter Catalog” what everyone knows that it really is – a lesbian Christmas catalog. . . .

The Ambitious Amazons responded to correct the subscriber’s misperceptions about their catalog.

First of all, please don’t assume that we’re all Christians. Second, we’re sorry the wreath upset you, and we can understand why. Although we liked, that drawing, we almost didn’t use it *because* of the wreath – guess we should have saved it for another time. You might be interested to know that we put together our first catalog in the spring of 1977, so obviously Christmas had nothing to do with its origin. Because of the success of this catalog, we decided to do two a year, so months later we mailed our first Winter Catalog. (By the way, as far as we can remember, we’ve never said anything about “seasonal gift-giving for solstice and Chanukah.” If we did, we apologize.)

Several readers responded to correct misperceptions about the wreath. One subscriber explained, “The evergreen WREATH is a *pagan* symbol stolen by the Christians to make the holiday suitable for Christian conversion and usage. The wreath is a symbol of the circle of life.” Another explained that, “*All* of the Christian holidays and symbols stem from Pagan beliefs and symbols . . .”

Semiotic Analysis: Defining Lesbian

During early 1990s, there was evidence of an ongoing push for lesbians to identify and behave like normal, middle-class heterosexuals. Nowhere was this more

evident than in the economic endeavors of lesbians. During this time, *LC* became a household word when it was reviewed by the *Library Journal* and referenced in a *Wall Street Journal* article about the rapid growth of lesbian-owned bed and breakfasts, guest houses, travel cruises, and safaris. At this time Olivia Records was earning \$4 million in annual revenue and there were over 500 lesbian-owned businesses in Chicago alone. Running parallel to the success of these mainstream business endeavors was the demise of more traditional endeavors rooted in the early lesbian movement of the mid-1970s, including lesbian bookstores, festivals, and community centers. The Lesbian Center run by the Ambitious Amazons was among the many endeavors that fell to the wayside during this time.

This ongoing shift toward the center created even more chasms between normal lesbians and others. *LC* continued to face difficult decisions regarding who should and should not be allowed to participate in their publication.

[We want to] remind everyone about some of our policies concerning non-lesbians being in LC. As you probably know, we say that LC is for, by, and about lesbians. Generally speaking, all the individual writings and letters in LC are from lesbians, however, we sometimes include ads from non-lesbians who want to reach lesbians. So please don't make the mistake of thinking that everything in LC is lesbian-owned or for lesbians only. In fact, lately we've had an increasing number of inquiries from straight businesses that are considering advertising with us. We have mixed feelings about this, but for now we're just going to deal with

them on a case to case basis. (It's quite unlikely that we'll be including any full-page ads for vodka anytime soon.)

The increase in advertising inquiries from straight businesses is an indication that these businesses had begun to recognize the economic clout of the lesbian community. Interestingly, discussions in *LC* suggest that some prominent women in the lesbian community may have also been attempting to take advantage of this growing economic resource. Subscribers complained that some women claimed to be woman identified or lesbian, but were having sex with men. Subscribers felt these women were attempting to cash in on lesbian dollars while continuing to "sleep with the enemy." This suggests that the premise that one could be a lesbian without engaging in same-sex sexual activity was no longer acceptable. In another example, a subscriber wrote,

I recently went to see the movie "Fried Green Tomatoes" with two lesbian friends. On the way home, I asked if they thought it was a lesbian movie. What followed was a discussion that gave each of us the opportunity to define what "lesbian" meant to her.

Because the initial discussion was so interesting, I began asking every lesbian I knew if they thought "Fried Green Tomatoes" was a lesbian movie. The majority of the responses were "No, because the two womyn, Ruth and Idgie, were not portrayed being sexual with on another." That answer always prompted my second question, "Must womyn be sexual with one another in order to be classified as lesbians?" Once again the majority responded that, "Yes, lesbianism has to do with sexual preference."

Well, as a lesbian, I know that. But I've come to a broader definition. I believe lesbians are womyn who are womyn-focused, who give their energy to other womyn rather than men. When sex (i.e. – who we do “it” with) becomes the criteria for defining who we are, it sounds a lot like the men's game to me. What I do with womyn is so much grander than “it.” Sex is fun, but not my identity.

“Fried Green Tomatoes” is a movie about two womyn who love each other, make a life together, raise a child together, run a business together, and who are devoted to each other's well-being. I never once needed to see them being sexual to know that they met my criteria for being lesbians.

What a great public message this film delivers – womyn in control, taking control of their lives, womyn loving other womyn fiercely and passionately. It never once had to prove to the audience that Ruth and Idgie were the “real thing” by showing us they were sexual with one another. I gave “Fried Green Tomatoes” four stars for the lesbian movie of the year.

Interestingly, the author of the book on which the movie was based denied that the story was about lesbian women. A news item published in *LC* stated,

In an interview in the Chicago Sun-Times, Fannie Flagg, author of *FRIED GREEN TOMATOES AT THE WHISTLE STOP CAFÉ*, denied that the relationship between Idgie and Ruth was a lesbian one. “No, no, no. It's a story about love and friendship. The sexuality is unimportant. We are looking at them from 1991. The 30's was a totally different time period. There were very warm friendships between women.

The sentiment that women could no longer be defined as lesbian unless they had sex with women was echoed in the response of *LC* editors to a woman who attempted to nominate Whoopi Goldberg for Lesbian of the Year. The Ambitious Amazons wrote, “A note to the woman who tried to nominate Whoopi Goldberg for Lesbian of the Year – sorry, since the award is for lesbians, she doesn’t qualify (yet?).”

The shift toward the center did not go unnoticed by those lesbians who had participated in early efforts to build a lesbian nation. One of those who had been involved in this movement wrote to express her dismay at the changes occurring in the lesbian community.

Many of us are old Feminist Fogies who got started when the concept of Lesbian Nation was first being kicked around. We felt we were part of a community with values that were evolving in a particular direction, and we figured our Nation would have to have an economy. However, over the years some festivals have set up jurying systems to select which crafts will be allowed in, just like mainstream art shows. Evidently building our own economic conduits is no longer a goal.

Can’t We Just Be Normal? 1994-1999

The Ambitious Amazons marked their 20th anniversary by purchasing a new building to house *LC* operations. They also changed the look of *LC* to a 7”x10” center-stapled booklet with a cardstock cover that was mailed in a discreet manila envelope. The Ambitious Amazons wrote the following introduction to the 20th anniversary issue.

SURPRISE!! Welcome to the new, improved *Lesbian Connection*! Since this marks the beginning of our third decade, we thought it was a perfect time to give

LC a makeover. During the past twenty years, the most common complaint we've gotten has been about our staples. So even though changing the size and mailing the issues in envelopes will be more expensive, we decided it was worth it. Also, while we haven't done much to change how the inside copy looks yet, we think you'll find that these smaller size pages are much easier to read. It's been quite a challenge working out all the production details and still getting this issue mailed out close to on schedule. But we've all been working a little bit harder to make it happen because we're so excited about this change. We certainly hope you'll like it, too.

With this new contemporary look, *LC* looked more like a mainstream periodical than a homespun newsletter. With this new look came general shift in the lesbian community toward identification with the normal. Discussions in *LC* suggest that many readers were interested in respectability and mainstream acceptance. "After all," they seemed to be saying. "There is only one tiny difference between lesbians and heterosexuals. Right?"

Content Analysis/Narrative Analysis

The eleven categories used for the previous analysis remained unchanged in the current analysis; no new categories were added. These categories, listed from most discussed category to least discussed category are as follows: Health and Mental Health; Discrimination and Fear; Growing Pains; Relationships and Sexuality; Defining Lesbian; Networking; Minority Lesbians; Children, Families, and Parenting; Separatism; Isolation; and Religion and Spirituality.

Health and Mental Health

The Health and Mental Health category was the most discussed category during 1994-1999. This category includes discussions relevant to health and mental health issues in the lesbian community. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Health and Mental Health category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table D1.

During this time, conversion therapy made its way into news items published in *LC*. Conversion therapy (also called reparative therapy or reorientation therapy) refers to any of a number of treatments meant to convert homosexuals to heterosexuality. The most drastic form, aversion therapy, exposed a patient to stimulus while at the same time subjecting them to some sort of discomfort. For instance, aversion therapists might apply an electric current, or administer nausea-inducing drugs while showing nude pictures of individuals of the same sex. The electric current would be turned off when photographs of individuals of the opposite sex were shown (Houser, 1990).

During the late 1990s, the American Medical Association adopted sweeping policy changes regarding health care for lesbians and gay men which included rejecting the practice of aversion therapy. The board of the American Psychiatric Association unanimously passed a resolution opposing any psychiatric treatments that attempted to change a person's sexual orientation. Moreover, Exodus, one of the Christian groups that claimed they could convert homosexuals reported that two of the founders of Exodus International had left the organization after falling in love, and more than a dozen Christian ministries had closed down after their leaders reverted back to homosexuality.

At the same time, gay rights groups were trying to convince the American Psychiatric Association to declassify Gender Identity Disorder as a pathology.

LC subscribers also began to get conflicting reports about the incidence of breast cancer in lesbians. Preliminary results from what *LC* called the largest lesbian health and sexuality survey conducted to date indicated that lesbians did *not* have a higher risk for breast cancer. Conversely, a report issued by the Institute of Medicine found that, contrary to past speculation, lesbians were not at higher risk for any particular health problem simply because of their sexual orientation. However, some risk factors for certain diseases, such as breast cancer, may be more common among lesbians. *LC* also reported on a new book titled *Dressed to Kill* that reported finding that women who wore a bra for more than 12 hours a day were 21 times more likely to have breast cancer than those who did not.

Although conversion therapy, Gender Identity Disorder, and breast cancer were key news items in the Health and Mental Health category, there were no discussions about these issues in *LC*. The most discussed item in the Health and Mental Health category and during the entire analysis period was a letter from a woman whose partner had a history of sexual abuse. She wrote,

I have been involved and living with a woman for nearly ten years and we only have sex once a year on average. She has a very difficult history of sexual abuse. Exploring this in therapy has made her much happier and more integrated, but she still seems to hate sex even though she would like to feel otherwise. . . . I have a sexual abuse history as well, so I understand ambivalence about sex. However,

this woman is still incredibly attractive to me, and I love her and want her. . . . Is there any therapy that will overcome the effects of early, sadistic incest so someone can enjoy sex? . . .

Almost two years after the original letter, the same subscriber wrote again.

I had a letter published in LC that asked, “Is there sex after incest?” Much to my dismay, no one ever responded. . . . I’ve become more despairing and keep trying to discern: Am I asking too much of her? Is the damage done so thoroughly that she will never want to go there? Sex is clearly *not* my main interest or I wouldn’t still be here. The longer this goes on though, the more my heart sinks; the more it costs me emotionally, and slowly the door on my vulnerability with her has started to close. . . . So I ask again: Is there anyone out there who has gotten to the other side of dealing with incest/sexual abuse with your sex life intact? . . .

Her letter was signed, “Praying for Reasons to Keep Hoping.”

The Ambitious Amazons were so inundated with responses to her letter, that they could not publish all the responses in *LC*. They wrote,

This issue contains what may be the longest response section we’ve ever had in LC. In fact, it was only after we had begun printing the pages for this issue that we realized we had seriously underestimated the length. At that point we decided that the best thing to do would be to add eight extra pages, and this accounts for the creative page numbering you’ll find in this issue (e.g., between pages 12 and 13 you’ll find page 12A, 12B, 12C & 12D).

Since we had so many long responses on one topic (Is there sex after incest?) we couldn't possibly include them all and still get everything else in. So instead, we are offering a special supplement that will include the letters on incest that didn't make it in. If you'd like to receive a copy just send us an SASE and tell us you want the Incest Supplement. . . .

Many subscribers responded to share their personal stories and make recommendations that were helpful to them in overcoming their abuse and developing a healthy sex life. Those recommendations included specific types of therapeutic treatment, special groups for survivors of incest, behavioral and cognitive changes the couple might consider, and books that might be helpful. The author of one of those books responded,

To an incest survivor, sex is not about pleasure, or sharing, or intimacy, but about violation and rape. Yet it is the language she has learned, the commodity of relationships – the value she has been shown she has. And so survivors often find themselves sexualizing all of their more casual relationships, while losing interest in sex when there is trust and intimacy, because love and rape cannot coexist. So, for perhaps the first time in her whole life she is able to say “No.” As awful as it feels for the partner, this is actually a good thing. This abstinence gives the survivor the room to disconnect the bad psychic wiring which associates sex with abuse, to heal the trauma, and to rediscover sex – on her own terms, for her own benefit.

Ultimately – unfortunately – whether “Praying’s” partner will/can accomplish this cannot be forecast . . . [but] there is hope – I’ve seen over and over again that it can be done.

Another highly discussed item in both this category and the analysis period overall was a letter that asked, “How should the Lesbian community respond when an adult Lesbian sexually exploits a teenage Lesbian?” The letter went on to describe such an incident that had recently occurred in her community.

The older Lesbian, a therapist working at a teen program, first had sex with the 15-year-old while she was a client in the program. The adult told some other teens about her relationship with the younger woman, but carefully kept it secret from other adults. The teen Lesbian was very vulnerable because she has no parents to watch out for her, has a background of severe abuse, and has many emotional challenges facing her. . . .

As more girls come out earlier, this type of scenario is likely to happen more often. We need to share ideas about how to protect young Lesbians from sexual abuse within our communities. . . .

The majority of respondents felt these types of relationships should be handled no differently than in the case of an adult male having sex with a teenage girl. However, many respondents recommended keeping an open mind and refraining from jumping to conclusions. A number of subscribers wrote to share their own sexual encounters or the experiences of teenage girls they knew who had sexual encounters with adult lesbians.

Most described the experience as abusive and harmful; however, one subscriber did not.

She wrote,

While I abhor all types of child *abuse* perpetrated by anyone, straight or lesbian, let's not ignore some realities here. . . . The law has no business in my bedroom, or for that matter, preventing me from marrying another woman. So let's not be too fast in supporting the law. . . .

Many women – straight and lesbian – had crushes on older women: teachers, coaches, actresses, etc. This is natural! And for some of us, these feelings were reciprocated by the adult women, and developed into gentle, loving relationships. Although my coach was closeted, she was not hesitant to have sex with me at 14 (she was 26). We parted when I graduated from high school and left for college. I will always be grateful to her for bringing me out. . . .

I have always been open with my daughter about my lesbianism. While I would never try to manipulate her sexuality, I am very proud to be the lesbian mother of a lesbian daughter! At age nine she started having sex with other girls, with my support and approval. . . . Then at age 12 she developed a crush on one of my friends. She told me about her feelings, and I replied directly and emphatically that I approved. Since that time she has mostly dated adult women. . . .

We should encourage girls to come out and support them through mentoring relationships (and yes, even intimate relationships with adult lesbians when the feelings are mutual). . . .

This letter prompted a plethora of accusations from women who felt this mother was subjecting her daughter to abusive adults. One subscriber wrote,

We need to look no further than the response from [this woman] for proof of the damage that is done to children when they are SEXUALLY USED by adults. [She] says that she was not harmed when at fourteen she was seduced by a 26-year-old woman. She belies that assertion when she tells us that, with her support and approval, her daughter started having sex at the age of nine. Healthy nine-year-olds don't have sex . . . They may explore their own bodies and those of friends, but any sexual feeling in those experiences was put there by you. That your daughter would then come to you at age twelve and express sexual feelings for adults ought to have given you a big clue that she was in serious psychological trouble. And more horrifying, those adults acted on their sexual feelings for your child. Perhaps your own childhood trauma led you to develop friendships with adults who would prey on children. You have a duty to protect your daughter, not present her to sexual predators under the guise of an open and loving sexuality. Get some help, for you and your daughter, lest we hear about *her* daughter in 15 years.

Another highly discussed letter in the Health and Mental Health category, as well as the 1994-1999 analysis period overall was a letter from a woman who was struggling with the symptoms of menopause. She wrote,

As a side effect of menopause, I've been experiencing the total loss of sexual desire. I haven't really felt "normal" in this regard for over three years. . . .

Because of my age and the danger of osteoporosis my gynecologist is strongly pushing hormone replacement therapy (HRT). . . . However, due to the cancer risk, I just don't want to go that route. Still, I'm so dead sexually that I can't even masturbate. . . . I'm feeling really depressed about this condition because it seems like it may be my permanent state of being. Have other menopausal lesbians experienced this problem, and if so, what have you done about it?

HRT had brought a welcome relief from the symptoms of menopause for many women who responded, and they encouraged the writer to reconsider her decision to refrain from using it. As has frequently been the case throughout this study, many subscribers wrote to offer suggestions for natural approaches for easing the symptoms of menopause. They offered a number of solutions from dietary changes to creams, herbs, vitamins, and acupuncture. They also suggested a number of books that the subscriber might find useful.

Another highly discussed item in this category, as well as the 1994-1999 time period, was a letter from a subscriber who was angry because neither her doctor nor her therapist had told her that the anti-depressants she was taking could lead to sexual dysfunction, weight gain, and other unpleasant side effects. She wrote, "The crying and irritability have returned, but I'd rather deal with them than the unpredictable effects of these drugs."

Nearly all of the subscribers who responded indicated anti-depressants had given them a renewed sense of joy in life. One respondent wrote, "The depression is like being buried alive for weeks and weeks, and the Prozac is like a shovel finally tunneling

through to me with the first breath of fresh air.” Another wrote, “The anti-depressant drug ZOLOFT, is nothing short of a miracle for me.” Those respondents who had experienced less success with anti-depressants recommended trying lower doses of the medication. They also suggested a number of natural approaches including dietary changes, vitamins, and other supplements.

The final most discussed item in this category, which was also among the most discussed items overall during this analysis period was from a subscriber who wrote, “I just want to know if anybody out there has suggestions for living with a manic-depressive and/or alcoholic. I’m at wits’ end, and my friends think my sanity is in danger.” A number of respondents recommended that the writer attend Al-Anon and several recommended books the writer might read. Many women wrote to describe their own experiences living with women suffering with bipolar disorder. Several of these women recommended that the writer seek out a healthier relationship with another woman. One woman wrote, “The only suggestion I have for living with a manic-depressive and/or alcoholic is – *do not* do it.”

At least one woman who was living with bipolar disorder took exception to the tone of many of the responses. She wrote,

I’m BIPOLAR and I was saddened and angered by the tone of the . . . responses. . . . We bipolars come in an assortment of styles, and not all of us ought to be exiled. Many of us are intelligent, creative, insightful and pleasantly unique. The dark side does exist, but so do meds, therapy and a willingness to control a

disorder that hurts us, too. Let's not start a group of "Lesbians Against Bipolars," okay?

Discrimination and Fear

The Discrimination and Fear category was the second most discussed category during 1994-1999. This category includes discussions about discrimination experienced by lesbians from within and outside the lesbian and feminist movements, acts of resistance in the face of discrimination, and fear resulting from discrimination and violence against lesbians. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Discrimination and Fear category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table D2.

News items relative to the Discrimination and Fear category focused on a wide array of issues. Most news items in this category addressed hate crimes, discrimination, and the fight for protection of gay people on the local, state, and federal levels. These struggles were set against a backdrop of heinous crimes against lesbians, including the December 1995 murder of Roxanne Ellis and Michelle Abdill who ran a property management business. The women disappeared after Ellis showed Robert James Acremant an apartment for rent. Police found the women in Ellis' pickup truck. They had been shot in the head, their bodies bound and gagged. Acremant admitted that he killed the women because of their sexual orientation (Burress, 1996, August 22).

Six months later, in May 1996, Julianne Marie Williams and Laura "Lollie" Winans were found murdered after they set out on a camping trip near the Appalachian Trail. Their hands were bound, their mouths gagged, and their throats slit. Darrell David

Rice was indicted for the slayings. He told authorities the women “deserved to die because they were lesbian (expletives)” (Kellman, 2002, April 11).

This was not the first time lesbians had been attacked on the Appalachian Trail. In 1988, Stephen Roy Carr shot and killed Rebecca Wight and critically wounded her partner, Claudia Brenner, while they were camping and hiking on the Appalachian Trail. He received life in prison without parole.

As has often been the case throughout history, these stories about lesbians went relatively unnoticed. It was not until Matthew Shepard was savagely murdered that national attention was drawn to the issue of hate crimes.

At the local level, the fight for equal rights often played out in the school systems. According to news items in *LC*, many school systems attempted to ban lesbian-themed books; dismiss lesbian teachers, coaches, and athletes; and deny lesbian and gay students their basic civil rights. The school board in Salt Lake City, UT voted to ban all extracurricular clubs rather than allow a club for lesbian and gay students to meet. A school board in New Hampshire passed a policy that banned school instruction or counseling that encouraged or supported homosexuality as a positive lifestyle alternative. But in some cases, students were fighting back, and winning. In a resounding victory, a Kentucky jury awarded \$220,000 to a lesbian high school student for damages inflicted by her classmates.

On the international news front, Canada; Buenos Aires; and Columbia, South America took measures to protect the basic civil rights of lesbian and gay people. In June 1997, a Russian lesbian was granted asylum in the US to escape persecution in her

homeland where she was arrested, assaulted, expelled from medical school, and forced to undergo electric-shock treatment because she was a lesbian. At the same time, it was reported that two lesbians staying in the United Arab Emirates were sentenced to 90 lashes and up to two years for practicing indecency. The late 1990s were clearly a time of mixed victories and defeats in the war for basic human rights for lesbians and gays.

LC subscribers continued to focus more on individual issues than on broader-based issues affecting lesbian and gay people. The most discussed item in this category was a photograph that graced the cover of *LC* in 1997. The picture depicted a nude woman with her back to the camera. Her long dark hair cascaded down her back and her arms were uplifted in worship. She wrote the following about the photograph.

Here is a black and white photo for your consideration. I had the photo taken as an anniversary present for my lover, and it was a very empowering experience. For years I hated my body and believed the people who made fun of my size. Then I met my sweetie. She fell in love with me and adores my body size and shape. And when I saw this photo of my full nude breasts and hips and thighs, for the first time in my life I saw myself as beautiful. I encourage all wimmin to treat themselves to a photo shoot.

There was an outpouring of positive responses to the photograph, making the photograph the second most discussed item in this category. One subscriber wrote,

Thank you for printing that beautiful picture . . . I'd also like to thank her for her courage in sending it to you. I, too, am an overweight woman who has been given the idea by both my family and friends that something is wrong with my size.

Now, with therapy and size-positive friends, I am beginning to recognize that my body is indeed beautiful. I'd like to join in celebrating the beauty of bountiful women's bodies along with [the woman in the photo] and her partner.

Another woman wrote,

I really *really* loved the . . . COVER! Wow. That's the kind of photo I'd like to have hanging on my wall, and the kind of cover I would like to see a whole lot more of. This is the first time one of your covers has elicited such a response from me.

A small handful of subscribers took exception to the cover. One letter in particular received an outpouring of protest from subscribers. The subscriber wrote,

When I looked at the . . . COVER photo and read the accompanying letter, I didn't just see someone who is happy with her body because she had found someone to accept her. Instead I saw a woman who is what we in the medical profession refer to as morbidly obese. In years to come she will develop myriad medical problems, including diabetes, hypertension and heart disease. She will have a difficult time being accepted into any managed care insurance plan which makes patients responsible for their own health. With a future of medical problems and doubtful insurance, our tax dollars will be supporting this woman in her older years.

I know it is very P.I. [politically incorrect] to criticize heavy women, but this is a *health* issue. I advise [the woman in the photo] to see a therapist, *not* to learn self-acceptance, but to get at the root causes of your overeating. Get a thorough physical and see a registered dietician. Join an exercise group for

overweight women – they’ll be excellent support. You need to make these changes so you can be here with your sweetie for a long, long time.

Many subscribers were angered by the letters from unsupportive women. One subscriber responded,

It is with a lifelong rage that I write in response to the abusive comments made by three readers in your last issue . . . The first called the . . . COVER . . . “distasteful and ridiculous.” The second was so “offended” that she demanded an apology. The third, representing our old ally, “The Medical Profession,” casually lists a number of outrageous assumptions about fat women: we are unhealthy and dependent, overeat, and never exercise.

She’s apparently unaware that the studies that “prove” we are so unhealthy were originally done on groups of fat people who had been on scores of starvation diets over their lifetimes, causing them to lose their hair and memory, and eventually gain back the weight lost and more. She also apparently hasn’t realized that diets don’t work and people naturally come in *all* sizes, not just the ones she approves. I am stunned that these writers never stopped to wonder *where* their prejudice comes from. . . .

The partner of the woman in the photograph published a thank you to those women who wrote to defend and support her companion. She added,

To those who remain entrenched in patriarchal values, please try to rise above your outmoded sensibilities and remember that there’s a *person* behind every photo and every letter. [My partner] was criticized as though she were an

inanimate object, without feelings or understanding. Did you think we wouldn't read your comments? . . .

The second most discussed item in the Discrimination and Fear category was an article titled, "Behind Bars." The subscriber wrote,

Thirty-three years ago, I was in prison for sixteen months. Now, here I am again! In all that time not one thing has improved regarding the oppression and persecution of lesbians in prison. And this isn't going to change, no matter how hard we try. . . .

Men in prisons earn \$200-\$600 a month, which the maximum a woman can earn is \$46. Most earn far less – some as little as \$4.25 for a whole month! Many people don't realize that inmates have to pay for everything except our meals and medical care. . . .

Nothing from home can be sent in . . . The food here is very unhealthy, and many of us gain weight from all the fats and sugars and the lack of vegetables and fruits. To supplement our diet, we buy vitamins, food, and powdered milk from the canteen. . . . For most, the telephone is our lifeline, but we have to pay for all our calls. . . .

When our civil rights are violated or our health needs ignored, it costs \$140 plus lawyer's fees to fight for our rights. Finally, in order to get paroled we must already have a few hundred dollars saved. Altogether, it takes a lot of money to be in here. . . .

Another area of injustice involves religious discrimination. Because of previous court cases, prisons are supposed to acknowledge Wicca/Paganism as a religion. Getting them to cooperate, however, is a struggle. Here in Colorado we are only allowed to gather on the eight Holy Days of the year, while other religions have weekly church, plus Bible studies and prayer groups any time they want. . . .

Women who love the Goddess desperately need the support of outside groups in order to be able to practice our religion. These illegal practices of the Department of Corrections must be exposed. Please help women in prisons – we need you!

Many women who responded to the article were less than supportive of the woman's plight. One woman wrote,

My field (Criminal Justice and Criminology) has already made me aware of the conditions INCARCERATED WOMEN face daily. But when I read Karen's article I kept seeing "victim" between the lines and it made me sick! When you offended . . . you made a choice, and with the choice you gave up many freedoms afforded general society. You are not the victim, and you do have choices...albeit limited. Do your time the hard way or choose a productive way, but don't lay the victim role on those of us who are out here playing by the rules!

Some women were sympathetic and wrote to inquire how they could help. One woman wrote,

I'm disappointed with the cold-heartedness and general nastiness in many of the responses . . . Try to think about prison in terms of reality, not in terms of Republican rhetoric: many women in prison are there for killing their abusive husbands/boyfriends in self-defense. Prisons are anything but "resorts," contrary to what the naïve may think. Women in prison are often sexually assaulted and raped by guards. Twenty-four hours a day isolation in a soundproof, windowless room is now the norm in prisons across the country, rooms that have been proven to drive people insane. The number of women in prison is growing at a rate faster than for men. Most people in U.S. prisons are poor and from racial/ethnic minorities. And in a country where many jobs pay only \$5.15 an hour with no benefits, "getting a job" is not going to solve everyone's problems.

And finally, what's with all these accusations of harboring a "victim mentality?" Many women truly have been victimized. It seems that many of you would like to pretend that male violence against women does not exist, and this is your way of shouting, "Witch!" to silence the women who insist it does exist.

Where have all the feminists gone?

Many prisoners wrote to tell their own stories, and to echo the words of the previous writer. Subscribers wrote long, passionate letters describing the despicable prison conditions they had witnessed. Many women were clearly taken aback by the attitudes expressed toward prisoners.

Another highly discussed issue during this time period was a letter about the American Automobile Association (AAA). The subscriber wrote,

I got a call from AAA telling me I could save lots of money on an “associate” membership for someone else. When I asked if the someone else had to be a blood relative, they told me it could be a “significant other,” but only if the other was my fiancé . . .

Nearly every woman who responded indicated she had been successful in obtaining an associate membership with her partner. In some cases, they simply added their partner to the application form and returned it; however, in other cases they made it clear they were a lesbian couple.

Despite evidence of ongoing discrimination and fear during the late 1990s, there was also evidence that, at least for some women, the turbulence was subsiding. For example, the Ambitious Amazon made the decision to begin publishing the full name, town, and state of the contributors who wrote responses, articles, reviews, etc. unless they received a specific request asking them not to do so. For those writing letters for publication, the Ambitious Amazons continued to use only the writer’s first name, town, and state asked to do otherwise.

Glaringly absent from the discussions in this category was the death of Matthew Shepard who was murdered by Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson. The two men led Shepard to a remote area in Laramie, Wyoming and tied him to a split-rail fence where he was beaten and left to die. Almost 18 hours later he was found by a cyclist who initially mistook him for a scarecrow. Shepard died on October 12th at a hospital in Fort Collins, Colorado (Matthew Shepard Foundation, 2007). This tragedy became a wake-up call to the hate and discrimination in the lives of lesbian and gay people. While it is

surprising that there were few discussions in *LC* about Shepard's death, this fact is evidence of the ongoing focus of discussions on only those issues of importance in the day-to-day lives of lesbians.

Growing Pains

The Growing Pains category was the third most discussed category during the 1994-1999 analysis period. This category includes items of discussion about the struggle to grow and survive faced by *LC*, lesbian publishers, lesbian musicians, women's festivals, and the lesbian movement in general. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Growing Pains category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table D3.

News items in the Growing Pains category focused almost exclusively on the sitcom *Ellen* (called *These Friends of Mine* during its first season). In 1997, the show featured the coming out of Ellen DeGeneres' character, Ellen Morgan.

The ongoing struggle of women's publishing initiatives also made its way into the news. Inland Books, one of the major distributors for women's presses and publications, filed Chapter 11 bankruptcy. As a result, *Off Our Backs* and *Common Lives* had to do special mailings to try to raise money to cover their losses.

The most discussed item in the Growing Pains category was the new format of *LC*. As discussed earlier, this new look seemed to parallel an overall trend away from traditional lesbian ideologies and toward assimilation with the dominant culture. Nonetheless, *LC* still managed to maintain much of its "kitchen table press" quality.

Perhaps it is the Ambitious Amazons' unique ability to embrace the new without turning their backs on their roots that has kept *LC* alive for so many years. One woman wrote,

The NEW SIZE and look is terrific! Sooo "professional." How do you women do it? Keep this thing alive year after year without craving a career change? Three cheers to you for all your dedication. I love the homey, conversational quality of the magazine – like keeping in touch with old friends! . . .

Another subscriber wrote,

The 20-YEAR issue of *Lesbian Connection* (Jan/Feb) is truly a collector's item. The cover is wonderful – I can remember when LC first began publishing in 1974. I was living in Chicago and very active in the ♀♀'s community, and we were very excited about LC. Time has passed and there is so much printed for lesbians now (books, magazines, newspapers, etc), but LC has a personal quality and is one of the "mothers" of lesbian print.

Nearly all of the letters about *LC*'s new format discussed the absence of the staples that for 20 years had maintained the confidentiality subscribers. One subscriber joked, "Just got your new issue in the ENVELOPE and I gotta say I'm kinda disappointed. I mean, what the heck is a big ol' butch dyke like me supposed to do without those ever-lovin' staples to rip out?"

There were also some expressions of concern about the ecologic consequences of the decision to mail *LC* in an envelope. One subscriber wrote,

The self-seal and the adhesive address label also make the envelopes virtually unrecyclable. Perhaps you could find an envelope made of recycled paper, with a lick and stick seal, and a hole for the address to show? . . .

The Ambitious Amazons responded that the envelopes are recyclable if the flap is removed. Subscribers also warned readers to mark through the bar code if they intend to reuse the envelopes. According to one subscriber, the bar code takes precedence over what is actually written on the envelope.

LC's 20th anniversary also sparked a number of discussions during this period.

Many subscribers wrote to *LC* to reminisce. One former Ambitious Amazon wrote,

Birthday Greetings LC!! TWENTY YEARS!!! I recall our beginnings like it was yesterday – almost! I say “our” because I was an “Ambitious Amazon” back then. I still have my T-shirt (no, it doesn’t fit, but it is among my most precious memorabilia). What a group we were. I remember Margy and Goldi asking me if I’d like to type the newsletter – in its grassroots stage. Sure, says I, and my partner can help proofread, etc. Typing on an old typewriter – running it off on a mimeograph machine (or was it a ditto? – omigod, what an experience – running off the pages by hand, stapling, collating, sorting, getting ready for the big mailing. Margy and Goldi holding us all together, making it happen – making it work!!! Years have passed . . . but I will always hold dear to my heart those early days when we were a fledgling newsletter. “You’ve come a long way, Baby,” and I’m proud of you and your growth...and to have been a tiny part! Congratulations to all of you who’ve kept LC alive and well all these years!!!

Another subscriber wrote,

Tonight, at midnight, the city of Juneau, Alaska will be sealing up a Time Capsule for the next 100 years. Included in the “Capsule” (actually a room) will be the many back issues of *Lesbian Connection* I have saved over the years. I hope our sisters in 2094 are out and free when they find these copies and can get a sense of what struggles we dealt with in our time to make it easier for the future. . . .

LC continued to grow in other ways during the late 1990s. The Ambitious Amazons began using “a company that promises faster delivery” to send *LC* to subscribers living outside the US. This allowed them to make international subscriptions completely free. (In the past, international subscribers were required to pay for the extra postage.) The Ambitious Amazons wrote, “We’re excited about this because we see it as a necessary first step towards LC becoming more of an international lesbian publication.” *LC* also received their first e-mail address and began to accept credit cards. Alison Bechdel’s lesbian cartoon strip debuted in *LC* during the late 1990s. The Ambitious Amazons continually increased the size of *LC* in order to publish all of the responses and they began sending *LC* out to be printed by an independent press.

The ongoing struggle with the post office continued into the late 1990s. This time the post office claimed *LC* owed \$19,000 in extra postage because they published ads for Olivia Cruises. Subscribers continued to complain about cover art and subscribers had to be reminded, once again, that advertising in *LC* is not an endorsement of the company and does not mean the business is lesbian owned.

During this time, the Contact Dyke listing increased to 1,330 and Argentina, Cuba, Russia, and Korea were represented for the first time in the history of *LC*. As in the past, *LC* continued to have problems with the Contact Dyke list. Offensive photos of a man were sent via e-mail and attributed to a lesbian subscriber who had nothing to do with the photos being sent. Moreover, the Ambitious Amazons repeatedly asked subscribers to stop using the Contact Dyke list for chain letters, advertising, etc.

LC also continued to be the center of criticism that reflected changes occurring in the lesbian community at large. One subscriber wrote to complain about what she viewed as offensive advertising in *LC*. Another cancelled her subscription because “your publication caters to the lesbian fringe.” This critique illustrates the ongoing push-pull politics between traditional lesbians and those seeking assimilation. One subscriber responded,

I simply must respond to the [writer] regarding the LESBIAN FRINGE. . . (sigh)
 . . . I can picture you whizzing by in your foreign car on the way to your important job tapping your high heels lipstick syncing to mainstream music. I am not a quasi-comedic-cynic like you who prides herself in modeling after the lives of heterosexuals. I am just a simple jerk who calls it as I sees it. Now, try to understand this: LC is a publication that honors lesbians by providing an open forum for all lesbians. Yes, even you dear.

In many ways, *LC* remained the same, yet in other ways *LC* continued to shift and change to meet the needs of its subscribers, and lesbian culture in general. *LC* continued to meet an important need for lesbians in the late 1990s. The Ambitious Amazons had

their finger on the pulse of the lesbian community and its lifeblood would keep *LC* alive and strong for years to come.

Relationships and Sexuality

The Relationships and Sexuality category was the fourth most discussed category during the 1994-1999 period studied. This category includes discussions about lesbian relationships, sexuality, and sexual intimacy. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Relationships and Sexuality category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table D4.

The trend in news items seen in the 1989-1994 analysis continued into the current analysis. News items pertinent to the Relationships and Sexuality category focused almost exclusively on the fight for partnership rights for same-sex partners and their families.

Hawaii's Commission on Sexual Orientation released a report recommending that the state's marriage laws be amended to allow same-sex couples to marry. Moreover, employers were extending health care benefits to the partners of lesbians and gay employees in greater numbers. One survey found that 13% of all U.S. employers were offering these benefits and for companies with more than 5,000 workers, the figure jumped to one in four.

In one of the most sweeping gay rights decisions ever, an Oregon appeals court said that the state government was constitutionally required to recognize same-sex domestic partnerships. This made Oregon the first state ever to require that its public

agencies provide benefits to the partners of lesbian and gay employees. After six months of lobbying virtually by themselves, a Maryland lesbian couple convinced their state to change its rules and allow health insurers to offer domestic partner benefits. Despite growing recognition of lesbian and gay couples, the Virginia Housing Development Authority revised its policy in order to prohibit unmarried couples, including lesbians and gays, from getting home loans through the state agency.

In international news, *LC* reported that since the government's 1993 change in its immigration policy, 62 lesbian and gay Canadians had successfully brought their foreign partners to live with them in Canada. Moreover, a loan company in Australia announced it would start offering discounted home loans to lesbian and gay couples.

LC also reported the startling findings of a national study on domestic violence among lesbians and gays. The study found that there were 1,566 incidents of domestic violence reported in six cities. In some cities, there were more reports of domestic violence than anti-gay attacks.

Despite the ongoing focus on marital rights for same-sex couples, lesbians contributing to discussions in *LC* were more concerned about sex, sadomasochism, surviving a breakup, reviving their relationships, and unfaithful partners than they were about partnership rights.

The most discussed item in the Relationships and Sexuality category was a letter from a woman who became tired and irritable after orgasms. She wrote,

If this strikes anyone as funny, let me tell you it is not. My girlfriend has been very patient, but I know it must be difficult for her. I have become less eager to

have sex, knowing that afterwards I will feel cranky and exhausted. So – has anyone out there in Elsieland experienced this? Is it possibly related to oncoming menopause? Most importantly, are there any treatments for this syndrome? Please help!

Some subscribers wrote to confirm that they, too, experienced debilitating fatigue following orgasm, sometimes for several days. One woman reminded her that lovemaking need not include having an orgasm. Another suggested she might be allergic to an increase in hormones, such as serotonin, during sex. A third subscriber suggested retaining more of her chi “by not opening too many major centers/openings all at once.”

Over time, one physician lost her patience with the various medical suggestions readers were offering in *LC*. She wrote,

As a physician, I feel I can no longer stand silent in the face of some of the info being given out by writers in *LC*. . . . A contributor referred to a SEROTONIN ALLERGY as the underlying cause of some medical ailment. Serotonin is found in high concentrations throughout the body. It's produced from tryptophan, an amino acid which is present in almost all foods containing protein. Although human beings do develop autoimmune disorders, no one could survive an allergy to something as pervasive as serotonin. . . .

I really feel that we have to draw the line somewhere when it comes to this raging anti-western (read male) approach. I find it ironic that we lesbians as a group single out western medicine as the ogre, while all the while we eat to the point of obesity and defend it in the name of feminism, and sadly attempt to

squelch our inner hungers with cigarettes and alcohol. There is much wrong in the western model of medicine – I see it every day. But this wrong cannot be righted with misinformation and superfluous hostility.

Defining Lesbian

The Defining Lesbian category was the fifth most discussed category during 1994-1999. This category includes debates about how lesbians define and celebrate themselves and their community. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Defining Lesbian category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table D5.

There was a plethora of news items in the Defining Lesbian category relative to the continued push toward the normalization of lesbians. This ongoing push toward normalcy, which was occurring from both within and outside of the lesbian culture arched across many of the categories during this study period, but is especially evident in the Defining Lesbian category.

The news items reported that Marcia Brady of *The Brady Bunch* would be a lesbian in the next movie based on the TV series and a new comic book based on a lesbian superhero was scheduled to debut. MTV was slated to make dating game-show history by featuring lesbian and gay contestants. Atlantic City officials announced that the summer Olympics would feature an official Gay and Lesbian Visitors Center. Moreover, thousands of red-shirted lesbians and gays crowded into Disney World for Gay Day. By early afternoon, the Magic Kingdom had reached its capacity of 75,000.

Two lesbians were crowned homecoming king and queen at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. A lesbian couple assumed duties as housemasters at Harvard's Lowell House. Moreover, during its fourth annual Holocaust memorial day the German government chose for the first time ever to focus on the lesbian and gay victims of the Nazis. Scholars estimate between 10,000 and 15,000 gays were interned at the camps and jails during the Nazi reign.

A lesbian kindergarten teacher from Atlanta, won a Pulitzer Prize for Drama with her first play, "Wit," about a woman confronting death. Moreover, just one week before the Dinah Shore Classic in Palm Springs, CA, Muffin Spencer-Devlin became the first professional golfer to come out as a lesbian in the Ladies Professional Golf Association's 46-year history.

Longtime lesbian activist and writer, Charlotte Bunch was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame in Seneca Falls, NY. In an Australian first, the New South Wales police service took out a full-page ad in *Lesbians on the Loose* with the headline "Join the NSW Police. We guarantee you'll get sensible shoes."

The most discussed item in the category, and the fourth most discussed item overall during this period was a letter from a subscriber describing her experience attending the Michigan Women's Music Festival for the first time. She wrote,

This year was my first Michigan Womyn's Music Festival and I went with high hopes. But from the moment I entered the festival grounds, my expectations began dropping. . . .

I was to discover a world of unwritten rules, an inexplicable and incomprehensible form of organization. I struggled to make sense of the experience. I wanted to be open minded. What I saw were half-naked women, shaved heads, blue hair, body paint, nipple (and other) piercings, and communal showers. There was a mixing of children and nudity. There was ugliness.

I had difficulty getting past the shock factor to see the women there as women, not as freaks. Their “in-your-face” activism assaulted me and offended my sensibilities. The public nudity crashed through my personal boundaries and I became more guarded and intolerant, not less. For the first time in my life, I understood with alarming clarity how a straight person can feel repulsed by homosexuals. . . .

While there were a few women who agreed with the writer, most respondents vehemently disagreed. Many women were appalled and offended by what they heard as an insulting and inaccurate portrayal of the festival and the women who attended. Their sensibilities were assaulted by her blatant intolerance of others. They viewed her as needy and spoiled.

One response to this letter sparked a second outpouring of responses that kept the discussion running for nearly a year. She wrote,

I have identified as lesbian-feminist-separatist since the 1970s. In my house females are welcome to go nude if they want. But shaved heads and piercings are *not* welcome (nor are smoking, so-called “recreation” drugs, or other illegal

activities). Females into these are *not* feminist, separatist, or even lesbian; they are male-identified. . . .

One group of women wrote,

She states that women with SHAVED HEADS AND PIERCINGS are *not* welcome in her house because they are not feminist, separatist, or lesbian; they are male identified. How lovely. So women who shave their heads for spiritual reasons aren't allowed in her house? How about women with cancer? Or women who shave their heads as a way to escape the tyranny of male directed standards of beauty, claiming their right to define beauty by their own standards?

I have noticed that there is a great schism between the dykes of different generations. This painful division results in a loss for both groups. . . .

Networking

The Networking category was the sixth most discussed category during 1994-1999. This category includes discussions in which subscribers requested information from or provided information to other subscribers of *LC*. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Networking category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table D6. There were no news items or articles relevant to the Networking category published in *LC* during this time.

The Networking category is, by its very nature, a jumble of unrelated topics. However, it also provides interesting insight into the day-to-day needs and interests of lesbians. Some subscribers wrote about relocation. One young couple wrote to ask for

advice from writers regarding where and how to move to a new area and how to find a lesbian community there. Another writer who had recently moved into a mobile home was dealing with the stigma of mobile home living. She asked for correspondence from other women living in mobile homes.

Some women wrote seeking help finding products. One woman with allergies to commercial feminine supplies sought help finding a product called moon pads. Another woman sought information on large-size cotton bras.

Some subscribers wrote about money issues. One writer sought information about funding sources for lesbians doing graduate work who wanted to serve the lesbian community. Another began a discussion about self-made millionaires who were selling Mary Kay cosmetics and skin care products. Still another provided information about obtaining disability pension from the Marines after receiving a dishonorable discharge.

Several women wrote to discuss travel. One woman planning a month-long trip to Nepal asked for correspondence from women regarding traveling alone or who had traveled to Nepal. One couple sought information about traveling to Bali. Another sought information about low-cost travel to Europe.

Some women brought up political issues. For example, one subscriber asked for input on how to end female genital mutilation in other countries.

Several subscribers sought assistance in finding outlets for their artistic endeavors. One woman who had self-published a book of poetry sought information about distribution networks for women's bookstores. Another asked for help in getting her drawings into a gallery or showing. Moreover, one group of women who had put

together an all-lesbian film festival sought to network with other women doing the same type of work.

Minority Lesbians

The Minority Lesbians category was the seventh most discussed category during the 1994-1999 period studied. This category includes discussions by and about minority lesbians. Here, minority is defined as lesbians who differ by culture, class, ethnicity, race, religion, age, or ability from the dominant group. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Minority Lesbians category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table D7.

There were only a handful of news items relative to the Minority Lesbians category. The most discussed news topic was ageism. New items reported on the unsuccessful attempts of Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon who co-founded the country's first national lesbian organization to get the White House Conference on Aging to pass a resolution dealing with lesbian and gay rights. *LC* reported on the failure of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force to follow through on any of the agreements made with Old Lesbians Organizing for Change (OLOC). The task force had allegedly agreed to hire a staff person over age 60, to invite OLOC to conduct training on ageism for their staff, and to include ageism in its Creating Change Conferences.

LC also reported that according to a recent survey by the National Foundation For Women-Owned Businesses minority female-owned firms increased by 153% between 1987 and 1997 – the fastest growing segment of small business groups. These firms also

experienced a 276% rise in employment and a 318% increase in sales over the ten-year period.

The most discussed topic in the Minority Lesbians category surrounded the issue of retirement. The subscribers wrote,

We are two older Dykes who need to find a place to live in the next few years that's less costly and more supportive. . . . In three years when I'm 65 our combined retirement will be only about \$2500 a month. We'd like feedback from others who are facing similar living adjustments. Throughout the years we have received so much support and helpful information from LC that we thought of you first when we needed constructive advice.

Many subscribers wrote to offer suggestions; however, several subscribers felt these women needed a reality check. One woman wrote,

The letter . . . really caught my eye. These two professional women approaching RETIREMENT seem worried that their "combined income will be only about \$2500 a month." Excuse me? That's \$30,000 a year! The government sets the poverty level for a family of two at \$10,610. . . . Older adults currently enjoy generous government programs, notably Medicare and Social Security.

Unfortunately, these programs are doomed for baby boomers unless the powerful senior lobby looks beyond their own interests. Excuse me if I seem to lack compassion . . . but I am scared. [I'm] wondering what income my partner and I will have. It won't be \$30,000 a year . . .

Another subscriber wrote, “My initial reaction to the couple worrying about their mere \$2500 monthly income during RETIREMENT . . . was laughter. I am a disabled lesbian who has made far less than \$2500 a year for over eight years.” Still another subscriber wrote, “What’s with the women who can’t figure out how to RETIRE on \$2500/month? Even here in California I can support myself, my partner and my fourteen-year-old daughter on about \$1400 a month. Are they spoiled or what?”

Children, Families, and Parenting

The Children, Families, and Parenting category was the eighth most discussed category during 1994-1999. This category includes items of discussion from subscribers who have or want children in their families. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Children, Families, and Parenting category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table D8.

News items related to the Children, Families, and Parenting category published between 1994 and 1999 continued to focus on a variety of legal issues related to lesbian parenting. For example, *LC* reported that a Massachusetts judge approved the adoption of an infant boy by two lesbians. The birth mother wanted her child to go to a lesbian or gay couple because her cousin, who was gay and died of HIV/AIDS, had wanted to adopt but was unable to do so. The birth mother who was pregnant a second time asked the couple to adopt her second child and they have agreed. In Utah, Salt Lake City a lesbian was successful in gaining visitation with the son of her former lesbian partner.

A gay man who had donated sperm 13 years ago to a lesbian couple for insemination had successfully sued to be legally recognized as the father of the women's daughter. Circuit Judge Joseph Tarvuck revoked a lesbian mother's custody of her twelve-year-old daughter saying he wanted to give the child a chance to live in "a non-lesbian world." Custody was awarded to the girl's father who had served eight years in prison for the murder of his first wife.

There was a flood of activity related to lesbian parenting in the international news. Under new rules recently adopted by Italy's national physicians guild, Italian doctors were barred from providing artificial insemination to lesbians, single women, or women over 50. Some physicians said they planned to disregard the rules and challenge their constitutionality. In England, a county court awarded two lesbians from North London joint custody of each other's children. This move, a British first, gave the couple full parental rights and paved the way for similar rulings in that country.

A lesbian policewoman in Stockholm, Sweden who previously applied for the leave when her registered partner, also a policewoman, gave birth to their daughter won an appeal and was granted paternity leave. In the first case of its kind in Australia, a lesbian successfully sued a fertility clinic for discrimination. A District Court judge in Wellington, New Zealand, granted a lesbian mother the right to child support from her former lesbian partner. Moreover, for the first time in Israeli history, two lesbians were granted legal guardianship of one another's children. The women planned to continue to fight for their ultimate goal—a legally recognized second-parent adoption.

LC reported that a study comparing lesbian and heterosexual parents found that lesbian couples are better at sharing household chores than traditional parents, leaving both partners more time to spend with their children. In lesbian families, both the mother and the co-parent tended to regard parenthood as a combination of mothering and breadwinning. Thus they could devote more time to child than the conventional heterosexual model.

The most discussed item in this category focused on one couple's story about losing their baby shortly after birth. They wrote,

Our beautiful 8 pound 1 ounce baby girl, Samantha, was delivered at 9:51 pm. She was stillborn, but we were not overly concerned since we knew that babies often don't breathe at delivery. However, after twenty minutes of trying to revive her, we heard the head of pediatrics say that it had been long enough...Samantha could not be revived. We were stunned, as was the staff. It seemed incomprehensible that this could happen. . . .

During the pregnancy we had discussed various "what ifs," but we had never anticipated this one. We desperately need communication with other lesbian couples who have had miscarriages or fetal/infant loss.

LC subscribers responded with love, support, and advice. Many told their own stories of loss. One woman wrote,

I'm writing to express solidarity with my sisters who have LOST CHILDREN . . . especially to miscarriage, stillbirth and SIDS. Gwynneth Rhiannon Jones, my daughter, was born and died at home on March 31, 1994. The pregnancy was

normal, the baby was healthy, the labor was term and only lasted twelve hours. For an unknown reason, her heart rate dropped to about ten beats per minute just as she was about to emerge. My midwife knew she needed to get the baby out as soon as possible, but in our haste Gwyn got stuck. . . .

The most important thing to do is what makes *you* feel better. If you need to talk about your child (which I recommend) but your friends are getting uncomfortable listening and wondering when you'll "get over it," find some other way to express your feelings. Write in a journal. Tell strangers in the grocery line or on the bus about your child. Write to a forum like [LC](#). Hire a therapist. Talk to your child. Find some way to experience those feelings, painful though they are. You have a huge emotional splinter in your heart and it won't work its way out unless you pick at it a little. Be gentle with yourself, though. It's OK to laugh even when you're sad. It's OK to cry anywhere at any time.

You'll never forget and you'll always miss your children, but eventually you will be able to breathe again without a catch in your throat, and your arms will quit aching from the weight of a baby that isn't in them. . . .

Another highly discussed item in this category was prompted by a letter from a subscriber asking to see a section on lesbian parenting in *LC*. Readers responded with information about articles, support groups, and an organization that supported childbirth choices. One reader warned,

When I decided to have a child I was in an eight-year relationship. After our "little shadow" was born our relationship changed, and eventually ended. I am

now a single mother with total financial and emotional responsibility for a child. I wouldn't trade it for the world, I would never exchange the genuine unconditional love I feel for my daughter, the laughs and even the worries. But you should know that although you may have decided as a couple to have a child, you might still end up a single lesbian mother, without the legal promise of child support that heterosexual women have.

These women's stories illustrate the fact that although there were few discussions about marital rights in *LC*, many women were experiencing the devastating impact of not having those rights on a very personal level.

Separatism

The Separatism category was the ninth most discussed category during the 1994-1999 period studied. This category includes debates about the best way to align lesbian energies to achieve the goals of the lesbian community. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Separatism category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table D9.

There were several news items related to the Separatism category. These news items reported that a woman-owned funeral firm in England had begun offering women-only undertaking services. An RV park for women in Arizona was forced to open its facilities to men. Moreover, lesbian feminist philosopher Mary Daly canceled her all-women course at Boston College rather than allow men into her class.

There was also ongoing evidence of rifts between lesbians and gay men. A top-rated radio station in New York, which openly courted a gay male audience, refused

commercials for the Her/She Bar's Friday night lesbian dance parties. Moreover, there was evidence that lesbians continued to be the "invisible" twin in the merging of lesbians and gay men. In media reports about the bombing of the Otherside Lounge in Atlanta, only a handful of stories correctly noted that this bar was a lesbian nightclub. Most reported that it was a lesbian and gay club.

The most discussed item in this category was also among the ten most discussed items during this period and served to boost declining interest in separatist issues. The discussion surrounded a Subaru ad published in *LC* the summer of 1997. One woman in favor of the ads wrote,

Thank you for accepting the SUBARU ad. I think it's great that such a megabucks corporation heard of LC and is courting our readers' dollars. It is amazing to me to see the transformation that has occurred over the past 25 years regarding gay visibility and acceptance. Over the next two decades we will become as accepted as any other ethnic/cultural group in the tapestry of America. If Subaru has a quality product at a competitive price, why wouldn't they want our patronage and why wouldn't we want their merchandise?

Many subscribers disagreed. One reader responded,

Feeling surprisingly flattered when a profit-motivated corporation such as SUBARU pursues lesbian money shows the loss of the feminist consciousness that was so visible in the women's community of the '70s. Of course most of these big multi-national corporations want the support of the rapidly growing lesbian and gay population...the name of their game is – increase the profits. Nike would like

every dyke foot to be clad in their shoes (which they pay people \$1.29 a day to manufacture). No, as a feminist I'm not impressed. I'll be impressed and feel there's a change in the mainstream corporate system when they start supporting the devastated women of Bosnia, or the female babies abandoned in China, or the end of female genital mutilation and the multi-national oppression of lesbians. No, a corporation wanting my money doesn't compute with me as supportive – support is when they *give* their money.

Although subscribers were in favor of publishing mainstream ads in *LC* 10 to 7, the Ambitious Amazons made the decision to stop accepting them. In the past, alternative publications like *LC* were silenced because they failed to attain financial stability. That all changed in the late 1980s, when the economic recession took its toll and American business was struggling. When the findings of research firm Overlooked Opinions, Inc. were published, big business took notice. Their research showed that 18 million lesbian and gay adults were pumping \$154 billion into the economy each year. The average gay couple earned \$51,500 annually, compared to \$37,000 for heterosexual couples. Lesbians averaged \$42,800, a figure 13% higher than married heterosexual couples. Moreover, many lesbian and gay households had more disposable income because they did not have the expense of raising a child. Big business wanted a piece of these profits and began to court lesbian and gay magazines. With the large influx of revenue from advertising, lesbian and gay publications began to achieve fiscal solvency and slick, upscale magazines began to flourish. However, this transformation may not have been the advance one might expect. In order to maintain long-term contracts with advertisers,

lesbian and gay magazines had to tone down the defiant rebelliousness of earlier magazines. Instead, they began to publish articles about what young, beautiful, fashionable gay people were wearing, how DINKS (double income, no kids) might transform their homes into perfect showplaces, and the most popular destinations for vacationing (Streitmatter, 1995). The shift to the right was clearly reflected in these magazines, and *LC* wanted nothing to do with this new image. They wrote,

After considering what all was said, we've decided that, for now at least, we will not run any more Subaru ads. This is not because we felt that these ads would compromise us (while display advertising is the main source of revenue for most magazines, it comprises less than 10 percent of LC's yearly income). We admit the extra income from Subaru was nice, but it seemed more important to do our best to keep LC's focus on being a grassroots lesbian publication.

In another move that supported traditional lesbian ideologies, the Ambitious Amazons made the decision to begin using the abbreviation LOO (Lesbian Owned and Operated) in *LC* advertising. They wrote,

We occasionally have received complaints from readers who think we shouldn't include certain ads or inserts (e.g. The Advocate, On Our Backs, land communities that include men, etc.). On the other hand, we know that a number of LC's readers do use these ads. And since we want LC to be a forum for all lesbians, we are pretty adverse to anything that seems at all like censorship. Remember, just because something's in LC that doesn't mean we endorse it, or

even that it's lesbian (in the classifieds you can check for the abbreviation *LOO*, which stands for *Lesbian Owned & Operated*).

Isolation

The Isolation category was the tenth most discussed category during 1994-1999. This category includes items of discussion that underscore the isolation experienced by lesbians and initiatives to overcome that isolation. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Isolation category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table D10.

There were no news items related to Isolation published in *LC* during the current analysis period, and only four brief discussions. One subscriber asked for information regarding how to make connections with older lesbians. A prisoner asked subscribers to donate lesbian books to her prison library. A Peace Corps volunteer serving in the Republic of Malawi wrote about her isolation there. Moreover, a 50-year-activist wrote about isolating herself to recover from burn-out.

Religion and Spirituality

The Religion and Spirituality category was the least discussed category during 1994-1999. This category includes discussions about religious and spiritual beliefs and practices as they relate to lesbians and the lesbian community. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Religion and Spirituality category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table D11.

There was only one news item relative to the Religion and Spirituality category. *LC* published a story about two Sacramento, CA women who exchanged vows in a holy union ceremony blessed by more than 90 United Methodist ministers in a dramatic mass defiance of the church's law against same-sex marriages.

Interestingly, the only discussion in this category was a letter from a subscriber about the acceptance she had found at the United Methodist Church in her area. One reader responded,

There are *many* UMC [United Methodist Churches] that are Reconciling (publicly declaring themselves welcoming of all people, including lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgendered). The great thing about this movement is that it is inclusive of *everyone*. . . .

Be aware of a new program within the United Methodist Church called Transforming Congregations that believes l/g/b/t's can be "transformed into heterosexuals." The best thing is to call and ask the church which program they participate in before you go. . . .

Semiotic Analysis: Defining Lesbian

Building on the shift to the center seen in the early 1990s some lesbians began to shift past the center and to the right during the late 1990s. This created another group of lesbians who claimed to be a true lesbian. These "upwardly mobile" women sought respectability and mainstream acceptance through assimilation with society at large. They defined lesbians as having only one difference from mainstream America—their

sexuality. Radical lesbians viewed these women with distain and the feeling was clearly mutual.

When one upwardly mobile lesbian accused *LC* of catering to the fringe an *LC* subscriber wrote, “I can picture you whizzing by in your foreign car on the way to your important job tapping your high heels lipstick syncing to mainstream music.”

There was also evidence that still another group of lesbians was beginning to appear on the lesbian scene during this time. In many ways, these women seemed to be reviving the ideologies of radical lesbians and separatists seen in the late 1970s; however, these women were likely involved in the queer movement. One upwardly mobile woman described these women as half-naked “freaks” with “shaved heads, blue hair, body paint, nipple (and other) piercings.” She wrote “their in-your-face activism assaulted [me] and offended [my] sensibilities.”

Throughout all of these shifts in the definition of lesbian, *LC* managed to find a way to straddle these differences by making just enough changes in the publication to appeal to new groups of lesbians while not offending older groups.

30 Years and Counting: 1999-2004

The 1999-2004 analysis ended with the 30th anniversary edition of *LC*. To mark the end of their 30th year, the Ambitious Amazons wrote the following mission statement.

Our mission is to provide a free member-driven forum of news, events, and ideas for, by, and about lesbians. We strive to facilitate all types of grassroots lesbian organizing worldwide through our various publications. We also work to increase

communication among all lesbians across our various separations (ability, age, class, ethnic, geographic, racial, etc.)

By early 2000, *LC* had a subscription list of about 20,300 separate households. They also sent about 2,000 copies of *LC* in bulk packages of five to places that had offered to distribute *LC*, such as bookstores, centers, coffeehouses, restaurants, bed and breakfasts, guesthouses, and a few individual women who took them to activities in their area.

Content Analysis/Narrative Analysis

The eleven categories used for the previous analysis remained unchanged in the current analysis; no new categories were added. These categories, listed from the most discussed category to the least discussed category are as follows: Health and Mental Health; Defining Lesbian; Relationships and Sexuality; Discrimination and Fear; Networking; Growing Pains; Minority Lesbians; Isolation; Children, Families, and Parenting; Separatism; and Religion and Spirituality.

Health and Mental Health

The Health and Mental Health category was the most discussed category during the 1999-2004 analysis period. This category includes discussions relevant to health and mental health issues in the lesbian community. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Health and Mental Health category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table E1.

Many of the news items in the category focused on the discrimination experienced by lesbians in the areas of health and mental health. *LC* reported that a California woman sued her physician who refused to see her as a regular patient after she wrote her partner's name under *spouse* on the new-patient form. After a routine examination, the physician told her he would prefer to not treat her again since he did not agree with her "lifestyle." *LC* detailed a 1995 Stanford University survey finding that 85% of lesbian respondents were reluctant to go to doctors for just such reasons. In addition, the Lesbian Services Program of the Whitman-Walker Clinic in Washington, DC found that many lesbians reported feeling alienated when it came to health care. Despite the fact that 87% of respondents had health insurance, almost one in three had delayed seeking health care in the previous year because they were concerned about encountering heterosexism.

Lesbians also continued to receive conflicting information about their risk for breast cancer. A new study of lesbians and their biological sisters found that lesbians had an 11.1% risk of developing breast cancer during their lives, which was just a half percent higher than their sisters (10.6%).

LC reported on the first CDC-funded research project focusing on HIV-positive women who have sex with other women. This was a victory for lesbian health activists who had lobbied for increased research on HIV transmission between women since the beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

LC also reported that the San Francisco gay weekly, *The Bay Area Reporter*, accepted an ad from the right-wing group Focus on the Family for a conference aimed at training parents and educators how to help gay people reject homosexuality. The paper

also ran an editorial acknowledging that such seminars were dangerous. The Ambitious Amazons responded: “Hmmm—would African American community papers run ads for the KKK?”

Procter & Gamble announced it had pulled plans to advertise on Laura Schlessinger’s radio show and syndicated television programs. This announcement came just one week after the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council ruled that her broadcasts were “abusively discriminatory” toward lesbians and gay men. In other mental health news, the Chinese Psychiatric Association decided to stop classifying homosexuality as a mental illness.

The most discussed item in the Health and Mental Health category was a request from the Ambitious Amazons for tips on dealing with menopause. Readers recommended a variety of natural interventions. They debated the pros and cons of HRT. In addition, they pointed out that menopause, which was once considered a rite of passage, was now viewed as a disease.

Another highly discussed item in this category was comprised of three letters from women dealing with CFIDS and/or fibromyalgia. This topic was also among the most discussed items overall during this period. This is the second time CFIDS made its way into the most discussed items in the Health and Mental Health category (See the 1989-1994 analysis). Readers responded to recommend a variety of treatments and books subscribers might find helpful. Several chiropractors and a massage therapist also responded to recommend various treatments in their fields of expertise.

Defining Lesbian

The Defining Lesbian category was the second most discussed category during the 1999-2004 analysis period. This category includes debates about how lesbians define and celebrate themselves and their community. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Defining Lesbian category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table E2.

New items provide interesting insight into the continuing push toward the normalization of lesbians during this period. *LC* reported on the outing of a number of icons from the past. For example, there was new evidence about to be published showing that in addition to being married, Mary Wollstonecraft, a radical 18th-century writer who inspired modern feminism, enjoyed a series of erotic relationships with women.

When staffers at the National Archives in Canada opened a sealed box of Charlotte Whitton's personal papers they found love letters to and from her live-in companion, Margaret Grier. Whitton had served as Ottawa's mayor from 1951-56 and 1960-64.

LC reported that secret letters from screen goddess Greta Garbo to her reported female lover, Mercedes de Acost were revealed publicly for the first time. Moreover, according to a new biography, Claudette Colbert, Greta Garbo, Judy Holliday, and Judy Garland were among a number of Hollywood stars who were romanced by Katharine Hepburn.

Well-known contemporary lesbians were also in the news items published in *LC*. Tennis player Martina Navratilova was inducted into the International Tennis Hall of

Fame in Newport, RI. *Modern Maturity* magazine featured a cover story on comedian Lily Tomlin. Moreover, *LC* reported that magazines and daily newspapers published in Rosie O'Donnell's home town had begun to mention Rosie and her longtime partner in the same sentence. O'Donnell's spokeswoman said, "Rosie's sexuality has never been important to her, and it's not going to be now. I don't think it's important to her public. She is what she is."

In other news, the Olympic torch was carried through the Washington, DC area on its way to Salt Lake City by an open lesbian who was fighting systemic lupus and was partially paralyzed. The Small Business Administration began a lending program specifically for lesbian and gay business owners. Moreover, at least two lesbians were among those who received the infamous last-minute pardons from President Clinton. Leftist activists Linda Evans and Susan Rosenberg had each served over ten years for being members of the group that in 1983 planted a bomb in the U.S. Capitol to protest the US invasion of Grenada.

In travel news, Britain's Foreign Office began offering travel advice specifically for lesbian and gay citizens who were planning to travel abroad. At the same time, Bloomington, IN joined a growing number of cities in the US actively targeting lesbian and gay tourists. Other cities included Minneapolis, MN; Los Angeles and West Hollywood, CA; Key West, FL; and Palm Springs, FL.

The most discussed item in this category, as well as the most discussed item in this analysis period overall, was a topic that has cycled throughout the 30 years *LC* has been in publication—male-to-female transgender lesbians. A statement issued by the

Michigan Women's Music Festival, and a letter asking for *LC*'s definition of Lesbian prompted the current discussion. While these two letters were separate items, the responses were so enmeshed that it was impossible to separate the responses. Thus, they were counted as one topic. The Michigan Women's Music Festival wrote,

This August the Festival was the target of a political action by the group Transexual Menace, and we found ourselves again needing to defend womyn's space. I'm writing to tell LC readers about this Son of Camp Trans action, and to ask you to join with us in continuing to educate new generations about the value of womyn-only space in a sexist world. . . .

When we first learned that Transexual Menace planned to hold a Camp of Trans event across the road from the Festival grounds, I issued a statement that said, in part: "***We do not and will not question any individual's gender. The Festival is an event organized by, for, and about womyn. Our intention is for the Festival to be for womyn-born womyn, meaning people who were born and have lived their entire life experience as female. We ask that the Transexual community support and respect the intention of our event.***"

On Friday, August 13th, six individuals and a group of supporters from Son of Camp Trans (including several Lesbian Avengers from Chicago and Boston) approached our Box Office and requested tickets to the festival. They proceeded with the full knowledge of the intent of the Festival to be a womon-born-womon space. In keeping with the Festival's values that no womon's gender

ever be questioned on the land, tickets were sold to the six individuals as requested.

The Son of Camp Trans activists then proceeded to the outdoor communal showers in the RV camping area. They took off their clothes and it was apparent to the womyn in and near the showers that two of the Son of Camp Trans activists were anatomically male. . . . One member of the Son of Camp Trans group also stopped by a discussion group for teenage girls at the Community Center, and engaged in explicit discussion about the clinical aspects of sex change operations. Later, some of the Trans activists began selling Transexual Menace T-shirts outside the main kitchen area . . .

As the Son of Camp Trans activists made their way through the Festival, increasing numbers of participants became aware of and expressed concerns about their actions. . . .

On Saturday morning, several Festival staff members met with Transexual menace organizers at Son of Camp Trans . . . and again asked Son of Camp Trans participants to respect the Festival community's autonomy. After discussion, two Camp Trans participants decided to voluntarily support the Festival's intentions, and the two anatomically male individuals agreed to not reenter the Festival. However, [the] Transexual Menace organizer . . . declined to respect those wishes and reentered the Festival.

We believe that individuals and organizations who are committed to disrupting or destroying womyn-born-womyn space are acting with complete disregard for the legacy of misogyny and sexism that still pervades our daily lives.

When a subscriber asked for *LC*'s definition of lesbian, the Ambitious Amazons responded,

LC is for lesbians, which to us means women-born-women who call themselves lesbians. . . . We'll put any woman on our mailing list who writes in for a sub [subscription] or signs up at a festival, and we don't question them about their sexuality. . . .

These letters sparked many debates among subscribers. Among those women who voiced their opinion, the responses were equally split and many subscribers on both sides of the issue wrote long, passionate letters expressing their opinions on the subject. Interestingly, some supporters of transgender people wrote to disassociate themselves with the methods and actions of the transgender people who entered the festival. One subscriber wrote,

For the past six years I have been involved in the TRANSGENDERED community and I am partnered with a TG [transgender] person. I know the people who transgressed their admittance to the Festival, and I am disillusioned with this political faction of the TG community. Their attempts to be heard, seen, and respected were harsh. Bathing in the showers was totally inappropriate. . . . Perhaps [these people] are not the best spokespeople for gender education at the Festival. . . .

In par with longstanding *LC* tradition, some subscribers protested by cancelling their subscription. Two of those subscribers wrote,

As women born with vaginas, we would like a full refund of the remainder of our subscription to "*Lesbian*" *Connection*. We only wish we knew six years ago about your narrow contrary definition of lesbian because we wouldn't have given you a cent. We both passionately feel that *TRANSGENDER* (TG) dykes are lesbians and were "born women." We don't wish to take part in your exclusionary, separatist "community." . . .

Another highly discussed item in this category that was among the most discussed items overall during this period was a letter from a women who identified as a "Femme." She wrote,

After being out as a lesbian for fifteen years, I admitted to myself about six years ago that I kind of liked lipstick. I shoved this horrible notion to the corners of my mind. How could I like lipstick? It was just wrong. Then I started to like dresses; I felt sexy in them. I thought about wooing butches in new and different ways. This couldn't be! I am a radical lesbian feminist political activist! I am a lesbian, and therefore had to subscribe to the lesbian dress code and the behavior code! I thought I was supposed to be a butch. . . .

I thought that if I was going through this morphing, then other lesbians had to have done the same. I decided I wanted to hold a discussion/workshop for Femme Lesbians at the 2000 Michigan Festival. . . . I thought maybe ten women would show up, and I wasn't even sure *what* we would talk about. Well, 75

femmes showed up, and as we went around the circle, many of the same things came up . . . Wow! We learned a lot . . . we laughed a lot and celebrated being femme! That year we held the first ever Femmes Parade – what a blast! Last summer we held a similar workshop and the parade just about tripled in size, with at least 200 gorgeous femmes participating! . . .

One subscriber offered her theory on the various types of lesbians. She wrote, “My theory is that there’s a one to ten spectrum, just like from lesbian to straight. There’s the very butch 1’s, the very femme 10’s, and many in between.” She went on to say, “I want to put in a plea to all you butches out there to stay butch lesbians! Many of us femmes love you as butch lesbians rather than as transgender males.” This set off another outpouring of letters from subscribers. One woman who had been with her female-to-male partner for 10 years wrote to correct the contributor’s misperceptions about transgender people.

I assure you that no one goes through gender transition in order to avoid homophobia or to attract more femmes. . . . Lesbians as an oppressed minority, ought to be more supportive and understanding of their transgender sisters and brothers. One supportive step would be for Elsie [*LC*] to revise its definition of lesbians . . . so that it no longer excludes transgender lesbians.

In the January/February 2000 issue of *LC* one Ambitious Amazon published a Looking For ad asking subscribers to contribute pictures of themselves with their pets for a collage on the cover of *LC*. Responses to this cover and subsequent issues that contained more pictures of lesbians and their pets made this one of the most discussed

items in this category, as well as the one of the top ten items of discussion overall during this analysis period. One woman wrote,

I couldn't help but notice that all of the women appeared to be white like me. I thought about writing to point this out and question why, but figured you all would publish someone else's more eloquent comment on this. However, I've just received the subsequent issue, which contains praise for the pet lover cover, and also has yet more equally delightful photos, but there's no mention of their whiteness. Did only white women send in photos? If that is the case I am surprised that no one on the LC staff went out pro-actively to find photos of women of color and their pets. I regret when something like this happens and it gets by.

The Ambitious Amazons responded,

We included a picture from every reader who answered our call for photos of lesbians and their pets. Yes, we did notice that it appears there were few if any women of color, nor were there many young lesbians or elderly ones, and none were women living outside the U.S. We plan to run more photos of lesbians and our pets at some point, and we are hoping that next time they will better reflect the wonderful diversity we know exists among LC's readers!

The Ambitious Amazons published another group of photos in 2003 which was also among the most discussed items overall in this category, as well as the entire analysis period. One subscriber responded,

Just wanted to say that while I loved seeing all of the photos of PETS, I loved even more seeing all those photos of *real* lesbians! So refreshing after seeing the pics of so-called “lesbians” in other mags...

Another highly discussed item in this category, as well as the analysis period overall, was a letter from a woman who was considering canceling her subscription because she found herself involved with man. She wrote,

After eleven years of being an out and proud lesbian, I found myself in a relationship for four months with someone of the opposite sex. . . . I supposed that I must be bi [bisexual]. As a member of many specifically “lesbian” organizations, I suddenly didn’t know what to do. Come out as a bi and cancel my memberships, including my beloved subscription to *LC*? . . . I’m wondering if I have a right to call myself a lesbian again.

The writer discussed issues surrounding the labeling of sexuality and wondered whether her isolation from the lesbian community, her recovery from a recent breakup, and the fact that she had just turned 30 and wanted to conceive a child were related to her four-month relationship with a man.

Every response from *LC* readers offered support and comfort and many wrote long thoughtful responses. In an update, the subscriber wrote,

I want to thank from the bottom of my heart all of the supportive women who responded to my letter about my **IDENTITY CRISIS**. I was genuinely fearful about the reactions by you, dear readers, and by my friends in the community. Neither have abandoned me—I apologize for ever doubting you. Now, nestled

back in the loving arms of my community . . . I am happy to report that I am no longer suffering doubt about my place in the community or my identity as a Lesbian. Of course I don't know what surprises the future will bring, but with your support I've been able to put the past into perspective. And, a special thank you to *LC* for, once again, helping me feel less alone. What a gift this forum can be.

Relationships and Sexuality

The Relationships and Sexuality category was the third most discussed category during the 1999-2004 period studied. This category includes discussions about lesbian relationships, sexuality, and sexual intimacy. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Relationships and Sexuality category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table E3.

The news trend seen in the 1989-1994 and 1994-1999 analyses continued. News items continued to focus almost exclusively on the fight for partnership rights for same-sex partners and their families. Perhaps the most poignant of these news items was an article about 21 lesbians and gay men who were seeking assistance through the Victim Compensation Fund after losing their partners in the September 11, 2001 attacks on the US. As seen in the previous two analyses, lesbians contributing to discussions in *LC* were generally more concerned about other relationship and sexuality issues. However, partnership rights did make it into the top three discussions in this category during this analysis period.

The most discussed issue in this category was also the second most discussed issue during this analysis period. The issue arose from a letter from a couple regarding their dog's participation in their sex life. They wrote,

We are wondering whether any of you have your dogs or cats (or other companions) in bed with you, participating in your lovemaking. Our 7-year-old doggie likes to lick nipples. She is very sensuous and takes it very seriously. We do not force her, but have occasionally allowed her to participate (when she wants). We suspect that we are not alone in this. Please tell all.

This letter prompted outrage from many readers. For one reader, discussing bestiality in *LC* had gone too far:

Please take me off *LC*'s list because the letter about **SEX WITH ANIMALS** was disgusting—you should exercise some editorial control. I had to rip up my *LC* because I'd be absolutely humiliated if anyone found it in my recycling bin and associated me with such activity.

In contrast, some readers expressed gratitude for an uncensored discussion forum for lesbians and some subscribers were more alarmed by the criticism from readers than by the letter that prompted the criticism. One reader wrote,

“Perverted” is not the word I use to describe people who have honest questions about some of the mysteries of life, including sex. . . . We can all benefit from addressing our fears about sexuality without labeling s/m [sadomasochism], dildos and harnesses, fetishes, and any questions people (especially lesbians) have about our sexuality as “perverted.”

Discrimination and Fear

The Discrimination and Fear category was the fourth most discussed category during the 1999-2004 analysis period. This category includes discussions about discrimination experienced by lesbians from within and outside the lesbian and feminist movements, acts of resistance in the face of discrimination, and fear resulting from discrimination and violence against lesbians. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Discrimination and Fear category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table E4.

News items relative to the Discrimination and Fear continued to focus on discrimination within public school systems. It is interesting that discussions about this new venue in the struggle for equal rights did not make their way into *LC*. This is especially poignant, given the fact that young lesbians complained that they received little to no support from the lesbian community at large, yet they were at the forefront of these activities (see *Discrimination and Fear*, 1979-1989 and *Defining Lesbian*, 1979-1989).

LC reported that after the American Civil Liberties Union intervened, school officials in Floyd County, VA agreed to allow a high school girl to take her female date to the junior prom. In Ferndale, WA, high school students elected an open lesbian for prom king. She posed for pictures with the Queen, but spent the evening dancing with her girlfriend. The school's principal said afterward that in the future the school will more clearly define who can and cannot be nominated for king and queen.

Students at Boulder High School held a “kiss-in” to protest the removal of a photo from the school yearbook that showed two female students kissing. The yearbook adviser said she tried calling the girls’ parents to get permission and after receiving no response she decided to pull the photo. Students pointed out that the photos of the straight students kissing were published without parental approval.

When Dover, NH high school seniors were asked to pick students for the yearbook’s superlative categories such as best dressed or nicest eyes, a furor ignited because they overwhelmingly chose a lesbian couple as class sweethearts. The two girls, who were both 17 and had been dating for over two years, received more than twice as many votes as the second-place couple.

After two years of meetings and negotiations, 591 copies of the award-winning video, *It’s Elementary: Talking about Gay Issues in School*, were finally mailed out to every school in the Chicago Public Schools system. Moreover, after the American Civil Liberties Union sued an Anaheim, CA school for pulling the biographical series *Lives of Notable Gays and Lesbians* from the school library, school officials agreed to return the books to the school’s bookshelves.

After four years of legal battles, the school board in Salt Lake City voted in September to end its policy that had prevented most student clubs from meeting on high school campuses. The ban had been enacted to prevent the forming of a Gay Straight Alliance.

A Spencer County, KY girl who was sexually harassed and assaulted throughout middle and high school because she was perceived to be a lesbian was awarded \$220,000.

She said that despite her repeated complaints, school officials did nothing to stop the harassment and attacks.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Southern California and the National Center for Lesbian Rights filed suit on behalf of an eighth-grade girl who was sent to the principal's office during physical education class after the teacher overheard she was a lesbian. For the next week and a half until her schedule changed, the student was required to sit in the principal's office during gym class. The school district eventually agreed to pay damages, put into place an anti-discrimination policy that included sexual orientation, and provide training for all of its teachers, staff, and students on issues of discrimination and diversity.

When a teacher in Louisiana overheard a seven-year-old boy tell a classmate that his mother was gay, she told the boy that gay was a bad word and sent him to the principal's office. The following week, he was required to attend an early morning behavior clinic where he had to repeatedly write, "I will never use the word 'gay' in school again."

Philadelphia high school officials say they are facing a new problem: rising tensions between heterosexual girls and open lesbians. Lesbian girls are complaining they're being harassed, while some heterosexual girls claim they have been grabbed and bothered. School officials plan to institute training sessions on lesbian and gay issues for all school employees this spring, and instruction on respect and tolerance for the students beginning next fall.

The topic of obesity made its way into discussions once again when the Ambitious Amazons published a painting of fat lesbians on the cover of *LC*. The picture, titled “Solstice III” depicted a diverse group of fat women standing in a circle in waist-high water with their joined hands upraised in worship. The women were silhouetted by a full moon. While most women responded positively to the cover art, some women continued to remind readers about the dangers of obesity.

Interestingly, along with the typical letters about fat prejudice, two fat subscribers wrote about their decision to seek surgical interventions for losing weight. This is the first time in this analysis that fat lesbians engaged in this type of discussion. One subscriber wrote,

On my birthday . . . I was in a horrendous car accident. . . . During my long recovery I added over 75 pounds to my already heavy (296-pound) body. I already had type II diabetes, high blood pressure, and damage to my knees from osteoarthritis. After the accident, because of the pressure from my weight, they had to operate on my leg. I was told by a number of doctors that had my weight not been an issue I might have just been put in a wheelchair for four to six weeks and my leg could have healed itself.

All this led up to last September when I had a form of weight loss surgery . . . Why . . . did I have the surgery? Because over the long term diets don’t work – for anyone. I needed to get the extra weight off because I was in pain every day. It needed to be gone because my diabetes was spiraling out of control. Plus after

physical therapy they had sent me home with a cane and I would have needed it for life had I not lost weight. . . .

Just prior to surgery I attended my first NOLOSE [National Organization for Lesbians of SizE] conference. I got to see for the first time many women whom I'd only known from their writings. Many were in wheelchairs, riding scooters, or using walkers, including some even younger than me (I'm 46). I felt really panicky as I saw some of the older activists who needed assistance walking or moving about. I didn't want to lose any more of my mobility . . .

Even so, I support my fat sisters, whatever weight they are or choose to be. I also support them in enlightening the public about fat prejudice and its insidious nature. I will be right there beside you to protest the prejudice and find ways to help you move more easily through the world. My question to my fat activist sisters is this – will you support me in kind?

Another highly discussed issue in this category surrounded the May/June 2000 mailing of *LC*. Following the mailing, *LC* staff learned that the company handling mailings in Canada had placed small white stickers on them that read, "Lesbian Connection CPM #1733370."

As discussed earlier the editors of *LC* had always gone to great measures to protect the safety and privacy of their subscribers. Understandably, they were appalled that many of their Canadian subscribers had been inadvertently outed by this incident. The editors wrote letters of apology to every woman involved in the incident offering their assurance that this would never happen again.

Many Canadian women responded to discuss the incident. Some women expressed concern for their safety. One woman wrote,

Your infamous issue OUTED me in this very small community where I live.

Indeed, I may have to move as a result of your mistake. . . . I live alone in a very isolated spot at the end of a long lane, and do not feel very safe.

People living in urban anonymity or as part of active Lesbian communities probably have little understanding of the vulnerability of rural dykes. I suppose it was nice of you to send a letter of apology, but it does little to mitigate the consequences I must face here on my own.

Some women indicated they hadn't even noticed the sticker on the envelope. Others thought it may no longer be necessary to go to such extremes to protect the privacy of lesbians. Most of the Canadian readers involved in the incident expressed gratitude that the editors of *LC* had taken the time to apologize for the mistake.

It is interesting to note that the Supreme Court's decision to strike down sodomy laws went relatively unnoticed in the *LC* discussion forum. In November 2003, the Supreme Court struck down a Texas state law banning private consensual sex between adults of the same sex. The 6-3 decision by the court reversed course from a ruling 17 years ago that states could punish homosexuals for what such laws historically called deviant sex. This ruling impacted 12 other states with similar sodomy laws (CNN, 2003). The response of the Ambitious Amazons to this issue suggests that there may have been no discussions on this topic because lesbians may not have felt as threatened by sodomy laws as gay men did. They wrote,

So, the Supreme Court says we're legal. Intellectually we know that striking down the sodomy laws is a good thing. But oddly enough, it just doesn't feel as if it matters all that much. Just like it didn't seem to be that big of a tragedy when the Court ruled the opposite way back in '86. In an SAP story about this year's Pride celebrations one gay man was quoted as saying, "There was always the fear that you would break the law if you had sex with your partner." Always that fear – really? Perhaps being outlaws in this society just isn't that big a problem for some of us. . . .

Networking

The Networking category was the fifth most discussed category during the 1999-2004 analysis period. This category includes discussions in which subscribers requested information from or provided information to other subscribers of *LC*. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Networking category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table E5. There were no news items relative to the Networking category published in *LC* during 1999-2004.

As in previous analyses, the Networking category was a medley of letters and responses. Readers sought unique products, such as black lesbian greeting cards and flannel panty liners. They offered information on making reusable cloth menstrual napkins. They discussed political issues, such as the dwindling interest of the lesbian community in environment issues, concerns about voting machine fraud, providing

assistance to women living in Afghan, the September 11, 2001 attack on the US, and removing George W. Bush from office.

Readers discussed issues of importance to lesbian artists and writers, such as the Dyke Art Retreat and Encampment (DARE) and how to get copies of one's books into prison libraries. They discussed music, movies, magazines, books, bird watching, quilting, travel, teaching abroad, starting a small business, and dealing with the Social Security Administration.

Growing Pains

The Growing Pains category was the sixth most discussed category during the 1999-2004 analysis period. This category includes items of discussion about the struggle to grow and survive faced by *LC*, lesbian publishers, lesbian musicians, women's festivals, and the lesbian movement in general. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Growing Pains category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table E6. There were no news items relative to the Growing Pains category published in *LC* during 1999-2004.

The most discussed item in this category was a letter from a subscriber who did not understand the humor in the Dykes to Watch Out For (DTWOF) comic strip published in *LC*. She wrote, "What's with the boy in the unfunny comic strip? . . . I find most of that insulting and just tear it out before I go to the creek to relax and enjoy my beautiful/sacred LC." Some subscribers responded that they, too, failed to find the humor in the comic strip; but others hailed it as brilliantly poignant and funny.

LC continued to grow throughout the 1999-2004 analysis period. Thanks to a reader in Flint, MI who paid so they could register their domain, *LC* joined the World Wide Web. This meant that they were required to register as a nonprofit corporation in 37 states.

In 2002, the Ambitious Amazons began looking for a new *LC* logo. They offered a token \$50 cash prize to the winner. The new logo was published for the first time in 2003. The logo was a line-drawing of five women of various races above the words *Lesbian Connection*. One woman used a cane and another held a baby in her arms. In 2004 *LC* started a 30-year fund drive to provide a solid financial base for *LC*. By the end of the analysis period, they had well over 1,500 contact dykes.

The Ambitious Amazons celebrated their 30th anniversary by publishing a 30th anniversary issue of *LC* and planning a celebration weekend that took place on October 8-9, 2004. They wrote the following introduction to their 30th anniversary issue.

Welcome to our 30th Anniversary Issue. Our Celebration Weekend (Oct. 8-9) [2004] is going to be quite the event. [Lesbian comedian] Suzanne Westenhoefer is performing on Friday, with an afterglow gathering at the local women's bar (Club 505). On Saturday we're planning on opening our offices for a tour, and that evening we'll hold our Dinner Dance with dj Maze along with silent and live Auctions. We've received lots more great auction items, including a 5-day Caribbean Cruise for two, donated by Womynfest At Sea . . .

LC's 30th year anniversary was also a semi-retirement party for one of the Ambitious Amazons who had been with *LC* since its inception.

Minority Lesbians

The Minority Lesbians category was the seventh most discussed category during the 1999-2004 period studied. This category includes discussions by and about minority lesbians. Here, minority is defined as lesbians who differ by culture, class, ethnicity, race, religion, age, or ability from the dominant group. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Minority Lesbians category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table E7.

News items during this time period were almost exclusively about lesbians and aging. *LC* reported that the director of the Area Agency on Aging in Ft. Lauderdale, FL met with community leaders to discuss plans for a new senior center. The agency, which funded eight senior day centers in Broward County, promised \$200,000 in federal seed money to start a day center for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) seniors. In other Florida news, a couple filed charges against a Tallahassee retirement community after their application to live there was rejected because they were lesbians.

Plans were moving forward on two housing complexes specifically for LGBT seniors in downtown Cleveland and Los Angeles. A lesbian and gay retirement community was given the go ahead by New Mexico's highest court after neighbors claimed that by targeting women the development's owner was in violation of the Fair Housing Act. Another lesbian and gay retirement community, Rainbow Vision Properties, was slated to break ground in Santa Fe. Moreover, a new LGBT Senior Center began operating out of Cleveland's Lesbian Gay Community Center. The first of its kind in Ohio, the center offered lesbian and gay seniors a free place to gather during the day.

According to a National Gay and Lesbian Task Force report, the number of LGBT seniors was projected to grow 14.6% by the year 2010 and double by 2020. In addition, a study by the Brookdale Center on Aging at Hunter College in New York found that less than one in five elderly lesbians or gays in their study had a life partner and only one in ten had children.

A Human Rights Campaign Foundation report analyzing the 2000 Census data showed that the greatest numbers of same-sex senior couples live in California, Illinois, New York and Florida. In more than ten percent of all same-sex couples, at least one of the partners was 65 or older. According to the report, when a lesbian, gay, or bisexual senior dies, her/his surviving partner faces a financial loss that can amount to tens of thousands of dollars because the couple cannot be recognized as legally married in the US. In order to maintain eligibility for Medicaid benefits, if one partner enters a nursing home, the other partner may be forced to give up their home. Not getting Social Security survivor benefits for one's partner amounts to an average yearly loss of \$5,528. When inheriting a retirement plan from a partner, the surviving partner may have to pay tens of thousands of dollars in taxes, while married spouses in the same situation pay no taxes. A surviving same-sex partner may be charged an estate tax on the couple's home, even if the home had been jointly owned.

One of the most discussed items in the Minority Lesbians category was a letter from a lesbian playwright who was concerned about the trend toward legalizing assisted suicide for the disabled. She wrote,

I understand that in Oregon, where [assisted suicide for the disabled] has been legalized, low-income disabled folks can qualify for assisted suicide, but, in some cases, not for the assistance they need for living. There was an article published in a national magazine a few years back about the misogyny of Kevorkian's work, which disproportionately targets women with conditions that have vague diagnoses. He helped kill one woman with chronic fatigue syndrome who had just two weeks earlier filed for a restraining order against her husband. Anyway, it has been distressing for me to see so-called gay/lesbian coalition organizations back these proposals for discriminatory legislation, when the disabled lesbian groups of whom I'm aware have strong objections to it. It seems that a middle-class, gay AIDS agenda is being prioritized over the experiences of low-income lesbians who are well aware of how misogynist discrimination plays out in the health care industry. . . . In response to these issues I have written "Thanatron," a play about a lesbian encountering the mindset of assisted suicide proponents. . . .

While some subscribers agreed with the playwright, others did not. One subscriber wrote,

Genocide does exist, and we need to do everything possible to stop it. But to use this argument to deny a terminally ill person a humane, loving, and consensual *choice*, based on the best care and information possible, lacks the compassion our community desperately needs.

Another highly discussed item was the death of world-renowned musician, composer, and spiritual leader, Kay Gardner. Subscribers agonized over the fact that she

was given muscle relaxers when she went to the emergency room complaining of back pain between her shoulder blades. She died later of a heart attack. Lesbians were outraged that the medical community had killed one of their elders by failing to recognize that the signs of a heart attack in women differ from those of men. Many women believed misogyny had murdered one of their most beloved sisters.

Isolation

The Isolation category was the eighth most discussed category during the 1999-2004 analysis period. This category includes items of discussion that underscore the isolation experienced by lesbians and initiatives to overcome that isolation. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Isolation category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table E8. There were no news items relative to the Isolation category published in *LC* during the 1999-2004 analysis period.

The most discussed item in this category was a letter from a couple seeking to relocate to a more active and supportive lesbian community. Several subscribers wrote to suggest areas that might better fill the couple's needs.

Another highly discussed item was a letter from a Licensed Electrical Journeyperson whose work isolated her from other women. She wrote, "I love my work but miss female and lesbian camaraderie in a big way. I would really love to read letters from other women in the non-traditional trades."

Interestingly, in 1989-1994, the most discussed item in this category was the isolation of lesbians fighting in Operation Desert Storm. Although the Iraq War began on

March 20, 2003 lesbians fighting in the Iraqi War received little attention from subscribers contributing to the discussion forum during this analysis period.

Children, Families, and Parenting

The Children, Families, and Parenting category was the ninth most discussed category during 1999-2004. This category includes items of discussion from subscribers who have or want children in their families. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Children, Families, and Parenting category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table E9.

News items related to the Children, Families, and Parenting category published between 1999 and 2004 continued to focus on the many legal issues surrounding lesbian parenting in the US and around the world including foster parenting, adoption, alternative insemination, second-parent or co-parent adoptions, visitation rights, custody issues, child support issues with partners or sperm donors, listing both parents on birth certificates, and filing as head-of-household. As was the case in previous analysis periods, the findings of various courts were often inconsistent and contradictory.

The most discussed item in this category was a letter from a subscriber who was trying to have a baby. She wrote,

For the last year and a half my partner of five years and I have been trying so desperately to have a baby. We have tried everything from fertility clinics to using one of our close gay friends. We (mostly me) are having an extremely difficult time dealing with the stress, especially the waiting for two weeks after an

insemination only to get a negative sign on the pregnancy test. . . . We are willing to try anything. Please, if any of LC's readers have any suggestions, all would be appreciated.

Subscribers offered a number of recommendations including reading various books, taking certain herbs, using special insemination techniques, choosing a compatible donor, referring to the Astrological Timetable in *The Old Farmer's Almanac*, and knitting to help pass the time.

Separatism

The Separatism category was the tenth most discussed category during the 1999-2004 period studied. This category includes debates about the best way to align lesbian energies to achieve the goals of the lesbian community. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Separatism category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table E10. There were no news items relative to the Separatism category during the current period of study.

The most discussed item in this category was a letter from a woman seeking other lesbian feminists. She wrote,

Does a wee candle of hope still burn for walking away from the death knell of excesses of patriarchy! Where are the Lesbian-Feminist rallying voices of yesteryear like Sonia Johnson's? Have we become too complacent in our pseudo safety net of social acceptance, or is it because the odds seem so insurmountable that we forget our potential to make a difference by being different? A

government that was founded on the genocide of American Indians, the slavery of African Americans, and the oppression of Lesbians (indeed all women) and the poor does not deserve my respect; but rather, my contempt and resistance.

“Remember your roots and the potential they hold for change!” Are there any kindred spirit, Lesbian-Feminist sisters out there?

Sonia Johnson was a Mormon housewife who was excommunicated from the Mormon Church in 1979 when she endorsed and became a leader in the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) movement. She became a radical anarchist and eventually came to believe that to cooperate with or resist male-created systems only served to strengthen that system. Johnson advocated for complete withdrawal from male systems by creating women’s communities. Later she declared that even lesbian couples were a patriarchal trap and that sex was a patriarchal construct (Moore, Spring, 1990).

Subscribers responded to let the writer know that radical lesbian feminists were alive and well. Many provided resources for connecting with other like-minded women.

Religion and Spirituality

The Religion and Spirituality category was the least discussed category during 1999-2004. This category includes discussions about religious and spiritual beliefs and practices as they relate to lesbians and the lesbian community. The most discussed items and/or discussions that illustrate the overall tone of the Religion and Spirituality category are presented here. For a complete list of all the discussions included in this category, see Table E11.

Although the Religion and Spirituality category was the least discussed category during this period of analysis, there were a number of news items relative to this category. *LC* reported that the Vatican barred an American nun and priest in Maryland from conducting the workshops, discussions, and retreats for lesbians and gay men that had formed the backbone of their ministry for two decades. At the same time, a world-renowned Roman Catholic scholar reported on overwhelming evidence that the Catholic Church sanctioned and blessed same-sex relationships from the Middle Ages until the 19th century. Moreover, Rabbis from the country's largest Jewish movement took a major step when they voted to formally support Reform Rabbis who perform same-sex union ceremonies.

Christian conservative researcher Paul Cameron who had advocated quarantining gays to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in the 1980s reported his findings that, "Men do a better job on men, and women on women, if all you are looking for is orgasm. . . . It's pure sexuality. It's almost like pure heroin. . . ." Cameron believed that if society approved of lesbian and gay people, more and more heterosexuals would be inexorably drawn into homosexuality because the allure of gay sex is so powerful.

When anti-gay activist Rev. Fred Phelps went to Ann Arbor, the community decided not to get mad, but to get rich. Knowing that Phelps planned to picket the Aut Bar, a gay-owned restaurant/bar, people pledged money for every minute Phelps picketed the bar, with the proceeds going to the Washtenaw Rainbow Action Project, a local gay advocacy group.

A children's book titled *Spot* was accused of being gay propaganda by the right-wing group, Focus on the Family. The book's author, Todd Tuttle, a former Baptist minister who is now openly gay, was appalled that his simple story of a dog living in the town of Barksville was being maligned.

Despite the numerous news items on issues relative to the Religion and Spirituality category, there were only two discussions in the Religion and Spirituality category. One letter requested information about lesbians in the Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormons). Readers provided information about the Mormon lesbian and gay group Affirmation. The other discussion was prompted by a picture of a female Rabbi on the cover of *LC*. The respondent wrote about the diversity at her daughter's Bat Mitzvah.

It is noteworthy that despite the high profile tensions regarding homosexuality and the Episcopal Church, there were no discussions about this struggle. The key issues facing the Episcopal Church were whether qualified lesbians and gays in committed relationships should be eligible for ordination as priests and consecration as bishops, and whether a church ritual recognizing and blessing committed same-sex unions should be available. During the 2003 General Convention, the church made decisions that appeared to support both issues. Delegates confirmed the consecration of Bishop Gene Robinson, who is in a long-term relationship with another man, as bishop of New Hampshire. Moreover, they overwhelmingly approved a compromise resolution which, in effect, introduced a local option to churches by recognizing that some priests had already been performing blessings of lesbian and gay couples in some dioceses in the US.

Semiotic Analysis: Defining Lesbian

While the push toward assimilation with the heterosexual culture continued into the early 2000s, there were signs of some lesbians attempting to “reach back” to earlier posturings. For example, fem lesbians were reviving the butch-fem role-playing that was prominent during the 1950s and 1960s. While there were likely some young women in the queer movement who also played with butch-fem roles as a type of parody, this was not the case for the fem lesbians who contributed to *LC*.

At the same time, there was evidence that at least some subscribers were aging alongside *LC*. Lesbians were discussing the symptoms of menopause and expressing interest in separatist retirement communities for lesbians. At the same time, subscribers reminisced about outspoken women from the past, such as Sonia Johnson, who had challenged lesbians to think critically about their lives and the lives of all women. In so doing, these women also appeared to reaching back to earlier lesbian ideologies. Perhaps these women were hoping to finally make good on their dreams of building a Lesbian Nation during their retirement years.

The disdain for upwardly mobile lesbians continued into the early 2000s. For example, one subscriber thanked *LC* for publishing pictures of real lesbians instead of the “so-called ‘lesbians’ in other mags.” Indeed, many of the slick lesbian magazines had toned down the image of lesbians in order to maintain long-term contracts with lucrative advertisers. These magazines are re-created lesbians as young, beautiful, and fashionable. Many lesbians were infuriated by this plastic image of Lesbian.

One theme that continued to arch across the entire 30-year period of study was the issue of male-to-female transgender women entering women-only or lesbian-only spaces. *LC* and the Michigan Women's Music Festival, both of which are arguably at the foundation of the lesbian community continued to define a lesbian as a *woman-born-woman*—that is to say, born with female genitalia. Nonetheless, no woman would ever be questioned about her gender—a woman was a woman if she said she was. Subscribers were evenly divided on this issue during this time period and, as in the past, there seemed to be no middle ground for resolving the division.

One interesting discussion during the 2000s was a letter from a woman questioning her identity as a lesbian because she had a brief relationship with a man. In the past, subscribers would have attacked the Ambitious Amazons for publishing a letter from someone who was not a lesbian. However, this letter drew long, thoughtful letters offering comfort and support. Perhaps it was the writer's willingness to withdraw from women-only spaces if she did not belong there that prompted this outpouring of kindness from *LC* subscribers. Not unlike the prodigal son, this writer eventually admitted her mistake. She returned to the fold and was unconditionally welcomed back into the lesbian community.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to analyze discussions in *LC* to determine what issues appeared to be of importance to subscribers participating in the discussion forum. The study sought to determine whether those issues were related to sociopolitical activities within and outside the cultural discourse of the time; whether those issues had changed over time; and the meanings, contradictions, and effects of those changes. In this chapter, a discussion of the findings, the counseling implications of those findings, and directions for future research are presented. Finally, limitations of the study are discussed.

Content Analysis/Narrative Analysis

This study analyzed 4,633 letters or items of discussion and responses published in 170 issues of *LC* over a period of 30 years from the October 1974 premier issue to the November/December 2004 30th anniversary issue. Seven categories were used in the 1974-1979 analysis: Discrimination and Fear, Defining Lesbian, Separatism, Growing Pains, Isolation, Relationships and Sexuality, and Health and Mental Health. Four additional categories were added during the 1979-1989 analysis: Minority Lesbians; Children, Families, and Parenting; Religion and Spirituality; and Networking. These eleven categories continued to be useful throughout the remaining 15 years of analysis. These categories, listed from most discussed category to least discussed category over the full 30-year period are as follows: Health and Mental Health; Discrimination and Fear; Relationships and Sexuality; Defining Lesbian; Growing Pains; Isolation; Separatism;

Networking; Minority Lesbians; Children, Families, and Parenting; Religion and Spirituality (See Table F1).

The top ten discussions overall during the full 30-year period are provided in Table F2. These discussions fell within the top five categories overall. These discussions and categories were clearly the most important issues for subscribers participating in the discussion forum (see Figure F17). The top ten most discussed topics listed from most discussed item to least discussed item over the 30 years of analysis were: (a) the impact of incest on lesbian sexuality; (b) the fear and distrust surrounding the *Shigella* epidemic at the 1988 Michigan Women's Music Festival; (c) disagreements about whether fat women are oppressed or simply unhealthy; (d) discussions regarding whether lesbians become less interested in sex as their relationships mature (lesbian bed death); (e) disagreements about whether male-to-female transgender women are lesbians and whether they should be allowed to attend lesbian-only or women-only gatherings; (f) discussions regarding whether sadomasochism represents a patriarchal construct or is a healthy, acceptable sexual activity for lesbians; (g) the isolation of adolescent lesbians, especially isolation from the lesbian community; (h) discussions regarding whether lesbians in prison are oppressed or are simply getting what they deserve; (i) disagreements between lesbians who want to assimilate with society at large and those who wish to maintain radical lesbian feminist views; and (j) discussions regarding whether bisexual women or "ex lesbians" have a right to identify as lesbian and attend lesbian-only events.

Interestingly, a recent analysis of the topics of articles published in counseling-related journals shows that few, if any, of the issues raised by this study are being addressed in counseling literature. The five most common topics in counseling literature were homophobia, identity development and coming out, HIV/AIDS, attitudes toward lesbian and gay people, and psychological adjustment (Phillips et al., 2003).

The following provides an overview of counseling issues related to lesbian and gay clients as they relate to the field of counseling. This is followed by an overview of the most discussed categories in this study, with an emphasis on the counseling implications of the most discussed items overall. Counseling implications are discussed beginning with the most discussed category and ending with the least discussed category.

Counseling Issues Related to Lesbian and Gay Clients

Some studies show there are few differences between heterosexuals and lesbians and gay men on measures of psychological well-being, self-esteem, or psychological functioning (Coyle, 1993; Gonsiorek, 1991; Pillard, 1988; Rothblum, 1994a; Savin-Williams, 1990). Others suggest that lesbian and gay men may be at risk for or show higher prevalence of sexual orientation-related psychological problems (Cochran & Mays, 2000a, 2000b; Cochran, Sullivan, & Mays, 2003; Gilman et al., 2001; Herrell et al., 1999; Mays & Cochran, 2001; Meyer, 1995; Otis & Skinner, 1996; Sandfort, de Graff, Bijl, & Schnabel, 2001). Despite these differences in findings, there is clear evidence that lesbians and gay men often seek counseling or are more likely than heterosexual people to seek counseling (A. P. Bell & Weinberg, 1978; Bradford, Ryan, & Rothblum, 1994; Cochran, Keenan, Schober, & Mays, 2000; Cochran & Mays, 2000b;

Cochran et al., 2003; Liddle, 1997, 1999; Mapou, Ayres, & Cole, 1983; K. S. Morgan, 1992; Saghir, Robins, Walbran, & Gentry, 1970; Saghir, Robins, & Walbran, 1970). Thus, it is not surprising that counselors often provide services to lesbian and gay clients (Garnets, Hancock, Cochran, Goodchilds, & Peplau, 1991; Graham, Rawlings, Halpern, & Hermes, 1984; Green & Bobele, 1994; J. A. Murphy et al., 2002; Phillips & Fischer, 1998). While some research suggests that the quality of services to gay consumers may be improving (Liddle), other research suggests that mental health providers continue to harbor negative biases toward lesbian and gay clients that could negatively impact quality of care (Annesley & Coyle, 1995; Bohan & Russell, 1999; Garnets et al., 1991; Haldeman, 1994; Liddle, 1996; Moss, 1995, August). This is somewhat understandable in light of the fact that as recent as 15 years ago 10% of students reported being taught that it was in the best interest of homosexual clients to change their sexual orientation; 30% reported that homosexuality was discussed as a psychopathology (von Kleist, 1992).

Lesbian and gay clients often report more fears or concerns regarding the counseling process than heterosexual clients (C. J. Alexander, 1998; Godfrey, Haddock, Fisher, & Lund, 2006) and studies suggest these fears are sometimes warranted (A. P. Bell & Weinberg, 1978; Casas, Brady, & Ponterotto, 1983; Garnets et al., 1991; Glenn & Russell, 1986; Godfrey et al., 2006; Graham et al., 1984; Liddle, 1996; Moss, 1995, August; Nystrom, 1997; James Rudolph, 1988; J. Rudolph, 1990; Saghir & Robins, 1973). As a result, lesbian and gay clients often screen therapists to determine if they are gay-friendly or have knowledge and experience in working with lesbian or gay clients (J.S. Kaufman et al., 1997; Liddle, 1996, 1997).

While some research has shown that matching the sexual orientation of the client with the sexual orientation of the counselor may be beneficial to lesbian and gay clients (Brooks, 1981; J. S. Kaufman et al., 1997; Liddle, 1996; Liljestrand, Gerling, & Saliba, 1978; J. A. Murphy et al., 2002; Rochlin, 1982), in reality lesbian or gay counselors are not always available, particularly in rural areas. Moreover, counselors cannot change their characteristics to enhance their effectiveness with a given client. This begs the question, Can heterosexual counselors be effective helpers when working with lesbian clients? Research suggests that they can (J. S. Kaufman et al., 1997; Liddle, 1996). For example, Liddle (1996) found that lesbian and gay clients rated heterosexual female counselors no less helpful than lesbian, gay, or bisexual counselors. Even among heterosexual male and unidentified male counselors who were among the lowest rated groups by lesbian and gay clients in the study, 30% were rated as helpful.

Based on the research, mental health concerns shared by lesbians and gay men include determining whether to reveal their sexual orientation to others (Lesserman, DiSantostefano, Perkins, & Evans, 1994; Mapou et al., 1983; J. A. Murphy et al., 2002; Trippet & Bain, 1990), dealing with antigay verbal and physical harassment (Bradford et al., 1994; Herek, 1989, 2000; J. A. Murphy et al.), relationship issues (J. A. Murphy et al.), self-esteem (J. A. Murphy et al.), depression (J. A. Murphy et al.), anxiety (J. A. Murphy et al.), developing a support system (J. A. Murphy et al.), estrangement from family (J. A. Murphy et al.), body image issues (J. A. Murphy et al.), and substance abuse (J. A. Murphy et al.). Another important issue might be internalized heterosexism which can play a significant role in a number of presenting problems including low self-esteem,

depression, anxiety, alcoholism, and sexual dysfunction (Gonsiorek, 1993; Meyer, 1995; Meyer & Dean, 1998; Shidlo, 1994).

Those counseling practices that have been rated especially helpful by lesbian and gay clients include: (a) knowledge about the lesbian and gay communities and other resources, (b) not focusing on sexual orientation when it was *not* relevant, (c) addressing sexual orientation when it *was* relevant, and (d) helping the client feel good about being lesbian or gay (Liddle, 1996).

Those counseling practices rated as unhelpful by lesbian and gay clients include: (a) automatically assuming the client is heterosexual; (b) indicating homosexuality is bad, sick, or inferior; (c) discounting, arguing against, or pushing the client to renounce their lesbian or gay identity; (d) blaming the client's problems on their sexual orientation or focusing on sexual orientation when it is not relevant to the client's problems; (e) refusing to see a client after they reveal their sexual orientation; (f) lack of knowledge about lesbian and gay issues necessary to be effective and/or having to be constantly educated on lesbian and gay issues; (g) failing to support or recognize the importance of lesbian and gay relationships; and (h) failing to understand internalized heterosexism or societal prejudice against gay people (Liddle, 1996).

When lesbian and gay clients have been asked what they would like their counselor to know about their experiences as a sexual minority, responses include: (a) knowledge about the invisibility of lesbian and gay relationships; (b) knowledge about the coming out process with family, friends, employers, and coworkers; knowledge about

the history of the gay rights movement; (c) knowledge about the major social battles facing lesbians and gays; and (d) the impact of heterosexism (Long, 1996).

At the heart of promoting effective counseling for diverse populations is appropriate training (Betz, 1991; Buhrke, 1989b; Buhrke & Douce, 1991; Clark & Serovich, 1997; Dworkin, 1992; Firestein, 1996; Garnets et al., 1991; Greene, 1994; Iasenza, 1989; J. A. Murphy et al., 2002; Phillips & Fischer, 1998; Rothblum, 1994a; J. Rudolph, 1989; T. S. Stein, 1994). Indeed, the inherent heterosexual biases of a generalist training model may result in harm to lesbian and gay clients (Godfrey et al., 2006; McHenry & Johnson, 1993; Morin & Charles, 1983; Phillips & Fischer, 1998).

Lesbian and gay affirmative training is supported by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the largest counseling-related accreditation body in the world, as well as the American Counseling Association (ACA), the world's largest association dedicated to the growth and enhancement of the counseling profession.

Among the eight core CACREP curriculum standards is the study of Social and Cultural Diversity. This standard requires that accredited programs

provide an understanding of the cultural context of relationships, issues and trends in a multicultural and diverse society related to such factors as culture, ethnicity, nationality, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental and physical characteristics, education, family values, religious and spiritual values, socioeconomic status and unique characteristics of individuals, couples, families, ethnic groups, and

communities. (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, 2001)

The ACA Code of Ethics requires counselor competence with diverse populations defined as “counseling that recognizes diversity and embraces approaches that support the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of individuals within their historical, cultural, economic, political, and psychosocial contexts” (American Counseling Association, 2005). Some scholars are calling for even more rigorous standards including training in lesbian and gay issues as a prerequisite to state licensure (Liddle, 1999; McCann, 2001; Morrow, 1998; Phillips & Fischer, 1998) and training that continues beyond licensure (Graham et al., 1984).

Addressing issues of diversity can begin at the university and program levels. Many lesbians and gays have been subjected to discriminatory practices in employment and housing, as well as harassment, ostracism, assault, and hate crimes with little recourse. Thus, it is not surprising that this treatment can and does occur in educational settings (Biaggio, Orchard, Larson, Petrino, & Mihara, 2003; Comstock, 1991; Eliason, 1996; Myrick & Brown, 1998; Rey & Gibson, 1997). For this reason, lesbian and gay students often screen training programs for openly lesbian or gay faculty or heterosexual allies, take measures to determine the degree of sensitivity to diversity issues, and consider the geographic location of the program (Lark & Croteau, 1998; Niolon, 1998). Programs located in rural settings, those who offer little social support, and those that have anti-gay politics are frequently avoided by these students (Lark & Croteau; Niolon). Unfortunately, students seeking lesbian- and gay-friendly programs may face great

difficulty finding lesbian or gay role-models in their program. One study of psychology graduate programs found that only 27% had openly lesbian or gay faculty, yet 53% had openly gay students (APA Committee on Lesbian and Gay Concerns, 1993). This large discrepancy between training programs with openly gay students and those with visible gay faculty highlights the need for visible faculty allies within mental health training programs. Without the needed support, students may become consumed with surviving in their training programs and fail to reach their full professional potential (Lark & Croteau, 1998; Massey & Walfish, 2001).

There is also evidence that lesbian and gay faculty in counseling and counseling-related disciplines may also be subjected to discriminatory practices and even physical violence (Myrick & Brown, 1998). Even in those environments where progress toward embracing diversity is evident, support for lesbian and gay educators is often insufficient (McNaron, 1997; Myrick & Brown). While some lesbian and gay faculty report feeling a sense of gratification, appreciation, and support in their perspective programs, they still report feeling “more than a little misunderstood, angry, isolated, scrutinized, exhausted, vulnerable, lonely, self-conscious, anxious, and frustrated” (Liddle, Kunkel, Kick, & Hauenstein, 1998, p. 27). Studies suggest that counseling training programs can begin to address these issues by actively recruiting, supporting, and valuing the contributions of lesbian and gay students and faculty, a practice supported by the ACA Code of Ethics (American Counseling Association, 2005; Buhrke, 1989a; Buhrke & Douce, 1991; Flores, O'Brien, & McDermott, 1995, August; Phillips & Fischer, 1998).

In addition to the unfriendly environment experiences of some students and faculty, research has also shown that mental health training programs may not be adequately preparing students to work with lesbian and gay clients (Allison, Crawford, Echemendia, Robinson, & Knepp, 1994; Anhalt, Morris, Scotti, & Cohen, 2003; Buhrke, 1989a, 1989b; Doherty & Simmons, 1996; Graham et al., 1984; Long & Serovich, 2003; Malley & Tasker, 1999; Mobley, 1998; Morrow, 1998; B. C. Murphy, 1991; J. A. Murphy et al., 2002; Phillips, 2000; Phillips & Fischer, 1998; Pilkington & Cantor, 1996; T. S. Stein & Burg, 1994; Thompson & Fishburn, 1977; von Kleist, 1992; Whitman, 1995). For example, Doherty and Simmons found that one-half of the marriage and family therapists surveyed felt incompetent to work with lesbian and gay clients. Murphy, Rawlings, and Howe found that almost one third (28%) of therapists surveyed reported they had no formal training on lesbian or gay issues. Moreover, practitioners reported seeking out training on gay-related issues after completing their graduate training (J. A. Murphy et al.). In addition, lesbian and gay students often take primary responsibility for broaching issues related to homosexuality in the classroom (Morrow, 1998; Phillips & Fischer, 1998). This is an unfair burden to place on students and could jeopardize their academic success. Moreover, student-initiated efforts are not as likely to be as effective as those discussions or assignments initiated by instructors (Morrow, 1998).

Research suggests that the more training in gay-related issues a therapist has, the higher the proportion of lesbian and gay clients they have in their caseload (J. A. Murphy et al., 2002). Yet, Phillips and Fischer (1998) found that the modal number of lesbian or gay clients a student reported seeing in their training program was zero. They also found

that almost three fourths of the graduate psychology students studied reported they had not had a supervisor knowledgeable in lesbian or gay issues.

Despite the importance of discussing multicultural issues in supervision (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1989; M. T. Brown & Landrum-Brown, 1995; Constantine, 1997; Porter, 1994; Sue et al., 1982), one study found that almost half of the counselors who had received supervision when working with lesbian or gay clients reported that their supervisors had limited or inadequate knowledge about gay issues (J. A. Murphy et al., 2002). Another study found that sexual orientation was rarely discussed during supervision and when it was, the topic was raised by the student (Gatmon et al., 2001). However, when cultural variables such as sexual orientation were discussed in supervision, students reported greater satisfaction with supervision and an enhanced working alliance with their supervisor (Gatmon et al.).

Research findings also suggest that there is often little to no support for gay-related research in mental health training programs (Anhalt et al., 2003; Buhrke, 1989a; Pilkington & Cantor, 1996). For example, one study found that among female counseling psychology students, most reported there were no faculty or supervisors in their programs conducting research on gay-related issues (Buhrke). A more recent study revealed instances in which students were discouraged from pursuing gay-related research topics (Pilkington & Cantor). The failure to study gay-related issues in graduate programs can result in limited knowledge about the needs of lesbian and gay clients and misperceptions about lesbians and gays.

Phillips (2000) noted that students have been exposed to heterosexist comments by instructors, supervisors, and textbooks. Moreover, the majority of students studied report experiencing heterosexist biases in their training programs (Niolon, 1998; Pilkington & Cantor, 1996). Examples include pathologizing, diagnosing, and stereotyping lesbians and gays; making discriminatory remarks to lesbian and gay students; dismissing reports of bias; discouraging gay-related research; characterizing homosexuality as a deviant sexual practice; and general hostility (Biaggio et al., 2003; Gatmon et al., 2001). These experiences negatively impact lesbian and gay students and suggests that it is acceptable for future mental healthcare providers to maintain biased attitudes toward lesbian and gay clients (Saffren, 1999).

While basic information related to working with lesbian and gay clients is important, some research suggests that training students about the needs of lesbian and gay clients may not be sufficient for fostering gay-affirmative counseling services (Biaggio et al., 2003; Bieschke, Eberz, Bard, & Croteau, 1998; Greene, 1994; Phillips & Fischer, 1998). Raising students' awareness about their heterosexist biases and the impact of heterosexism on lesbians and gay men are key to effective training (Biaggio et al., 2003; Daniel, Roysircar, Abeles, & Boyd, 2002; Godfrey et al., 2006; Graham et al., 1984; Hansen, Papitone-Arreola-Rockwell, & Green, 2000; Iasenza, 1989; McHenry & Johnson, 1993; Moss, 1995, August; B. C. Murphy, 1991; Phillips, 2000; Phillips & Fischer, 1998). Indeed, subtle heterosexism cannot be addressed unless students are aware that it exists.

Identifying, confronting, and defying heterosexism . . . should be a part of the task of an effective instructor. Success in this endeavor requires breaking the customary silence on the topic and challenging its omission from the traditional . . . curriculum. (Simoni, 2000, p. 76)

Scholars have developed a number of recommendations for improving the landscape of mental health training programs. These include integrating and infusing information about sexual orientation and the needs of lesbians and gays into program curricula (Biaggio et al., 2003; Buhrke, 1989b; Buhrke & Douce, 1991; Godfrey et al., 2006; Graham et al., 1984; Hancock, 1995; Long & Serovich, 2003; Norton, 1982; Phillips & Fischer, 1998). Infusing lesbian and gay issues sends a message that issues surrounding homosexuality are integral to clinical services. Key topics might include coming out, the experiences of victims of anti-gay discrimination, and negotiating an often hostile world (B. C. Murphy, 1991). In addition, some scholars recommend full courses on lesbian and gay issues that allow for a more focused, in-depth exploration of lesbian and gay issues (Lidderdale, 2002; Phillips, 2000; T. S. Stein & Burg, 1996; Whitman, 1995).

Training programs might also consider discussing ethical considerations when working with lesbian and gay clients. For example, the outcome of a recent law suit suggests that refusing to counsel a lesbian or gay client due to religious beliefs is unacceptable. In 2001, a federal appeals court upheld the termination of a counselor who has asked to be removed from a case with a lesbian client because homosexuality

conflicted with her religious beliefs (*Bruff v. North Mississippi Health Services, Inc. 2001*) (Hermann & Herlihy, 2006).

In order to effectively train counselors to work with lesbian or gay clients, faculty and clinical supervisors must be informed about the unique counseling needs of homosexual clients (Biaggio et al., 2003; Godfrey et al., 2006). Informed faculty and supervisors understand that lesbian and gay clients operate in a different social context and must often navigate two cultures—a heterosexist society and their own culture as a sexual minority (Biaggio et al., 2003).

Counseling programs can encourage students to conduct research on gay-related issues (Biaggio et al., 2003; Bieschke et al., 1998). Moreover, since lesbians and gays are more likely to seek treatment from counselors trained to work with the gay population (J. A. Murphy et al., 2002), programs can offer and advertise gay-affirmative counseling services. This enables programs to provide students with training experiences working with lesbian or gay clients in practicum settings (Biaggio et al.; Buhrke & Douce, 1991; Iasenza, 1989). Counseling programs can encourage students to have casual or social experiences with lesbian or gay people where they can ask questions and become more familiar with lesbian and gay culture (Anhalt et al., 2003; Buhrke, 1989a; Flores et al., 1995, August; Godfrey et al., 2006; Greene & Croom, 2000; Iasenza). Programs can also invite panel presentations of lesbians and gays who challenge stereotypical ideas about sexual minorities (Croteau & Kusek, 1992; Engstrom & Sedlacek, 1997).

Some scholars believe that heterosexual identity development models can be effective in facilitating self-awareness for counselors. These models highlight the

importance of counselors being aware of their own identity formation and how their development process can affect their work with lesbian and gay clients (Mohr, 2002; Worthington, Savot, Dillon, & Vernaglia, 2002).

Some programs take a multicultural approach to training mental healthcare providers. Empirical studies have examined a number of preparation programs, projects, and activities that might be helpful in training mental health professionals to work with diverse populations (Baber & Garrett, 1997; Nagda et al., 1999; Sevig & Etzkorn, 2001). Some models recommend a conceptual framework for teaching multicultural competence, such as Sue's (2001) multidimensional model of cultural competence (MDCC) or Pedersen's (2001) orthogonal model. In addition, some scholars assert that social justice must be an integral part of multicultural competence (Constantine, Hage, Kindaichi, & Bryant, 2007; Kiselica & Robinson, 2001; Martin-Baro, 1994; Ramirez, 1998; Ridley, Mendoza, & Kanitz, 1994; Toporek & Reza, 2001; Vera & Speight, 2003). Thus, some models recommend experiential approaches that integrate multiculturalism and social justice into mental health training programs (Butler-Byrd, Nieto, & Senour, 2006; McGoldrick et al., 1999). These types of models may best incorporate the many differences found in this study among those women who call themselves lesbian.

Regardless of the recommendations or models used for training counselors, it is crucial that training programs began to evaluate the effectiveness of the training modality used to teach counselors how to work effectively with lesbian and gay clients (Daniel et al., 2002). Possible instruments include the Sexual Orientation Counselor Scale (SOCS), which assesses awareness, knowledge, and skills (Bidell, 2003) and the Lesbian, Gay,

and Bisexual Affirmative Counseling Self-Efficacy Inventory (LGB-CSI) which assess application of knowledge, advocacy skills, self-awareness, relationships, and assessment skills (Dillon & Worthington, 2003). It is only when counselors are prepared to work with lesbian clients that they can begin to address to key issues of concern that arose in the current study.

Health and Mental Health

The Health and Mental Health category included discussions relevant to health and mental health issues in the lesbian community. It was the most discussed category in the 30-year analysis

Counseling Implications

The Health and Mental Health category raised a number of issues important to counselors working with the lesbian population. Among those are the need for appropriate therapeutic intervention for lesbians, alcoholism, self-mutilation, ritual abuse, child sexual abuse, and health care needs. The most discussed item in this category, as well as the entire 30-year period studied was incest. Research on incest is generally studied as one type of child sexual abuse. Therefore, counseling implications will focus on the broader issue of child sexual abuse.

Child sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse is generally portrayed as having devastating psychological effects on children. However, some researchers have argued that research fails to distinguish between abuse defined as harm done to a child and abuse as a violation of social norms (Kilpatrick, 1987; Rind, Tromovitch, & Bauserman, 1998). They claim that one cannot assume that the violation of social norms is harmful to a

child. Consider a case in which a toddler is repeatedly raped by her mother and a case in which a lesbian high school senior becomes sexually involved with her lesbian softball coach who has recently graduated from college. The former example is clearly a case of child sexual abuse. The latter is clearly a violation of social norms; however, one cannot assume that the sexual encounter resulted in harm to the student (Rind et al., 1998). The suggestion that an adult/child sexual encounter may not be harmful to a child is likely to be a touchy issue for some counselors, but as we saw in discussions in *LC* it is one that must be considered when working with lesbian clients.

Recall that so many young lesbians wrote to *LC* about their lack of support and role models in the lesbian community that it was the seventh most discussed item during the 30-year analysis. With this shortage of role models, it is not surprising to find that the incidence of young lesbian athletes developing a crush on their coach is so prevalent in the lesbian community that one popular lesbian performer wrote a humorous song about this phenomenon. When it is performed, the song is generally met with back-slapping, uproarious laughter and the exchange of knowing looks. Indeed, an adolescent girl's coach, whether or not she is lesbian, may be the first strong, confident woman a lesbian girl has met. The following is an excerpt of the lyrics to "Ode to a Gym Teacher."

So you just go to any gym class

And you'll be sure to see

One girl who sticks to Teacher like a leaf sticks to a tree

One girl who runs the errands and who chases all the balls

One girl who may grow up to be the gayest of all.

Chorus: She was a big strong woman

The first to come along

To show me being female meant you still could be strong

And though graduation meant that we had to part

You'll always be a player on the ball field of my heart! (Christian, 1990)

Responses to a subscriber who described having a positive relationship with an adult when she was an adolescent suggest that *LC* subscribers abhor adolescent/adult sexual contact. Nonetheless, these encounters may be a more common occurrence in the lesbian community than lesbians might wish to admit. Had this discussion occurred earlier in the analysis period when lesbians were less interested in assimilation with the dominant culture, more subscribers may have characterized these relationships as positive experiences (Meyer-Bahlburg, 2002). Some research would support their claim (Rind et al., 1998). Of course, one might argue that it is not uncommon for individuals who are sexually abused to be unaware of the fact that they were abused and were harmed by that abuse (Tomeo, Templer, Anderson, & Kotler, 2002). These individuals would find support among counselors, legislators, law enforcement personnel, the media, and the general public (Rind & Tromovitch, 1997; Rind et al., 1998). The question remains, however, whether adult/adolescent sexual contact is harmful because society says so. Moreover, what if the norms of a minority client's culture differ from society at large? These are the difficult issues counselors may need to negotiate when working with lesbian clients.

Undoubtedly, some lesbians who, as an adolescent, had sexual contact with an adult lesbian would describe that contact as a loving, caring, helpful relationship. Like the *LC* subscriber, she may even refer to that adult as the one who “brought her out” and taught her what it means to be lesbian. For example, one group of researchers interested in the impact of child sexual abuse on lesbians were somewhat surprised when some participants indicated that child sexual abuse had a positive impact on their coming out experience (Robohm, 2003). When the researchers looked deeper, they found that some of those respondents were referring to same-sex adolescent/adult sexual encounters. One participant stated, “My first girlfriend when I was 17 was in her mid-twenties. It was a ‘positive’ experience” (Robohm, 2003, p. 40). The researchers noted, “It is likely that these participants would not have self-identified as [child sexual abuse] experiencers” (Robohm, 2003, p. 40).

Counselors must also use caution when reviewing the literature on child sexual abuse in lesbians. Consider, for example, one study that compared the experiences of participants in a gay pride march with students attending a local university (Tomeo, Templer, Anderson, & Kotler, 2001). The questionnaire asked, in part, “Before you were 16 years old, did you ever have sexual contact with a woman or girl 5 or more years older than yourself and at least 16 years of age” (Tomeo et al., 2001, p.538)? and “Before you were 16 years old, did you ever have sexual contact with a man or boy 5 or more years older than yourself and at least 16 years of age” (Tomeo et al., 2001, p. 538)? These are common criteria for defining molestation. Thus, although participants were asked if they had experienced sexual contact, if their answers met the criteria for molestation, sexual

contact was redefined as molestation. Participants were not aware of the researchers' intention to redefine their experiences.

The researchers found that, "22% of homosexual women reported having been molested by a person of the same gender. This contrasts to only . . . 1% of heterosexual women reporting having been molested by a person of the same gender" (Tomeo et al., 2002, p. 539). However, the lesbians who answered the survey did not report that they had been molested. They reported that they had a sexual encounter before the age of 16 with a girl or woman who was at least 5 years older. Given the fact that adolescent/adult sexual encounters may be accepted and even encouraged in some lesbian subcultures, some participants in this study may have been outraged by the assumptions of the researchers.

Those encounters that lesbians define as positive experiences aside, sexual dysfunction in lesbians survivors of incest was the single most discussed item in the 30-year period studied. Research suggests that lesbians may be more likely to experience child sexual abuse than heterosexual women (Corliss, Cochran, & Mays, 2002; Hughes, Johnson, & Wilsnack, 2001; Tomeo et al., 2001). In fact, research suggests that lesbians have more than a one-in-three chance of having been sexually abused as a child (Loulan, 1987; Russell, 1986). That abuse can have severe, life-long consequences, including less relationship satisfaction for survivors of abuse (Weingourt, 1998) and their non-abused partners (C. E. Robinson, 2003); problems related to secrecy, (Kerewsky & Miller, 1996) including the double secret of child sexual abuse and lesbianism (J. Hall, 1999); anxiety (Hyman, 2000); depression (Cooper, 1996; J. M. Hall, 1996; Hyman, 2000; C. Ross,

Durkin, V., 2005); problems with trust (Kerewsky & Miller, 1996) addiction problems (J. M. Hall, 1996; Neisen, 1990); self-harm (J. M. Hall, 1996; Kerewsky & Miller, 1996); suicidal ideations (Hyman, 2000); isolation (J. M. Hall, 1996; Kerewsky & Miller, 1996); sexual problems (J. Hall, 1999; J. M. Hall, 1996; Kerewsky & Miller, 1996; Roth, 1985). As a result, lesbians may experience sexual risk-taking (Robohm, 2003); increased risk for re-victimization (Robohm, 2003); shame or self-loathing (J. M. Hall, 1996; Kerewsky & Miller, 1996); health problems (J. M. Hall, 1996; Hyman, 2000); inability to work (J. M. Hall, 1996); less educational attainment (Hyman, 2000); lower annual earnings (Hyman, 2000); gender identity issues (Kerewsky & Miller, 1996); sexual identity issues (Robohm, 2003); and distorted body image (Kerewsky & Miller, 1996). It would be a mistake and a disservice to lesbian survivors of child sexual abuse for counselors to ignore all the research on this issue because some studies may not have taken cultural differences into consideration. Counselors must be prepared to provide appropriate treatment to lesbian survivors of child sexual abuse.

A lesbian survivor who seek counseling services are likely to report receiving a great deal of understanding and support from her community (Butke, 1995). Sexual abuse is often openly discussed in the lesbian community and lesbian feminists share a common understanding about oppression and the prevalence and impact of violence. However, because lesbian feminists often attribute abuse to men, there is a tendency to minimize or deny abuse committed by women. Survivors may report feeling silenced by their friends who do not want to hear stories about abuse perpetrated by women (Butke, 1995).

Child sexual abuse can become entangled in the process of coming out and this process repeats itself throughout a lesbian survivor's life. Each time she meets new people and forms new relationships, she must decide whether to disclose her sexual orientation, and whether to disclose her experiences of child sexual abuse. Some survivors fear that coming out as a lesbian and as a survivor will cause the two to become merged in the minds of others who may conclude that the abuse caused her to become damaged. (Butke, 1995).

It is also important for counselors to assess how family members react to a lesbian client's abuse, as well as her sexual orientation. Family members may believe that she is claiming abuse because they assume that lesbians hate men. Or they may choose to face one of these issues while denying or minimizing the other (Butke, 1995).

Counselors may find that survivors struggle with understanding how their abuse impacts their sexual orientation. Therefore, it is especially important that counselors understand that abuse does not cause a woman to become lesbian. This view is overly simplistic. It suggests that there is something wrong with being lesbian and fails to take into account the multidimensional factors involved in sexual orientation. With the high rate of child sexual abuse experienced by women, there would be a much higher percentage of lesbians in the population if abuse caused a woman to become lesbian (Browning, Reynolds, & Dworkin, 1991; Butke, 1995).

It is also important that counselors understand that sometimes the focus on the survivor's needs may mean that their partner's needs take a back seat. Clinical work suggests that group work is crucial for the partners of survivors. It is perhaps the best way

of ending their isolation and sharing coping strategies. Partners often experience stages of healing that may include protecting the victim, blaming the victim, trying to exert control, grieving, understanding, and forgiveness. These stages may be experienced in a different order and some may be experienced consecutively. Counselors can be aware of the stages of healing and be prepared to help partners of survivors develop strategies for coping with and moving through those stages (Smolover, 1996).

One treatment model for working with lesbian couples whose relationship has been impacted by childhood trauma involves three stages of therapeutic intervention—the Outer, Middle, and Inner Circles. In the Outer Circle, the counselor gathers information about the survivor's world and worldview. This information is gathered in a manner that is non-intrusive, nonjudgmental, and curious. The counselor may help the couple to develop genograms, encourage them to engage in journaling and other creative outlets, and make various cognitive-behavioral assignments (Kerewsky & Miller, 1996; D. Miller, 1990).

In the Middle Circle, the counselor deals directly with problematic behaviors and makes appropriate referrals to supportive resources such as 12-step programs, hospitals, legal systems, or school personnel. Problematic behaviors are explored with regard to the way in which they have become the face of trauma. Caretaking that is no longer useful to the couple is addressed and couples may be encouraged to explore and connect with the lesbian community in their area if they have not already done so (Kerewsky & Miller, 1996; D. Miller, 1990).

Within the Inner Circle, the survivor begins remembering her trauma and exploring the meaning it holds for both her and her partner. This includes exploring the ways in which trauma has developed an intrusive presence in their relationship. During this stage, the counselor can help the couple begin to rewrite their abuse stories (Kerewsky & Miller, 1996; D. Miller, 1990).

It is essential that counselors working with survivors and their partners establish clear boundaries and make thoughtful decisions about self-disclosure. The question of a counselor's sexual orientation and whether she has experienced child sexual abuse may be important to lesbian survivors. It may be helpful for the counselor to determine how she wishes to handle these questions before they arise. There is no correct answer; however this issue is important to consider when working with a client whose boundaries have been violated and confused. When in doubt, it is always best for counselors to seek supervision and consultation regarding boundary issues (Butke, 1995; Gartrell, 1992).

Those lesbian counselors who have worked through their own internalized heterosexism can provide a counter-stereotype for lesbian clients—a catalyst for clients to develop an integrated, congruent, and positive identity (Malyon, 1982). The advantages of being a lesbian counselor far outweigh the disadvantages; however, lesbian counselors who are active in the lesbian community face a number of unique challenges in establishing professional boundaries. The relatively small size of the lesbian community and the high probability of informal contact between lesbian counselors and their clients within the lesbian community makes setting boundaries difficult (Butke, 1995; Gartrell, 1992, 1994; Lyn, 1995).

Social and sexual encounters between female clients and counselors are a serious problem. One study found that almost 13% of the lesbian therapists studied had engaged in an ongoing social relationship with a current client and 41.4% had done so with a former client. Some lesbian therapists reported having engaged in sexual activities with a current client (2.5%), 11.2% had done so with a former client, and 4.3% were currently doing so with former clients (Lyn, 1995).

Other research has shown that female-female sexual contact comprises between 1.4% and 10% of reported cases (Schoener, Milgrom, Gonsiorek, Luepker, & Conroe, 1989). In one study, 47% of lesbian counselors expressed concern about boundaries and social encounters with clients (Gartrell, 1994). Unfortunately, most lesbian graduates of mental health programs receive no training to assist them in establishing personal and professional boundaries within the lesbian community (Buhrke, 1989a; Gartrell, 1994).

Finally, it is important that counselors understand the potential for misinformation about homosexuality and pedophilia. It is not uncommon for minority groups to be represented as dangerous to vulnerable members of society. For example, African American men have often been falsely accused of raping White women (Herek, 2003; Hill Collins, 1998). During the Middle Ages, Jewish people were associated with disease, filth, degeneration of communities, and the stealing and murder of children (Herek, 2003; Herman, 1998). Similarly, as discussed in *LC*, some individuals claim that anti-discrimination laws for lesbians and gay men would legalize child sexual abuse (Adam, 1995; Bull & Gallagher, 2001; Herek, 2003).

Anita Bryant used the argument that lesbian and gay people molest children in her fight to repeal ordinances that prohibited discrimination against lesbian and gay people. This argument was used to exclude gay scouts and scoutmasters from the Boy Scouts of America. Moreover, during the wake of the Catholic church scandals when the church was accused of covering for priests who were routinely abusing young men, the Vatican's early response was to declare that gay men should not be ordained into the ministry (Herek, 2003).

Many individuals who believe lesbians and gay men abuse children simply do not understand the terminology used to describe sexual abuse of children by adults. As such, they draw incorrect conclusions from the data. For example, the term homosexual molestation is sometimes used to describe an adult male molesting a male child or an adult female molesting a female child. Similarly, the term heterosexual molestation is used to describe an adult male molesting a female child or an adult female molesting a male child. While this terminology does not describe the sexual orientation of the perpetrator, it is easy to see how these terms can be misleading (Herek, 2003).

Sexual orientation, whether heterosexual or homosexual is an adult sexual attraction to other adults. Pedophilia, however, is an adult sexual attraction to children. Research has never found a connection between homosexuality and pedophilia (Freund, Watson, & Reienzo, 1989; Groth & Birnbaum, 1978; Groth & Gary, 1982; Groth, Hobson, & Gary, 1982; Jenny, Roesler, & Poyer, 1994; McConaghy, 1998; Newton, 1978).

While a handful of studies have concluded that non-heterosexual people are more likely than heterosexual people to molest children, these studies tend to be conducted by alarmists; this body of research has serious methodological and definitional flaws (Erwin, 2006a; Herek, 2003). Nonetheless, the assertions of these individuals are often quoted by antigay organizations as scientific evidence of a link between homosexuality and child sexual abuse (Herek, 2003).

In summary, counselors may find subgroups of lesbians who view sexual contact between older adolescents and adults favorably. This cultural norm is so prominent that it has appeared in *LC* discussions and in many studies of child sexual abuse in lesbians. It may be helpful for counselors to be aware of this norm when counseling lesbian clients and when reviewing the research on child sexual abuse in lesbians.

Sexual dysfunction in lesbian survivors of incest was the single most discussed item in *LC* during over the 30-year period studied. Research shows that the experience of child sexual abuse can have devastating consequences for lesbians and their partners. It is important that counselors be prepared to meet the counseling needs of these women and understand the unique dynamics involved in this helping relationship. Finally, it may be helpful for counselors to understand the terminology and research on pedophilia as it relates to child sexual abuse and sexual orientation.

Discrimination and Fear

The Discrimination and Fear category included discussions about discrimination experienced by lesbians from within and outside the lesbian and feminist movements,

acts of resistance in the face of discrimination, and fear resulting from discrimination and violence against lesbians.

Counseling Implications

Over time, *LC* subscribers became most interested in those issues that affected their day-to-day lives. For many subscribers, discrimination was one of the key issues they faced on a daily basis. This discrimination and the resulting fear directly impacted whether or not they came out to family, friends, or co-workers. Indeed, older lesbians were so afraid of being outed that they often turned their back on younger lesbians who desperately needed their support. This response to younger lesbians, along with the discrimination faced by lesbians in general, and the fact that the public school system has recently become a venue in the fight for lesbian and gay rights makes it vital that school counselors are prepared to address lesbian issues in the school system.

Other issues in this category that were among the ten most discussed items overall were debates about whether fat lesbians are oppressed or simply unhealthy and discussions regarding whether lesbians in prison are subjugated by a patriarchal prison system or are getting what they deserve. As such, it may be important for counselors to be aware of the fat movement in the lesbian community, the ways in which that movement has changed over time, and how those changes have impacted fat lesbians. Moreover, counselors working with lesbians who are or have been in prison can be aware of the unique challenges of being a lesbian in the U.S. prison system and the issues surrounding *situational lesbians*—women who previously identified as heterosexual, but began having intimate relationships with women in prison. In each of these cases,

counselors can begin by acknowledging the discrimination faced by their lesbian clients and understanding the dynamics of internalized heterosexism.

Adolescent lesbians. Discussions in *LC* revealed that older lesbians were so afraid of being outed that they often turned their backs on younger lesbians who wrote desperate pleas for help and support from the lesbian community. In addition, one subscriber who reviewed the findings of the study noted that in her experience school counselors view lesbian youth as “jail bait.” She expressed surprise that this issue was not discussed in *LC*. She wrote,

[I] wonder why in the section on lesbian youth ..no mention was made regarding “Jail bait” and those counselors who have been taken to court for influencing the youth into lesbianism. Many older lesbians avoid young underaged lesbians for that reason alone! Many school counselors who are lesbians also avoid the topic with gay/lesbian youth so as to avoid prosecution or the suggestion of it by parents. I know several lesbians whose jobs were lost or put on the line because of assisting lesbian/gay youth in coming to terms with their sexuality. I know this must have been mentioned in the *LC* ! Didn't you find any research regarding this fear?

The discrimination that young lesbians experienced from the lesbian community at large was so prominent as to make it the seventh most discussed issue overall during the 30-year period studied.

Research has shown that lesbian and gay adolescents may experience identity conflict (Cooley, 1998; Gibson, 1989; Gonsiorek, 1988; Marinoble, 1998; L. E. Muller &

Hartman, 1998; Remafedi, Farrow, & Deisher, 1991; Teague, 1992) or mourn the loss of a heterosexual identity (Black, 1998). They may experience isolation, fear and stigmatization (Capuzzi, 1994; Cooley, 1998; Gibson, 1989; Hetrick & Martin, 1987; Hunter, 1987; Marinoble, 1998; S. L. Nichols, 1999; Omiza, 1998; K. E. Robinson, 1994; S. G. Schneider, Farberow, & Kruks, 1989), peer relationship problems (Marinoble, 1998); family problems (Cooley, 1998; Hetrick & Martin, 1987; Holtzen & Agresti, 1990; Hunter, 1987; Marinoble, 1998; L. E. Muller & Hartman, 1998; Remafedi, 1987; K. E. Robinson, 1994; Teague, 1992; Telljohann, 1993); confusion or feeling misunderstood (Omiza, 1998; S. G. Schneider et al., 1989); guilt (Capuzzi, 1994); low self-esteem (Capuzzi, 1994; Telljohann, 1993); internalized hostility or heterosexism (Omiza, 1998); depression (Black, 1998; Capuzzi, 1994; S. G. Schneider et al., 1989); educational problems (Cooley, 1998; Remafedi, 1987; Savin-Williams, 1994); health problems (Cooley, 1998; Remafedi et al., 1991; C. E. Robinson, 2003; M. E. Ross, 1989); harassment or violence (Gibson, 1989; Hetrick & Martin, 1987; Hunter, 1987; Kourany, 1987; O'Connor, 1994; Pilkington & D'Augelli, 1995; Remafedi, 1987; K. E. Robinson, 1994; Savin-Williams, 1994; Telljohann, 1993); and abuse at home because they are homosexual (Gonsiorek, 1988; Hetrick & Martin, 1987). As a result, they may withdraw socially (Hetrick & Martin, 1987); abuse alcohol and drugs (Dempsey, 1994; Gibson, 1989; Hetrick & Martin, 1987; L. E. Muller & Hartman, 1998; J. T. Sears, 1991; Teague, 1992); become suicidal (A. P. Bell & Weinberg, 1978; Gibson, 1989; Harry, 1983, 1989; A. Martin & Hetrick, 1988; McFarland, 1998; L. E. Muller & Hartman, 1998; Remafedi et al., 1991; Rotheram-Borus, 1994; Saghir & Robins, 1973); self-

mutilate (N. Alexander & Clare, 2004; G. Smith, Cox, & Saradjian, 1999); become truant or drop out of school (Gibson, 1989; Hetrick & Martin, 1987; Remafedi, 1987; Savin-Williams, 1994); run away or are thrown away by their parents (Maylon, 1981; Remafedi, 1987); become homeless (Hetrick & Martin, 1987); or worry about their future (Omiza, 1998). Unfortunately, we are just beginning to understand how these factors may impact lesbian and gay adolescents from other cultures, racial groups, ethnic groups, religions, etc. (Chung, 1998).

News items published in *LC* revealed that the public school system has become the latest venue in the fight for lesbian and gay rights. Students are taking their schools to court and winning. Courts have ruled that students have the right to form Gay Straight Alliances (GSA) and other support groups in their schools (American Civil Liberties Union, 2005, November 22, 2006, December 13, 2006, July 14, 2007, April 6, 2007, January 10, 2007, March 14). They have ruled that lesbian and gay students have the basic civil right to a safe and inclusive learning environment (American Civil Liberties Union, 2005, November 4, 2005, September 14, 2006, November 16, 2007, February 21; McFarland & Dupuis, 2001). They have ruled that school officials can and should take measures to reduce anti-gay harassment in their schools (American Civil Liberties Union, 2005, September 14, 2006, February 18) and that schools cannot reveal the sexual orientation of their students to others without permission from the student to do so (American Civil Liberties Union, 2005, December 1). Based on these findings, it is vital that school counselors are lesbian- and gay-affirmative. In the best-case scenario, this begins at the school-wide level.

Lesbian and gay youth spend the majority of their time outside the home at school. Unfortunately, traditional schooling can exacerbate the problems faced by lesbian and gay students. Research has shown that homosexuality was discussed in only about half of the students' classrooms, and when it was discussed it was often in a negative context (Telljohann, 1993). Books, educational films and movies, classroom discussions, guest speakers, and field trips often serve to reinforce heterosexism (Marinoble, 1998; S. L. Nichols, 1999; K. E. Robinson, 1994).

Lesbian and gay teachers and school personnel are often closeted, thus denying lesbian and gay students positive role models. The overall school climate rarely supports positive identity development for lesbian and gay students (Marinoble, 1998).

Counselors, teachers, and school administrators may fail to reprimand students who make derogatory remarks or jokes about homosexuality. One study found that 82.9% of the LGBT students studied reported that faculty never or rarely intervened when they were verbally harassed (Kosciw, 2004). Moreover, school personnel may presume that students are interested in individuals of the opposite sex. When students have the courage to express concern about their sexual orientation, they may fail to address the issue appropriately or make an appropriate referral (Marinoble, 1998).

Counselors, teachers, and school administrators may fail to recognize that academic difficulties can be related to the students' struggle with sexual orientation. Or they may not consider that peer relationship difficulties could be related to sexual orientation issues (Marinoble, 1998).

It is imperative that schools work to assure that their environment is safe and inclusive for lesbian and gay students. Research has shown that school cultures that promote a sense of connectedness for students offer protection against engagement in risky behaviors (Battistich, 1997). Schools that function as *caring communities* foster healthier social and academic development in students (Battistich, 1997; Noddings, 1992).

One study found that LGBT youth who attended schools where there was no policy, or they did not know of a policy, protecting them from violence and harassment were nearly 40% more likely to skip school than other students because they were afraid to attend school (Kosciw, 2004). At minimum, lesbian and gay affirmative schools should have non-discriminatory and anti-harassment policies that include sexual orientation for both employees and students. In addition, they can have regular in-service trainings about lesbian and gay issues for teachers and other school employees. They can provide a safe forum for lesbian and gay students to meet. They can use inclusive language in school publications that do not make assumptions about family structure. They can have easily accessible resources on lesbian and gay issues. Moreover, they can have a curriculum that is inclusive of lesbian and gay people and the issues they face (Black, 1998; Cooley, 1998; Human Rights Campaign Foundation, 2007; Marinoble, 1998; McFarland & Dupuis, 2001; S. L. Nichols, 1999).

One study found that less than one in five students studied could identify someone who had been supportive of them at school and only one out of four students surveyed were able to talk to their school counselor about their sexual orientation (Telljohann,

1993). Another study found that 21% of school counselors studied reported that working with lesbian and gay students would *not* be gratifying. At the same time, 26% indicated that teachers exhibited prejudice towards lesbian and gay students in their schools; and 41% reported that their schools were not doing enough to support lesbian and gay students and help them adjust to their environment. Yet, only 27% of these school counselors believed it was their role to counsel lesbian and gay students and only 25% felt competent to do so (Price & Telljohann, 1991).

Another study found that less than 20% of school counselors had received training on lesbian and gay issues and many had negative feelings towards lesbian and gay students (J. Sears, 1992). Still another study found that only 15% of the homosexual adolescents studied believed their school counselors would be helpful; 43% stated that they believed their school counselors would be unhelpful (Mercier, 1989).

School counselors can begin providing the support lesbian and gay students need by first examining their own prejudices, biases, and heterosexism and working to create a lesbian and gay affirmative school counseling program (Bauman, 1998; Cooley, 1998; Gonsiorek, 1988; McFarland, 1998; Powell, 1987; K. E. Robinson, 1994).

When lesbian and gay students visit their school counselor program they should be assured full acceptance and confidentiality with regard to their sexual orientation (Black, 1998; Dempsey, 1994). A breach of confidentiality is a violation of the Ethical Standards for School Counselors and could lead to serious repercussions for the student, including suicide (American School Counselor Association, 2004).

School counselors working with adolescents might consider including questions about sexuality in their initial interviews with all students. Doing so conveys the message that sexuality is important and can be openly discussed. Open-ended questions such as, “Are you involved with anyone?” or “Do you have any other special, close friends?” are more productive than questions that assume heterosexuality (K. E. Robinson, 1994).

Counselors can help lesbian students feel comfortable by using the same terminology the student uses to describe themselves and their feelings. When students seem uneasy with labels, such as lesbian, gay, or homosexual, school counselors might consider using less charged terminology such as same-sex feelings (Black, 1998).

Lesbians may be struggling with their identity and may mourn the loss of a heterosexual identity. Counselors can help them grieve this loss and develop pride in their identity as a lesbian. Lesbians may feel angry, ashamed, guilty, afraid, and alone. Counselors can begin by listening without judging the student, allowing them time to vent, and validating what they are feeling. They can remind students that many individuals have experienced the same feelings and struggled with the same issues and are now healthy, happy adults who are proud of their lesbian identity (Black, 1998).

Lesbians may be experiencing relationship problems with their peers and families, including harassment and violence. These problems can result in depression, educational problems, health problems, self-mutilation, and suicide. Students may use drugs and alcohol to cope. They may drop out of school. They may run away from home, or be thrown away by their parents resulting in homelessness. It is important that school counselors assess for these issues and take immediate action to ensure that lesbian

students are living and studying in a safe environment, have an adequate support system, and develop positive coping skills.

Counselors should refrain from seeing confusion as an opportunity to convert a student to heterosexuality. Conversion therapy rarely works and is a violation of the Ethical Standards for School Counselors (American School Counselor Association, 2004). Counselors should never make assumptions about a student's sexual orientation. Instead, they can provide students with information about the many variations of sexual orientation and identity development and allow them to work through issues when they are ready to do so (Black, 1998). Moreover, they should never assume that a student's problems are always related to her sexual orientation (K. E. Robinson, 1994).

Lesbian students may experience internalized heterosexism. School counselors can assist these students in shifting away from self-blame by helping them understand that heterosexism is a cultural dysfunction, not something intrinsically wrong with the student (Black, 1998; Cooley, 1998; McFarland, 1998). They can help develop recreational activities where lesbian students can socialize with their peers. Moreover, they can establish support groups where young lesbians can talk about internalized heterosexism and other issues that are important to them (Black, 1998; Cooley, 1998; Gonsiorek, 1988; McFarland, 1998; McFarland & Dupuis, 2001; L. E. Muller & Hartman, 1998; Omiza, 1998; K. E. Robinson, 1994).

There is heavy media emphasis on sexually transmitted diseases for gay males; however, lesbians are rarely mentioned. Lesbian adolescents may incorrectly believe that they are immune to these diseases. Thus, it is important for counselors to provide

accurate information on sexually transmitted diseases or refer to the student to a reliable resource of information, such as a school nurse who is sensitive to and aware of issues important to lesbian students (Black, 1998; Cooley, 1998).

Lesbian students sometimes see little hope for the future. Research shows that LGBT youth who report significant verbal harassment are twice as likely to report they do not intend to go to college and their grade point averages were significantly lower than heterosexual students. Supportive counselors can make a difference for these students. Among LGBT students, 24.1% who could not identify supportive faculty reported they had no intention of going to college; however, that figure dropped to 10.1% when LGBT students could identify supportive staff at their school (Kosciw, 2004).

School counselors can reassure lesbian students that their sexual orientation will not prevent them from pursuing their dreams. Students may benefit from reading about or interacting with professional lesbians. This may help them understand that their future dreams for education and work are possible (McFarland, 1998). Counselors can also help by providing relevant information for choosing lesbian-affirming colleges (Orzek, 1992).

Lesbian students from ethnic, cultural, racial, or religious minority groups face unique needs. The experience of being lesbian or gay has a number of commonalities with belonging to other stigmatized minority groups (Hetrick & Martin, 1987; Telljohann, 1993). School counselors can take advantage of the parallel processes taking place in the students' identity development and help these students incorporate and celebrate their multiple identities (Chung, 1998).

School counselors can be informed about community resources for lesbian youth and make referrals as appropriate. They can be especially cognizant of the fact that some agencies may misrepresent themselves and attempt to convert lesbian girls to heterosexuality and guide students away from these agencies (Black, 1998; McFarland, 1998; Omiza, 1998; K. E. Robinson, 1994). There is also rapidly growing support for lesbians and gays within religious communities. School counselors should not overlook these organizations as possible resources for students (Black, 1998; Cooley, 1998; McFarland, 1998; Omiza, 1998; Powell, 1987).

When approached by parents of lesbian or gay students, school counselors can reassure them that they are not bad parents, that their parenting had no effect on their child's sexual orientation, and that their child is still the child they loved before (Cooley, 1998; Holtzen & Agresti, 1990; A. Martin & Hetrick, 1988; McFarland, 1998; Wells-Lurie, 1996). Even those parents who are supportive of their child's lesbian or gay identity may lack personal experience with the problems their child faces and lack strategies to help their child respond to those problems (A. Martin, 1982; A. Muller, 1987; Wells-Lurie, 1996). Thus, some families with lesbian children may benefit from family therapy. (School counselors should be aware that in most school districts the district is responsible for the financial costs of therapy if the counselor provides a direct referral to family therapy. Thus, instead of making a direct referral, counselors can provide several options or suggestions for the family to consider.)

School counselors can dispel myths and misinformation about sexual orientation for parents. Since parents also go through a type of coming out experience that includes

grieving the loss of their heterosexual child, school counselors can refer them to resources in their community where they can receive education and support from others who have been through this experience, such as Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) (Wells-Lurie, 1996).

School counselors can also be a part of the overall effort to make their school lesbian and gay affirmative. They can change their language so that it does not presume heterosexuality; they can be a resource for teachers who want to develop inclusive curricula; they can confront heterosexism when it arises in their school system and encourage others to do so; they can educate teachers and other school personnel about lesbian and gay issues and encourage them to look at their own prejudices and heterosexism; and they can dispel myths and misinformation about homosexuality in their schools (Bauman, 1998; Black, 1998; Cooley, 1998; McFarland, 1998; McFarland & Dupuis, 2001; Powell, 1987; K. E. Robinson, 1994; Telljohann, 1993). School counselors are encouraged to become a part of national initiatives such as the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (GLSEN) (www.glsen.org) where they can receive the information, materials, and support they need to become lesbian-affirmative

Schools are a reflection of our sociopolitical culture. As such, school counselors may be subjected to antagonism within the school system, as well as the community at large for becoming an advocate for lesbian and gay students. In the face of such alienation, they can stress the importance of a safe school environment where ideas can be discussed honestly and openly. They can remind others that a democratic society involves the celebration of all people and that advocacy for lesbian and gay youth

supports the core ideals of equality, respect, and citizenship in their school system (Chung, 1998; McFarland & Dupuis, 2001; K. E. Robinson, 1994).

School counselors can stress the fact that schools have a legal and ethical responsibility to accommodate and protect the civil rights of diverse populations. To support any discrimination sends the message that certain types of discrimination are acceptable. Students need to learn that it is not acceptable to treat others poorly because they are perceived to be different in some way (McFarland & Dupuis, 2001).

School counselors can assure others that this is not special treatment. School personnel have been identifying at-risk students and developing specialized programs to serve these students for decades. Serving and supporting lesbian and gay youth and their families is simply a continuation of those ongoing efforts (McFarland & Dupuis, 2001).

Community counselors can also be alert to the unique issues faced by lesbian and gay youth. This includes addressing the subject of sexual identity with *all* of their clients by communicating both verbally and nonverbally that sexual orientation issues can be discussed with them (Proctor, 1994). Community mental health centers can establish culturally competent practices and institute rigorous standards that are inclusive of the unique needs of lesbian and gay youth. They can consider providing telephone listening services, peer-counseling services, correspondence counseling, lesbian and gay pen pal programs, internet chat groups, and youth support groups to reach lesbian and gay youth who may feel isolated or alone and wish to speak with someone who has faced similar issues. Similarly, youth shelters, residential programs, foster care programs, and adoption programs can also be sensitive to issues faced by gay youth.

Discussions in *LC* suggest that lesbian youth desperately need support and acceptance. This issue was seventh among the most discussed issues in *LC* over the past 30 years. Research shows the young lesbians face a myriad of issues and may not have the coping skills or support they need to adequately cope with these issues. School counselors, mental health counselors, and community-based programs that serve youth can play an important role in helping young lesbians find the support they need to live healthy, productive, fulfilling lives.

Fat oppression. Fat oppression was the third most discussed item in the 30-year analysis of discussions in *LC*. Discussions about obesity generally fell into two distinct dichotomies. One group of lesbians believed that fat was a feminist issue and that the medical profession maintained patriarchal ideas about how a woman should look and behave by overstating the negative consequences of obesity and ignoring the fact that fat women could and did live long, healthy lives. These women expressed pride in their body image and were often active in the fat movement. The other group of subscribers believed that fat women were ignoring the negative health consequences of obesity and were using the fat movement as an excuse to systematically kill themselves with food. Subscribers on both sides of the issue were passionate in their opinions.

By the end of the analysis period there was evidence of a subtle shift in some women's attitudes toward obesity. This shift was brought about by women who were involved in the fat movement, but had made the unpopular decision to seek a surgical solution to their obesity. Although these women continued to verbalize their belief in the right of women to celebrate their bodies regardless of their size, they had made the

personal decision to seek surgical intervention for weight loss. This decision was clearly related to health concerns. These subscribers expressed fear that women in the fat movement would ostracize and criticize them for buying into patriarchal ideologies. However, they held firm in their belief in a woman's right to make choices about her body that were right for her and pledged continued support of the fat movement.

The lesbian fat movement is rooted in early feminist ideologies that highlighted what they perceived to be patriarchal rules about food intake and body size for women. These rules dictated that women be small; they should occupy less space, be less visible, and require fewer resources than men. Women should be physically weak. Their role was to nurture others; therefore, they should not nurture themselves, particularly with food. Moreover, women should not be powerful; they should maintain secondary positions in all areas of their lives (L. S. Brown, 1987).

Women were only valued when they followed these rules. However, the rules were constantly fluctuating to assure that following them was impossible. Therefore, women had to be constantly afraid and vigilant. They had to carefully watch how and what they ate, and punish themselves when they did not follow the rules. Women were to fear fat in themselves and in other women. Moreover, they were forbidden to love other women. To do so might result in women loving and valuing themselves and breaking the other rules (L. S. Brown, 1987).

Our culture has been unrelenting in its criticism of fat women. They are stereotyped as ugly and stupid. They are typecast as pigs that are afraid of sex and use their body fat to protect them from intimacy. They have been made a sexual fetish and

those attracted to them are viewed as perverted, and they face a wide range of discriminatory practices (L. S. Brown, 1987; Siever, 1994). Despite the fact that *LC* subscribers were divided on issues of obesity, there is some evidence that lesbians may have overcome the social rules that women be thin to some extent.

Research suggests that lesbians are less concerned about the overall physical attractiveness of themselves or their partners (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Gettleman & Thompson, 1994; Herzog, Newman, & Warshaw, 1992; Siever, 1994, 1996; Taub, 1999). There is evidence that the lesbian community is generally more accepting of larger-sized women (L. S. Brown, 1987; Erickson, 1999; Myers, Taub, Morris, & Rothblum, 1999; Ojerholm & Rothblum, 1999; Rothblum, 1994b) and that lesbians may actually prefer women with higher body mass indexes (Cohen & Tannenbaum, 2001; Swami & Tovee, 2006).

Studies of the content of personal ads have shown that lesbians are less likely than heterosexuals and gay men to describe their appearance and they rarely state a preference for the desired appearance of their partners (Deaux & Hanna, 1984; Laner, 1978). Some studies suggest that lesbians are concerned with physical attractiveness (Beren, Hayden, Wilfley, & Grilo, 1996); however, attractiveness may be defined differently by lesbians. For them, being in good physical condition may be the most important measure of attractiveness (K. Heffernan, 1999). Moreover, researchers have found evidence that physical condition is closely related to self-esteem in lesbians (Striegel-Moore, Tucker, & Hsu, 1990).

Research has shown that lesbians tend to be heavier than heterosexual women (Aaron et al., 2001; Case et al., 2004; Cochran et al., 2001; Dibble, Roberts, Robertson, & Paul, 2002; Owens, Hughes, & Owens-Nicholson, 2003; Roberts, Dibble, Nussey, & Casey, 2003; Valanis et al., 2000; Yancey, Cochran, Corliss, & Mays, 2003) and they are generally dissatisfied with their weight (K. Heffernan, 1996). However, they may be less likely than heterosexual women to have symptoms of eating disorders (L. S. Brown, 1987; Gettleman & Thompson, 1994; Guille & Chrisler, 1999; Herzog et al., 1992; Owens et al., 2003; Siever, 1994, 1996) and may be less concerned about being overweight (Brand, Rothblum, & Solomon, 1992; J. A. Schneider, O'Leary, & Jenkins, 1993). Moreover, they may be more likely to exercise for health, fitness, mood, or enjoyment reasons rather than for weight control, physical attractiveness, or to improve body tone (Cogan, 1999; K. Heffernan, 1996; Striegel-Moore et al., 1990). Nonetheless, research suggests that lesbians may be more likely to binge eat (Bradford et al., 1994; L. S. Brown, 1987; K. Heffernan, 1996; Striegel-Moore et al., 1990) or just as likely to binge eat as heterosexual women (French, Story, Remafedi, Resnick, & Blum, 1996).

Research on overall body satisfaction among lesbians is mixed. Most studies have shown that lesbians are more satisfied with their overall appearance than heterosexual women (Austin et al., 2004; Gettleman & Thompson, 1994; Herzog et al., 1992; Lakkis, Ricciardelli, & Williams, 1999; Morrison, Morrison, & Sager, 2004; Owens et al., 2003; J. A. Schneider et al., 1993; Share & Mintz, 2002; Siever, 1994, 1996). A few studies suggest that lesbians are dissatisfied with their bodies, sometimes to the same extent as

heterosexual women (Beren et al., 1996; Brand et al., 1992; Cogan, 1999; K. Heffernan, 1996, 1999; Striegel-Moore et al., 1990).

Some studies have found that lesbians frequently dieted or were not significantly different from heterosexual women in dieting (Brand et al., 1992; K. Heffernan, 1996, 1999). Others have found that lesbians are less likely than heterosexual women to diet (Cogan, 1999; Lakkis et al., 1999; Striegel-Moore et al., 1990).

Given the mixed research findings on lesbians and their comfort level with their weight and body, it would be a mistake for counselors to assume that lesbians do not have weight and body concerns or eating disorders (Krentz & Arthur, 2001). Counselors working with fat lesbians can begin by examining their internalized myths and prejudices about fat women. Do they assume that a fat client's eating is out of control? Do they assume that their clients who are not fat are eating healthily and are not concerned about their weight? Do they secretly envy bulimic clients because they can eat whatever they want? Do they make unsolicited recommendations regarding diets and exercises when clients do not express concern about their weight? Counselors must be prepared to accept their client's views on issues of obesity. This is especially true for lesbians who are more likely to be aware of feminist views regarding the oppression of fat women (L. S. Brown, 1987). The counselor who has not dealt with her own issues of internalized fat oppression is likely to oppress her clients as well.

Clinical observations suggest that internalized heterosexism may be related to weight and body issues (L. S. Brown, 1987); therefore, it is important that counselors assess the client's level of internalized heterosexism. Lesbians experiencing internalized

heterosexism may believe that being overweight contributes to negative stereotyping of lesbians and may try to prove that it is possible to be an attractive, feminine lesbian (K. Heffernan, 1996; Krentz & Arthur, 2001). They may attempt to be conventionally attractive to compensate for not being socially acceptable (Krentz & Arthur, 2001). Or they may feel their bodies are defective or that what they do with their bodies is shameful (K. Heffernan, 1996; Krentz & Arthur, 2001).

Some research suggests that women who support feminist ideologies may be less likely to have negative body images (Bergeron & Senn, 1998; Cogan, 1999; Garner & Cooke, 1997, February; Guille & Chrisler, 1999; Leavy & Adams, 1986; Snyder & Hasbrouck, 1996). Therefore, it may be important for counselors working with clients struggling with negative body images to expose their clients to the basic tenets of feminism, particularly issues of power and empowerment. Worell and Remer (2003) discuss the steps counselors might use to analyze power with clients: (a) the counselor and client can discuss different definitions of power and choose a definition that works best for them; (b) counselors can help clients identify different kinds of power; (c) counselors can give clients information about the different levels of access to power afforded different groups and help them identify the types of power they have available to them; (d) counselors can help clients learn ways to effectively exert power; (e) counselors can assist clients in exploring the ways social messages and environmental barriers effect their use of power, including challenging and changing those messages and assessing the risks, costs, and benefits to using alternate types of power; and (f) counselors can encourage clients to try additional or alternative types of power and power strategies.

Research also suggests that involvement in lesbian and gay activities may serve as a buffer against negative body image for lesbians (K. Heffernan, 1996). Thus, counselors might encourage lesbians who are struggling with negative body images to seek out and become involved in activities in the local lesbian community. For lesbians who are extremely closeted, becoming involved in discussions in *LC* might be a safe way of becoming more involved in the lesbian community. Internet chat rooms are another alternative; however, counselors should be aware of the problems that can arise from chat room participation including internet addictions, unhealthy internet romances, and exposure to predators or imposters.

Although research suggests that lesbians are somewhat insulated from societal standards of beauty, this protection is not necessarily good for everyone. As we have seen, the presence of a strong fat movement in the lesbian community can be restrictive to women who are unhappy with their weight or bodies. These women may be ostracized and accused of buying into patriarchal standards of beauty (Myers et al., 1999). Counselors can be aware of this possibility and help clients who wish to make changes in their weight or bodies find the support they need to be healthy and happy.

Over 30 years of discussions, fat oppression was the third most discussed item published in *LC*. It was clearly a divisive issue for subscribers. Although research suggests that many lesbians have been successful in insulating themselves from cultural demands regarding how a woman is supposed to look, it would be a mistake for counselors to make the assumption that lesbians do not have concerns about their weight or bodies. It is important that counselors understand the issue of obesity as it plays out in

the lesbian community and provide appropriate intervention that takes into account the unique needs and concerns of lesbian clients.

Lesbians in prison. A letter from an incarcerated lesbian was the eighth most discussed item during the 30-year analysis. In the letter, the subscriber described the struggles of lesbians living in prison. Some women who responded to her letter had a harsh you got what you deserved so live with it attitude. Others wrote passionate letters describing the harsh prison conditions many women face. Moreover, many lesbian prisoners wrote to describe their own struggles living in the prison system. This was not the first time the topic of women in prison had arisen in *LC* discussions. In the 1974-1979 analysis an inmate wrote to express how much true lesbians in prison appreciated publications like *LC*. During the 1994-1999 analysis, an inmate wrote to ask subscribers to donate lesbian-themed books to her prison library.

The criminal justice system is generally a system of men, for men. Women are the minority both as offenders and as professionals working in the corrections system. Yet, there has been a tremendous increase in the numbers of incarcerated women. For example, in 2001, there were over 91,000 women confined in U.S. prisons. This reflected a 36% increase in the number of women in prison since 1996. During the same time period, there was a 24% increase in the number of incarcerated men (Harrison & Beck, 2002, July).

This growth in the number of female prisoners has resulted in more scholarly, professional, and public attention to women's issues in prison. Research has shown that these women face many challenges that differ from those of men in the areas of health

care (A. Morris & Wilkinson, 1995; P. H. Ross & Lawrence, 1998), families and children (Bloom, 1993; Hale, 1988), and equal rights (Flanagan, 1995; Kaplan & Sasser, 1996).

Nonetheless, most research on incarcerated women generally focuses on the prevalence of homosexual activity and sexual coercion (Hensley, Wright, Koscheski, Castle, & Tewksbury, 2002). These factors are difficult to study for a number of reasons. Sexual activity is a violation of prison rules and many inmates and staff frown on same-sex sexual encounters. Thus, inmates may be afraid to report such activity. Some research findings rely on self-administered surveys; the accuracy of these surveys depends on the ability of inmates to complete the survey. Since between 60% and 75% of inmates are illiterate (Hensley & Tewksbury, 2002; Herrick, 1991), this creates a significant barrier in obtaining accurate information. Definitions of sexual behaviors in this research are often unclear and some inmates may not report instances of sexual assault in order to protect their reputation. To appear weak in the prison system can have devastating effects on a woman in prison. Moreover, inmates who report sexual aggression may be placed in protective custody, which ultimately becomes a type of punishment (Hensley & Tewksbury, 2002; Severance, 2004).

Despite these barriers, research indicates that consensual sexual activity is a frequent occurrence in female correctional facilities (Giallombardo, 1966; Greer, 2000; Halleck & Hersko, 1962; E. Heffernan, 1972; Otis, 1913; Owen, 1998; Propper, 1978, 1981, 1982; Selling, 1931; Ward & Kassebaum, 1965). Studies estimate that between one-third (Greer, 2000; Owen, 1998) and nearly one-half (Hensley, Tewksbury, & Koscheski, 2002) of women in prison are sexually active with other inmates.

Sexual assaults also occur among female prisoners (Alarid, 2000; Hensley, Castle, & Tewksbury, 2003; Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 2000; Struckman-Johnson, Struckman-Johnson, Rucker, Bumby, & Donaldson, 1996). Some studies suggest that the incidence is low, especially when compared to male prisoners (Hensley & Tewksbury, 2002). However, other studies suggest that sexual assaults are drastically underreported (Alarid, 2000). One study found that nearly half (45%) of the reported incidents of sexual assault involved staff perpetrators (Struckman-Johnson & Struckman-Johnson, 2000). Therefore, it is not surprising that studies that do not include staff-on-inmate sexual assault report much lower rates of sexual assault among female inmates (4.5%) (Hensley et al., 2003).

A number of earlier studies found that many inmates who were sexually active in prison did not identify as lesbians before incarceration. Researchers explained this sexual contact as a way of coping with stress and deprivation within the prison environment (Gagnon & Simon, 1968; Propper, 1978; Ward & Kassebaum, 1964). They believed these women would revert back to heterosexual relationships following their release from prison (Pollock, 1998; Ward & Kassebaum, 1964). However, many other researchers believe that sexual identity among female prisoners who engage in lesbian relationships in prison is more complex than was originally believed (Diaz-Cotto, 1996; Faith, 1993; Hampton, 1993; Hensley, Tewksbury et al., 2002; Maeve, 1999; Severance, 2004; Watterson, 1996) and that women may struggle with their sexual identity during their incarceration and following their release from prison (Severance, 2004).

Several studies reported that prisoners use specific terminology to describe sexual or romantic relationships among female inmates (Giallombardo, 1966; Halleck & Hersko, 1962; E. Heffernan, 1972; Maeve, 1999; Selling, 1931; Severance, 2004). One of the most prominent findings in research on the social and sexual cultures of female inmates was the practice of forming pseudofamilies. Pseudofamilies were familiar structures within which women identified and related to one another as kin (Hensley & Tewksbury, 2002). These familial structures were not found in male correctional facilities (Hensley & Tewksbury, 2002).

Pseudofamilies first appeared in the research in the early 1930s and were speculated to serve as substitute families for juveniles who were emotionally disassociated from their families (Selling, 1931). Titles such as “Mammy” or “Mumsy” were given to girls who assumed a maternal role and the title “Popsy” was given to the father figure. The girls used derivatives of their real names for other male roles such as brothers or uncles (e.g., Louis for Louise and Bob for Barbara) (Selling, 1931).

While pseudofamilies were quite common in earlier research (Giallombardo, 1966; E. Heffernan, 1972; Hensley & Tewksbury, 2002; Owen, 1998; Propper, 1982), researchers have not found the presence of these families since the late 1990s (Girshick, 1999; Greer, 2000; Pollock, 1998). Some researchers believe early researchers may have exaggerated or misinterpreted these relationships (Faith, 1993). Greer argued that changing social conditions in the prisons have excluded the need for pseudofamilies. She believed that changes in the physical and interpersonal environment of women’s prisons,

as well as variations in prison sentences and the mere passage of time has resulted in less investment in prison social roles.

The response of prisons to sexual activity between female inmates varies. One study found that some prisons only sanctioned women if they were caught in bed together. Others placed women in solitary confinement if they were caught in another woman's room. One prison sent letters to the families of prisoners who were sent to maximum confinement for homosexual activity (Watterson, 1996).

Women in prison typically come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds where their lives were frequently in constant chaos (Maeve, 1999; Piercy, 1976; Watterson, 1996). Women of color are overrepresented in female prisons (American Correctional Association, 1990; Immarigeon, 1992; Maeve, 1999; Snell & Morton, 1994; Watterson, 1996). Many women in prison are single mothers with dependent children. Since most prisons are in remote rural areas, it is often difficult for families and friends to visit (Bloom, 1995; Immarigeon, 1992; Maeve, 1999; Taylor, 1996). Therefore, only about 50% of incarcerated mothers ever see their children while they are in prison (Snell & Morton, 1994).

The majority of women in prison have histories of sexual and physical abuse from early childhood (American Correctional Association, 1990; Comack, 1996; Fogel & Martin, 1992; Haney & Kristiansen, 1998; Immarigeon, 1992; K. Jordan, Schlenger, Fairbank, & Caddell, 1996; Maeve, 1997, 1999; National Commission on Correctional Health Care, 1994; Richie & Johnson, 1996; Singer, Bussey, Li-Yu, & Lunghofer, 1995; Snell & Morton, 1994) and imprisonment can re-expose them to the traumatic

experiences of their childhood, including sexualization, powerlessness, stigmatization, and betrayal (Haney & Kristiansen, 1998). As children, they were unable to protect themselves and were not protected by the adults in their lives. As adults they have learned to react with violence in order to protect themselves from real or perceived threats (Maeve, 1999). As such, approximately one-quarter of women in prison have committed violent crimes and may continue to struggle with violent behavior while in prison (American Correctional Association, 1990; Immarigeon, 1992; Maeve, 1999; Snell & Morton, 1994).

Women prisoners often experience a number of serious mental health problems. Yet, counseling is often reserved for inmates who have real mental illnesses—those that can be successfully treated with medication. The remainder are characterized as “faking it” or are diagnosed with borderline personality disorder, which is deemed untreatable (Lovell & Jemelka, 1998; Maeve, 1999).

Prison life is difficult, at best. Maeve (1999) provided a vivid image of day-to-day life in the prison where she conducted her research as a prison nurse. Inmates were generally faceless numbers who were allowed no expression of individuality and little personal choice. Pictures of family or other mementoes could not be visible and there were limitations placed on the number of books, clothing, and toiletry items an inmate could have. Personal lockers were organized in a specified manner and a woman’s personal belongings were “fair game” during inspections (Maeve, 1999).

Each woman’s room was secured by a heavy door with a long narrow window that could be covered only when she was changing clothes or using the bathroom. If the

window was covered for too long, she could expect an officer to check for possible homosexual activity. Room assignments were often influenced by the perception of that an inmate might be lesbian (Maeve, 1999).

Women wore prison-issued apparel and shoes unless they had the funds to purchase their own athletic shoes. They could only wear a necklace if it portrayed an acceptable religious symbol (Maeve, 1999).

Six times daily, women were locked in their rooms and counted to make sure everyone was accounted for. This procedure took between 45 minutes and 2 hours. Following the first count, an officer would often make a second sweep in an attempt to catch inmates trying to be intimate between checks (Maeve, 1999).

Women received no compensation for prison labor; yet, they were charged a five-dollar co-pay for appointments with medical care or mental health staff. Thus, women with little money often chose to use it for store items instead of seeing medical staff or mental health care providers (Maeve, 1999).

Food was served three times daily during the week and twice daily on weekends and holidays. They were allowed seven minutes to eat and the quality of the food was a constant source of complaint. Women who could afford to buy food at the prison store often bought their own food and did not eat meals in the cafeteria. Their diet was typically comprised of fatty, salty snack foods (Maeve, 1999).

Women who received a disciplinary report for breaking rules were placed in a lockdown unit for a maximum of 28 days. The most typical offenses were smoking in

their rooms, unauthorized presence in another woman's room, failure to follow instructions, and homosexual behavior (Maeve, 1999).

While in lockdown, women were escorted in handcuffs to a cage once a day where they could get an hour of fresh air. They were escorted to medical appointments in handcuffs and leg chains. They were allowed one shower per week and they could have only a few personal items and no books except a Bible (Maeve, 1999).

Corrections officers were obsessed with the women's sexual activities, whether real or imagined. Moreover, they attributed the inmates' problems to their essential evil nature and perverted sexual tendencies (Maeve, 1999).

The prison ministry was also consumed with the women's sexual behaviors. Therefore, they were obsessed with helping women turn away from the sin of homosexuality. Women who identified as being sexually active, or who appeared to be homosexual were placed in group therapy with a chaplain where they were advised to stop looking like a man by growing their hair long, learning to wear makeup, and walking and sitting like a woman. They were given propaganda claiming that attraction to children and animals was an inevitable consequence of a homosexual lifestyle (Maeve, 1999).

As one might expect, counselors in this type of environment face unique barriers to being affective helpers. Many prisoners may have been exposed to ineffective and unprofessional mental health professionals in the past making them reluctant to trust other professionals. Moreover, prison administrators may require counselors to follow a certain agenda when counseling inmates, which may include reporting details about

counseling sessions to prison officials. As a result, inmates may become defensive and construct an emotional barrier that counselors must break through to create the trust needed for an effective counseling relationship (D. Morgan, 1997).

As discussed earlier, female inmates have become accustomed to being sexualized and judged by prison personnel. Many resort to lying, refusing to reveal their feelings, telling the counselor what she thinks she is supposed to say, or saying what she thinks will be shocking to the counselor as a way to protect her feelings and avoid being judged or punished (D. Morgan, 1997). Given the severe consequences for homosexual contact in prison, it is easy to understand why women resort to lying or avoidance when asked about their sexual behaviors.

In order to survive, inmates have become experts in human behavior and nonverbal messages. Prisoners will immediately see through facades of false sympathy, inattention, or bravado in counselors. Thus, counselors offering genuine, honest, fair, and sincere friendship may be more successful in forming a working relationship with an inmate (D. Morgan, 1997).

Prison culture is a social island and prison counselors should not assume that same-sex relationships in prison are the same as those outside the penitentiary. There may be deep and complex motivations for women in these relationships (D. Morgan, 1997). Some may feel confused, embarrassed, and ashamed, while others may be experiencing normal relationship challenges (Severance, 2004). Still others may bring previous relationship and addiction patterns into these relationships and may not have the emotional tools necessary to deal with these issues on their own (D. Morgan, 1997).

Despite the fact that same-sex relationships in prison are substantially different from those outside the penitentiary, there are some similarities. For example, the necessity to hide relationships from those in power has resulted in the need to create a unique language in the lesbian community as well as among sexually active women in prison. When working with either population, it is important that counselors learn and use the language of their clients. Isolation from or rejection by families has resulted in the need to create pseudofamilies or families of choice by both groups of women (Ariel & McPherson, 2000; Giallombardo, 1966; E. Heffernan, 1972; Hensley & Tewksbury, 2002; Owen, 1998; Propper, 1982; Saffron, 1998; Weston, 1991). While there is speculation that pseudofamilies are no longer a common practice in prisons (Faith, 1993), it is important that counselors recognize and respect them when they are present. Moreover, in the same way that lesbians may need to grieve the loss of their families, women in prison may need to grieve the loss of contact with their family outside the prison.

Although there is a low incidence of sexual coercion or sexual assault in women's prisons, it is important that counselors assess for these incidents and help survivors deal with the emotional consequences. Counselors can be cognizant of the fact that women may refuse to admit to such incidents, especially when the crime was perpetrated by prison staff. To do so may cause them to appear weak in a system where maintaining one's power is key to remaining safe (Hensley & Tewksbury, 2002).

It is also important that counselors obtain a thorough history when working with women in prison. Research has shown that many of these women have been severely

traumatized since childhood. They may have limited coping skills and attempt to deal with these issues through self-injury, substance abuse, violence, and even suicide (Maeve, 1999).

Pre-release programming can include discussions and support groups focused on the loss and grief women may experience when ending prison relationships, whether romantic or platonic. Women may also benefit from referrals to women's centers, mental health agencies and LGBT groups in their community (Severance, 2004).

In summary, women in prison become faceless entities with no way to express individuality and little to no personal choice. They are redefined by prison staff as nothing more than their sexuality and the crime they committed. They are constantly policed, punished and demonized for needing the touch and love of another human being. The prison counselor may be the only place where inmates can receive the support and validation they need to survive prison life. It is vital that prison counselors understand the unique dynamics of prison relationships and the special dynamics among women prisoners in general in order to be effective when working with women in prison.

Relationships and Sexuality

The Relationships and Sexuality category included discussions about lesbian relationships, sexuality, and sexual intimacy. It was the third most discussed category in the 30-year analysis.

Counseling Implications

Contributors to *LC* discussed a wide range of issues related to the Relationships and Sexuality category over the past 30 years ranging from financial arrangements to

female ejaculation and unwanted body hair. Lesbians were deeply concerned that their relationships were doomed to become little more than asexual friendships over time. Moreover, they were clearly passionate about their views on such topics as sadomasochism. This suggests that it is important for counselors to create an open, accepting counseling environment where lesbians can discuss their most intimate concerns as they relate to their relationships and sexual practices.

Lesbian bed death. A letter from a subscriber whose partner was no longer interested in sex was the fourth most discussed item during the 30-year period studied. In this case, her partner's disinterest in sex may have been a symptom of incest (See further Child Sexual Abuse in the Clinical Implications section of the Health and Mental Health category). Responses to this letter were mixed. Some subscribers reported that they, too, were experiencing decreased interest in sex over time. However, others indicated that their sex lives continued to be passionate and satisfying.

A number of theorists have attempted to explain a phenomenon called lesbian bed death which was "discovered" by Blumstein and Schwartz (1983) in a highly-regarded study of American couples. These researchers found that about two years into the relationship, the sex lives of lesbians in their study came to a screeching halt. This discovery was followed by an avalanche of speculative theories that were promulgated by the lesbian community until lesbian bed death had become a generally accepted truth.

Some theorists speculated that socialization played a role in lesbian bed death (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; M. Nichols, 1982, 1987). They claimed that women were socialized to be passive. They did not request sex and were not even aware of their own

sexual desires. Thus, since lesbians were first and foremost women, they were unaware of their desire for sex and did not initiate or pressure their partners to have sex. Heiman's (1975) classic study has been used to support this theory. Heiman measured the physiological arousal of women and men while they listened to sexually explicit audiotapes. She found no difference in physiological arousal between women and men; however, all of the men reported feeling aroused and only half of the women reported feeling aroused.

Other theorists believed that women were socialized to be caretakers—to attend to the needs of others over their own (Pearlman, 1989; Vargo, 1987). According to these theorists, lesbians became involved in a circular process of being sensitive to their partner's feelings at the expense of their own. Sexual dysfunction resulted from the inability to temper one's own needs with the needs of one's partner.

Some research found that nearly all lesbians had experienced coitus with men at least once (A. P. Bell & Weinberg, 1978). Thus, Nichols (1987) hypothesized that these women had used intercourse with men to hide their sexual orientation. For these women, sexual intimacy with men may have been distasteful, or even painful, resulting in negative conditioning that may have been transferred to their sexual relationships with women.

Apuzzo theorized that incest was sometimes used to punish or control "tomboys" who did not follow socially prescribed gender roles. This abuse may have also resulted in negative conditioning in lesbians (M. Nichols, 1987).

Berzon believed that some lesbians may have resisted their desire for sexual intimacy with other women by having close non-sexual relationships with them. These psychological defenses may have remained intact even after accepting one's lesbian identity and interfered with a lesbian's ability to enjoy a satisfying sexual relationship (M. Nichols, 1987).

Tripp's (1975) theory of importation and exportation suggested that individuals were attracted to others who possessed characteristics in which they felt deficient. Sexual contact was a means of incorporating these deficiencies while at the same time exporting characteristics in which one's partner felt deficient. Since lesbians valued sameness in their relationships, lesbians would be expected to experience wonderful, close-knit relationships, but abysmal sex lives (M. Nichols, 1987).

Other theorists (Tennov, 1979; Tripp, 1975) believed that sexual desire required some sort of tension or distance within the relationship. The tendency for closeness in lesbian relationships was so prominent as to be dubbed *fusion*, *close-coupledness*, or *merging* by various theorists (A. P. Bell & Weinberg, 1978; Jay & Young, 1977; Krestan & Bepko, 1980). They speculated that this resulted from the fact that egalitarian relationships were highly valued by the lesbian community. Or perhaps lesbian couples formed rigid boundaries around their relationships as a means of protection from the outside world (Krestan & Bepko, 1980). Many theorists believed that the closeness in lesbian relationships led to diminished sexual excitement (Faderman, 1991; Lindenbaum, 1985; Loulan, 1984; M. Nichols, 1987) as well as alcoholism and social isolation (Krestan & Bepko, 1980).

The issue of fusion led to a number of debates about its consequences (Iasenza, 2000). Fusion was framed as pathological (Lindenbaum, 1985; Siegel, 1988), potentially problematic (Burch, 1982; Elise, 1986; P. A. Kaufman, Harrison, & Hyde, 1984; Roth, 1989), or positive and empowering (Burch, 1985; Glassgold, 1992). Treatment recommendations included teaching lesbian couples how to fight, encouraging competition between lesbian partners, and suggesting that women in lesbian relationships develop separate interests and spend more time apart (Iasenza, 2000).

Eventually, feminists began to challenge mental health professionals who attempted to force women into a male developmental mold. As feminist psychological theories began to normalize women's capacity for empathy and intimacy, the concept of fusion in lesbian relationships became obsolete (Gilligan, 1982; Gilligan, Roberts, & Tolman, 1991; J. V. Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver, & Surrey, 1991). However, despite much evidence to the contrary (Bressler & Lavender, 1986; Coleman, Hoon, & Hoon, 1983; Hedblom, 1973; Jay & Young, 1977; Matthews, Tartaro, & Hughes, 2003), Blumstein and Schwartz's (1983) findings continued to be cited by sex experts as "proof" that lesbian bed death existed (Iasenza, 1999, 2000, 2002). The irony was that in the past researchers had viewed lesbians as pathological because they were sexual; now researchers were characterizing them as pathological because they weren't (M. Hall, 2001).

Research used to support lesbian bed death is problematic on a number of levels. Researchers often conflated sexual infrequency and inhibited sexual desire. Yet, these processes can have very different causes and may develop very differently. Moreover,

they did not take into account the uniqueness of lesbian sexuality (Iasenza, 1999, 2000, 2002; M. Nichols, 2004). For example, Blumstein and Schwartz (1983) were only interested in the number or quantity of sexual encounters in the couples they studied. Therefore, they ignored the quality of those encounters. Masters and Johnson (1979) found that heterosexual couples in their study were more interested in quantifiable sex such as performance and orgasmic attainment; however, lesbians were most interested in quality. Lesbians took considerably more time having sex. They engaged in whole-body contact, kissing, hugging, touching, and holding before any breast or genital contact was ever made. Moreover, lesbians valued the reciprocity of giving and receiving pleasure. Therefore, quantification of what “counts” does not begin to describe the nature of lesbian sexuality (M. Hall, 1996). Had Blumstein and Schwartz focused on longevity instead of frequency, they might have discovered *heterosexual bed death* (Iasenza, 1999, 2000, 2002).

In studies that compared lesbians with heterosexual women, researchers have found that lesbians are more arousable (Coleman et al., 1983; Iasenza, 1991), more assertive (Iasenza, 1991; Masters & Johnson, 1979), and more comfortable using erotic language during sex (Wells, 1989, 1990) than heterosexual women. They reported lower levels of orgasmic dysfunction than heterosexual women (Coleman et al., 1983; Falco, 1991; Hedblom, 1973; Jay & Young, 1977; Kinsey, 1953; M. Nichols, 2004). Moreover, they often reported being more satisfied with the quality of their sex lives than heterosexual women (Bressler & Lavender, 1986; Coleman et al., 1983; Iasenza, 1991; Jay & Young, 1977).

Blumstein and Swartz (1983) also found that all couples surveyed considered reduced sexual contact to be a normal response to time limitations, energy levels, and becoming familiar with one other. Yet this sexual infrequency negatively affected all couples except lesbians. Research suggests that relationship satisfaction in lesbians is more closely related to friendship (Vetere, 1982), closeness, and equitable involvement and power (Peplau, Cochran, Rook, & Pedesky, 1978; Peplau, Padesky, & Hamilton, 1982).

Some counselors believe that having little to no sex is perfectly normal for lesbian couples in long-term relationships and what needs to be “fixed” is the pro-sex fervor of therapists. They claim that no amount of therapy for underlying “problems” will change the frequency of sex between lesbians in a long-term relationship. These counselors believe that the most important issue is challenging a clients’ beliefs that their identities as lesbians hinge on their sexual performance (M. Hall, 1996). Others believe that counseling can and does bring about positive changes for lesbians who are dissatisfied with their sex lives.

Iasenza’s (2000) multicultural sex therapy approach takes into account the social, familial, interpersonal, intrapsychic, and therapeutic contexts of a lesbian couple who is dissatisfied with their sex lives. Social issues include the effects of sexism, phallocentrism, heterosexism, and misogyny on a couple’s sex life. Counselors may find that bibliotherapy and videotherapy can be useful in helping couples identify and counteract the effects of negative socialization about a woman’s body and her sexual

entitlement (L. S. Brown, 1988; Iasenza, 2000; Parks, Cutts, Woodson, & Flarity-White, 2001; Swartz, 1989).

Most often, it is our family that teaches us attitudes about our bodies, sexual attractions, and sexual behaviors. Therefore, it is important for counselors to explore the early lessons lesbians learned from their families and discuss the nature of a lesbian couple's current relationship with their families of origin (Iasenza, 2000).

Counselors can also assess the quality of a lesbian couple's interpersonal relationships. Internalized feelings or conflicts may be projected onto one's partner. It is important to acknowledge and deal with these issues for sexual safety and spontaneity to be possible. Couples may also become aware of multiple or shifting unconscious sexual desires or gender identifications that contribute to their adult sexual styles (Iasenza, 2000).

A healthy sense of self develops when girls are mirrored by their caregivers and feel they are seen and valued. Therefore, it is important to explore the intrapsychic experiences of women in lesbian relationships. Specifically, how did they experience themselves as girls and how did the world respond to them? Lesbian girls who grow up with no positive lesbian role models, or who fail to see themselves reflected in society may develop feelings of shame. This shame can contribute to sexual phobias, decreased sexual desire, or problems with orgasm. Clients may not be aware of the sacrifice they are making for the sake of survival and acceptance (Iasenza, 2000).

Lesbian couples may also be unaware of the way that painful childhood experiences can impact the quality of their sex lives. They may need assistance in

identifying the defenses, conflicts, and styles of relating to others that operate both within and outside their bedrooms (Iasenza, 2000).

Counselors undertake crucial roles when working with lesbian couples who are dissatisfied with their sex lives. They may serve as sex educators, role models, nonjudgmental coaches, or objects of transference (Iasenza, 2000). Therefore, it may be helpful to be aware of their personal prejudices about sexual expression. It may also be helpful if counselors are comfortable with their own sexuality, and comfortable discussing issues of sexuality within the lesbian context.

In summary, research claiming to have discovered lesbian bed death is fraught with questionable assumptions about the lesbian sexual experience. Moreover, these findings are not supported by other studies of lesbian sexuality, including the current study of discussion in *LC*. Nonetheless, some counselors believe that a reduced interest in sex over time is normal for lesbians. They believe that counselors need to keep in their pro-sex attitudes in check and offer lesbian couples reassurance and support. Other therapists believe that lesbians who are dissatisfied with their sex lives can benefit from lesbian-affirmative therapy. One useful therapeutic approach for working with these couples is multicultural sex therapy. This approach takes into account the social, familial, interpersonal, intrapsychic, and therapeutic contexts of a lesbian couple in therapy.

Sadomasochism. Discussions in *LC* suggest that lesbians often define themselves more by what they are *not* than by what they are. For many *LC* subscribers, a true lesbian does *not* practice sadomasochism. Many subscribers were infuriated when *LC* published mild pornographic or sadomasochistic ads, such as an ad for the x-rated video “Hay-

Fever: A Lesbian Erotic Cowgirl Comedy” made “by and for women.” Although *LC* had published such ads in the past, women on both sides of the sex wars during the 1980s wrote to express their opinions, making this issue the sixth most discussed issue during the 30-year analysis period.

By the 1989-1994 analysis period, discussions about sadomasochism had generally disappeared from *LC*. However, professionals in the counseling community continue to debate who gets to decide what is healthy sexuality and the criteria that should be used to make that decision (Iasenza, 1998, April 30). In 1998, *In the Family* asked therapists to contribute articles for a special issue on sadomasochism (Markowitz, 1998, April 30b). In 2006, the *Journal of Homosexuality* followed suit (Moser & Kleinplatz, 2006). Clearly, the issue of sadomasochism is not dead, at least not for mental health professionals (Iasenza, 1998, April 30).

Despite the fact that there are no studies showing that individuals who practice sadomasochism fit the criteria for a mental disorder, sadism and masochism do appear in the current *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th Edition, Text Revision (DSM-IV-TR)* (Moser & Kleinplatz, 2005). They are also listed in the *International Classification of Diseases*, which is the internationally accepted classification and diagnostic system of the World Health Organization (Reiersol & Skeid, 2006).

The *DSM-IV-TR* defines masochism as “the act (real, not simulated) of being humiliated, beaten, bound, or otherwise made to suffer” (American Psychiatric Association, 2000, p. 573). Sadism is defined as “acts (real, not simulated) in which the

individual derives sexual excitement from the psychological or physical suffering (including humiliation) of the victim” (p. 573). Sadism and masochism are only considered diagnosable mental illnesses when they cause “clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning” (p. 574-574).

Sadomasochism is also known as SM, S/M, BDSM, D/S, Leather, or simply as “kink” (Moser & Kleinplatz, 2006). BDSM refers to the major sub-groupings of sadomasochism: bondage and discipline, domination and submission, and sadism and masochism (or sadomasochism). “Leather” is the term most often used by the lesbian and gay community (Moser & Kleinplatz, 2006).

Kraft-Ebing coined the term masochism from the name of the writer Leopold Ritter von Sacher Masoch, who wrote novels that reflected his preoccupation with pain, humiliation and submission (Cleugh, 1952; Weinberg, 2006). The word sadism is found in French literature and is linked with the writings of Comte Donatien-Alphonse-Francois, Marquis de Sade who believed that pain was more thrilling than joy (Ridinger, 2006; Weinberg, 2006). Early psychoanalysts drew their knowledge about sadomasochism from the literary work of de Sade, Sacher Masoch, and other French literary writers. Therefore, it is not surprising that early psychoanalysts, including Freud and Kraft-Ebing, viewed sadomasochism as a pathology (Weinberg, 2006). Moreover, until recently, the only sadomasochistic patients seen by therapists were those who sought counseling for other problems. Therefore, much of what we knew about sadomasochism was based on very limited and narrow experiences.

The article “Fetishism and Sadomasochism” by Paul Gebhard (1969) is perhaps the most influential discussion about sadomasochism in modern history. It prompted sociologists and social psychologists to revisit and reconsider the issues surrounding sadomasochism. In the 37 years since Gebhard’s essay, researchers have gradually amassed a body of knowledge showing that sadomasochistic practitioners are generally emotionally and psychologically balanced and socially well adjusted (Weinberg, 2006).

Individuals who take part in sadomasochism report that participation is rarely about pain. It is the sexual ritualization of dominance and submission that they are seeking. Indeed, many organizations for sadomasochists use the term power in their names (e.g., Arizona Power Exchange, People Exchanging Power in New Mexico, and Memphis Power Exchange in Tennessee) (Weinberg, 2006). Sadomasochism is not viewed by participants as real. They view it as theatrical sexual behavior that can be a means of escaping the everyday world (Moser, 1998). Fantasy plays an important role in sadomasochism (Brodsky, 1993; Sandnabba, Santtila, & Nordling, 1999).

Sadomasochism is often scripted with participants playing pre-designated roles. These scripts are consensual and developed through a collaborative effort (Baumeister, 1988a; Hoople, 1996; Weinberg, 1978; Weinberg & Falk, 1980). Scripting helps maintain the boundaries between real and fantasy and allows individuals to engage in behaviors or roles that are usually not permitted in their everyday lives without feeling guilt (J. A. Lee, 1979; Weinberg, 1978). Careful planning also removes uncertainties about what is about to happen.

Sadomasochists find it unacceptable to force individuals to participate. They carefully discuss the limits to activities to ensure that the experience is pleasurable for everyone involved. Safe words such as yellow (meaning slow down) or red (meaning stop) are used when a participant is nearing or has reached her/his discomfort level (Moser, 1998). Sometimes, the dominant partner will test the limits to add to the authenticity of the experience. However, this is usually not viewed as too harsh by participants (van Naerssen, van Dijk, Hoogveen, Visser, & van Zessen, 1987). When a participant uses a code word, interaction is decelerated slowly so that the mood is not broken (Weinberg, 1978).

The use of code words is not always necessary for more skilled dominants who know when deceleration is necessary (Ernulf & Innala, 1995; Weinberg, 1994). Since trust and safety are vitally important, participants may investigate the reputation of others before becoming involved in sexual role-playing with them. Thus, individuals who have a reputation for being unsafe will have difficulty finding partners (Brodsky, 1993; Kamel, 1980; J. A. Lee, 1979).

Sadomasochists meet by placing and responding to personal ads, through internet chat rooms, joining sadomasochistic clubs, frequenting sadomasochistic bars, or attending or holding private parties (Moser, 1998). Sadomasochistic subcultures are generally organized by sexual orientation, gender, and preferred activities; however, there can be overlaps with a variety of practitioners interacting at parties or clubs (Moser, 1998).

Some theorists believe that individuals who participate in sadomasochism may undergo a coming out process during which they come to terms with their identity as a sadomasochist and become a part of the subculture (Kolmes, Stock, & Moser, 2006; Moser & Levitt, 1987; M. Nichols, 2006). Sadomasochists report experiencing incidents of harassment, physical attacks, and discrimination as a result of their sexual practices. To date, there has been no national determination regarding the legal status of sadomasochism in the US and many states forbid using consent as a defense in assault cases. Moreover, the *DSM-IV-TR* is sometimes used as evidence that sadomasochism is a mental illness. As a result, sadomasochists face a number of discriminatory practices in the legal system including the loss of their children or reduced visitation rights in custody battles, unfair divorce settlements, employment discrimination, and dishonorable discharge from the military (M. Klein & Moser, 2006; Moser & Kleinplatz, 2005; Ridinger, 2006; S. Wright, 2006).

Virtually none of the large survey studies on sexual behavior have studied sadomasochistic behavior (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Kinsey, 1953; Kinsey et al., 1948; Michael et al., 1994). As a result, very little is known about the incidence or prevalence of sadomasochism. Nonetheless, education, support, and social organizations for sadomasochists can be found in every state in the US and in many foreign countries (S. Wright, 2006). The Folsom Street Fair, which is the culmination of a week-long celebration of sadomasochism is the third largest street event in California and draws 400,000 people every year (Moser & Kleinplatz, 2006).

There are generally three schools of thought regarding the reason individuals participate in sadomasochism. It is important to note, however, that to seek the etiology of a behavior suggests that there is something wrong with that behavior. Radical feminists believe that sadomasochism is a fundamentally misogynistic act that borrows its script from the violence and injustice women experience at the hands of men (Bar-on, 1982; Butler, 1982; Cross & Matheson, 2006).

A second school of thought comes from Baumeister's (1988b; 1989) social psychological theories of sadomasochism. Baumeister theorized that masochists simply need to escape from their stressful, high-powered lives. This theory has also been used to explain why people use alcohol, drugs, or tobacco; (Hull, 1981; Hull & Young, 1983; Wicklund, 1975) participate in spectator sports; watch movies; or read novels (Baumeister, 1988b, 1989).

Finally, those who participate in sadomasochism argue that it is best understood as a consensual, eroticized exchange of power. The infliction of pain is just one of many ways to delineate power and status. However, it is the power status that participants in sadomasochism seek, not the pain (Califia, 1983).

Therapists report that increasing numbers of young clients are experimenting with sadomasochism. Body piercings, leather, tattoos, and buzz cuts—all symbols of sadomasochism—are becoming trendy, especially among adolescents. Given the growing visibility and interest in sadomasochism, counselors must begin to look at this issue and determine their role in working with clients who want to explore it further (Brockmon, 1998, April 30; Markowitz, 1998, April 30b).

Some counselors worry that sadomasochism among young lesbians is attracting their participation in much the same way bulimia anorexia, or self-mutilation can become contagious in college dormitories. They fear that these young women are modeling the behaviors of thrill seekers or identity seekers simply because it is trendy. These counselors do not believe that sadomasochism is an appropriate or helpful vehicle of expression for lesbian couples. In their clinical experience, counselors have noted that sadomasochistic role-playing can become metaphoric flashbacks of childhood abuse. It can develop into a compulsive reenactment of former abuse or trauma. Or it can be one of a number of behaviors aimed at meeting one's addiction to the production of adrenaline (Brockmon, 1998, April 30).

In some instances, counselors have seen unhealthy role-playing cross over into every part of a couple's lives. For these couples, sadomasochism is used to justify and normalize their pathological behaviors. Eventually, their impulses can begin to take precedence over the rules of sadomasochism and what was once play can become a dangerous interaction with no boundaries (Brockmon, 1998, April 30).

Other counselors believe that there are complex motives, dynamics, and sources for all sexual behaviors that can have pathological origins and consequences. However, this does not mean that all sadomasochistic behavior is always problematic (Iasenza, 1998, April 30). The difference is the way the behavior functions in the lives of the participants. Thus, behaviors that go beyond eroticism should be carefully explored by counselors (Markowitz, 1998, April 30a).

These counselors disagree with those who view sadomasochism as abusive. They point out that there are a number of differences between abuse and sadomasochism. For example, in instances of abuse, only the abuser has power. In sadomasochism both parties have power. Those involved in abuse do not invite it. In sadomasochism, it is welcomed. With abuse, neither party feels good afterward. With sadomasochism both parties look forward to more. With abuse, the recipient can't stop the action. With sadomasochism, the recipient can stop the action or change its intensity at any time. With abuse, the victim does not know what is going to happen. With sadomasochism, the recipient always knows what to expect (Markowitz, 1998, April 30a).

Research shows that clients often hide their participation in sadomasochism from their counselors, or screen counselors to determine whether they are accepting of sadomasochism (Kolmes et al., 2006). In some instances, clients have reported that their counselors have required that they give up sadomasochism as a condition of treatment. Therefore, it is not surprising that counselors who see sadomasochism as a potentially normal, healthy behavior report spending much of their practice undoing the work of others. They report that there are a number of parallels between homophobia and "kinkophobia" and recommend that training and ethical guidelines for counselors not unlike those established for working with lesbian, gay, and bisexual clients (Kolmes et al., 2006; Markowitz, 1998, April 30a; M. Nichols, 2006).

Those counselors who want to be better informed and prepared to help clients interested in sadomasochism can begin by taking written inventory of their attitudes, thoughts, biases, and prejudices about sadomasochistic behaviors. They can evaluate that

inventory as a therapist and a scientist and decide whether they want to become better informed. If the answer is no, they can refer clients to informed clinicians. If the answer is yes, they have a moral, intellectual and profession obligation to conduct a balanced investigation of the facts (Markowitz, 1998, April 30a; M. Nichols, 2006).

In summary, although sadomasochistic behavior has been observed and documented throughout history, it has only been recently that researchers have begun to look at sadomasochism through an empirical lens. This growing body of research suggests that individuals who practice sadomasochism are generally emotionally and psychologically balanced and socially well-adjusted. Sadism and masochism are classified as mental illnesses in the current *DSM-IV-TR*; however, these behaviors are only considered a mental illness if they cause clinically significant distress or impairment. There are several schools of thought regarding the etiology of sadomasochism; however, to seek a cause suggests there is something wrong with individuals who practice sadomasochism.

Sadomasochists face a number of discriminatory practices, including inappropriate therapeutic intervention. Thus, many counselors are calling for the establishment of treatment guidelines for working with clients who practice sadomasochism. Some counselors believe sadomasochism can be harmful to lesbian clients, while others believe that sadomasochism can be a healthy sexual expression. They recommend that counselors carefully evaluate their prejudices and beliefs about sadomasochism and seek to better inform themselves before working with individuals who practice sadomasochism.

Growing Pains

The Growing Pains category included items of discussion about the struggle to grow and survive faced by *LC*, lesbian publishers, lesbian musicians, women's festivals, and the lesbian movement in general. It was the fifth most discussed category in the 30-year analysis.

Counseling Implications

The Growing Pains category was made up of discussions that generally focused on *LC* and the summer music festivals. These discussions most often took the form of critiques, praise, or suggestions for improvement that sometimes led to passionate debates between *LC* subscribers. The 1988 *Shigella* outbreak was the most discussed item in this category and the second most discussed item in the 30-year analysis.

Shigella outbreak. For many years, the Michigan Women's Music Festival had been a safe haven for thousands of women. However, following the *Shigella* outbreak, many women believed the festival had failed to protect them. These women experienced a deep sense of loss and grief following the epidemic. Other women felt the festival was no longer a safe haven or a place of renewal, but an opportunity for individuals who hated lesbians to commit unspeakable crimes against them in massive proportions.

It is easy to believe that the world has changed since the 1988 *Shigella* outbreak—that lesbians no longer need these safe havens—that they no longer need to feel afraid and vulnerable. This may be the case for some lesbians, especially those living in large progressive cities. However, many lesbians continue to feel afraid, vulnerable, and unsafe. This is one of the reasons why the summer music festivals continue to thrive and

why there is growing interest in lesbian-only retirement communities. It is why lesbians continue to seek out lesbian affirmative doctors and counselors.

Along with the *Shigella* outbreak, *LC* subscribers also expressed concern about a number of health issues, including CFIDS, fibromyalgia, antidepressants, and menopause. Research has clearly documented the inadequacy of health care for lesbians in the US. Our health care system is often marked by judgmental, nonsupportive, hostile health care providers whose behaviors deny lesbians their basic human right to lesbian-affirmative care that validates their identity and relationships (Eliason, Donelan, & Randall, 1993; Gentry, 1993; Kenney & Tash, 1992; Levy, 1996; M. Robertson, 1992; Stevens, 1993; Tash & Kenney, 1993; Trippet, 1993). Lesbians often avoid mainstream health care because they do not feel they will receive safe, adequate care. They are afraid to disclose their sexual identity when they sense signs of disapproval. Moreover, they fear their health problems will be interpreted as a pathological extension of their sexual identity. Lesbians have described ostracism, invasive personal questions, shock, embarrassment, unfriendliness, pity, condescension, and fear from health care providers (Stevens & Hall, 1988). They have reported that their partners were treated badly, their confidentiality was violated, they were handled roughly, and were blasted with disparaging remarks (Stevens & Hall).

As a result of heterosexist health care providers, lesbians often seek health care only when there is a problem and may not receive the preventive care that many heterosexuals enjoy. Many lesbians indicate they prefer to receive health care from a female provider, preferably a lesbian health care provider (Bunting, 1993; Johnson,

Guenther, Laube, & Keettel, 1981; Lucas, 1992; Reagan, 1981; E. M. Smith, Johnson, & Guenther, 1985; Trippet, 1993). Others prefer alternative or nontraditional health care practices, such as homeopathy, chiropractic care, and midwifery (Harvey, Carr, & Bernheine, 1989; Olesker & Walsh, 1984; Smith et al.; Stevens & Hall, 1988; Trippet). These issues speak to the importance of counselors establishing lesbian-affirmative practices and forming alliances with health care providers to assure their clients receive the information they need to live healthy, productive lives. Mental health assessments can include a thorough evaluation of past and present health concerns and assess the quality of health care the lesbian client is receiving. It may be important for counselors to be comfortable in their role as advocate for lesbians who are not receiving quality health care services, particularly for lesbians struggling with issues of poverty who cannot afford quality health care.

Due to the difficulty in locating lesbian-affirmative health care providers, it is important for counselors to provide assistance and advocacy to lesbians seeking a lesbian-affirmative physician (Levy, 1996). One excellent resource for finding a lesbian-affirmative physician is the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA). The GLMA has been in operation for over twenty years. It is dedicated to providing equality in health care access and delivery to non-heterosexual people. The GLMA offers continuing education, advocacy, research funding, health care referrals, and a medical expertise retention program for HIV-positive professionals. In addition to programmatic work, they publish the *Journal of the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association*.

In summary, the *Shigella* outbreak is a reminder that lesbians continue to live in fear. Many need gathering places where they can feel safe from the outside world. Moreover, they need to feel safe when they seek assistance from counselors and physicians. Counselors can help by establishing lesbian-affirmative practices, creating partnerships with lesbian-affirmative doctors, advocating for their clients, and referring their clients to resources where they can find appropriate care.

Defining Lesbian

The Defining Lesbian category included debates about how lesbians define and celebrate themselves and their community. It was the fourth most discussed category during the 30-year analysis.

Counseling Implications

Three of the ten most discussed items in the 30-year analysis arose out of the Defining Lesbian category. The fifth most discussed topic in the 30-year analysis was male-to-female transgender women who identified as lesbian and attended the Michigan Women's Festival despite the festival's woman-born-woman policy. The ninth most discussed item was from a woman who attended the Michigan Women's Music Festival for the first time and was appalled by the what she characterized as "ugliness." The tenth most discussed item was about women who shifted identities between being lesbian, heterosexual, and bisexual.

In each of these cases, lesbians only accepted the self-definition of others as lesbian if these women reflected their image of what a lesbian was supposed to be—how she was supposed to look and behave. The message was clear. Lesbians were not born

with male genitalia. Lesbians did not sleep with men. Lesbians were not loud, angry, or radical; they behaved appropriately and assimilated themselves with society at large. These discussions interweave and overlap with the Semiotic Analysis to such an extent that it is impossible to discuss them separately. Thus, the counseling implications are incorporated with the Semiotic Analysis discussion.

Semiotic Analysis: Defining Lesbian

To date, counseling research has tended to document unifying aspects of the lesbian experience while ignoring the differences between lesbians. For example, studies on the formation of a sexual identity have attempted to describe a standardized coming out process for lesbians and gay men. These studies tend to ignore the many different ways lesbians come to know themselves as lesbian. Thus, they essentialize the lesbian experience. As we saw in the case of lesbian bed death, speculations such as these can actually begin to create the behaviors they were meant to describe (A. Stein, 1997).

As is the case in most counseling research, the content analysis and narrative analysis portions of this research sought to describe a fundamental identity called Lesbian. These analyses were built on the assumption that there are unique individuals called lesbians who belong to an exclusive minority group called the lesbian community. These individuals share a singular knowledge called the lesbian experience that can be studied. In turn, counselors can learn about this minority group and their distinct knowledge so as to adapt counseling interventions to meet the needs of any woman who enters her counseling office and identifies as lesbian. Yet, the multiple and changing findings of this study call into question these assumptions about Lesbian.

As we have seen, many *LC* subscribers believed in a universal lesbian experience. However, the experiences of individual lesbians in this study varied widely. Women who identified as lesbian constructed different identities depending on the cultural context of their coming out experience, making their identity as a lesbian historically contingent. This study showed that there is no single story of Lesbian; there are many stories and those stories are both simultaneous and overlapping. Moreover, lesbians often find themselves in opposition with the collective concept of Lesbian.

Long-standing institutions such as *LC* and the Michigan Women's Music Festival serve to create and maintain a collective identity. Lesbians in this study used this collective identity to establish dichotomies of Lesbian and to police other lesbians. For example, women who slept with men could not contribute to the discussion forum of *LC*. Male-to-female transgender lesbians or lesbians who practiced sadomasochism were not welcome at the Michigan Women's Music Festival. In addition, fat lesbians, adolescent lesbians, lesbians in prison, working-class lesbians, minority lesbians, mentally ill lesbians, lesbian mothers (especially those with male children), Southern lesbians, and lesbians in the military were subjected to severe admonition from some *LC* subscribers—so much so, in fact that these topics dominated the discussions. In each case, the collective identity of Lesbian was dependent on its location in time. For example, fat lesbians and lesbians in prison were viewed as victims of the establishment and were embraced by radical anti-establishment lesbians of the late 1970s. However, 30 years later, the views on these lesbian subcultures had changed dramatically.

In the same way heterosexuals use homosexual behavior to separate the pure from the impure, lesbians have established similar boundaries within their own ranks. These dichotomous us vs. them labels exaggerate differences and minimize the diversity within them. By pontificating endlessly on their revulsion of the other, true lesbians keep themselves safe from inquisition. Thus, in the same way that heterosexuals keep themselves aloof and beyond reproach by pathologizing homosexuals, lesbians pathologize the other lesbian. Even those lesbians who pushed for assimilation with heterosexuals failed to recognize that in associating themselves with normal, they were at once creating categories of lesbians who were abnormal.

Not only did this study find that there were many definitions of Lesbian, it also found that women who participated in the discussion forum also performed Lesbian in a number of different ways. Some lesbians strongly identified with attributes that are often associated with femininity. In some cases these women did not experience themselves as different from heterosexual women except in their choice of sexual partners. Others adopted masculine dress and behaviors and reported feeling different for as long as they could remember. Some lesbians experienced their desire for other women as profound and steadfast. Others experienced their desire for women as short-lived and flexible. Some lesbians identified as having been born lesbian. Others identified as having chosen to be lesbian. Indeed, subscribers took many paths to Lesbian and performed Lesbian in innumerable ways.

How do we account for these countless differences? Why do some lesbians seem to be typecast into rigid scripts while others are open and flexible? Still others fail to

identify with any sexual orientation at all. It is human nature to try to create order, predictability, continuity, integration, identification, and differentiation. For each woman in this study, she did so both alongside and against the collective identity of Lesbian as well as the sociopolitical culture of her time. Thus, she experienced a personal identity that was at once personal and political—that came from both within and without.

This study found that many of the radical lesbian endeavors—bookstores, coffeehouses, community centers—were dying. As a result, the lesbian community had become decentered. Encounters with other lesbians have become elusive, fleeting, and temporary experiences at the annual music festivals, on lesbian cruises, and at lesbian vacation spots. There are no longer places where lesbians can go that is the center of their culture. It may be this absence of a distinct community that is prompting aging lesbians to seek out lesbian retirement communities. The women who dreamt of a Lesbian Nation are seeking their lost community. This may be why younger lesbians are reaching back and embracing the earlier ideologies. This may also be a factor in the explosion in the travel industry for lesbians. Lesbians are seeking community, if only for a brief moment in time. Perhaps this is the ultimate reality of Lesbian—brief moments in time.

Counseling Implications

Queer theories are helpful in deconstructing the underpinnings of various positionings of Lesbian over the past 30 years. They provide opportunities to question gender and sexuality. Moreover, they embrace difference and validate opinions. However by attempting to construct individuals as without labels, one must question whether queer theories are simply creating a new dichotomy of heterosexual vs. queer. How helpful is it

to throw out all that we know and begin anew? Have we no knowledge that continues to be useful?

Having some sort of entity that lesbians recognize as the lesbian community creates a sense of security, if only for moments in time. Without this community lesbians cannot counter the stigma and injustice they face. In creating this organized community, lesbians must have some sort of minimum understanding of the boundaries of that community. Otherwise, they are left with nothing but a vague pluralism that embraces difference and validates all points of view.

Perhaps lesbians can benefit most when counseling researchers approach their research from multiple and opposing theoretical standpoints that incorporate self-conscious criticism into their findings. The current study illustrated one way of using this type of *counterpoint analysis*. While recognizing the essentialism of standpoint theory and the vagueness of queer theories in understanding Lesbian, the study analyzed findings from both perspectives. The end product questioned and troubled its own findings in such a way as to gain new understandings of the diverse, contingent, multiple, ambiguous, and fictional identity we call Lesbian.

Directions for Future Research

There are a number of issues that counselor researchers can take into consideration when reading research or studying the lesbian population. For example, individuals who participate in this type of research tend to be Caucasian, middle- to upper-class, mature, well-educated lesbians living in urban areas of the country who openly disclose their sexual orientation. Lesbian households in these studies often form a

patchwork of relationships that include partners, former spouses, and extended genetic and step-families. Sample sizes in these studies are often only marginally acceptable and it is often possible for a bisexual woman to be classified as homosexual or heterosexual. In some cases, sampling procedures are so vague as to make it impossible to determine the adequacy of the sample. Moreover, some researchers fail to ask about sexual orientation—participants are assumed to be heterosexual or homosexual. The difficulties associated with studying an oppressed, hidden population has led many researchers to become overly dependent on convenience sampling, snowball sampling, or a combination of the two.

Regardless of the researcher's political stance on lesbian issues, developing more inclusive research methodologies—those that always take sexual orientation into account—may be the best solution to addressing sampling problems. Counselor educators can help make this happen by discussing the importance of integration with counselor education students and encouraging their students to develop inclusive methodologies, and by modeling the integration of lesbian issues in their own research.

There also tends to be many problems with internal and external validity in the study of lesbians. Internal validity problems include inadequate instrumentation and disparate testing conditions. A key limitation with many of these studies is the desire of the respondents to present themselves as happy and well-adjusted. It is important that counselor researchers begin to address these issues by using instrumentation that meets rigorous standards and following careful testing protocols. They can also take measures to assure their findings are an accurate representation of the population studied through

the use of instruments that test for misrepresentation such as the Crowne-Marlowe Social Desirability Scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960, 1964).

Lesbian researchers can also take care in the interpretation of data. Given the social and political stakes for lesbian researchers, it is understandable that personal biases can effect the interpretation of data. Research is an intimate endeavor for researchers, who may choose research topics in which they are personally vested. Researchers may react defensively by stressing the absence of harm in their findings. The emotional nature of lesbian research makes it incumbent on counselor researchers to acknowledge their personal convictions and set aside their personal biases when discussing the findings of their research. Moreover, it is crucial that counselors reading the research have the tools necessary to subject the research and its findings to rigorous review.

Lesbian research is inadequate on every level; however, based on the findings of this research, it is imperative that counselor researchers begin filling in the gaps on issues as they relate to:

1. Child sexual abuse. Are lesbians more likely to experience child sexual abuse than heterosexual women? What issues may be unique to lesbians who experience child sexual abuse? What are the best ways to address these issues?
2. Sexuality. Are lesbian couples at risk for experiencing diminished interest in sex as their relationships mature? What are the implications of these findings for lesbian couples and the counselors who serve them? What is the impact of child sexual abuse on lesbian sexuality? Is sadomasochism a healthy sexual expression for lesbians or is it a reenactment of previous abuse?

3. Identity development. How does membership in lesbian subcultures impact lesbian identity development? Is it possible to define Lesbian, and if not, do queer ideologies present a viable option for addressing this dilemma? What are the similarities and differences between sexual identity and other minority identities such as race, culture, religion, and ability; how do they impact the individual; and how can counselors assist lesbians facing multiple and intersecting levels of marginalization?
4. Oppression. What is the role and impact of oppression within the lesbian community? How does oppression from society at large impact lesbians? How do counselors begin the process of addressing oppression?
5. Internalized heterosexism. Based on empirical evidence, what is the impact of internalized heterosexism on lesbians? What are the best ways to assist lesbians in overcoming internalized heterosexism?
6. Lesbians in prison. How do counselors work with situational lesbians vs. those for whom lesbianism is an important part of their identity? What types of marginalization do lesbians face in prison and how can counselors begin to address these injustices?
7. Adolescent lesbians. What are the unique needs of adolescent lesbians and what are the best ways to address those needs? How do we provide adolescent lesbians with positive role models and connections with their culture?
8. Defining lesbian. What do lesbians really think about divisive issues such as sadomasochism, male-to-female transgender lesbians, and bisexual women? Are

these issues truly as divisive as they appear, or are they being inflated by the rhetoric?

9. Fat oppression. Are lesbians more accepting of body image and weight variations? Are lesbians at risk for body dissatisfaction and eating disorders? What are the unique counseling needs of lesbians who are dissatisfied with their bodies or their weight? Do they have more weight-related medical problems? What are the best approaches to treating them?

In addition to research recommendations for counselor researchers, this research also found that lesbians are deeply concerned about their health. Their dependence on information from other *LC* subscribers suggests that they are distrustful of the medical community. It is unclear whether the increased interest in natural interventions is also related to this distrust, or whether these treatments are simply more accepted in the lesbian community. These findings charge the medical community to step up research efforts to determine the unique health needs of lesbians and how the medical community can best meet those needs.

Limitations of the Study

While the findings of this research are delimited to those individuals who have contributed to the *LC* discussion forum over the past 30 years, it can be argued that a study such as this—one that arches over 30 years of discussions and gives potential voice thousands of lesbian households—has the potential for developing theoretical generalizations that have widespread application. However, while every publication of *LC* states that the publication is “for, by, and about lesbians” and the editors report taking

rigorous steps to assure that contributors self-identify as lesbian (Lisa, personal communication, October 9, 2002), there is a possibility that some contributors to the discussion forum were not lesbian. In fact, the decision to sometimes publish letters by non-lesbians has been a source of contention among *LC* subscribers,

A further limitation is the fact that contributors to the discussion forum may not be representative of all lesbians. Group norms may have affected the representativeness of this sample. For example, it was common for subscribers to cancel their subscription when they disagreed with a stance taken by *LC* or its subscribers. Safety issues such as the fear of being outed may have precluded certain women from receiving or contributing to *LC*. Moreover, *LC* was greatly influenced by the lesbian-feminist rhetoric and politics of the 1970s and 1980s. This rhetoric is often accused of essentializing the experiences of white, middle-class women while ignoring the experiences of marginalized women, including women of color, women living in poverty, and disabled women. Despite efforts on the part of the Ambitious Amazons to make *LC* inclusive of all women, this theoretical foundation may have discouraged the participation of women who did not feel *LC* was representative of her own unique experiences.

The trustworthiness of the findings of this research was limited by the potential for inaccurate or incomplete descriptions of the data, misinterpretations of the data, the failure of the researcher to consider alternative explanations or understandings, and the failure of the researcher to provide transparent descriptions of potential researcher biases. In addition, the methodology used in this study may have failed to capture the most important issues for lesbians in this study. During the course of this analysis, a series of

discussions became apparent that were not being captured by the methodology. These letters received only a handful of responses each time they were published; however, the topic of the letters cycled throughout the analysis period. For example, during the 1989-1994 analysis period, conversations about sexual abuse arose 5 times for a total of 28 published letters. Three letters about breast cancer were published over the five year span for a total of 14 letters. To place this in perspective, the most discussed item overall during this time period had 23 published letters and the most discussed item in the Health and Mental Health category had 12 published letters. Thus, it could be argued that sexual abuse and breast cancer were the most discussed items in the Health and Mental Health category and that sexual abuse was the most discussed topic overall during this time period. Although these discussions were persistent enough that they were eventually captured by the methodology used, future researchers might consider using a methodology that takes into account discussions that repeat over time.

Another problem noted with the methodology occurred as a result of the decision to divide the discussions into five-year analysis periods. While this methodology was helpful in managing the large amount of data, the choice to add categories as needed created a stumbling block in tracking categories over the full 30-year period. For example, creating a separate category for Religion and Spirituality during the 1974-1979 could not be justified because there was only handful of discussions on the topic. Later, however, there were clearly enough discussions to create a separate category. Had this category been in place from the beginning of the analysis, the discussions could have been tracked over the full 30 years. Future researchers might consider establishing

categories for the full 30 years before they begin a detailed analysis of the data. In so doing, they can track the ebb and flow of discussions over the entire study period.

The data gathered in this research were rich and complex. Unfortunately, the top ten discussions accounted for only 8.7% of the discussions over the past 30 years and the top 25 discussions only accounted for 15.6% of the discussions (See Table F3). There were clearly many topics of interest to lesbians that were not discussed here, suggesting that this research begs additional investigation in the future.

REFERENCES

- Aaron, D. J., Markovic, N., Danielson, M. E., Honnold, J. A., Janosky, J. E., & Schmidt, N. J. (2001). Behavioral risk factors for disease and preventive health practices among lesbians. *American Journal of Public Health, 91*, 972-975.
- Abbott, S., & Love, B. (1978). *Sappho was a right-on woman: A liberated view of lesbianism*. New York: Day Books.
- Adam, B. D. (1995). *The rise of the gay and lesbian movement* (Rev. ed.). New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan.
- Adams, J. (1986, Fall). AIDS is getting to us. *Lesbian Contradiction, 20*.
- Adler, A. (1982). *Co-operation between the sexes: Writings on women and men, love and marriage, and sexuality*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Alarid, L. F. (2000). Sexual assault and coercion among incarcerated women prisoners: Excerpts from prison letters. *The Prison Journal, 80*(4), 391-406.
- Aldrich, R. (2006). *Gay life and culture: A world history*. New York: Universe.
- Alexander, C. J. (1998). Treatment planning for gay and lesbian clients. In C. J. Alexander (Ed.), *Working with gay men and lesbians in private psychotherapy practice* (pp. 95-106). New York: Haworth.
- Alexander, N., & Clare, L. (2004). You still feel different: The experience and meaning of women's self-injury in the context of a lesbian or bisexual identity. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology, 14*, 70-84.
- Allen, K. R., & Demo, D. H. (1995). The families of lesbians and gay men: A new frontier in family research. *Journal of Marriage & the Family, 57*(1), 111-127.

Allen, R. (1999). wimmin; womyn; womon. In *Pocket Fowler's modern English usage*.

Retrieved June 7, 2003 from http://www.library.ohiou.edu:2197/views/SEARCH_RESULTS.html?x=18&y=4&q=wimmin&category=t30&ssid=1026998294&scope=book&time=0.664321311666669.

Allison, K. W., Crawford, I., Echemendia, R., Robinson, L., & Knepp, D. (1994). Human diversity and professional competence: Training in clinical and counseling psychology revisited. *American Psychologist*, 69, 792-796.

American Civil Liberties Union. (2005, December 1). Federal judge rules that high schools cannot out lesbian and gay students. Retrieved April 11, 2007 from <http://www.aclu.org/lgbt/youth/22068prs20051201.html>.

American Civil Liberties Union. (2005, November 4). As a result of lawsuit, school agrees to allow publication of articles on sexual orientation. Retrieved April 11, 2007 from <http://www.aclu.org/lgbt/youth/21200prs20051104.html>.

American Civil Liberties Union. (2005, November 22). Following ACLU lawsuit, Colorado Springs high school ends second-class status for Gay-Straight Alliance. Retrieved April 11, 2007 from <http://www.aclu.org/lgbt/youth/21730prs20051122.html>.

American Civil Liberties Union. (2005, September 14). ACLU of Southern California and Fresno school officials reach agreement to counter anti-gay prejudice. Retrieved April 11, 2007 from <http://www.aclu.org/lgbt/youth/20176prs20050914.html>.

- American Civil Liberties Union. (2006, December 13). Hillsborough County schools keep open-door policy for Gay-Straight Alliances. Retrieved April 11, 2007 from <http://www.aclu.org/lgbt/youth/27747prs20061213.html>.
- American Civil Liberties Union. (2006, February 18). ACLU Hails federal court ruling on school trainings aimed at reducing anti-gay harassment. Retrieved April 11, 2007 from <http://www.aclu.org/lgbt/youth/24215prs20060218.html>.
- American Civil Liberties Union. (2006, July 14). Federal court says White County, Georgia school district must allow Gay-Straight Alliance to meet. Retrieved April 11, 2007 from <http://www.aclu.org/lgbt/youth/26161prs20060714.html>.
- American Civil Liberties Union. (2006, November 16). California high school journalists win free speech victory. Retrieved April 11, 2007 from <http://www.aclu.org/freespeech/youth/27414prs20061116.html>.
- American Civil Liberties Union. (2007, April 6). Federal Judge rules Okeechobee, FL students can form Gay-Straight Alliance club. Retrieved April 11, 2007 from <http://www.aclu.org/lgbt/youth/29283prs20070406.html>.
- American Civil Liberties Union. (2007, February 21). New Jersey Supreme Court rules that schools must protect students from bias-based bullying. (Retrieved April 11, 2007 from <http://www.aclu.org/lgbt/youth/28618prs20070221.html>).
- American Civil Liberties Union. (2007, January 10). ACLU hails settlement in White County, Georgia Gay-Straight Alliance case. Retrieved April 11, 2007 from <http://www.aclu.org/lgbt/youth/27893prs20070110.html>.

- American Civil Liberties Union. (2007, March 14). ACLU and GSA network clear the way for Gay-Straight Alliance club in Madera, California. Retrieved April 11, 2007 from <http://www.aclu.org/lgbt/youth/29020prs20070314.html>.
- American Correctional Association. (1990). *The female offender*. Laurel, MD: Author.
- American Counseling Association. (2005). *ACA code of ethics*. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- American Psychiatric Association. (2000). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (Text Revision)* (4th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- American School Counselor Association. (2004). Ethical standards for school counselors. Retrieved April 11, 2007 from <http://www.schoolcounselor.org/content.asp?contentid=2173>.
- Anhalt, K., Morris, T. L., Scotti, J. R., & Cohen, S. H. (2003). Student perspectives on training in gay, lesbian, and bisexual issues: A survey of behavioral clinical psychology programs. *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*, 10, 255-263.
- Annesley, P., & Coyle, A. (1995). Clinical psychologists' attitudes to lesbians. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 5, 327-331.
- APA Committee on Lesbian and Gay Concerns. (1993). *Graduate faculty in psychology interested in lesbian and gay issues, 1993*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Ariel, J., & McPherson, D. W. (2000). Therapy with lesbian and gay parents and their children. *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy*, 26(4), 421-432.

- Atkinson, D. R., Morten, G., & Sue, D. W. (1989). *Counseling American minorities: A cross-cultural perspective*. Dubuque, IA: William C. Brown.
- Austin, S. B., Ziyadeh, N., Kahn, J. A., Camargo, C. A., Colditz, G. A., & Field, A. E. (2004). Sexual orientation, weight concerns, and eating-disordered behaviors in adolescent girls and boys. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 43(9), 1115-1123.
- Baber, W. L., & Garrett, M. T. (1997). VISION: A model of culture for counselors. *Counseling & Values*, 41(3), 184-193.
- Bar-on, B. A. (1982). Feminism and sadomasochism: Self-critical notes. In R. R. Linden (Ed.), *Against sadomasochism: A radical feminist analysis* (pp. 72-89). East Palo Alto, CA: From in the Well.
- Battistich, V., Solomon, D., Watson, M., & Schaps, E. (1997). Caring school communities. *Educational Psychologist*, 32(3), 137-151.
- Bauman, S. (1998). A school takes a stand: Promotion of sexual orientation workshops by counselors. *Professional School Counseling*, 1(3), 42-45.
- Baumeister, R. F. (1988a). Gender differences in masochistic scripts. *Journal of Sex Research*, 25, 478-499.
- Baumeister, R. F. (1988b). Masochism as escape from self. *Journal of Sex Research*, 25, 28-59.
- Baumeister, R. F. (1989). *Masochism and the self*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Bayer, R. (1981). *Homosexuality and American psychiatry: The politics of diagnosis*. New York: Basic Books.

- Beauvoir, S. d. (1974). *The second sex*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Bell, A. P., & Weinberg, M. S. (1978). *Homosexualities: A study of diversity among men and women*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Bell, C. C., & Williamson, J. (2002). Articles on special populations published in *Psychiatric Services* between 1950 and 1999. *Psychiatric Services*, 53(4), 419-424.
- Bem, S. L. (1993). *The lenses of gender: Transforming the debate on sexual inequality*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Berelson, B. (1952). *Content analysis in communication research*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.
- Beren, S. E., Hayden, H. A., Wilfley, D. E., & Grilo, C. M. (1996). The influence of sexual orientation on body dissatisfaction in adult men and women. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 20(2), 135-141.
- Bergeron, S. M., & Senn, C. Y. (1998). Body image and sociocultural norms. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 22, 385-401.
- Bergler, E. (1949). *Basic neurosis: Oral regression and psychic masochism*. New York: Grune & Stratton.
- Berk, L. A. (1998). *Development through the lifespan*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Betz, N. E. (1991). Implications for counseling psychology training programs: Reactions to the special issue. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 19, 248-252.

- Biaggio, M., Orchard, S., Larson, J., Petrino, K., & Mihara, R. (2003). Guidelines for gay/lesbian/bisexual-affirmative educational practices in graduate psychology programs. *Professional Psychology: Research & Practice*, 34(5), 548-554.
- Bidell, M. P. (2003). *Extending multicultural counselor competencies to sexual orientation*. Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Counseling Association.
- Bieber, I. (1967). Homosexuality. In A. Freedman & H. Kaplan (Eds.), *Comprehensive textbook of psychiatry* (pp. 973). Baltimore, MD: Williams & Wilkins.
- Bieber, I., Dain, H. J., Dince, P. R., Drellich, M. G., Grand, H. G., Gundlach, R. H., et al. (1988). *Homosexuality: A psychoanalytic study*. Northvale, NJ: Aronson.
- Bieschke, K. J., Eberz, A. B., Bard, C. C., & Croteau, J. M. (1998). Using social cognitive career theory to create affirmative lesbian, gay, and bisexual research training environments. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 26(5), 735-753.
- Black, J., & Underwood, J. (1998). Young, female, and gay: Lesbian students and the school environment. *Professional School Counseling*, 1(3), 15-20.
- Blasius, M., & Phelan, S. (1997). *We are everywhere: A historical sourcebook in gay and lesbian politics*. New York: Routledge.
- Bloom, B. (1993). Incarcerated mothers and their children: Maintaining family ties. In J. A. Gondles (Ed.), *Female offenders: Meeting the needs of a neglected population* (pp. 60-68). Baltimore, MD: United Book Press.
- Bloom, B. (1995). Imprisoned mothers. In K. Gabel & D. Johnston (Eds.), *Children of incarcerated parents* (pp. 21-30). New York: Lexington Press.

- Blumstein, P., & Schwartz, P. (1983). *American couples: Money, work, sex*. New York: William Morrow.
- Bohan, J. S., & Russell, G. M. (1999). *Conversations about psychology and sexual orientation*. New York: New York University Press.
- Bowman, K. M. (1954). Introduction. In F. S. Caprio (Ed.), *Female homosexuality: A modern study of lesbianism* (pp. xv-xvii). New York: Grove Press.
- Bozett, F. W., & Sussman, M. B. (Eds.). (1990). *Homosexuality and family relations*. Binghamton, NY: Harrington Park Press, Inc.
- Bradford, J., Ryan, C., & Rothblum, E. D. (1994). National lesbian health care survey: Implications for mental health care. *Journal of Consulting & Clinical Psychology*, 62(2), 228-242.
- Brand, P. A., Rothblum, E. D., & Solomon, L. J. (1992). A comparison of lesbians, gay men, and heterosexuals on weight and restrained eating. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 11(3), 253-249.
- Bressler, L. C., & Lavender, A. D. (1986). Sexual fulfillment of heterosexual, bisexual, and homosexual women. In M. Kehoe (Ed.), *Historical, literary, and erotic aspects of lesbianism* (pp. 109-122). New York: Haworth Press.
- Bridges, K. L., & Croteau, J. M. (1994). Once-married lesbians: Facilitating changing life patterns. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 73(2), 134-140.
- Brockmon, C. (1998, April 30). A feminist view of sado-masochism; in the nineties. *In the Family*, 3(4), 10-20.

- Brodsky, J. L. (1993). The mineshaft: A retrospective ethnography. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 24(3/4), 233-251.
- Brooks, V. R. (1981). Sex and sexual orientation as variables in therapists' biases and therapy outcomes. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 9, 198-210.
- Brown, L. S. (1987). Lesbians, weight, and eating: New analyses and perspectives. In *Lesbian psychologies: Explorations and challenges* (pp. 294-312). Urbana: University of Illinois.
- Brown, L. S. (1988). Feminist therapy with lesbians and gay men. In M. A. Dutton-Douglas & L. E. A. Walker (Eds.), *Feminist psychotherapies: Integration of feminist and therapeutic systems* (pp. 206-251). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Brown, M. T., & Landrum-Brown, J. (1995). Counselor supervision: Cross-cultural perspectives. In J. G. Ponterotto, J. M. Casas, L. Suzuki & C. Alexander (Eds.), *Handbook of multicultural counseling* (pp. 263-286). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Browning, C., Reynolds, A. L., & Dworkin, S. H. (1991). Affirmative psychotherapy for lesbian women. *Counseling Psychologist*, 19(2), 177-196.
- Buening, J. A. (1993). Health life-styles of lesbian and heterosexual women. In P. N. Stern (Ed.), *Lesbian health: What are the issues?* (pp. 75-81). Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis.
- Buhrke, R. A. (1989a). Female student perspectives on training in lesbian and gay issues. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 17(4), 629-636.
- Buhrke, R. A. (1989b). Incorporating lesbian and gay issues into counselor training: A resource guide. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 68(1), 77-80.

- Buhrke, R. A., Ben-Ezra, L. A., Hurley, M. E., & Ruprecht, L. J. (1992). Content analysis and methodological critique of articles concerning lesbian and gay male issues in counseling journals. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 39(1), 91-99.
- Buhrke, R. A., & Douce, L. A. (1991). Training issues for counseling psychologists in working with lesbian women and gay men. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 19(2), 216-234.
- Bull, C., & Gallagher, J. (2001). *Perfect enemies: The battle between the religious right and the gay movement* (Updated ed.). Lanham, MD: Madison Books.
- Bullough, V. L. (1976). *Sexual variance in society and history*. New York: John Wiley.
- Bullough, V. L. (1977). Challenges to societal attitudes toward homosexuality in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. *Social Science Quarterly*, 58, 29-44.
- Bullough, V. L. (1994). *Science in the bedroom: A history of sex research*. New York: Basic Books.
- Burch, B. (1982). Psychological merger in lesbian couples: A joint ego psychological and systems approach. *Family Therapy*, 9(3), 201-208.
- Burch, B. (1985). Another perspective on merger in lesbian relationships. In L. B. Rosewater & L. Walker (Eds.), *Handbook of feminist therapy: Women's issues in psychotherapy* (pp. 100-109). New York: Springer.
- Burrell, C. (1996, August 22). Confessed Stockton slayer tells motive. *The San Francisco Chronicle*, p. A5.

- Butke, M. (1995). Lesbians and sexual child abuse. In L. A. Fontes (Ed.), *Sexual abuse in nine North American cultures: Treatment and prevention* (pp. 236-258). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Butler, J. (1982). Lesbian S & M: The politics of dis-illusion. In R. R. Linden (Ed.), *Against sadomasochism: A radical feminist analysis* (pp. 168-175). East Palo Alto, CA: Frog in the Well.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York: Routledge.
- Butler-Byrd, N., Nieto, J., & Senour, M. N. (2006). Working successfully with diverse students and communities: The community-based block counselor preparation program. *Urban Education, 41*(4), 376-401.
- Califia, P. (1983). A secret side of lesbian sexuality. In T. Weinberg & G. Kamel (Eds.), *S and M: studies in sadomasochism* (pp. 129-136). Buffalo, NY: Prometheus.
- Caprio, F. S. (1954). *Female homosexuality: A psychodynamic study of lesbianism*. New York: Citadel Press.
- Capuzzi, D. (1994). *Suicide prevention in the schools: Guidelines for middle and high school settings*. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.
- Casas, J. M., Brady, S., & Ponterotto, J. G. (1983). Sexual preference biases in counseling: An information processing approach. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 30*(2), 139-145.

- Case, P., Austin, B., Hunter, D. J., Manson, J. E., Malspeis, S., Willett, W. C., et al. (2004). Sexual orientation, health risk factors, and physical functioning in the Nurses' Health Study II. *Journal of Women's Health, 13*(9), 1033-1047.
- Cass, V. C. (1984). Homosexual identity: A concept in need of a definition. *Journal of Homosexuality, 9*(2-3).
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2006). Retrieved May 18, 2006 from http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/shigellosis_g.htm.
- CFIDS Association of America. (2007). Symptoms. Retrieved January 30, 2007 from <http://www.cfids.org/about-cfids/symptoms.asp>.
- Chance, P. (1975, December). Tolerance is condescending: Facts that liberated the gay community. *Psychology Today, 52-56*.
- Chauncey, G. (1994). *Gay New York*. New York: Basic.
- Chesler, P. (1994, Fall). Sister, fear has no place here. *On the Issues: The Progressive Woman's Quarterly*, Retrieved January 19, 2007 from <http://www.ontheissuesmagazine.com/sister.htm>.
- Chesler, P. (1997). *Women and madness*. New York: Four Walls Eight Windows.
- Chideckel, M. (1935). *Female sex perversion: The sexually aberrated woman as she is*. New York: Eugenics Publishing.
- Chodorow, N. J. (1978). *The reproduction of mother: Psychoanalysis and the sociology of gender*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Christian, M. (1990). Ode to a gym teacher. On *The best of Meg Christian*. [CD]. Oakland, CA: Olivia Records.

- Chung, Y. B. (1998). Ethnic and sexual identity development of Asian-American lesbian and gay adolescents. *Professional School Counseling, 1*(3), 21-25.
- Chung, Y. B., & Katayama, M. (1996). Assessment of sexual orientation in lesbian/gay/bisexual studies. *Journal of Homosexuality, 30*(4), 49-62.
- Churchill, W. (1967). *Homosexual behavior among males: A cross-cultural and cross-species investigation*. New York: Hawthorn Books.
- Clark, W. M., & Serovich, J. M. (1997). Twenty years and still in the dark? Content analysis of articles pertaining to gay, lesbian, and bisexual issues in marriage and family therapy journals. *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy, 23*(3), 239-253.
- Cleugh, J. (1952). *The marquis and the chevalier*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- CNN. (2003). Supreme Court strikes down Texas sodomy law. *CNN*, Retrieved April 3, 2007 from <http://www.cnn.com/2003/LAW/2006/2026/scotus.sodomy/index.html>.
- Cochran, S. D., Keenan, C., Schober, C., & Mays, V. M. (2000). Estimates of alcohol use and clinical treatment needs among homosexually active men and women in the U.S. population. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 68*(6), 1062-1071.
- Cochran, S. D., & Mays, V. M. (2000a). Lifetime prevalence of suicidal symptoms and affective disorders among men reporting same-sex sexual partners: Results from the NHANES III. *American Journal of Public Health, 90*, 573-578.

- Cochran, S. D., & Mays, V. M. (2000b). Relation between psychiatric syndromes and behaviorally defined sexual orientation in a sample of the U. S. population. *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 151, 516-523.
- Cochran, S. D., Mays, V. M., Bowen, D., Gage, S., Bybee, D., Roberts, S. J., et al. (2001). Cancer-related risk indicators and preventive screening behaviors among lesbians and bisexual women. *American Journal of Public Health*, 91(4), 591-597.
- Cochran, S. D., Sullivan, J. G., & Mays, V. M. (2003). Prevalence of mental disorders, psychological distress, and mental health services use among lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults in the United States. *Journal of Counseling and Clinical Psychology*, 71(1), 53-61.
- Cogan, J. C. (1999). Lesbians walk the tightrope of beauty: Thin is in but femme is out. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 3(4), 77-89.
- Cohen, A. B., & Tannenbaum, H. J. (2001). Lesbian and bisexual women's judgments of the attractiveness of different body types. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 38(3), 226-232.
- Coleman, E. (1988). Assessment of sexual orientation. In E. Coleman (Ed.), *Integrated identity for gay men and lesbians: Psychotherapeutic approaches for emotional well-being* (pp. 9-124). New York: Harrington Park Press.
- Coleman, E., Hoon, P. W., & Hoon, E. F. (1983). Arousability and sexual satisfaction in heterosexual women. *Journal of Sex Research*, 19(1), 58-73.

- Comack, E. (1996). *Women in trouble: Connecting women's law violations to their histories of abuse*. Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada: Fernwood.
- Comstock, G. E. (1991). *Violence against lesbians and gay men*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Constantine, M. (1997). Facilitating multicultural competency in counseling supervision: Operationalizing a practical framework. In D. B. Pope-Davis & H. L. K. Coleman (Eds.), *Multicultural counseling competencies: Assessment, education and training, and supervision* (pp. 310-324). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Constantine, M., Hage, S. M., Kindaichi, M. M., & Bryant, R. M. (2007). Social justice and multicultural issues: Implications for the practice and training of counselors and counseling psychologists. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 85, 24-29.
- Cooley, J. J. (1998). Gay and lesbian adolescents: Presenting problems and the counselor's role. *Professional School Counseling*, 1(3), 30-34.
- Cooper, C. D. (1996). Childhood sexual abuse and depressive symptoms in a lesbian population an exploratory study. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 57(3-B), 2146.
- Cordova, J. (1985a). Dyke. In C. C. Kramarae & P. A. Treichler (Eds.), *A feminist dictionary* (pp. 132). Boston, MA: Pandora.
- Cordova, J. (1985b). Gay. In C. Kramarae & P. A. Treichler (Eds.), *A feminist dictionary* (pp. 173). Boston, MA: Pandora.

- Corliss, H. L., Cochran, S. D., & Mays, V. M. (2002). Reports of parental maltreatment during childhood in a United States population-based survey of homosexual, bisexual, and heterosexual adults. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 26(11), 1165-1178.
- Cory, D. W. (1975). *The homosexual in America: A subjective approach*. New York: Arno Press.
- Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. (2001). *Accreditation standards and procedures manual*. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- Coyle, A. (1993). A study of psychological well-being among gay men using the GHQ-30. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 32, 218-220.
- Cross, P. A., & Matheson, K. (2006). Understanding sadomasochism: An empirical examination of four perspectives. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 50(2-3), 133-166.
- Croteau, J. M., & Kusek, M. T. (1992). Gay and lesbian speaker panels: Implementation and research. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 70(3), 369-401.
- Crowne, D. P., & Marlowe, D. (1960). A new scale of social desirability independent of psychopathology. *Journal of Consulting Psychology*, 24, 349-354.
- Crowne, D. P., & Marlowe, D. (1964). *The approval motive*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Daniel, J. H., Roysircar, G., Abeles, N., & Boyd, C. (2002). Individual and cultural-diversity competency: Focus on the therapist. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 60(7), 755-770.
- Darty, T., & Potter, S. (1984). *Women-identified women*. Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield.

- D'Augelli, A. R., & Rose, M. I. (1990). Homophobia in a university community: Attitudes and experiences of heterosexual freshmen. *Journal of College Student Development, 31*, 484-491.
- Davis, K. B. (1929). *Factors in the sex life of twenty-two hundred women*. New York: Harper.
- Deaux, K., & Hanna, R. (1984). Courtship in the personals column: The influence of gender and sexual orientation. *Sex Roles, 11*(5/6), 363-375.
- D'Emilio, J. (1998). *Sexual politics, sexual communities*: University of Chicago Press.
- D'Emilio, J. (2002). *The world turned: Essays on gay history, politics, and culture*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Dempsey, C. (1994). Health and social issues of gay, lesbian, and bi-sexual adolescents. *Families in Society, 75*(3), 160-167.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994a). Introduction: Entering the field of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 1-22). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (1994b). *The handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Devereux, G. (1937). Institutionalized homosexuality of the Mohave Indians. *Human Biology, 9*, 498-527.
- Diaz-Cotto, J. (1996). *Gender, ethnicity, and the state: Latina and Latino prison politics*. Albany: State University of New York.

- Dibble, S. L., Roberts, S. A., Robertson, P. A., & Paul, S. M. (2002). Risk factors for ovarian cancer: Lesbian and heterosexual women. *Oncology Nursing Forum*, 29, E1-7.
- Dickinson, R. L., & Beam, L. (1934). *The single woman: A medical study in sex education*. New York: Garland.
- Dillon, F. R., & Worthington, R. L. (2003). The lesbian, gay, and bisexual affirmative counseling self-efficacy inventory (LGB-CSI): Development, validation, and training implications. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 50(2), 235-251.
- Doherty, W. J., & Simmons, D. S. (1996). Clinical practice patterns of marriage and family therapists: A national survey of therapists and their clients. *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy*, 22(1), 9-25.
- Dworkin, S. (1992). Some ethical considerations when counseling gay, lesbian, and bisexual clients. In S. Dworkin & F. Gutierrez (Eds.), *Counseling gay men and lesbians: Journey to the end of the rainbow* (pp. 325-334). Alexandria, VA: American Association for Counseling and Development.
- Dynes, W. R. (Ed.). (1990). *Encyclopedia of homosexuality*. New York: Garland.
- Ehrenreich, B., Hess, E., & Jacobs, G. (1982). A report on the sex crisis. *Ms.*, 10(9), 64.
- Eliason, M. (1996). A survey of the campus climate for lesbian, gay, and bisexual university members. *Journal of Psychology & Human Sexuality*, 8(4), 39-58.
- Eliason, M., Donelan, C., & Randall, C. (1993). Lesbian stereotypes. In P. N. Stern (Ed.), *Lesbian health: What are the issues?* (pp. 41-54). Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis.

- Eliason, M., & Morgan, K. S. (1996). The relationship between therapy usage and political activity in lesbians. *Women & Therapy, 19*(2), 31-45.
- Elise, D. (1986). Lesbian couples: The implications of sex differences in separation-individuation. *Psychotherapy, 23*, 305-310.
- Ellis, A. (1965). *Homosexuality: Its causes and cure*. New York: Lyle Stuart.
- Engstrom, C. M., & Sedlacek, W. (1997). Attitudes of heterosexual students toward their gay male and lesbian peers. *Journal of College Student Development, 38*, 565-576.
- Erickson, J. M. (1999). Confessions of a butch straight woman. *Journal of Lesbian Studies, 3*(4), 69-72.
- Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Ernulf, K. E., & Innala, S. M. (1995). Sexual bondage: A review of unobtrusive investigation. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 24*, 631-654.
- Erwin, T. M. (2003). Issues of "othering" in counselor education programs. *Ohio Journal of Professional Counseling*, Retrieved April 28, 2007 from <http://www.ohiocounselingassoc.com/docs/Othering-Final%2020Revision%2020.doc>.
- Erwin, T. M. (2006a). Infusing lesbigay research into the counseling research classroom. *Journal of Homosexuality, 51*(3), 125-165.
- Erwin, T. M. (2006b). A qualitative analysis of the *Lesbian Connection* discussion forum. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 84*, 95-107.

- Esterberg, K. G. (1997). *Lesbian and bisexual identities: Constructing communities, constructing selves*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Evans, R. B. (1969). Childhood parental relationships of homosexual men. *Journal of Consulting & Clinical Psychology*, 33(2), 129-135.
- Faderman, L. (1981). *Surpassing the love of men: Romantic friendship and love between women from the renaissance to the present*. New York: William Morrow.
- Faderman, L. (1991). *Odd girls and twilight lovers: A history of lesbian life in twentieth-century America*. New York: Penguin.
- Faderman, L. (2007). *Great events from history: Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender events*. Pasadena, CA: Salem Press.
- Faith, K. (1993). *Unruly women: The politics of confinement and resistance*. Vancouver: Press Gang.
- Falco, K. L. (1991). *Psychotherapy with lesbian clients: Theory into practice*. New York: Brunner/Mazel.
- Fifield, L. H. (1975). *On my way to nowhere: Alienated, isolated, and drunk*. Los Angeles: Gay Community Services Center.
- Firestein, B. (1996). Bisexuality as a paradigm shift: Transforming our disciplines. In B. Firestein (Ed.), *Bisexuality: The psychology and politics of an invisible minority* (pp. 263-291). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Flanagan, L. (1995). Meeting the special needs of females in custody: Maryland's unique approach. *Federal Probation*, 59(2), 49-63.

- Flores, L. Y., O'Brien, K. M., & McDermott, D. (1995, August). *Counseling psychology trainees' perceived efficacy in counseling lesbian and gay clients*. Paper presented at the 103rd Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, New York.
- Fogel, C., & Martin, S. (1992). The mental health of incarcerated women. *Western Journal of Nursing Research*, 14(1), 30-47.
- Ford, C. F., & Beach, F. A. (1951). *Patterns of sexual behavior*. New York: Harper.
- Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality* (Vol. 1, An introduction). New York: Pantheon Books.
- French, S. A., Story, M., Remafedi, G., Resnick, M. D., & Blum, R. W. (1996). Sexual orientation and prevalence of body dissatisfaction and eating disordered behaviors: A population-based study of adolescents. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 19(2), 119-126.
- Freud, S. (1962). *Three essays on the theory of sexuality*. New York: Avon Books.
- Freud, S. (1963). The psychogenesis of a case of homosexuality in a woman (1920). In P. Rieff (Ed.), *Sexuality and the psychology of love* (pp. 123-149). New York: Touchstone.
- Freund, K., Watson, R., & Reienzo, D. (1989). Heterosexuality, homosexuality, and erotic age preference. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 26(1), 107-117.
- Fromm, E. (1997). Changing concepts of homosexuality (1948). In D. R. Funk (Ed.), *Love, sexuality, and matriarchy: About gender* (pp. 148-160). New York: Fromm International.

- Gagehabib, L., & Summerhawk, B. (2001). *Circles of power: Shifting dynamics in a lesbian-centered community*. Norwich, VT: New Victoria.
- Gagnon, J. H., & Simon, W. (1968). The social meaning of prison homosexuality. *Federal Probation*, 32(1), 23-29.
- Gamson, J. (2000). Sexualities, queer theory, and qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd. ed., pp. 347-365). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Garden, N. (2007). *Hear us out!: Lesbian and gay stories of struggle, progress and hope, 1950 to the present*. New York: Farrar Straus Giroux.
- Garner, D. M., & Cooke, A. K. (1997, February). Body image survey results. *Psychology Today*, 32-44, 75-84.
- Garnets, L., Hancock, K. A., Cochran, S. D., Goodchilds, J., & Peplau, L. A. (1991). Issues in psychotherapy with lesbians and gay men: A survey of psychologists. *American Psychologist*, 46(9), 964-972.
- Gartrell, N. (1992). Boundaries in lesbian therapy relationships. *Women & Therapy*, 12(3), 29-50.
- Gartrell, N. (1994). Boundaries in lesbian therapist-client relationships. In B. Greene & G. M. Herek (Eds.), *Lesbian and gay psychology: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (pp. 98-117). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Gatmon, D., Jackson, D., Koshkarian, L., Martos-Perry, N., Molina, A., Patel, N., et al. (2001). Exploring ethnic, gender, and sexual orientation variables in supervision:

- Do they really matter? *Journal of Multicultural Counseling & Development*, 29(2), 102-113.
- Gebhard, P. (1969). Fetishism and sadomasochism. In J. H. Masserman (Ed.), *Dynamics of deviant sexuality* (pp. 71-80). New York: Grune & Stratton.
- Gentry, S. E. (1993). Caring for lesbians in a homophobic society. In P. N. Stern (Ed.), *Lesbian health: What are the issues?* (pp. 83-90). Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis.
- Gettleman, T. E., & Thompson, J. K. (1994). Actual versus stereotypical perceptions of body image and eating disturbance: A comparison of male and female heterosexual and homosexual samples. *Sex Roles*, 25(1-18).
- Giallombardo, R. (1966). *Society of women: A study of a women's prison*. New York: John Wiley.
- Gibson, P. (1989). Gay male and lesbian youth suicide. In *Alcohol, drug abuse, and mental health administration, report of the Secretary's task force on youth suicide* (pp. 3-110-113-142). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gilligan, C., Roberts, A., & Tolman, D. (1991). *Women, girls, and psychotherapy: Reframing resistance*. New York: Haworth Press.
- Gilman, S. E., Cochran, S. D., Mays, V. M., Hughes, M., Ostrow, D., & Kessler, R. C. (2001). Prevalences of *DSM-III-R* disorders among individuals reporting same-

- gender sexual partners in the National Comorbidity Survey. *American Journal of Public Health*, 93, 933-939.
- Girshick, L. B. (1999). *No safe haven: Stories of women in prison*. Boston: Northeastern University.
- Glassgold, J. M. (1992). New directions in dynamic theories of lesbianism. In J. Chrisler & D. Howard (Eds.), *New directions in feminist psychology* (pp. 154-164). New York: Springer.
- Glenn, A. A., & Russell, R. K. (1986). Heterosexual bias among counselor trainees. *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 222-229.
- Godfrey, K., Haddock, S. A., Fisher, A., & Lund, L. (2006). Essential components of curricula for preparing therapists to work effectively with lesbian, gay, and bisexual clients: A Delphi study. *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy*, 32(4), 491-504.
- Gonsiorek, J. (1988). Mental health issues of gay and lesbian adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health Care*, 9, 114-122.
- Gonsiorek, J. (1991). The empirical basis for the demise of the illness model of homosexuality. In J. Gonsiorek & J. Weinrich (Eds.), *Homosexuality: Research implications for public policy* (pp. 115-136). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Gonsiorek, J. (1993). Mental health issues of gay and lesbian adolescents. In L. Garnets & D. Kimmel (Eds.), *Psychological perspectives on lesbian and gay male experiences* (pp. 469-485). New York: Columbia University Press.

- Gordon, L. E. (2006). Bringing the U-Haul: Embracing and resisting sexual stereotypes in a lesbian community. *Sexualities*, 9(2), 171-192.
- Graham, D. L. R., Rawlings, E. I., Halpern, H. S., & Hermes, J. (1984). Therapists' needs for training in counseling lesbians and gay men. *Professional Psychology: Research & Practice*, 15(4), 482-496.
- Green, S. K., & Bobele, M. (1994). Family therapists' response to AIDS: An examination of attitudes, knowledge, and contact. *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy*, 20(4), 349-367.
- Greene, B. (1994). Lesbian and gay sexual orientations: Implications for clinical training, practice, and research. In B. Greene & G. M. Herek (Eds.), *Lesbian and gay psychology: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (pp. 1-24). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Greene, B., & Croom, G. (Eds.). (2000). *Education, research, and practice in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered psychology: A resource manual* (Vol. 5). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Greer, K. (2000). The changing nature of interpersonal relationships in a women's prison. *The Prison Journal*, 80(4), 442-467.
- Groth, A. N., & Birnbaum, H. J. (1978). Adult sexual orientation and attraction to underage persons. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 7(3), 175-181.
- Groth, A. N., & Gary, T. S. (1982). Heterosexuality, homosexuality, and pedophilia: Sexual offenses against children and adult sexual orientation. In J. Anthony M.

- Scacco (Ed.), *Male rape: A casebook of sexual aggressions* (pp. 143-152). New York: AMS Press.
- Groth, A. N., Hobson, W. F., & Gary, T. S. (1982). The child molester: Clinical observations. In J. R. Conte & D. A. Shore (Eds.), *Social work and child sexual abuse* (pp. 129-144). New York: Haworth Press.
- Guille, C., & Chrisler, J. C. (1999). Does feminism serve a protective function against eating disorders? *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 3(4), 141-148.
- Haldeman, D. C. (1994). The practice and ethics of sexual orientation conversion therapy. *Journal of Consulting & Clinical Psychology*, 62(2), 221-227.
- Hale, D. C. (1988). The impact of mothers' incarceration on the family system: Research and recommendations. In F. H. M. Sussman (Ed.), *Deviance and the family* (pp. 143-154). New York: Haworth Press.
- Hall, J. (1999). An exploration of the sexual and relationship experiences of lesbian survivors of childhood sexual abuse. *Sexual & Marital Therapy*, 14(1), 61-70.
- Hall, J. M. (1996). Pervasive effects of childhood sexual abuse in lesbians' recovery from alcohol problems. *Substance Use & Misuse*, 31(2), 225-239.
- Hall, M. (1996). Unsexing the couple. *Women & Therapy*, 19(3), 1-11.
- Hall, M. (2001). Not tonight, dear, I'm deconstructing a headache--confessions of a lesbian sex therapist. In E. Kaschak & L. Tiefer (Eds.), *A new view of women's sexual problems* (pp. 161-172). New York: Haworth Press.
- Halleck, S., & Hersko, M. (1962). Homosexual behavior in a correctional institution for adolescent girls. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 32, 911-917.

- Hamilton, G. V. (1929). *A research in marriage*. New York: Albert & Charles Boni.
- Hampton, B. (1993). *Prisons and women*. Kensington, Australia: New South Wales University Press.
- Hancock, K. A. (1995). Psychotherapy with lesbians and gay men. In A. R. D'Augelli & C. J. Patterson (Eds.), *Lesbian, gay, and bisexual identities over the lifespan: Psychological perspectives* (pp. 398-432). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Haney, J., & Kristiansen, C. (1998). An analysis of the impact of prison on women survivors of childhood sexual abuse. In J. Harden & M. Hill (Eds.), *Breaking the rules: Women in prison and feminist therapy* (pp. 29-44). New York: Harrington Park Press.
- Hansen, N. D., Papitone-Arreola-Rockwell, F., & Green, A. F. (2000). Multicultural competence: Criteria and case examples. *Professional Psychology: Research & Practice*, 31(6), 652-660.
- Harley, D. A., Feist-Price, S., & Alston, R. J. (1996). Cultural diversity: A content analysis of the rehabilitation literature. *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*, 27(2), 59-62.
- Harrison, P. M., & Beck, A. J. (2002, July). Prisoners in 2001. *Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin*.
- Harry, J. (1983). Parasuicide, gender, and gender deviance. In G. Remafedi (Ed.), *Death by denial: Studies of suicide in gay and lesbian teenagers* (pp. 69-88). Boston: Alyson.

- Harry, J. (1989). Sexual identity issues. In *Alcohol, drug abuse, and mental health administration, report of the Secretary's task force on youth suicide* (pp. 2-131-132-142). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Hartstein, N. B. (1996). Suicide risk in lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth. In R. P. Cabaj & T. S. Stein (Eds.), *Textbook of homosexuality and mental health* (pp. 819-836). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press.
- Hedblom, J. H. (1973). Dimensions of lesbian sexual experience. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 2(4), 329-341.
- Heffernan, E. (1972). *Making it in prison: The square, the cool, and the life*. New York: John Wiley.
- Heffernan, K. (1996). Eating disorders and weight concern among lesbians. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 19(2), 127-138.
- Heffernan, K. (1999). Lesbians and the internalization of societal standards of weight and appearance. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 3(4), 121-127.
- Heiman, J. R. (1975). The physiology of erotica: Women's sexual arousal. *Psychology Today*, 8, 90-94.
- Henry, G. W. (1948). *Sex variants: A study of homosexual patterns*. New York: Paul B. Hoeber.
- Hensley, C., Castle, T., & Tewksbury, R. (2003). Inmate-to-inmate sexual coercion in a prison for women. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 37(2), 77-87.
- Hensley, C., & Tewksbury, R. (2002). Inmate-to-inmate prison sexuality: A review of empirical studies. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 3(3), 226-243.

- Hensley, C., Tewksbury, R., & Koscheski, M. (2002). The characteristics and motivations behind female prison sex. *Women & Criminal Justice, 13*(2/3), 125-139.
- Hensley, C., Wright, J., Koscheski, M., Castle, T., & Tewksbury, R. (2002). Examining the relationship between female inmate homosexual behavior and attitudes toward homosexuality and homosexuals. *International Journal of Sexuality & Gender Studies, 7*(4), 293-306.
- Herek, G. (1989). Hate crimes against lesbians and gay men. *American Psychologist, 44*(6), 948-955.
- Herek, G. (1995). Psychological heterosexism in the United States. In G. Herek (Ed.), *Lesbian, gay, and bisexual identities over the lifespan: Psychological perspectives* (pp. 321-346). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Herek, G. (2000). The psychology of sexual prejudice. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 9*, 19-22.
- Herek, G. (2003). *Facts about homosexuality and child molestation*, Retrieved 10/14/2003 from http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/html/facts_molestation.html.
- Herman, D. (1998). *The antigay agenda: Orthodox vision and the Christian right*. IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Hermann, M. A., & Herlihy, B. R. (2006). Legal and ethical implications of refusing to counsel homosexual clients. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 84*, 414-418.

- Herrell, R., Goldberg, J., True, W. R., Ramakrishnan, V., Lyoins, M., Eisen, S., et al. (1999). Sexual orientation and suicidality: A co-twin control study in adult men. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 56, 867-874.
- Herrick, E. (1991). Prison literacy connection. *Corrections Compendium*, 16(12), 1, 5-9.
- Herzog, D. B., Newman, K. L., & Warshaw, M. (1992). Body image satisfaction in homosexual and heterosexual women. *International Journal of Eating Disorders*, 11, 391-396.
- Herrick, E. S., & Martin, A. D. (1987). Developmental issues and their resolution for gay and lesbian adolescents. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 14, 25-42.
- Hill Collins, P. (1998). *Fighting words: Black women and the search for justice*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Hogan, T. L., & Rentz, A. L. (1996). Homophobia in the academy. *Journal of College Student Development*, 37, 309-314.
- Holtzen, D., & Agresti, A. (1990). Parental responses to gay and lesbian children: Difference in homophobia, self-esteem, and sex-role stereotyping. *Journal of Social Clinical Psychology*, 9, 390-399.
- Hooker, E. (1956). A preliminary analysis of group behavior of homosexuals. *The Journal of Psychology*, 41, 217-225.
- Hooker, E. (1957). The adjustment of the male overt homosexual. *Journal of Projective Techniques*, 21, 18-31.
- Hooker, E. (1958). Male homosexuality in the Rorschach. *Journal of Projective Techniques*, 33-54.

- Hooker, E. (1959). What is a criterion? *Journal of Projective Techniques*, 23, 278-281.
- Hoople, T. (1996). Conflicting visions: SM, feminism, and the law. A problem of representation. *Canadian Journal of Law and Society*, 11(1), 177-220.
- Houser, W. (1990). Aversion Therapy. In W. R. Dynes (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of homosexuality* (pp. 101). New York: Garland.
- Hughes, T. L., Johnson, T., & Wilsnack, S. C. (2001). Sexual assault and alcohol abuse: A comparison of lesbians and heterosexual women. *Journal of Substance Abuse*, 13, 515-532.
- Hull, J. G. (1981). A self-awareness model of the causes and effects of alcohol consumption. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 90, 586-600.
- Hull, J. G., & Young, R. D. (1983). Self-consciousness, self-esteem, and success-failure as determinants of alcohol consumptions in male social drinkers. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 44, 1097-1109.
- Human Rights Campaign Foundation. (2007). What welcoming schools offer. Retrieved April 11, 2007 from http://www.hrc.org/Template.cfm?Section=Youth_Schools&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=18593.
- Hunter, J., & Schaecher, R. (1987). Stresses on lesbian and gay adolescents in schools. *Social Work in Education*, 9, 180-190.
- Hyman, B. (2000). The economic consequences of child sexual abuse for adult lesbian women. *Department of Social Work*, 62, 199-211.
- Iasenza, S. (1989). Some challenges of integrating sexual orientations into counselor training and research. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 68(1), 73-76.

- Iasenza, S. (1991). *The relations among selected aspects of sexual orientation and sexual functioning in females*. Dissertation Abstracts International. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International (No. 9134752).
- Iasenza, S. (1998, April 30). Who decides what is "healthy" sexuality? *In the Family*, 3(4), 15-21.
- Iasenza, S. (1999). The big lie: Debunking lesbian bed death. *In the Family*, 4(4), 9-25.
- Iasenza, S. (2000). Lesbian sexuality post-Stonewall to post-modernism: Putting the "lesbian bed death" concept to bed. *Journal of Sex Education & Therapy*, 25(1), 59-69.
- Iasenza, S. (2002). Beyond "lesbian bed death": The passion and play in lesbian relationships. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 6(1), 111-120.
- Immarigeon, R. (1992). *Women's prisons: Overcrowded and overused*. San Francisco: The National Council on Crime and Delinquency.
- Jagose, A. (1996). *Queer theory: An Introduction*. Washington Square, NY: New York University Press.
- Jay, K., & Young, A. (1977). *The gay report*. New York: Summit Books.
- Jennings, R. (2007). *A lesbian history of Britain*. Oxford, England: Greenwood World.
- Jenny, C., Roesler, T. A., & Poyer, K. L. (1994). Are children at risk for sexual abuse by homosexuals? *Pediatrics*, 94(1), 41-44.
- Johnson, S. R., Guenther, S. M., Laube, D., W., & Keettel, W. C. (1981). Factors influencing lesbian gynecologic care: A preliminary study. *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 140(1), 20-28.

- Jones, E. (1957). *The life and work of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 3). New York: Basic Books.
- Jordan, J. V., Kaplan, A. G., Miller, J. B., Stiver, I. P., & Surrey, J. L. (1991). *Women's growth in connection: Writings from The Stone Center*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Jordan, K., Schlenger, W., Fairbank, J., & Caddell, J. (1996). Prevalence of psychiatric disorders among incarcerated women. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 53, 513-519.
- Kamel, G. W. L. (1980). Leathersex: Meaningful aspects of gay sadomasochism. *Deviant Behavior: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 1, 171-191.
- Kaplan, M. S., & Sasser, J. E. (1996). Women behind bars: Trends and policy issues. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 23(4), 43-56.
- Kaufman, J. S., Carlozzi, A. F., Boswell, D. L., Barnes, I. I. B., Wheeler-Scruggs, K., & Levy, P. A. (1997). Factors influencing therapist selection among gays, lesbians and bisexuals. *Counseling Psychology Quarterly*, 10, 287-297.
- Kaufman, P. A., Harrison, E., & Hyde, M. L. (1984). Distancing for intimacy in lesbian relationships. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 141(4), 530-533.
- Kellman, L. (2002, April 11). *US announces indictment of man in hate-crime slaying of two female hikers in Virginia*, Associated Press. Retrieved March 19, 2007 from http://nl.newsbank.com/nl-search/we/Archives?p_product=APAB&p_theme=apab&p_action=search&p_maxdocs=200&s_dispstring=U.S.%20announces%20indictment%20of%20man%20in%20hate-crime%20slaying%20of%20two%20female%20hikers%20in%20Virginia%20&p_field_advanced-

0=&p_text_advanced-0=("U.S.%20announces%20indictment%20of%20man%20in%20hate-crime%20slaying%20of%20two%20female%20hikers%20in%20Virginia")&xcal_numdocs=20&p_perpage=10&p_sort=YMD_date:D&xcal_use_weights=no

- Kenney, J. W., & Tash, D. T. (1992). Lesbian childbearing couples' dilemmas and decisions. *Health Care for Women International*, 13, 209-219.
- Kerewsky, S. D., & Miller, D. (1996). Lesbian couples and childhood trauma: Guidelines for therapists. In J. Laird & R. Jay-Green (Ed.), *Lesbians and gays in couples and families: A handbook for therapists* (pp. 298-315). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Kilpatrick, A. (1987). Childhood sexual experiences: Problems and issues in studying long-range effects. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 23, 173-196.
- Kinsey, A. C. (1953). *Sexual behavior in the human female*. Philadelphia: Saunders.
- Kinsey, A. C., Pomeroy, W. B., & Martin, C. E. (1948). *Sexual behavior in the human male*. Philadelphia, PA: W. B. Saunders.
- Kiselica, M. S., & Robinson, M. (2001). Bringing advocacy counseling to life: The history, issues, and human dramas of social justice work in counseling. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 79(4), 387-397.
- Kitzinger, C. (1987). *The social construction of lesbianism*. London: Sage.
- Klein, F., Sepekoff, B., & Wolf, T. J. (1985). Sexual orientation: A multi-variable dynamic process. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 11(1-2), 35-49.
- Klein, M., & Moser, C. (2006). SM (Somasochistic) interests as an issue in a child custody proceeding. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 50(2-3), 233-242.

- Kolmes, K., Stock, W., & Moser, C. (2006). Investigating bias in psychotherapy with BDSM clients. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 50(2-3), 301-324.
- Kong, T. S. K., Mahoney, D., & Plummer, K. (2002). Queering the interview. In J. F. Gubrium & J. A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research* (pp. 239-258). Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kort, M. (2005). *Dinah!: Three decades of sex, golf, and rock 'n' roll*. Los Angeles, CA: Out Traveler Books.
- Kosciw, J. G. (2004). *The 2003 school climate survey: The school-related experiences of our nation's lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth*. New York: GLSEN.
- Kourany, R. F. C. (1987). Suicide among homosexual adolescents. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 13(4), 111-117.
- Kracauer, S. (1953). The challenge to qualitative content analysis. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 16, 631-642.
- Krentz, A., & Arthur, N. (2001). Counseling culturally diverse students with eating disorders. *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy*, 15(4), 7-21.
- Krestan, J.-A., & Bepko, C. S. (1980). The problem of fusion in the lesbian relationship. *Family Process*, 19, 277-289.
- Krieger, S. (1983). *The mirror dance: Identity in a women's community*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Krum, S. (2001, August 2). Lady killer. *Guardian Unlimited*, Retrieved January 22, 2007 from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/women/story/2000,3604,530951,530900.html>.

- Lakkis, J., Ricciardelli, L. A., & Williams, R. J. (1999). Role of sexual orientation and gender-related traits in disordered eating. *Sex Roles, 41*(1-2), 1-16.
- Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund. (2000, September 1). Boy Scouts of America v. Dale, Retrieved 1/24/2007 from <http://www.lambdalegal.org/cgi-bin/iowa/cases/record?record=2033>.
- Laner, M. R. (1978). Media mating II: "Personals" advertisements of lesbian women. *Journal of Homosexuality, 4*, 41-61.
- Lark, J. S., & Croteau, J. M. (1998). Lesbian, gay, and bisexual doctoral students' mentoring relationships with faculty in counseling psychology: A qualitative study. *The Counseling Psychologist, 26*(5), 754-776.
- Leavy, R. L., & Adams, E. M. (1986). Feminism as a correlate of self-esteem, self-acceptance, and social support among lesbians. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 10*, 321-325.
- Lee, I.-C., & Crawford, M. (2007). Lesbians and bisexual women in the eyes of scientific psychology. *Feminism & Psychology, 17*(1), 109-127.
- Lee, J. A. (1979). The social organization of sexual risk. *Alternative Lifestyles, 2*, 69-100.
- Lerman, H. (1996). *Pigeonholing women's misery: A history and critical analysis of the psychodiagnosis of women in the twentieth century*. New York: BasicBooks.
- Lesserman, J., DiSantostefano, R., Perkins, D. O., & Evans, D. I. (1994). Gay identification and psychological health in HIV-positive and HIV-negative gay men. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 24*, 2193-2208.

- Levy, E. F. (1996). Reproductive issues for lesbians. In K. J. Peterson (Ed.), *Health care for lesbians and gay men: Confronting homophobia and heterosexism* (pp. 49-58). New York: Harrington Park Press.
- Lidderdale, M. A. (2002). Practitioner training for counseling lesbian, gay, and bisexual clients. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 6(3/4), 111-120.
- Liddle, B. J. (1996). Therapist sexual orientation, gender, and counseling practices as they relate to ratings on helpfulness by gay and lesbian clients. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 43(4), 394-401.
- Liddle, B. J. (1997). Gay and lesbian clients' selection of therapists and utilization of therapy. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, 34(1), 11-18.
- Liddle, B. J. (1999). Recent improvement in mental health services to lesbian and gay clients. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 37(4), 127-137.
- Liddle, B. J., Kunkel, M. A., Kick, S. L., & Hauenstein, A. L. (1998). The gay, lesbian, and bisexual psychology faculty experience: A concept map. *Teaching of Psychology*, 25(1), 19-25.
- Liljestrand, P., Gerling, E., & Saliba, P. A. (1978). The effects of social sex-role stereotypes and sexual orientation on psychotherapeutic outcomes. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 3(4), 361-372.
- Lindenbaum, J. P. (1985). The shattering of an illusion: The problem of competition in lesbian relationships. *Feminist Studies*, 11(1), 85-103.
- Long, J. K. (1996). Working with lesbians, gays, and bisexuals: Addressing heterosexism in supervision. *Family Process*, 35, 377-388.

- Long, J. K., & Serovich, J. M. (2003). Incorporating sexual orientation into MFT training programs: Infusion and inclusion. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 29(1), 59-67.
- Loulan, J. (1984). *Lesbian sex*. Duluth, MN: Spinsters Ink.
- Loulan, J. (1987). *Lesbian passion: Loving ourselves and each other*. San Francisco: CA: Spinsters, Aunt Lute.
- Lovell, D., & Jemelka, R. (1998). Coping with mental illness in prisons. *Family and Community Health*, 21(3), 54-66.
- Lucas, V. A. (1992). An investigation of the health care preferences of the lesbian population. *Health Care for Women International*, 13, 221-228.
- Lyn, L. (1995). Lesbian, gay, and bisexual therapists' social and sexual interactions with clients. In J. C. Gonsiorek (Ed.), *Breach of trust: Sexual exploitation by health care professionals and clergy* (pp. 193-212). Thousand Oaks: CA: Sage.
- Maeve, M. K. (1997). Nursing practice with incarcerated women: Caring within mandated alienation. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, 18, 495-510.
- Maeve, M. K. (1999). The social construction of love and sexuality in a woman's prison. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 21(3), 46-65.
- Mahan, W. C., Varjas, K., Dew, B. J., Meyers, J., Singh, A. A., Marshall, M. L., et al. (2006). School and community service providers' perspectives on gay, lesbian, and questioning bullying. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling*, 1(2), 45-66.
- Malley, M., & Tasker, F. (1999). Lesbians, gay men and family therapy: A contradiction in terms? *Journal of Family Therapy*, 21, 3-29.

- Malyon, A. K. (1982). Psychotherapeutic implications of internalized homophobia in gay men. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 7, 59-70.
- Mapou, R. L., Ayres, J., & Cole, S. P. (1983). An analysis of problem areas and counseling experiences of gay white males. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 11(3), 323-336.
- Marañón, G. (1932). *The evolution of sex and intersexual conditions*. London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Marinoble, R. M. (1998). Homosexuality: A blind spot in the school mirror. *Professional School Counseling*, 1(3), 4-7.
- Markowitz, L. (1998, April 30a). Against kinkophobia; An interview with Guy Baldwin. *In the Family*, 3(4), 6-9.
- Markowitz, L. (1998, April 30b). Editor's note; Beyond rhetoric. *In the Family*, 3(4), 2.
- Marmor, J. (1965). *Sexual inversion: The multiple roots of homosexuality*. New York: Basic Books.
- Martin, A. (1982). Learning to hide: Socialization of the gay adolescent. *Adolescent Psychiatry*, 10, 52-65.
- Martin, A., & Hetrick, E. S. (1988). The stigmatization of the gay and lesbian adolescent. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 15, 163-184.
- Martin, D., & Lyon, P. (1972). *Lesbian/woman*. San Francisco, CA: Bantam Books.
- Martin-Baro, I. (1994). *Writings for a liberation psychology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Massey, R., & Walfish, S. (2001). Stresses and strategies for underrepresented students: Gender, sexual, and racial minorities. In S. Walfish & A. K. Hess (Eds.), *Succeeding in graduate school: The career guide for psychology students* (pp. 141-155). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Masters, W. H., & Johnson, V. E. (1979). *Homosexuality in perspective*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Matthew Shepard Foundation. (2007). Matthew's life, Retrieved March 30, 2007 from http://www.matthewshepard.org/site/PageServer?pagename=mat_Matthews_Life.
- Matthews, A., Tartaro, J., & Hughes, T. (2003). A comparative study of lesbian and heterosexual women in committed relationships. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 7(1), 101-114.
- Maxwell, J. A. (1996). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Maylon, A. (1981). The homosexual adolescent: Developmental issues and social bias. *Child Welfare*, 60(5), 655-660.
- Mays, V. M., & Cochran, S. D. (2001). Mental health correlates of perceived discrimination among lesbian, gay and bisexual adults in the United States. *American Journal of Public Health*, 91, 1869-1876.
- McAughey, S. (2006, February 5). The American dream: Camp Sister Spirit Mississippi. *The blanket: A journal of protest and dissent*, Retrieved January 19, 2007 from <http://lark.phoblacht.net/smca0505064g.html>.

- McCann, D. (2001). Lesbians, gay men, their families and counseling: Implications for training and practice. *Educational and Child Psychology, 18*, 78-88.
- McConaghy, N. (1998). Paedophilia: A review of the evidence. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, 32*, 252-265.
- McFarland, W. P. (1998). Gay, lesbian, and bisexual student suicide. *Professional School Counseling, 1*(3), 26-29.
- McFarland, W. P., & Dupuis, M. (2001). The legal duty to protect gay and lesbian students from violence in school. *Professional School Counseling, 4*(3), 171-179.
- McGoldrick, M., Almeida, R., Garcia Preto, N., Bibb, A., Sutton, C., Hudak, J., et al. (1999). Efforts to incorporate social justice perspectives into a family training program. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 25*(2), 191-209.
- McHenry, S. S., & Johnson, J. W. (1993). Homophobia in the therapist and gay or lesbian client: Conscious and unconscious collusions in self-hate. *Psychotherapy, 30*, 141-151.
- McNaron, T. (1997). *Poisoned ivy: Lesbian and gay academics confronting homophobia*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Mercier, L., & Berger, R. (1989). Social service needs of lesbian and gay adolescents: Telling it their way. *Journal of Social Work & Human Sexuality, 8*(1), 75-95.
- Meyer, I. (1995). Minority stress and mental health in gay men. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 7*, 9-25.
- Meyer, I., & Dean, L. (1998). Internalized homophobia, intimacy, and sexual behavior among gay and bisexual men. In G. Herek (Ed.), *Psychological perspectives on*

lesbian and gay issues: Stigma and sexual orientation: Understanding prejudice against lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals (Vol. 4, pp. 160-186). Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage.

Meyer-Bahlburg, H. F. L. (2002). Child-adult sexual contact: Terminology. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 31(2), 157-158.

Michael, R. T., Gagnon, J. H., Laumann, E. O., & Kolata, G. (1994). *Sex in America: A definitive survey*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown.

Miller, D. (1990). The trauma of interpersonal violence. *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, 61, 6-26.

Miller, J. B. (1986). *Toward a new psychology of women* (2nd ed.). Boston: Beacon Press.

Miller, N. (1996). *Counseling in genderland: A guide for you and your transgendered client*. Boston: Different Path Press.

Miller, N. (2006). *Out of the past: Gay and lesbian history from 1869 to present* (Rev. & updated ed.). New York: Alyson Books.

Mobley, M. (1998). Lesbian, gay, and bisexual issues in counseling psychology training: Acceptance in the millennium? *The Counseling Psychologist*, 26(5), 786-796.

Mohr, J. J. (2002). Heterosexual identity and the heterosexual therapist: An identity perspective on sexual orientation dynamics in psychotherapy. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 30(4), 532-566.

- Mohr, J. J., & Rochlen, A. G. (1999). Measuring attitudes regarding bisexuality in lesbian, gay male, and heterosexual populations. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 46*, 353-369.
- Moore, C. (Spring, 1990). Our husband, the state book review of *Wildfire: Igniting the She!volution* by Sonia Johnson. *Association of Libertarian Feminists News, 52*, Retrieved April 3, 2007 from <http://www.carolmoore.net/articles/johnsonreview.html>.
- Morgan, D. (1997). Restricted love. *Women & Therapy, 20*(4), 75-84.
- Morgan, K. S. (1992). Caucasian lesbians' use of psychotherapy: A matter of attitude? *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 16*(1), 127-130.
- Morin, S. F. (1977). Heterosexual bias in psychological research on lesbianism and male homosexuality. *American Psychologist, 32*(8), 629-637.
- Morin, S. F., & Charles, K. A. (1983). Heterosexual bias in psychotherapy? In J. Murray & P. R. Abramson (Eds.), *Bias in psychotherapy* (pp. 309-338). New York: Praeger.
- Morris, A., & Wilkinson, C. (1995). Responding to female prisoners' needs. *The Prison Journal, 75*(3), 295-305.
- Morris, M., & Patton, P. (Eds.). (1979). *Michel Foucault: Power, truth, strategy*. Sydney, Australia: Feral.
- Morrison, M. A., Morrison, T. G., & Sager, C.-L. (2004). Does body satisfaction differ between gay men and lesbian women and heterosexual men and women? A meta-analytic review. *Body Image, 1*(2), 127-138.

- Morrow, S. L. (1998). Toward a new paradigm in counseling psychology training and education. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 26(4), 797-808.
- Moser, C. (1998). S/M (sodomasochistic) interactions in semi-public settings. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 36, 19-29.
- Moser, C., & Kleinplatz, P. J. (2005). DSM-IV-TR and the paraphilias: An argument for removal. *Journal of Psychology & Human Sexuality*, 17(3-4), 91-109.
- Moser, C., & Kleinplatz, P. J. (2006). Introduction: The state of our knowledge on SM. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 50(2-3), 1-15.
- Moser, C., & Levitt, E. G. (1987). An exploratory-descriptive study of a sadomasochistically oriented sample. *Journal of Sex Research*, 23, 322-337.
- Moss, J. F. (1995, August). *Gay, lesbian, and bisexual clients' perceptions of bias in psychotherapy*. Paper presented at the 103rd Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, New York.
- Muller, A. (1987). Retrospective distortion in homosexual research. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 9, 525-531.
- Muller, L. E., & Hartman, J. (1998). Group counseling for sexual minority youth. *Professional School Counseling*, 1(3), 38-41.
- Murphy, B. C. (1989). Lesbian couples and their parents: The effects of perceived parental attitudes on the couple. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 68(1), 46-51.
- Murphy, B. C. (1991). Educating mental health professionals about gay and lesbian issues. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 22(3-4), 229-246.

- Murphy, J. A., Rawlings, E. I., & Howe, S. R. (2002). A survey of clinical psychologists on treating lesbian, gay, and bisexual clients. *Professional Psychology: Research & Practice, 33*(2), 183-189.
- Myers, A., Taub, J., Morris, J. F., & Rothblum, E. D. (1999). Beauty mandates and the appearance obsession: Are lesbian and bisexual women better off? *Journal of Lesbian Studies, 3*(4), 15-26.
- Myrick, R., & Brown, M. H. (1998). Out of the closet and into the classroom: A survey of lesbian, gay, and bisexual educators' classroom strategies and experiences in colleges and universities. *Journal of Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Identity, 4*, 295-317.
- Nagda, B. A., Spearmon, M. L., Holley, L. C., Harding, S., Balassone, M. L., McIsaac, D., et al. (1999). Intergroup dialogues: An innovative approach to teaching about diversity and justice in social work programs. *Journal of Social Work Education, 35*(3), 433-449.
- National Commission on Correctional Health Care. (1994). *Women's health care in correctional settings*. Chicago: IL.
- National Institute of Mental Health Task Force on Homosexuality. (1972). *Final report and background papers*. Washington, DC: Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.
- Neisen, J. H., & Sandall, Hilary. (1990). Alcohol and other drug abuse in a gay/lesbian population: Related to victimization? *Journal of Psychology & Human Sexuality, 3*(1), 151-168.

- Nestle, J. (1990). Butch-fem (lesbian) relationships. In W. R. Dynes (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of homosexuality* (pp. 177-179). New York: Garland.
- Neuendorf, K. A. (2003). *The content analysis guidebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Newton, D. E. (1978). Homosexual behavior and child molestation: A review of the evidence. *Adolescence*, *XIII*(49), 29-43.
- Nichols, M. (1982). The treatment of inhibited sexual desire (ISD) in lesbian couples. *Women and Therapy*, *1*, 49-66.
- Nichols, M. (1987). Lesbian sexuality: Issues and developing theory. In Boston Lesbian Psychologies Collective (Ed.), *Lesbian psychologies: Explorations and challenges* (pp. 97-125). Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Nichols, M. (2004). Lesbian sexuality/female sexuality: Rethinking "lesbian bed death". *Sexual and Relationship Therapy*, *19*, 363-371.
- Nichols, M. (2006). Psychotherapeutic issues with "kinky" clients: Clinical problems, yours and theirs. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *50*(2-3), 281-300.
- Nichols, S. L. (1999). Gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth: Understanding diversity and promoting tolerance in schools. *The Elementary School Journal*, *99*(5), 505-519.
- Niolon, R. (1998). Experiences of gays and lesbians as students in psychology training programs (Doctoral dissertation, Saint Louis University, 1998). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, *58*(8-B), 4463.
- Noddings, N. (1992). *The challenge to care in schools: An alternative approach to education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

- Norton, J. L. (1982). Integrating gay issues into counselor education. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 21*, 208-212.
- Nystrom, N. M. (1997). Oppression by mental health providers: A report by gay men and lesbians about their treatment. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 58*-06A, 2394-2538.
- O'Connor, A. (1994). Who gets called queer in school? Lesbian, gay and bisexual teenagers, homophobia, and high school. *The High School Journal, 77*, 7-12.
- Ojerholm, A. J., & Rothblum, E. D. (1999). The relationships of body image, feminism and sexual orientation in college women. *Feminism & Psychology, 9*(4), 431-448.
- Omiza, M. M., & Omizo, S. A., Okamoto, C. M. (1998). Gay and lesbian adolescents: A phenomenological study. *Professional School Counseling, 1*(3), 35-37.
- Orner, M. (1992). Interrupting the calls for student voice in "liberatory" education: A feminist poststructuralist perspective. In C. Luke & J. Gore (Eds.), *Feminisms and critical pedagogy*. New York: Routledge.
- Orzek, A. M. (1992). Career counseling for the gay and lesbian community. In S. Dworkin & F. Gutierrez (Eds.), *Counseling gays and lesbians: Journey to the end of the rainbow* (pp. 23-33). Alexandria: VA.
- Otis, M. (1913). A perversion not commonly noted. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 8*, 113-116.
- Otis, M., & Skinner, W. F. (1996). The prevalence of victimization and its effect on mental well-being among lesbian and gay people. *Journal of Homosexuality, 30*, 93-121.

- Owen, B. (1998). *"In the mix": Struggles and survival in a women's prison*. Albany: State University of New York.
- Owens, L. K., Hughes, T. L., & Owens-Nicholson, D. (2003). The effects of sexual orientation on body image and attitudes about eating and weight. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 7(1), 15-33.
- Oxford University Press. (1993). herstory. *Oxford English dictionary additions series*, Retrieved April 23, 2007 from http://www.library.ohiou.edu:2099/cgi/entry/00293243?single=00293241&query_type=word&queryword=herstory&first=00293241&max_to_show=00293210.
- Parks, C. W., Cutts, R. N., Woodson, K. M., & Flarity-White, L. (2001). Issues inherent in the multicultural feminist couple treatment of African-American, Same-Gender loving female adult survivors of child sexual abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 10(3), 17-34.
- Pearlman, S. F. (1989). Distancing and connectedness: Impact on couple formation in lesbian couples. *Women & Therapy*, 8, 77-88.
- Pedersen, P. (2001). Mobilizing the generic potential of culture-centered counseling. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 23, 165-177.
- Penelope, J. (1997). Wimmin- and lesbian-only spaces: Thought into action. In M. Blasius & S. Phelan (Eds.), *We are everywhere: A historical sourcebook of gay and lesbian politics* (pp. 781-786). New York: Routledge.

- Peplau, L. A., Cochran, S. D., Rook, K., & Pedesky, C. (1978). Loving women: Attachment and autonomy in lesbian relationships. *Journal of Social Issues*, 34, 7-27.
- Peplau, L. A., Padesky, C., & Hamilton, M. (1982). Satisfaction in lesbian relationships. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 8(2), 23-35.
- Pettis, R. M. (2006). Socarides, Richard (b. 1954). *An encyclopedia of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, & queer culture*, Retrieved from http://www.glbtc.com/social-sciences/socarides_r.html.
- Phillips, J. C. (2000). Training issues and considerations. In R. M. Perez, K. A. DeBord & K. J. Bieschke (Eds.), *Handbook of counseling and psychotherapy with lesbian, gay, and bisexual clients* (pp. 337-358). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Phillips, J. C., & Fischer, A. R. (1998). Graduate students' training experiences with lesbian, gay, and bisexual issues. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 26(5), 712-734.
- Phillips, J. C., Ingram, K. M., Smith, N. G., & Mindes, E. J. (2003). Methodological and content review of lesbian-, gay-, and bisexual-related articles in counseling journals: 1990-1999. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 31(1), 25-62.
- Pickett, J. P., et al.,. (2000). yoni. In *The American heritage dictionary of the English language* (4th ed.). Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.
- Piercy, M. (1976). *Living in the open*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

- Pilkington, N. W., & Cantor, J. M. (1996). Perceptions of heterosexual bias in professional psychology programs: A survey of graduate students. *Professional Psychology: Research & Practice*, 27(6), 604-612.
- Pilkington, N. W., & D'Augelli, A. R. D. (1995). Victimization of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth in community settings. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 23, 34-56.
- Pillard, R. C. (1988). Sexual orientation and mental disorder. *Psychiatric Annals*, 18, 51-56.
- Pollock, J. M. (1998). *Counseling women in prison*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Porter, N. (1994). Empowering supervisees to empower others: A culturally responsive supervision model. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 16(1), 43-56.
- Powell, R. E. (1987). Homosexual behavior and the school counselor. *School Counselor*, 34(3), 202-208.
- Price, J. H., & Telljohann, S. K. (1991). School counselors' perceptions of adolescent homosexuals. *Journal of School Health*, 61, 433-438.
- Proctor, G. (1994). Lesbian clients' experience of clinical psychology: A listener's guide. *Changes: An International Journal of Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 12, 290-298.
- Propper, A. (1978). Lesbianism in female and coed correctional institutions. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 3(3), 265-274.
- Propper, A. (1981). *Prison homosexuality*. Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath.

- Propper, A. (1982). Make-believe families and homosexuality among imprisoned girls. *Criminology*, 20(1), 127-138.
- Rado, S. (1962). *Psychoanalysis of behavior* (Vol. 2). New York: Grune & Stratton.
- Rado, S. (1965). A critical examination of the concept of bisexuality. In J. Marmor (Ed.), *Sexual inversion: The multiple roots of homosexuality* (pp. 175-189). New York: Basic Books.
- Ramirez, M. (1998). *Multicultural/multiracial psychology: Mestizo perspectives in personality and mental health*. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson.
- Reagan, P. (1981). The interaction of health professionals and their lesbian clients. *Patient Counselling and Health Education*, 3(1), 21-25.
- Reiersol, O., & Skeid, S. (2006). The ICD diagnoses of fetishism and sadomasochism. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 50(2-3), 243-262.
- Reisman, J., & Eichel, E. W. (1990). *Kinsey, sex and fraud: The indoctrination of a people*. Lafayette, LA: Lochinvar-Huntington House.
- Remafedi, G. (1987). Adolescent homosexuality: Psychosocial and medical implications. *Pediatrics*, 79(3), 331-337.
- Remafedi, G., Farrow, J. A., & Deisher, R. W. (1991). Risk factors for attempted suicide in gay and bisexual youth. *Pediatrics*, 87(6), 869-875.
- Renzetti, C. M. (1992). *Violent betrayal: Partner abuse in lesbian relationships*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

- Rey, A. M., & Gibson, P. (1997). Beyond high school: Heterosexuals' self-reported anti-gay/lesbian behaviors and attitudes. *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Services*, 7, 65-84.
- Reynolds, M. (1992). *Dead ends*. New York: St. Martin's.
- Rich, A. (1980). Compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 5(4), 631-660.
- Richardson, D. (1985). The dilemma of essentiality in homosexual theory. In J. P. D. Cecco & M. G. Shively (Eds.), *Origins of sexuality and homosexuality* (pp. 79-90). New York: Harrington Park Press.
- Richie, A., & Johnson, C. (1996). Abuse histories among newly incarcerated women in a New York City jail. *JAMWA*, 51(3), 111-117.
- Ridinger, R. B. (2006). Negotiating limits: The legal status of SM in the United States. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 50(2-3), 189-216.
- Ridley, C. R., Mendoza, D. W., & Kanitz, D. E. (1994). Multicultural training: Reexamination, operationalization, and integration. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 22, 227-289.
- Rind, B., & Tromovitch, P. (1997). A meta-analytic review of findings from national samples on psychological correlates of child sexual abuse. *Journal of Sex Research*, 34, 237-255.
- Rind, B., Tromovitch, P., & Bauserman, R. (1998). A meta-analytic examination of assumed properties of child sexual abuse using college samples. *Psychological Bulletin*, 124(1), 22-53.

- Roberts, S. A., Dibble, S. L., Nussey, B., & Casey, K. (2003). Cardiovascular disease risk in lesbian women. *Women's Health Issues, 13*, 167-174.
- Robertson, M. (1982). We need our own banner. In E. Jackson & S. Perskey (Eds.), *Flaunting it!* (pp. 177-178). Vancouver: New Star.
- Robertson, M. (1992). Lesbians as an invisible minority in the health services arena. *Health Care for Women International, 13*, 155-163.
- Robinson, C. E. (2003). Relationships among childhood sexual abuse status, trust, and relationship satisfaction in lesbian couples. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B, 64*(5-B), 2401.
- Robinson, K. E. (1994). Addressing the needs of gay and lesbian students: The school counselor's role. *School Counselor, 41*(5), 326-332.
- Robohm, J. S. (2003). Sexual abuse in lesbian and bisexual young women: Associations with emotional/behavioral difficulties, feelings about sexuality, and the "coming out" process. *Journal of Lesbian Studies, 7*(4), 31-47.
- Rochlin, M. (1982). Sexual orientation of the therapist and therapeutic effectiveness with gay clients. *Journal of Homosexuality, 7*, 21-29.
- Ross, C., Durkin, V. (2005). Childhood trauma, dissociation and alcohol/other drug abuse among lesbian women. *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly, 23*(1), 99-105.
- Ross, M. E. (1989). Gay youth in four cultures: A comparative study. *Journal of Homosexuality, 17*, 299-315.

- Ross, P. H., & Lawrence, J. E. (1998). Health care for women offenders: Challenge for the new century. In T. Allenman & R. L. Gido (Eds.), *Turnstyle justice: issues in American corrections* (pp. 176-191). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Roth, S. (1985). Psychotherapy with lesbian couples: Individual issues, female socialization, and the social context. *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy*, 11(3), 273-286.
- Roth, S. (1989). Psychotherapy with lesbian couples: Individual issues, female socialization, and the social context. In M. McGoldrick, C. M. Anderson & F. Walsh (Eds.), *Women in families: A framework for family therapy* (pp. 286-307). New York: W. W. Norton.
- Rothblum, E. D. (1994a). "I only read about myself on bathroom walls": The need for research on the mental health of lesbians and gay men. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 62, 213-220.
- Rothblum, E. D. (1994b). Lesbians and physical appearance: Which model applies? In B. Greene & G. M. Herek (Eds.), *Psychological perspectives on lesbian and gay issues* (pp. 84-97). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rothblum, E. D., & Sablove, P. (2005). *Lesbian communities: Festivals, RVs and the internet*. Binghamton, NY: Harrington Park Press.
- Rotheram-Borus, M., Hunter, J., & Rosario, M. (1994). Suicidal behavior and gay-related stress among gay and bisexual male adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 9(4), 498-508.

- Ruddick, S. (1989). *Maternal thinking: Towards a politics of peace*. Boston, MA: Beacon.
- Rudolph, J. (1988). Counselors' attitudes toward homosexuality: A selective review of the literature. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 67(3), 165-168.
- Rudolph, J. (1989). Effects of a workshop on mental health practitioners' attitudes toward homosexuality and counseling effectiveness. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 68, 81-85.
- Rudolph, J. (1990). Counselors' attitudes toward homosexuality: Some tentative findings. *Psychological Reports*, 66, 1352-1354.
- Russell, D. E. H. (1986). *The secret trauma: Incest in the lives of girls and women*. New York: Basic Books.
- Rutledge, L. W. (1992). *The gay decades*. New York: Plume.
- Saffren, S. A. (1999). Facing gay, lesbian, and bisexual graduate students in clinical psychology training. *The Behavior Therapist*, 22, 189-192.
- Saffron, L. (1998). Raising children in an age of diversity-advantages of having a lesbian mother. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 2(4), 35-47.
- Saghir, M. T., & Robins, E. (1973). *Male and female homosexuality: A comprehensive investigation*. Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins.
- Saghir, M. T., Robins, E., Walbran, B., & Gentry, K. A. (1970). Psychiatric disorders and disability in the female homosexual. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 127(2), 147-154.

- Saghir, M. T., Robins, E., & Walbran, B. G., K. A. (1970). Psychiatric disorders and disability in the male homosexual. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 126, 1079-1086.
- Samar, J. V. (2001). *The New York Times twentieth century in review: The gay rights movement*. Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn.
- Sandfort, T. G. M., de Graff, R., Bijl, R. V., & Schnabel, P. (2001). Same-sex sexual behavior and psychiatric disorders: Findings from the Netherlands Mental Health Survey and Incidence Study (NEMESIS). *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 58, 85-91.
- Sandnabba, N. K., Santtila, P., & Nordling, N. (1999). Sexual behavior and social adaptation among sadomasochistically-oriented males. *Journal of Sex Research*, 36, 273-282.
- Sandoval, C. (2001). U.S. third world feminism: The theory and method of oppositional consciousness in the postmodern world. In K.-K. Bhavnani (Ed.), *Feminism and "race"* (pp. 261-280): Oxford University Press.
- Savin-Williams, R. C. (1990). *Gay and lesbian youth: Expressions of identity*. New York: Hemisphere.
- Savin-Williams, R. C. (1994). Verbal and physical abuse as stressors in the lives of lesbian, gay male, and bisexual youths: Associations with school problems, running away, substance abuse, prostitution, and suicide. *Journal of Consulting & Clinical Psychology*, 62(2), 261-269.

- Schiffman, J. B., DeLucia-Waack, J. L., & Gerrity, D. A. (2005). An examination of the construct of homophobia: Prejudice or phobia? *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling, 1*(1), 75-93.
- Schneer, D., & Aviv, C. (Eds.). (2006). *American queer, now and then*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm.
- Schneider, J. A., O'Leary, A., & Jenkins, S. R. (1993). Gender, sexual orientation, and disordered eating. *Psychology and Health, 10*, 113-128.
- Schneider, S. G., Farberow, N. L., & Kruks, B. N. (1989). Suicidal behavior in adolescent and young adult gay men. *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior, 19*(4), 381-194.
- Schoener, G., Milgrom, J. H., Gonsiorek, J. C., Luepker, E. T., & Conroe, R. M. (1989). *Psychotherapists' sexual involvement with clients: Intervention and prevention*. Minneapolis, MN: Walk-In Counseling Center.
- Sears, J. (1992). Educators, homosexuality, and homosexual students: Are personal feelings related to professional beliefs? In K. Harbeck (Ed.), *Coming out of the classroom closet: Gay and lesbian teachers and curricula* (pp. 27-79). New York: Harrington Park.
- Sears, J. T. (1991). Helping students understand and accept sexual diversity. *Educational Leadership, 49*, 54-56.
- Selling, L. S. (1931). The pseudo family. *The American Journal of Sociology, 37*(2), 247-253.

- Servicemembers Legal Defense Network. Historical timelines of don't ask, don't tell, don't pursue, don't harass. Retrieved January 26, 2007 from http://www.sldn.org/binary-data/SLDN_ARTICLES/pdf_file/1451.pdf.
- Severance, T. A. (2004). The prison lesbian revisited. *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services: Issues in Practice, Policy & Research*, 17(3), 39-57.
- Sevig, T., & Etzkorn, J. (2001). Transformative training: A year-long multicultural counseling seminar for graduate students. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling & Development*, 29(1), 57-72.
- Share, T. L., & Mintz, L. B. (2002). Differences between lesbians and heterosexual women in disordered eating and related attitudes. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 42(4), 89-106.
- Shidlo, A. (1994). Internalized homophobia: Conceptual and empirical issues in measurement. In B. Greene & G. M. Herek (Eds.), *Lesbian and gay psychology: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (pp. 176-205). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Siegel, E. (1988). *Female homosexuality: Choice without volition*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Siever, M. D. (1994). Sexual orientation and gender as factors in socioculturally acquired vulnerability to body dissatisfaction and eating disorders. *Journal of Consulting & Clinical Psychology*, 62(2), 252-260.
- Siever, M. D. (1996). The perils of sexual objectification: Sexual orientation, gender, and socioculturally acquired vulnerability to body dissatisfaction and eating disorders.

- In C. J. Alexander (Ed.), *Gay and lesbian mental health: A sourcebook for practitioners* (pp. 223-247). New York: Harrington Park Press.
- Signorile, M. (1991, February 20). Gossip Watch. *OutWeek*, 64.
- Simoni, J. M. (1996a). Confronting heterosexism in the teaching of psychology. *Teaching of Psychology*, 23(4), 220-226.
- Simoni, J. M. (1996b). Pathways to prejudice: Predicting students' heterosexist attitudes with demographics, self-esteem, and contact with lesbians and gay men. *Journal of College Student Development*, 37, 68-78.
- Simoni, J. M. (2000). Confronting heterosexism in the teaching of psychology. In B. Greene & G. Croom (Eds.), *Education, research, and practice in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered psychology: A resource manual* (Vol. 5, pp. 74-90). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Singer, M., Bussey, J., Li-Yu, S., & Lunghofer, L. (1995). The psychosocial issues of women serving time in jail. *Social Work*, 40(1), 103-113.
- Smith, E. M., Johnson, S. R., & Guenther, S. M. (1985). Health care attitudes and experiences during gynecologic care among lesbians and bisexuals. *American Journal of Public Health*, 75(9), 1085-1087.
- Smith, G., Cox, D., & Saradjian, J. (1999). *Women and self-harm: Understanding, coping, and healing from self-mutilation*. New York: Routledge.
- Smith-Rosenberg, C. (1975). The female world of love and ritual: Relations between women in nineteenth-century America. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 1(1), 1-29.

- Smolover, M. (1996). What about my needs?: Working with lesbian partners of childhood sexual abuse survivors. In C. J. Alexander (Ed.), *Gay and lesbian mental health: A sourcebook for practitioners* (pp. 15-37). Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.
- Snell, T., & Morton, D. (1994). *Women in prison*. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- Snortum, J. R. (1969). Family dynamics and homosexuality. *Psychological Reports*, 24(3), 763-770.
- Snyder, R., & Hasbrouck, L. (1996). Feminist identity, gender traits, and symptoms of disordered eating among college women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 20, 593-598.
- Socarides, C. W. (1968). *The overt homosexual*. New York: Grune & Stratton.
- Socarides, C. W. (1975). *Beyond sexual freedom*: Quadrangle/New York Times.
- Socarides, C. W. (1978). *Homosexuality*. New York: Jason Aronson.
- Spelman, E. V. (2001). Gender & race: The ampersand problem in feminist thought. In K.-K. Bhavnani (Ed.), *Feminism & "race"* (pp. 74-88): Oxford University Press.
- Staff of the University of Chicago Press (Ed.). (2003). *The Chicago manual of style* (15th ed.): University of Chicago Press.
- Stein, A. (1997). *Sex and sensibility: Stories of a lesbian generation*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Stein, M. (Ed.). (2003). *Encyclopedia of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender history in America*. Farmington Hills, MI: Charles Scribner.

- Stein, T. S. (1994). A curriculum for learning in psychiatric residencies about homosexuality, gay men, and lesbians. *Academic Psychiatry, 18*, 59-70.
- Stein, T. S., & Burg, B. K. (1994). Teaching in mental health training programs about homosexuality, lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals. In R. P. Cabaj & T. S. Stein (Eds.), *Textbook of homosexuality and mental health* (pp. 621-631). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press.
- Stein, T. S., & Burg, B. K. (1996). Teaching in mental health programs about homosexuality, lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals. In R. P. Cabaj & T. T. Stein (Eds.), *Textbook of homosexuality and mental health* (pp. 621-631). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press.
- Stevens, P. E. (1993). Lesbian health care research: A review of the literature from 1970 to 1990. In P. N. Stern (Ed.), *Lesbian health: What are the issues* (pp. 1-30). Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis.
- Stevens, P. E., & Hall, J. M. (1988). Stigma, health beliefs and experiences with health care in lesbian women. *IMAGE: Journal of Nursing Scholarship, 20*(2), 69-73.
- Streitmatter, R. (1995). *Unspeakable: The rise of the gay and lesbian press in America*. Boston: Faber and Faber.
- Striegel-Moore, R. H., Tucker, N., & Hsu, J. (1990). Body image dissatisfaction and disordered eating in lesbian college students. *International Journal of Eating Disorders, 9*(5), 493-500.
- Struckman-Johnson, C., & Struckman-Johnson, D. (2000). Sexual coercion rates in ten prison facilities in the mid-west. *The Prison Journal, 80*(4), 379-390.

- Struckman-Johnson, C., Struckman-Johnson, D., Rucker, L., Bumby, K., & Donaldson, S. (1996). Sexual coercion reported by men and women in prison. *The Journal of Sex Research, 33*(1), 67-76.
- Sue, D. W. (2001). Multidimensional facets of cultural competence. *The Counseling Psychologist, 29*, 790-821.
- Sue, D. W., Bernier, J. E., Durran, A., Feinberg, L., Pedersen, P., Smith, E. J., et al. (1982). A position paper: Cross-cultural counseling competencies. *The Counseling Psychologist, 10*, 45-52.
- Swami, V., & Tovee, M. J. (2006). The influence of body mass index on the physical attractiveness preferences of feminist and nonfeminist heterosexual women and lesbians. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 30*, 252-257.
- Swartz, V. J. (1989). Relational therapy with lesbian couples. In G. R. Weeks (Ed.), *Treating couples: The intersystem model of The Marriage Council of Philadelphia* (pp. 236-257). New York: Brunner/Mazel.
- Szasz, T. S. (1967). *The myth of mental illness: Foundations of a theory of personal conduct*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Szasz, T. S. (1970). *Ideology and insanity: Essays on the psychiatric dehumanization of man*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.
- Tash, D. T., & Kenney, J. W. (1993). The lesbian childbearing couple: A case report. *Birth, 20*(1), 36-40.
- Taub, J. (1999). Bisexual women and beauty norms: A qualitative examination. *Journal of Lesbian Studies, 3*(4), 27-36.

- Taylor, S. (1996). Women offenders and reentry issues. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, 28, 85-93.
- Teague, J. B. (1992). Issues relating to the treatment of adolescent lesbians and homosexuals. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 14(422-239).
- Telljohann, S. K. (1993). A qualitative examination of adolescent homosexuals' life experiences: Ramifications for secondary school personnel. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 26(1), 41-56.
- Tennov, D. (1979). *Love and limerence: The experience of being in love*. New York: Stein and Day.
- Thompson, G. H., & Fishburn, W. R. (1977). Attitudes toward homosexuality among graduate counseling students. *Counselor Education & Supervision*, 17, 121-131.
- Tomeo, M. E., Templer, D. I., Anderson, S., & Kotler, D. (2001). Comparative data of childhood and adolescence molestation in heterosexual and homosexual persons. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 30(5), 535-541.
- Tomeo, M. E., Templer, D. I., Anderson, S., & Kotler, D. (2002). Sensitivity but not censorship. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 31(2), 157-158.
- Toporek, R. L., & Reza, J. V. (2001). Context as a critical dimension of multicultural counseling: Articulating personal, professional, and institutional competence. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling & Development*, 29(1), 13-30.
- Tripp, C. A. (1975). *The homosexual matrix*. New York: Meridian.

- Trippet, S. E. (1993). Reasons American lesbians fail to seek traditional health care. In P. N. Stern (Ed.), *Lesbian health: What are the issues?* (pp. 55-63). Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis.
- Trippet, S. E., & Bain, J. (1990). Preliminary study of lesbian health concerns. *Health Values: The Journal of Health Behavior, Education & Promotion*, 14(6), 30-36.
- Valanis, B. G., Bowen, D. J., Bassford, T., Whitlock, E., Charney, P., & Carter, R. A. (2000). Sexual orientation and health: Comparisons in the Women's Health Initiative Sample. *Archives of Family Medicine*, 9(9), 843-853.
- van Naerssen, A. X., van Dijk, M., Hoogveen, G., Visser, D., & van Zessen, G. (1987). Gay SM in pornography and reality. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 12(2/3), 111-119.
- Van Voorhis, R., & Wagner, M. (2002). Among the missing: Content on lesbian and gay people in social work journals. *Social Work*, 47(4), 345-354.
- Vargo, S. (1987). The effects of women's socialization on lesbian couples. In Boston Lesbian Psychologies Collective (Ed.), *Lesbian Psychologies: Explorations and Challenges* (pp. 161-173). Illinois: University of Illinois Press.
- Varjas, K. (2006). Assessing school climate among sexual minority high school students. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling*, 1(3), 49-76.
- Vera, E. M., & Speight, S. L. (2003). Multicultural competence, social justice and counseling psychology: Expanding our roles. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 31(3), 253-272.
- Vetere, V. A. (1982). The role of friendship in the development and maintenance of lesbian love relationships. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 8(2), 51-65.

- von Kleist, W. (1992). A survey of doctoral clinical and counseling psychology students' exposure in doctoral training programs to gay and lesbian issues and attitudes toward lesbians and gay men. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 53, 6617-6618.
- Ward, D., & Kassebaum, G. (1965). *Women's prison: Sex and social structure*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Ward, D., & Kassebaum, G. G. (1964). Homosexuality: A mode of adaptation in a prison for women. *Social Problems*, 12(2), 159-177.
- Watters, A. T. (1986). Heterosexual bias in psychological research on lesbianism and male homosexuality (1979-1983), utilizing the bibliographic and taxonomic system of Morin (1977). *Journal of Homosexuality*, 13(1), 35-58.
- Watterson, K. (1996). *Women in prison: Inside the concrete womb*. Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press.
- Weinberg, T. S. (1978). Sadism and masochism: Sociological perspectives. *The Bulletin of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*, 6, 284-295.
- Weinberg, T. S. (1994). Research in sadomasochism: A review of sociological and social psychological literature. *Annual Review of Sex Research*, 5, 257-279.
- Weinberg, T. S. (2006). Sadomasochism and the social sciences: A review of the sociological and social psychological literature. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 50(2-3), 17-40.
- Weinberg, T. S., & Falk, G. (1980). The social organization of sadism and masochism. *Deviant Behavior: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 1, 379-393.

- Weingourt, R. (1998). A comparison of heterosexual and homosexual long-term sexual relationships. *Archives of Psychiatric Nursing*, 12(3), 114-118.
- Wells, J. W. (1989). Sexual language usage in different interpersonal contexts: A comparison of gender and sexual orientation. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 18(2), 127-143.
- Wells, J. W. (1990). The sexual vocabularies of heterosexual and homosexual males and females for communicating erotically with a sexual partner. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 19(2), 139-147.
- Wells-Lurie, L. (1996). Working with parents of gay and lesbian children. In C. J. Alexander (Ed.), *Gay and lesbian mental health: A sourcebook for practitioners* (pp. 159-171). New York: Harrington Park Press.
- Weston, K. (1991). *Families we choose: Lesbians, gays, kinship*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Whitman, J. S. (1995). Providing training about sexual orientation in counselor education. *Counselor Education & Supervision*, 35(2), 168-176.
- Wicklund, R. A. (1975). Discrepancy reduction or attempted distraction? A reply to Lieblind, Seiler & Shaver. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 11, 78-81.
- Wilkinson, S., & Kitzinger, C. (Eds.). (1993). *Heterosexuality: A feminism & psychology reader*. London: Sage.
- Willett, G. (2000). *Living out loud: A history of gay and lesbian activism in Australia*. St. Leonards, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin.
- Wolff, C. (1971). *Love between women*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

- Worell, J., & Remer, P. (2003). *Feminist perspectives in therapy: Empowering diverse women* (2nd ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley.
- Worthington, R. L., Savot, H. B., Dillon, F. R., & Vernaglia, E. R. (2002). Heterosexual identity development: A multidimensional model of individual and social identity. *The Counseling Psychologist, 46*(964-974).
- Wright, L. (1999, July/August). The Stonewall riots: 1969. *Socialism Today, 40*.
- Wright, S. (2006). Discrimination of SM-Identified Individuals. *Journal of Homosexuality, 50*(2-3), 217-231.
- Yancey, A. K., Cochran, S. D., Corliss, H. L., & Mays, V. M. (2003). Correlates of overweight and obesity among lesbian and bisexual women. *Preventive Medicine, 36*(676-683).

APPENDIX A: 1974-1979 Tables

Table A1

1974-1979: Discrimination and Fear

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Anita Bryant	1	6	1	4	12
2	Great SE Lesbian Conference	2	7	0	0	9
3	Lesbian In the Closet	1	7	0	0	8
4	Hints for Hetero Woman	1	6	1	0	8
5	Fat and Female	1	6	0	0	7
6	FBI at Your Door	1	2	0	4	7
7	A N.O.W. Experience	1	4	0	0	5
8	Smash Tropicana	1	4	0	0	5
9	Mom and Dad	1	3	0	1	5
10	Immigration Blues	2	2	0	0	4
11	Military Purge of Lesbians	1	1	1	0	3
12	Declaration of Independence	1	2	0	0	3
13	Two “Stars” Speak	1	2	0	0	3
14	Remove Me From Mailing List	1	2	0	0	3
15	Lesbian Feminist Soldier	1	2	0	0	3
16	Over 50	1	1	1	0	3
17	Weekend Escape	1	2	0	0	3

Table A1: continued

18	Word Lesbian in Bookstore Ad	1	1	0	0	2
19	Some Small Steps Forward	1	1	0	0	2
20	Lesbian History Exploration	1	1	0	0	2
21	Ms. Magazine	1	1	0	0	2
22	Lesbians and Science	1	1	0	0	2
23	A Lesbian is Speaking	1	1	0	0	2
24	Equal Rights for Whom?	1	1	0	0	2
25	More News From TV Land	1	1	0	0	2
26	Paranoia	1	1	0	0	2
27	Prohibit Female Beards	1	1	0	0	2
28	A Feminist Pronoun	1	1	0	0	2
29	Women Marching in N. Ireland	1	1	0	0	2
30	Ozark Women on Land	1	1	0	0	2
31	Growing Up, Reaching Out	1	1	0	0	2
32	End of a Nightmare	1	1	0	0	2
33	Planning Lesbian Events	1	1	0	0	2
34	Ageism	1	1	0	0	2
35	Caught By the Past	1	1	0	0	2
36	Economic Superiority	1	1	0	0	2

Table A1: continued

37	Fat Oppression	1	1	0	0	2
38	CBS and Rape	1	1	0	0	2
39	Snuff	1	1	0	0	2
40	Lesbian Tax Resistance	1	1	0	0	2
41	New York, New York	1	1	0	0	2
42	The Magic Screen	1	1	0	0	2
43	Resistor Code Limerick Game	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	45	85	4	9	143

Table A2

1974-1979: Defining Lesbian

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Open Letter to Olivia Records	1	20	0	0	21
2	Choose Four	1	9	0	0	10
3	Witches & Amazons	1	7	0	0	8
4	Lesbian Connection Survey	1	4	2	0	7
5	God Loves Lesbians	1	4	0	0	5
6	Marriage	1	3	0	1	5
7	A Witch's Curse	1	4	0	0	5
8	Directory of American Lesbians	1	4	0	0	5
9	You Are What You Eat	1	4	0	0	5
10	Our Lifestyle is Beautiful	1	2	1	0	4
11	Expanding Lesbian Culture	1	2	0	0	3
12	Emily Dickinson	1	2	0	0	3
13	Why I Turned Airarian	1	2	0	0	3
14	In Her Day	1	2	0	0	3
15	We Love You, Miss Jessup	1	2	0	0	3
16	Rita Mae Brown: In Retrospect	1	2	0	0	3
17	Goddess Worship	1	2	0	0	3

Table A2: continued

18	Japanese Women's Movement	1	1	0	0	2
19	Amazonism	1	1	0	0	2
20	Lost in a Crowd	1	1	0	0	2
21	Cover Art	1	1	0	0	2
22	Beware of False Prophets	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	22	80	3	1	106

Table A3

1974-1979: Separatism

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Thoughts on Separatism	1	17	1	0	19
2	Middle of the Road	1	10	0	0	11
3	Lesbian Separatism	1	6	2	0	9
4	Raising a Son	1	8	0	0	9
5	To Women's Health Collective	1	8	0	0	9
6	Conflict at Lesbian Center	1	6	0	0	7
7	Open Letter to All Lesbians	1	5	0	0	6
8	Little People . . . My Priority	1	4	0	0	5
9	Sister: Take This Quiz	1	3	0	0	4
10	The Myth of Lesbian Pride	1	3	0	0	4
11	Male Children	1	1	1	0	3
12	Socialist/Feminist Conference	1	2	0	0	3
13	Directory of Country Living	1	1	1	0	3
14	Destructive Cities	1	1	0	0	2
15	Parthenogenesis	1	1	0	0	2
16	Meg Christian in Concert	1	1	0	0	2
17	20th Century Paradise	1	1	0	0	2

Table A3: continued

18	Suggestions About Our Books	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	18	79	5	0	102

Table A4

1974-1979: Growing Pains

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Pen Pals	0	20	5	0	25
2	De-Pressing Issues	2	7	1	0	10
3	Off-Key Music	1	6	1	0	8
4	Policy on Editing	1	4	1	0	6
5	Anatomy of <i>LC</i> 's Finances	1	2	1	0	4
6	Baltimore, Maryland	1	3	0	0	4
7	Front Cover	1	1	1	0	3
8	Trashy Filth	1	1	1	0	3
9	I Would Like to Help You	1	1	1	0	3
10	Stop Sending Immediately	1	1	1	0	3
11	Funding	1	2	0	0	3
12	Feminist Forge	1	2	0	0	3
13	Junk Mail	1	1	0	0	2
14	Your Letter in the Front of <i>LC</i>	1	1	0	0	2
15	You Hadn't Printed My Name	1	1	0	0	2
16	Complaints About Businesses	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	16	54	13	0	83

Table A5

1974-1979: Isolation

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Special Issue	1	8	2	0	11
2	Review of Publications	1	5	2	0	8
3	Be the First on Your Block . . .	2	5	0	0	7
4	Black and White Couple	1	4	1	0	6
5	Cheyenne	1	3	0	0	4
6	17-Year Old Lesbian	1	2	1	0	4
7	Revolution Known by Graffiti	1	2	0	0	3
8	Search for Lesbian Community	1	2	0	0	3
9	High School Lesbians	1	2	0	0	3
10	Living in DC	1	2	0	0	3
11	Austin Lesbian Organization	1	1	0	0	2
12	My Gay Self	1	1	1	0	3
13	Directory of Publications	1	1	0	0	2
14	Galesburg, IL	1	1	1	0	3
15	Looking Hard	1	1	0	0	2
16	Lesbian Prisoners	1	1	1	0	3
17	Brighten Your Day	1	1	0	0	2

Table A5: continued

18	Going Into the Army	1	1	0	0	2
19	Gaia's Guide	1	0	1	0	2
20	CB Radio for Dykes?	1	1	0	0	2
21	Torn Between Two Loves	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	22	45	10	0	77

Table A6

1974-1979: Relationships and Sexuality

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Can Lesbians Be Friends	2	13	0	0	15
2	Love, Come Set Me Free	1	7	0	0	8
3	An Open Letter to Butches	1	7	0	0	8
4	Sexuality Survey	1	4	1	0	6
5	Pre-Orgasmic Lesbians	1	5	0	0	6
6	Autonomy vs. Monogamy	1	2	0	0	3
7	Big Daddy B.S.	1	2	0	0	3
8	Let's Hear it for Monogamy!	1	2	0	0	3
9	A Diary to My Love	1	1	0	0	2
10	Love as an Obsession	1	1	0	0	2
11	Infatuation	1	1	0	0	2
12	Loving Friends	1	1	0	0	2
13	Lesbian Relationship Violence	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	14	47	1	0	62

Table A7

1974-1979: Health and Mental Health

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Lesbians & Alcoholism	1	7	0	0	8
2	Experiences in Therapy	1	2	1	0	4
3	Suicide Within Our Community	1	3	0	0	4
4	Testosterone	1	2	0	0	3
5	What Can You Say?	1	2	0	0	3
6	Funding for Lesbian Alcoholics	1	1	0	0	2
7	Lesbians and Mental Health	1	1	0	0	2
8	Diagnosis	1	1	0	0	2
9	Electro-Shock "Therapies"	1	1	0	0	2
10	What is All This Therapy Stuff	1	1	0	0	2
11	Gay Alcoholism	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	11	22	1	0	34

Table A8

1974-1979: Category Totals

Table	Category	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
A1	Discrimination and Fear	45	85	4	9	143
A2	Defining Lesbian	22	80	3	1	106
A3	Separatism	18	79	5	0	102
A4	Growing Pains	16	54	13	0	83
A5	Isolation	22	45	10	0	77
A6	Relationships and Sexuality	14	47	1	0	62
A7	Health and Mental Health	11	22	1	0	34
	TOTALS	148	412	37	10	607

Table A9

1974-1979: Top Ten Items of Discussion

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Pen Pals	0	20	5	0	25
2	Open Letter to Olivia Records	1	20	0	0	21
3	Thoughts on Separatism	1	17	1	0	19
4	Can Lesbians Be Friends	2	13	0	0	15
5	Anita Bryant	1	6	1	4	12
6	Middle of the Road	1	10	0	0	11
7	Special Issue	1	8	2	0	11
8	De-Pressing Issues	2	7	1	0	10
9	Choose Four	1	9	0	0	10
11	Lesbian Separatism	1	6	2	0	9
10	Great SE Lesbian Conference	2	7	0	0	9
12	Raising a Son	1	8	0	0	9
13	To Women's Health Collective	1	8	0	0	9
	TOTAL	15	139	12	4	152

APPENDIX B: 1979-1989 Tables

Table B1

1979-1989: Defining Lesbian

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Ex-Lesbians	1	26	0	0	27
2	Feminine Gay Women	1	25	0	0	26
3	Lesbians Passing for Straight	1	16	0	0	17
4	Vegetarian Pet Food	1	15	0	0	16
5	Not Recognized as Lesbian	1	14	0	0	15
6	Term to for Relationships	1	12	0	0	13
7	Pets are Slaves	1	10	0	0	11
8	From 14-Year-Old Lesbian	1	9	0	0	10
9	Alienated by Movement	1	8	0	0	9
10	What We Call Ourselves	1	7	0	0	8
11	Don't Tell Me What To Eat	1	6	0	0	7
12	Lesbians Watching Strippers	1	6	0	0	7
13	Doesn't Fit Lesbian Mold	1	5	0	0	6
14	Married Lesbian	1	5	0	0	6
15	Banning Meat at Festivals	1	5	0	0	6
16	Lesbians in Girl Scouting	1	5	0	0	6
17	What to Call Ourselves	1	4	0	0	5

Table B1: continued

18	Lesbian Burlesque Show	1	4	0	0	5
19	Using the Term Butch	1	3	0	0	4
20	Tired of Radical Views	1	3	0	0	4
21	Meaning of Pink Flamingos	1	3	0	0	4
22	Remember the Animals	1	2	0	0	3
23	Monogamy	1	2	0	0	3
24	Loves Married Bisexual	1	2	0	0	3
25	Sexual Attraction to Men	1	2	0	0	3
26	Politically (In)Correct	1	2	0	0	3
27	Loves the City	1	2	0	0	3
28	Festive, Eccentric Old Maids	1	2	0	0	3
29	Urban Professional Lesbian	1	2	0	0	3
30	Lesbians in France	1	2	0	0	3
31	Glamour Lesbians Ad	1	2	0	0	3
32	Toward a New Vocabulary	1	1	0	0	2
33	Lesbian Character in Soaps	1	1	0	0	2
34	Dykes with Fingernails	1	1	0	0	2
35	Re-Run of Language Article	1	1	0	0	2
36	Couple-ism	1	1	0	0	2

Table B1: continued

37	Is Lesbianism a Choice?	1	1	0	0	2
38	Came out Late in Life	1	1	0	0	2
39	<i>LC</i> Mailing List	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	39	219	0	0	258

Table B2

1979-1989: Relationships and Sexuality

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	My “Lover” is Celibate	1	35	0	0	36
2	Sadomasochistic Ad in <i>LC</i>	1	32	0	0	33
3	About Sadomasochism	1	15	0	0	16
4	I am Non-Orgasmic	1	9	0	0	10
5	Child Molestation or Love?	1	8	0	0	9
6	S & M Exhibition	1	8	0	0	9
7	S/M Banished	1	8	0	0	9
8	Ménage à Trois	1	7	0	0	8
9	Learning Orgasm	1	5	1	0	7
10	Censoring Sadomasochism	1	6	0	0	7
11	Lesbian Divorce	1	6	0	0	7
12	Sexual Abuse by a Lover	1	5	0	0	6
13	Sex in the Age of AIDS	1	5	0	0	6
14	Giving Myself a Divorce	1	5	0	0	6
15	Age Differences	1	5	0	0	6
16	Celebration or Fixation	1	4	0	0	5
17	Long-Distance Relationships	1	4	0	0	5

Table B2: continued

18	Students Are Off Limits	1	4	0	0	5
19	Observations About Love	1	4	0	0	5
20	To the Other Woman	1	3	0	0	4
21	My Lover Kicked Me Out	1	3	0	0	4
22	Sadomasochistic Ad in <i>LC</i>	1	3	0	0	4
23	Lesbian Battery	1	2	0	0	3
24	Response to AIDS	1	2	0	0	3
25	Going Through the "Change"	1	2	0	0	3
26	Can Lesbians Be Friends	1	1	0	0	2
27	Changing Roles	1	1	0	0	2
28	Martina Navratilova's Partner	1	1	0	0	2
29	Married in Unitarian Church	1	1	0	0	2
30	Book Review	1	1	0	0	2
31	Changing Last Names	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	31	196	1	0	228

Table B3

1979-1989: Discrimination and Fear

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	18-Year-Old Lesbian ^a	1	31	0	0	32
2	Festival Blues	1	7	0	0	8
3	A Letter to My Dad	1	6	0	0	7
4	Supremacist Threats	1	6	0	0	7
5	Magazines Ignore March	1	5	0	0	6
6	Teachers	3	2	1	0	6
7	Lesbians Killed on Trail	2	3	0	0	5
8	Raitt Negates Lesbians	1	5	0	0	6
9	16-Year-Old Lesbian	1	5	0	0	6
10	Being Called Sir	1	4	0	0	5
11	Festival Workers Attitudes	1	4	0	0	5
12	Legal Concerns	1	3	0	0	4
13	Bounced Out of Military	1	3	0	0	4
14	Uninvited Festival Worker	1	3	0	0	4
15	Festival Rules	2	1	0	0	3
16	Jewish Lesbians	1	2	0	0	3
17	Movie is Male Fantasy	1	2	0	0	3

Table B3: continued

18	Victory Over Universities	1	2	0	0	3
19	Victimized at Gay Monument	1	1	0	0	2
20	Third World Women	1	2	0	0	3
21	Young Angry Lesbian	1	2	0	0	3
22	Finding Our Power	1	2	0	0	3
23	Lesbian Started Riot	1	2	0	0	3
24	Send White to Electric Chair	1	1	0	0	2
25	The Bathroom Line	1	1	0	0	2
26	Fat Liberation	1	1	0	0	2
27	Boys Oppressing Girls	1	1	0	0	2
28	White, Thin Able Bodies	1	1	0	0	2
29	Beyond the ERA	1	1	0	0	2
30	Legal System: Friend or Foe	1	1	0	0	2
31	Lesbianism Ignored	1	1	0	0	2
32	Article Rejected	1	1	0	0	2
33	Some Small Steps Forward	1	1	0	0	2
34	Hints for Hetero Women	1	1	0	0	2
35	Anti-Rape Fragrance	1	1	0	0	2
36	“Justice” System	1	1	0	0	2

Table B3: continued

37	NGLTF Ignores Lesbians	1	1	0	0	2
38	Resist with Bloody Pads	1	1	0	0	2
39	Rude Festival Workers	1	1	0	0	2
40	Cruise Disaster	1	1	0	0	2
41	Barred From Wrestling	1	1	0	0	2
42	Closeted in Law School	1	1	0	0	2
43	Diversity vs. Unity	1	1	0	0	2
44	Lesbianism Ignored	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	48	124	1	0	173

^a The Ambitious Amazons reported they received over 30 responses to this letter. Only six responses were published. For the purposes of this study, over 30 was interpreted as 31 responses.

Table B4

1979-1989: Growing Pains

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	<i>Shigella</i> Outbreak ^a	9	60	0	0	69
2	Harassment by Christians	1	17	0	0	18
3	Using Columns in the <i>LC</i>	1	13	1	0	15
4	Criticism of the <i>LC</i>	1	7	0	0	8
5	Computerizing the <i>LC</i>	1	6	0	0	7
6	Can't Stand Winter Catalog	1	2	2	0	5
7	Cover Picture on <i>LC</i>	1	3	0	0	4
8	Nuns Betrayed by Grier	1	2	0	0	3
9	Post Office Problems	1	1	1	0	3
10	Attitudes of Musicians	1	2	0	0	3
11	Unwanted Mail	1	1	1	0	3
12	Publishing Land Directory	1	2	0	0	3
13	Lesbian/Feminist Printer	1	1	0	0	2
14	Found <i>LC</i> in Trash	1	1	0	0	2
15	Anniversary Issue	1	1	0	0	2
16	No Perfect Festivals	1	1	0	0	2
17	Publishing Land Directory	1	1	0	0	2

Table B4: continued

18	Insurance Crisis	1	1	0	0	2
19	Review of <i>Reflections</i>	1	1	0	0	2
20	Lafayette, Indiana	1	1	0	0	2
21	Postcards are Junk Mail	1	1	0	0	2
22	Wallet Stolen	1	1	0	0	2
23	Focusing Lesbian Energies	1	1	0	0	2
24	The Crystal Curtain	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	32	128	5	0	165

^a The Ambitious Amazons reported they received 69 letters about the *Shigella* outbreak at the Michigan Women's Music Festival. Only nine originals and 17 responses were published.

Table B5

1979-1989: Health and Mental Health

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Importance of Therapy	1	18	0	0	19
2	Lesbian Atheist in AA	1	18	0	0	19
3	Epstein-Barr Virus	1	11	0	0	12
4	Endometriosis	1	8	0	0	9
5	Med School Alternatives	1	7	0	0	8
6	Breast Reduction Surgery	1	7	0	0	8
7	Breast Removed	1	4	1	0	6
8	Adult Child of Alcoholic	1	5	0	0	6
9	Lesbians and AIDS	1	4	0	0	5
10	Arthritis & Asthma Herbs	1	4	0	0	5
11	Dysfunctional Family	1	3	0	0	4
12	Idiopathic Thrombocytopenia	1	3	0	0	4
13	Wellness Newsletter	1	1	1	0	3
14	Lesbian Risk for AIDS	1	2	0	0	3
15	Dykes for Sobriety	1	1	0	0	2
16	Lesbian Incest Survivors	1	1	0	0	2
17	Loud Music/Drinking	1	1	0	0	2

Table B5: continued

18	Child Sexual Abuse	1	1	0	0	2
19	How to Roll a Tampon	1	1	0	0	2
20	Gov't Funding Dangers	1	1	0	0	2
21	Need Smoke-Free Spaces	1	1	0	0	2
22	Vaginal Yeast Infections	1	1	0	0	2
23	Lichen Sclerosis	1	1	0	0	2
24	Birth Control Questions	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	24	105	2	0	131

Table B6

1979-1989: Minority Lesbians

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Ablism at Festival	5	15	1	1	22
2	Seeking Asian Lesbians	1	7	0	0	8
3	Temporarily Thin	1	3	0	0	4
4	Disabled Threatened Harm	1	3	0	0	4
5	Black Feminist Dilemma	1	2	0	0	3
6	Addressing -isms	1	2	0	0	3
7	Fat Liberation	1	2	0	0	3
8	A Safe Place Racism	1	2	0	0	3
9	Removal of Native People	1	2	0	0	3
10	Native American Homophobia	1	2	0	0	3
11	Japanese Lesbian	1	2	0	0	3
12	Whitewashing Thanksgiving	1	1	0	0	2
13	Disabled Dykes	1	1	0	0	2
14	Racism Workshop	1	1	0	0	2
15	Deaf Lesbian Speaks Out	1	1	0	0	2
16	Jewish Lesbian Group	1	1	0	0	2
17	Anti-Semitism	1	1	0	0	2

Table B6: continued

18	Marbles in Your Shoes	1	1	0	0	2
19	Lesbians of Color Confer.	1	1	0	0	2
20	Black Lesbians?	1	1	0	0	2
21	Attitude Greatest Handicap	1	1	0	0	2
22	Deaf Lesbians	1	1	0	0	2
23	Bridging the Differences	1	1	0	0	2
24	Classism	1	1	0	0	2
25	Info for Disabled Lesbians	1	1	0	0	2
26	Ageism	1	1	0	0	2
27	“Old” Lesbians	1	1	0	0	2
28	Sisters of the Forest	1	1	0	0	2
29	No Perfect 10	1	1	0	0	2
30	Wheelchair Stall	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	34	61	1	1	97

Table B7

1979-1989: Isolation

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Difficult Meeting Women	1	14	0	0	15
2	Lesbian in the Military	1	6	0	0	7
3	Mother Dying of Cancer	1	4	0	0	5
4	Isolated Med Student	1	4	0	0	5
5	Isolation Isn't Healthy	1	3	0	0	4
6	Stranded Sister	1	3	0	0	4
7	Running 106 Acres Alone	1	2	0	0	3
8	Lost Her Hearing	1	2	0	0	3
9	Isolated Professionals	1	2	0	0	3
10	Homophobic Town	1	2	0	0	3
11	<i>LC</i> Gave Her Strength	1	2	0	0	3
12	Seeking Joy	1	1	0	0	2
13	Divorced Lesbian Mother	1	1	0	0	2
14	Seeking Lesbian Twins	1	1	0	0	2
15	Being Lesbian Too Hard	1	1	0	0	2
16	Lesbian Grandmother	1	1	0	0	2
17	Mail Order Gives Access	1	1	0	0	2

Table B7: continued

18	Reactor Rangerette	1	1	0	0	2
19	Closeted Teacher	1	1	0	0	2
20	Looking For You	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	20	53	0	0	73

Table B8

1979-1989: Separatism

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Sisterfire Controversy	2	13	0	0	15
2	Male Children	1	12	0	0	13
3	Anti-Separatist Sentiment	1	4	0	0	5
4	Lost Friends to AIDS	1	4	0	0	5
5	Benefit for AIDS	1	4	0	0	5
6	Silencing Separatists	1	3	0	0	4
7	Boys at Festivals	1	3	0	0	4
8	Male Performers	1	2	0	0	3
9	Lesbian Prejudices	1	2	0	0	3
10	Men in Women's Music	1	2	0	0	3
11	Non-Lesbian Safehouses	1	1	0	0	2
12	Lesbian vs. Gay	1	1	0	0	2
13	Cooperative Living	1	1	0	0	2
14	Winter Horse Exercising	1	1	0	0	2
15	Not Man-Haters	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	16	54	0	0	70

Table B9

1979-1989: Children, Families, and Parenting

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Adoption/Insemination	2	20	0	0	22
2	Going to Have a Baby?	1	7	0	0	8
3	Two Females Creating Baby	1	6	0	0	7
4	Artificial Insemination	1	3	0	0	4
5	Books for Children of Lesbians	1	2	0	0	3
	TOTAL	6	38	0	0	44

Table B10

1979-1989: Religion and Spirituality

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
2	I Hate Christmas	1	8	0	0	9
3	Daughter of “Preacher”	1	3	0	0	4
4	Lesbian Spiritual Center	1	3	0	0	4
5	Seeking Moslem Lesbians	1	3	0	0	4
6	Spiritual Politics	1	1	0	0	2
7	Lesbian Christian	1	1	0	0	2
8	Witchcraft	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	8	29	0	0	37

Table B11

1979-1989: Networking

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Seeking <i>War Widow</i>	1	3	0	0	4
2	Sweet Caroline Review	1	2	0	0	3
3	Seeking Lesbian Sorority	1	2	0	0	3
4	Seeking Indigo Girls info	1	2	0	0	3
5	Seeking Women's Films	1	1	0	0	2
6	Checking for Radon	1	1	0	0	2
7	Using Smoke Detectors	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	7	12	0	0	19

Table B12

1979-1989: Category Totals

Table	Category	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
B1	Defining Lesbian	39	219	0	0	258
B2	Relationships and Sexuality	31	196	1	0	228
B3	Discrimination and Fear	48	124	1	0	173
B4	Growing Pains	32	128	5	0	165
B5	Health and Mental Health	24	105	2	0	131
B6	Minority Lesbians	34	61	1	1	97
B7	Isolation	20	53	0	0	73
B8	Separatism	16	54	0	0	70
B9	Children, Families, and Parenting	6	38	0	0	44
B10	Religion and Spirituality	8	29	0	0	37
B11	Networking	7	12	0	0	19
	TOTALS	265	1019	10	1	1295

Table B13

1979-1989: Top Ten Items of Discussion

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	<i>Shigella</i> Outbreak ^a	9	60	0	0	69
2	My “Lover” is Celibate	1	35	0	0	36
3	Sadomasochistic Ad in <i>LC</i>	1	32	0	0	33
4	18-Year-Old Lesbian ^b	1	31	0	0	32
5	Ex-Lesbians	1	26	0	0	27
6	Feminine Gay Women	1	25	0	0	26
7	Adoption/Insemination	2	20	0	0	22
8	Ablism at Festival	5	15	1	1	22
9	The Importance of Therapy	1	18	0	0	19
10	Lesbian Atheist in AA	1	18	0	0	19
	TOTAL	23	280	1	1	305

^a The Ambitious Amazons reported they received 69 letters about the *Shigella* outbreak at the Michigan Women’s Music Festival. Only nine originals and 17 responses were published.

^b The Ambitious Amazons reported they received over 30 responses to this letter. Only six responses were published. For the purposes of this study, over 30 was interpreted as 31 responses.

APPENDIX C: 1989-1994 Tables

Table C1

1989-1994: Relationships and Sexuality

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Finances in Relationships	1	22	0	0	23
2	Sadomasochism	11	8	0	0	19
3	Excessive Facial Hair	1	14	0	0	15
4	Doesn't Like Sex	1	9	1	0	11
5	Female Ejaculation	1	8	1	0	10
6	Crushes on Straight Women	1	8	0	0	9
7	Intimate Abuse	1	7	0	0	8
8	Gay-Affirming Ketubbah	1	6	0	0	7
9	Marriage in Netherlands	1	4	2	0	7
10	Lesbian Weddings	2	3	0	0	5
11	Three-Way Relationships	1	5	0	0	6
12	Kissing with Partial Denture	1	3	0	0	4
13	Open Relationships	1	3	0	0	4
14	Lesbian Weddings	1	3	0	0	4
15	Still in love with Ex	1	2	0	0	3
16	Lesbian Sisters	1	2	0	0	3
17	Relationship Conflict	1	1	0	0	2

Table C1: continued

18	Name Changes	1	1	0	0	2
19	I Don't Masturbate	1	1	0	0	2
20	Immigration Issues	1	1	0	0	2
21	Moving in Together	1	1	0	0	2
22	Height Differences & Sex	1	1	0	0	2
23	Taking Care of Yourself First	1	1	0	0	2
24	Domestic Partnership Plans	1	1	0	0	2
25	Canadian Bookstore Raided	1	1	0	0	2
26	Lesbians Married by Rabbi	1	1	0	0	2
27	21 Yrs in Open Relationship	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	38	118	4	0	160

Table C2

1989-1994: Growing Pains

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Stop Trashing Festivals	1	13	0	0	14
2	Olivia Concert Complaints	1	6	0	0	7
3	Change in <i>LC</i> Folding	1	6	0	0	7
4	Complaints from CDs	3	2	0	0	5
5	Support Lesbian Performers	1	4	0	0	5
6	Complaints about B & B	1	4	0	0	5
7	Angry Lesbian Playwright	1	3	1	0	5
8	Lesbian Resort Reviews	1	3	0	0	4
9	Complaints from CDs	1	3	0	0	4
10	Lesbian Songwriting Trends	1	3	0	0	4
11	<i>LC</i> Press Broke Down	1	3	0	0	4
12	Easterners vs. Westerners	1	2	0	0	3
13	Straight Ads in <i>LC</i>	1	1	1	0	3
14	Lesbian Resort Reviews	1	2	0	0	3
15	<i>LC</i> 's Name	1	1	1	0	3
16	Reviews of Festivals	1	2	0	0	3
17	Reviews of Festivals	1	2	0	0	3

Table C2: continued

18	Support Lesbian Bookstores	1	2	0	0	3
19	Stop Trashing Festivals	1	2	0	0	3
20	Straight Ads in <i>LC</i>	1	2	0	0	3
21	Reviews of Festivals	1	1	0	0	2
22	Complaints About kd lang	1	1	0	0	2
23	Complaint About Cover Art	1	1	0	0	2
24	Pro-Gay Candidates	1	1	0	0	2
25	Reviews of Festivals	1	1	0	0	2
26	Offended by T-Shirt Ad	1	1	0	0	2
27	Reviews of March	1	1	0	0	2
28	Complaint About Cover Art	1	1	0	0	2
29	Festival Complaint Process	1	1	0	0	2
30	Is CD List Effective?	1	1	0	0	2
31	Redwood Records In Debt	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	33	77	3	0	113

Table C3

1989-1994: Networking

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Seeking Adopted Lesbians	1	9	0	0	10
2	Seeking Deadhead Lesbians	1	6	1	0	8
3	Seeking tape of March	1	5	2	0	8
4	Coping with Elderly Parents	1	6	0	0	7
5	Seeking Large Patterns	1	5	0	0	6
6	Seeking Large Bike Seat	1	4	0	1	6
7	Seeking Info About Author	1	2	2	0	5
8	Unhappy with Career	1	3	0	0	4
9	Country Living	1	2	0	0	3
10	Seeking Lesbian Art Reviews	1	1	1	0	3
11	Clothing for and by womyn	1	2	0	0	3
12	Lesbians in Russia	1	1	1	0	3
13	Uses for Hemp Plant	1	2	0	0	3
14	Purchasing Lesbian Film	1	2	0	0	3
15	Seeking Info About Director	1	1	0	0	2
16	Lesbian Singles Group	1	1	0	0	2
17	Seeking Publication Info	1	1	0	0	2

Table C3: continued

18	Homemade Mace Recipe	1	1	0	0	2
19	Insurance for Partners at Levi	1	1	0	0	2
20	Homemade Menstrual Pads	1	1	0	0	2
21	Seeking Info About Author	1	1	0	0	2
22	Midwestern Organization	1	1	0	0	2
23	Seeking UFO Abductees	1	1	0	0	2
24	Music Review	1	1	0	0	2
25	Fan of Lesbian Author	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	25	61	7	1	94

Table C4

1989-1994: Health and Mental Health

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Satanic Ritual Abuse	1	11	0	0	12
2	Chronic Fatigue	1	8	2	0	11
3	Childhood Sexual Abuse	1	7	1	0	9
4	Questioning Abuse Stories	1	7	0	0	8
5	Breast Cancer & Deodorant	1	6	0	0	7
6	Childhood Sexual Abuse	1	5	0	0	6
7	Bras Harm Breast Health	1	3	0	0	4
8	Insurance for Partners	1	3	0	0	4
9	I'm a Thief	1	3	0	0	4
10	LC Editors Quit Smoking	1	2	0	0	3
11	Sex with Therapist Unethical	1	2	0	0	3
12	Breast Cancer	1	2	0	0	3
13	Menopause Symptoms	1	2	0	0	3
14	Prisoner Needed Support	1	2	0	0	3
15	Childhood Sexual Abuse	1	1	0	0	2
16	Seeking Lesbian Diabetics	1	1	0	0	2
17	Pre-Menstrual Syndrome	1	1	0	0	2

Table C4: continued

18	Question Hysterectomies	1	1	0	0	2
19	Lesbian Midwife	1	1	0	0	2
20	Lesbians & AIDS Study	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	20	69	3	0	92

Table C5

1989-1994: Discrimination and Fear

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Hate Crimes in Mississippi	3	6	0	0	9
2	Lesbian Serial Killer	7	1	0	0	8
3	Girl Scouts Homophobic	1	6	0	0	7
4	Lesbians Invisible in NOW	1	5	0	0	6
5	Boycotting Colorado	1	3	1	0	5
6	Is Research Firm Legitimate?	1	3	0	0	4
7	83-Year-Old Cancels <i>LC</i>	1	3	0	0	4
8	Lesbians in Peace Corps	2	1	0	0	3
9	Sappho Bulletin Board	1	1	1	0	3
10	New Anchor Reports Rapes	1	2	0	0	3
11	AT&T Boycott	1	2	0	0	3
12	High School Reunion	1	2	0	0	3
13	Boycotting Colorado	1	1	1	0	3
14	Lesbian Documentary	1	1	1	0	3
15	Auto Insurance Discrimination	1	2	0	0	3
16	Lesbian Midwives Attacked	1	1	0	0	2

Table C5: continued

17	Baltimore Bad Girls Club	1	1	0	0	2
18	Christian College Harassment	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	27	42	4	0	73

Table C6

1989-1994: Defining Lesbian

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Transsexuals at Festival	2	13	2	0	17
2	Lesbian Politics	1	6	0	0	7
3	LC Subscriber Demographics	1	4	1	0	6
4	Were Ruth & Idgie Lesbians?	2	3	0	0	5
5	Is Holly Near a Lesbian?	1	4	0	0	5
6	Butch vs. Androgyny	1	4	0	0	5
7	Bisexual or Heterosexual?	1	4	0	0	5
8	March Omits Bisexuals	1	2	0	0	3
9	Butch and Blue Collar	1	2	0	0	3
10	Lesbian of the Year Awards	1	1	0	0	2
11	Creating a World for Women	1	1	0	0	2
12	Language for Women	1	1	0	0	2
13	Covers are Stereotypical	1	1	0	0	2
14	80-Year-Old Lesbian	1	1	0	0	2
15	Transsexuals at Festival	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	17	48	3	0	68

Table C7

1989-1994: Isolation

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Lesbians in Gulf War	1	9	0	0	10
2	Lesbian Teenager	1	6	1	0	8
3	Lesbians in Soviet Union	1	5	1	0	7
4	Lesbians in Rural America	1	5	0	0	6
5	Single Lesbians	1	4	0	0	5
6	Lesbian Bulletin Board	1	4	0	0	5
7	Lesbians at Conferences	1	2	1	0	4
8	Lesbian Nurses	1	3	0	0	4
9	Lesbian Teenager	1	2	1	0	4
10	Lesbian Teachers	1	1	1	0	3
11	Lesbian in Czechoslovakia	1	2	0	0	3
12	Lesbians in Brazil	1	1	0	0	2
13	Disregard of Older Lesbians	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	13	45	5	0	63

Table C8

1989-1994: Minority Lesbians

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Dedication to Black Nanny	1	8	0	0	9
2	Reverse Discrimination	1	6	0	0	7
3	Native American Lesbians	1	5	0	0	6
4	Black Lesbian Feminist Dies	1	4	0	0	5
5	Discrimination at Lesbian Bar	1	4	0	0	5
6	Reverse Discrimination	1	3	0	0	4
7	Olivia Ads Discriminatory	1	3	0	0	4
8	American Ethnocentrism in Ad	1	1	1	0	3
9	Co-optation of Cultures	1	2	0	0	3
10	Russian Lesbian History	1	1	0	0	2
11	Oppression of Deaf Culture	1	1	0	0	2
12	Able vs. Dis-abled	1	1	0	0	2
13	Festival Access for Disabled	1	1	0	0	2
14	Accessibility Hard-Won Fight	1	1	0	0	2
15	Free Subscription for Disabled	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	15	42	1	0	58

Table C9

1989-1994: Children, Families, and Parenting

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Compulsory Motherhood	1	10	0	0	11
2	Abuse of Children	1	6	0	0	7
3	Seeking Adoption Information	1	4	0	0	5
4	Second Parent Adoption	1	2	0	0	3
5	Petition to Adopt Granted	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	5	23	0	0	28

Table C10

1989-1994: Separatism

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Male Children at Festival	4	4	0	0	8
2	Non-Lesbians at Workshop	1	4	0	0	5
3	Supporting Lesbian Causes	1	4	0	0	5
4	Non-Lesbians at Festival	1	2	0	0	3
	TOTAL	7	14	0	0	21

Table C11

1989-1994: Religion and Spirituality

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Winter Catalogue	1	6	1	0	8
2	United Methodist Lesbians	1	4	0	0	5
3	Former Pentecostal Lesbians	1	3	0	0	4
4	Born-Again Bigots	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	4	14	1	0	19

Table C12

1989-1994: Category Totals

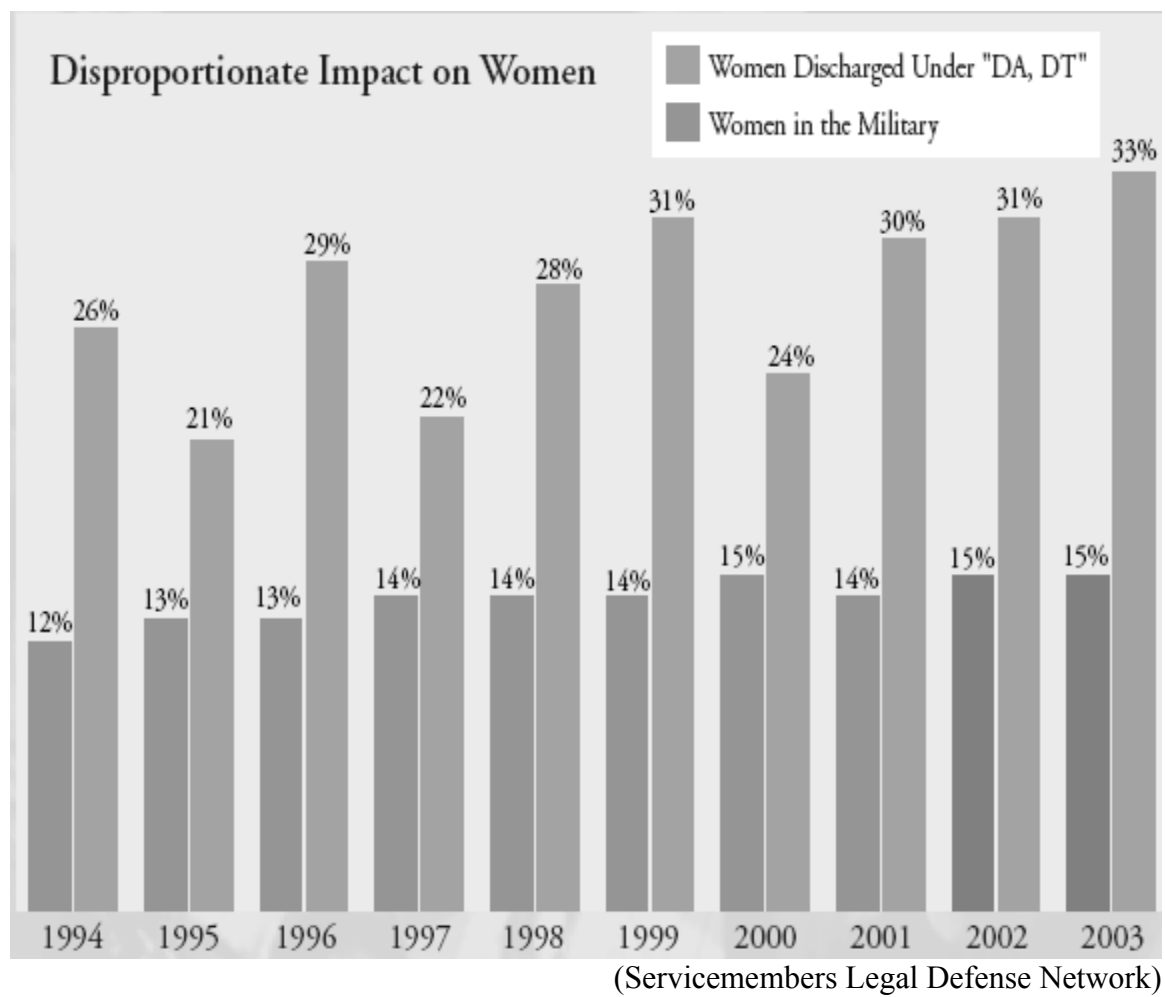
Table	Category	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
C2	Growing Pains	33	77	3	0	113
C3	Networking	25	61	7	1	94
C4	Health and Mental Health	20	69	3	0	92
C5	Discrimination and Fear	27	42	4	0	73
C6	Defining Lesbian	17	48	3	0	68
C7	Isolation	13	45	5	0	63
C8	Minority Lesbians	15	42	1	0	58
C9	Children, Families, and Parenting	5	23	0	0	28
C10	Separatism	7	14	0	0	21
C11	Religion and Spirituality	4	14	1	0	19
	TOTALS	204	553	31	1	789

Table C13

1989-1994: Top Ten Items of Discussion

No.	Title/ Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Finances in Relationships	1	22	0	0	23
2	Sadomasochism at Festivals	11	8	0	0	19
3	Transsexuals at Festival	2	13	2	0	17
4	Excessive Facial Hair	1	14	0	0	15
5	Stop Trashing Festivals	1	13	0	0	14
6	Satanic Ritual Abuse	1	11	0	0	12
7	Chronic Fatigue	1	8	2	0	11
8	Doesn't Like Sex	1	9	1	0	11
9	Compulsory Motherhood	1	10	0	0	11
10	Lesbians in Gulf War	1	9	0	0	10
11	Seeking Adopted Lesbians	1	9	0	0	10
12	Female Ejaculation	1	8	1	0	10
	TOTAL	23	134	6	0	163

Table C14

Impact of the Don't Ask, Don't Tell Policy on Lesbians

APPENDIX D: 1994-1999 Tables

Table D1

1994-1999: Health and Mental Health

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Is There Sex After Incest? ^a	2	64	0	4	70
2	Responding to Abuse	1	19	0	1	21
3	Side Effects of Menopause	1	17	0	1	19
4	Anti-Depressant Drugs	1	13	0	0	14
5	Manic-Depressive Alcoholic	1	11	0	1	13
6	Post-Traumatic Stress	1	10	0	1	12
7	Carpal Tunnel Syndrome	1	8	0	0	9
8	Uterine Fibroids	1	7	0	1	9
9	Coping With Migraines	1	7	0	0	8
10	Menopause	1	6	0	0	7
11	Human Papilloma Virus	1	5	1	0	7
12	Getting Disability Benefits	1	6	0	0	7
13	<i>Crones</i> (Crohn's) Disease	1	5	0	0	6
14	Sjorgren's Syndrome	1	4	1	0	6
15	Trichomoniasis	1	5	0	0	6
16	Lactose Intolerance	1	5	0	0	6
17	Breasts Have Dropped	1	5	0	0	6

Table D1: continued

18	Abused by Another Woman	1	4	0	0	5
19	Healer	1	4	0	0	5
20	Suicide	1	4	0	0	5
21	Pain During Ovulation	1	4	0	0	5
22	Endometriosis	1	4	0	0	5
23	Chronic Depression	1	4	0	0	5
24	Bras & Breast Cancer	1	4	0	0	5
25	Meniere's Disease	1	4	0	0	5
26	Sex & Hand Pain	1	3	0	0	4
27	Cancer Support Groups	1	3	0	0	4
28	Yeast Infection	1	3	0	0	4
29	Helping With Grief	1	3	0	0	4
30	Lesbians & Eating Disorders	1	2	0	1	4
31	Rosacea	1	3	0	0	4
32	Breast Cancer	1	3	0	0	4
33	Clitoris Anatomy	1	2	1	0	4
34	Pill Pushers	1	3	0	0	4
35	Bleeding Eight Days a Month	1	2	1	0	4
36	Nurse Layoffs	1	2	0	0	3

Table D1: continued

37	Gay-Friendly Doctors	1	2	1	0	4
38	Importance of Appreciation	1	2	0	0	3
39	Lesbian Polyfidelity	1	2	0	0	3
40	Hepatitis C, A Lesbian Issue	1	2	0	0	3
41	Hyperthyroid	1	2	0	0	3
42	Self-Hating Behaviors	1	1	0	0	2
43	Lesbian HIV Transmission	1	1	0	0	2
44	Fear of Death	1	1	0	0	2
45	Cure for Cancer	1	1	0	0	2
46	Suicide	1	1	0	0	2
47	Macular Degeneration	1	1	0	0	2
48	Depression & Bone Loss	1	1	0	0	2
49	Autoimmune Disorders	1	1	0	0	2
50	CFS & Fibromyalgia	1	1	0	0	2
51	Institiual Cystitis	1	1	0	0	2
52	Sexually Assaulted	1	1	0	0	2
53	Dioxins in Feminine Products	1	1	0	0	2

Table D1: continued

54	Discoid Lupus	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	55	281	5	10	351

^a Since the Ambitious Amazons were unable to publish all of the responses to these letters in *LC*, they decided to publish them in a supplement and make them available upon request. When a copy of the supplement was requested for this research, the Ambitious Amazons were unable to locate a copy. The Ambitious Amazons indicated that these letters received more responses than any other topic to date. The most discussed item to date was the *Shigella* incident (Growing Pains, 1979-1989), which prompted 69 discussions. Therefore, incest would have had a minimum of 70 discussions. For the purposes of this study, the number of responses was calculated to be 70.

Table D2

1994-1999: Discrimination and Fear

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Fat Oppression ^a	2	38	1	3	44
2	Behind Bars	1	25	2	1	29
3	AAA Membership ^b	1	22	1	1	25
4	Obese Lesbians	1	9	1	0	11
5	Lesbians & Immigration Issues	1	3	2	0	6
6	Coach, Are You Gay?	1	5	0	0	6
7	12-Year-Old Bigot	1	5	0	0	6
8	Lesbians & Immigration Issues	1	3	1	1	6
9	Straight Men Masturbating	1	4	0	0	5
10	Ellen's Coming Out Validating	1	3	1	0	5
11	Bathroom Blues	1	3	0	0	4
12	Homosexuality in China	1	3	0	0	4
13	Conservative South	1	3	0	0	4
14	Suing Philadelphia Cemetery	1	3	0	0	4
15	Lesbian Issues in Kentucky	3	1	0	0	4
16	Girl Scout Experiences	1	2	0	0	3
17	Island of Lesbos Dangerous	1	2	0	0	3

Table D2: continued

18	Budget Car Rental	1	2	0	0	3
19	Book Controversy at Library	1	2	0	0	3
20	Women's Investment Club	1	1	1	0	3
21	Discrimination of Tall Women	1	2	0	0	3
22	International Women's Day	1	1	0	0	2
23	Georgia	1	1	0	0	2
24	Slaying of Lesbian Campers	1	1	0	0	2
25	Closeted Until Retirement	1	1	0	0	2
26	Family State Fishing License	1	1	0	0	2
27	Lesbians in Chile	1	1	0	0	2
28	Gay Women on Hockey Team	1	1	0	0	2
29	Anti-Gay Protest in Bahamas	1	1	0	0	2
30	"Dr." Laura Schlessinger	1	1	0	0	2
TOTAL		33	150	10	6	199

^a There were 2 original letters, 26 responses, 1 Editor's Note, and 3 Updates published in *LC*. The Ambitious Amazons indicated that they received "a dozen other similar responses." Therefore, 12 responses were added to the total number of letters published for a total of 38 responses.

^b There was 1 original, 14 responses, 1 Editor's Note, and 1 Update published in *LC*. The Ambitious Amazons indicated that they received 8 additional responses that were not published. Therefore, 8 responses were added to the total number of letters published for a total of 22 responses.

Table D3

1994-1999: Growing Pains

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	New <i>LC</i> Format	1	20	1	0	22
2	<i>LC</i> 's 20th Anniversary	1	12	0	0	13
3	Offensive Olivia Cruises Ad	1	10	0	0	11
4	<i>LC</i> Caters to Lesbian Fringe	1	10	0	0	11
5	<i>LC</i> Goes Online	1	7	0	0	8
6	Memorable TV Moments	1	5	2	0	8
7	Is Women's Music Dead?	1	6	0	0	7
8	Doesn't Understand Comics	1	6	0	0	7
9	\$19,000 in Extra Postage	1	5	1	0	7
10	Complaint About Cover Art	1	5	0	0	6
11	No Refund from Festival	1	3	1	0	5
12	<i>LC</i> 's 25th Anniversary	1	3	1	0	5
13	Faster Overseas Delivery	1	3	0	0	4
14	Starting Business	1	3	0	0	4
15	Support Renewal of <i>Ellen</i>	1	2	1	0	4
16	Bookstore Closings	2	2	0	0	4
17	Michigan Music Festival	1	2	0	0	3

Table D3: continued

18	Festival Forum	1	2	0	0	3
19	Michigan Music Festival	1	1	1	0	3
20	Bookstore Closing	1	1	1	0	3
21	Rhythmfest Canceled	1	2	0	0	3
22	Seeking West Coast Festival	1	1	1	0	3
23	Bookstore Closing	1	2	0	0	3
24	Non-Christian Pro-Lifers	1	1	1	0	3
25	Male Ad?	1	1	1	0	3
26	Lesbian Vacations	1	1	0	0	2
27	Craft Exhibitor Complaint	1	1	0	0	2
28	Michigan Music Festival	1	1	0	0	2
29	Support Women's Music	1	1	0	0	2
30	<i>LC</i> Budget	1	1	0	0	2
31	Bookstore Closing	1	1	0	0	2
32	Problems with CD Directory	1	1	0	0	2
33	Stop Oppressive Letters	1	1	0	0	2
34	Bookstore Closing	1	1	0	0	2
35	End of Lesbian Quarterly	1	1	0	0	2
36	Expansion of B & B Section	1	1	0	0	2

Table D3: continued

37	Where to Publish	1	0	1	0	2
38	<i>LC</i> 's 25th Anniversary	1	1	0	0	2
39	Festival Finances	1	1	0	0	2
40	Postage for Travel Ads	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	41	129	13	0	183

Table D4

1994-1999: Relationships and Sexuality

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Tired, Irritable After Orgasm	1	6	0	0	7
2	Safer Sex Handbook/S&M	1	5	0	0	6
3	Surviving a Break-Up	1	5	0	0	6
4	We've Fallen into a Rut	1	5	0	0	6
5	Climaxes Too Fast	1	5	0	0	6
6	Vaginal Fisting	1	3	1	0	5
7	Internet Relationship	1	4	0	0	5
8	Orgasms While Sleeping	1	4	0	0	5
9	Cheater Wants to Try Again	1	4	0	0	5
10	Sex Toys in France	1	4	0	0	5
11	The Elusive Lesbian Date	1	3	0	0	4
12	Coming Out From Marriage	1	3	0	0	4
13	Partner Sold Belongings	1	3	0	0	4
14	Sex for Disabled in Pain	1	3	0	0	4
15	Lesbians Filing Jointly	1	1	1	0	3
16	Legal Name Change	1	2	0	0	3
17	Sadomasochism at Festivals	1	2	0	0	3

Table D4: continued

18	Sexuality Series Workshops	1	2	0	0	3
19	Lovers Who Live Apart	1	2	0	0	3
20	Sexual Term Explained	1	2	0	0	3
21	Partner Health Insurance	1	1	0	0	2
22	Brothel of Sorts at Festival	1	1	0	0	2
23	Different Love for Ex	1	1	0	0	2
24	Lesbian Wedding	1	1	0	0	2
25	Commitment Ceremony	1	1	0	0	2
26	Met Online	1	1	0	0	2
27	Living with Ex-Lover	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	27	75	2	0	104

Table D5

1994-1999: Defining Lesbian

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	First Michigan Festival	1	26	2	0	29
2	Feels Manly	1	9	0	0	10
3	More Intellectual Discussions	1	6	0	0	7
4	Naming Our Partnerships	1	6	0	0	7
5	My Ex Has a Boyfriend	1	6	0	0	7
6	Ignore Millennium March	1	5	0	0	6
7	Transsexuals	2	3	0	0	5
8	I'm Not a Dyke	1	3	0	1	5
9	Real Lesbians in Prison	1	3	0	0	4
10	Lesbian Behavior in Animals	1	2	0	0	3
11	Hollywood Lesbians	1	1	0	0	2
12	Lesbianism in Prisons	1	1	0	0	2
13	Gay TV/Movie Characters	1	1	0	0	2
14	Old Crones	1	1	0	0	2
15	Anne Frank a Lesbian?	1	1	0	0	2
16	Seeking Feminine Lesbians	1	1	0	0	2
17	Sex On the Brain	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	18	76	2	1	97

Table D6

1994-1999: Networking

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Need Advice About Moving	1	8	0	0	9
2	Allergic to Feminine Supplies	1	6	0	2	9
3	Female Genital Mutilation	1	3	0	1	5
4	Seeking Money for College	1	1	2	0	4
5	Female Millionaires	1	3	0	0	4
6	Finding a Bra	1	2	1	0	4
7	Mobile Home Living	1	3	0	0	4
8	Marines Disability Pension	1	1	1	0	3
9	Traveling to Nepal	1	2	0	0	3
10	Old Copies of <i>LC</i>	1	2	0	0	3
11	Getting Book into Stores	1	1	1	0	3
12	All-Woman Band	1	1	0	0	2
13	Dollar Power	1	1	0	0	2
14	Soliciting Money at Festival	1	1	0	0	2
15	Topp Twins Win Award	1	1	0	0	2
16	Notices & Passings	1	1	0	0	2
17	How to Get Art Showing	1	1	0	0	2

Table D6: continued

18	Traveling to Bali	1	1	0	0	2
19	Seeking Book	1	1	0	0	2
20	Guffey, Colorado	1	1	0	0	2
21	<i>Patience and Sarah</i> Opera	1	1	0	0	2
22	Traveling to Europe	1	1	0	0	2
23	Seeking Film Groups	1	1	0	0	2
24	Seeking Internet Chat Rooms	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	24	45	5	3	77

Table D7

1994-1999: Minority Lesbians

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Retirement Communities	1	5	2	0	8
2	Retirement Communities	1	7	0	0	8
3	Disabled Lesbians	2	3	0	1	6
4	Women of Color Space	1	4	0	0	5
5	Cruise Not Assessable	1	4	0	0	5
6	LC on Tape	1	2	0	0	3
7	Did Festival Discriminate?	1	3	0	0	4
8	Lesbian With MS Persevering	1	1	0	0	2
9	Seeking Books on Tape	1	1	0	0	2
10	Discrimination at Festival	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	11	31	2	1	45

Table D8

1994-1999: Children, Families, and Parenting

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Stillborn Baby	1	5	0	0	6
2	Lesbian Parenting Issues	1	4	1	0	6
3	Sharon Bottoms	1	4	0	0	5
4	Names for Two Mothers	1	3	0	0	4
5	Partners Disagree on Children	1	3	0	0	4
6	Partners Disagree on Children	1	3	0	0	4
7	Festivals/Vacations for Children	1	1	1	0	3
8	Financing Artificial Insemination	1	1	0	1	3
9	Hiding Erotic Materials	1	2	0	0	3
10	Baby Books & Announcements	1	1	0	0	2
11	Same-Sex Co-parent Adoptions	1	1	0	0	2
12	Female-Female Conception	1	1	0	0	2
TOTAL		12	29	2	1	44

Table D9

1994-1999: Separatism

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Mainstream Ads in <i>LC</i>	1	17	0	0	18
2	Space of Our Own	1	4	0	0	5
3	Straight Craftswomyn	1	4	0	0	5
4	Donating to Lesbian Causes	1	1	0	0	2
5	Male Children at Festivals	1	1	0	0	2
6	Women's RV Park	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	6	28	0	0	34

Table D10

1994-1999: Isolation

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	How to Meet Older Lesbians	1	3	0	0	4
2	Prisoner Seeking Books	1	1	0	1	3
3	Peace Corps Volunteer	1	1	0	0	2
4	Needs Healing Place	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	4	6	0	1	11

Table D11

1994-1999: Religion and Spirituality

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Welcoming Churches	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	1	1	0	0	2

Table D12

1994-1999: Category Totals

Table	Category	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
D1	Health and Mental Health	55	281	5	10	351
D2	Discrimination and Fear	33	150	10	6	199
D3	Growing Pains	41	129	13	0	183
D4	Relationships and Sexuality	27	75	2	0	104
D5	Defining Lesbian	18	76	2	1	97
D6	Networking	24	45	5	3	77
D7	Minority Lesbians	11	31	2	1	45
D8	Children, Families, and Parenting	12	29	2	1	44
D9	Separatism	6	28	0	0	34
D10	Isolation	4	6	0	1	11
D11	Religion and Spirituality	1	1	0	0	2
TOTALS		232	851	41	23	1147

Table D13

1994-1999: Top Ten Items of Discussion

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Is There Sex After Incest? ^a	2	64	0	4	70
2	Fat Oppression ^b	2	38	1	3	44
3	Behind Bars	1	25	2	1	29
4	First Michigan Festival	1	26	2	0	29
5	AAA Membership ^c	1	22	1	1	25
6	New <i>LC</i> Format	1	20	1	0	22
7	Responding to Abuse	1	19	0	1	21
8	Side Effects of Menopause	1	17	0	1	19
9	Mainstream Ads in <i>LC</i>	1	17	0	0	18
10	Anti-Depressant Drugs	1	13	0	0	14
11	<i>LC</i> 's 20th Anniversary	1	12	0	0	13

Table D13: continued

12	Manic-Depressive Alcoholic	1	11	0	1	13
	TOTAL	14	284	7	12	317

^a Since the Ambitious Amazons were unable to publish all of the responses to these letters in *LC*, they decided to publish them in a supplement and make them available upon request. When a copy of the supplement was requested for this research, the Ambitious Amazons were unable to locate a copy. The Ambitious Amazons indicated that these letters received more responses than any other topic to date. The most discussed item to date was the *Shigella* incident (Growing Pains, 1979-1989), which prompted 69 discussions. Therefore, incest would have had a minimum of 70 discussions. For the purposes of this study, the number of responses was calculated to be 70.

^b There were 2 original letters, 26 responses, 1 Editor's Note, and 3 Updates published in *LC*. The Ambitious Amazons indicated that they received "a dozen other similar responses." Therefore, 12 responses were added to the total number of letters published for a total of 38 responses.

^c There was 1 original, 14 responses, 1 Editor's Note, and 1 Update published in *LC*. The Ambitious Amazons indicated that they received 8 additional responses that were not published. Therefore, 8 responses were added to the total number of letters published for a total of 22 responses.

APPENDIX E: 1999-2004 Tables

Table E1

1999-2004: Health and Mental Health

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Menopause	1	12	0	0	13
2	Chronic Fatigue/Fibromyalgia	3	9	0	0	12
3	Weight Reduction Surgery	1	9	0	1	11
4	Suicide	1	9	0	1	11
5	Dr's. Inappropriate Comment	1	8	0	0	9
6	Partner Drinks and Smokes	1	8	0	0	9
7	Grieving Death of Partner	1	6	0	0	7
8	Beware of the Cure	1	6	0	0	7
9	Asperger's Syndrome	1	4	0	1	6
10	Headaches	1	5	0	0	6
11	Grieving Partner's Death	1	3	0	1	5
12	Genital Herpes	1	2	1	1	5
13	Breast Cancer	1	4	0	0	5
14	Raped By Another Woman	1	4	0	0	5
15	Abusive Family	1	3	0	0	4
16	Menstrual Cramps	1	3	0	0	4
17	Breast Self-Exams	1	3	0	0	4

Table E1: continued

18	Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome	1	3	0	0	4
19	Tamoxifen	1	2	0	0	3
20	Fibroids	1	2	0	0	3
21	Depression	1	1	1	0	3
22	Breast Cancer	1	1	0	0	2
23	Colon Cancer	1	1	0	0	2
24	Pap Smears	1	1	0	0	2
25	HHV-6 and Epstein Barr	1	1	0	0	2
26	Anorexia Nervosa	1	1	0	0	2
27	Glioblastoma	1	1	0	0	2
28	Herpes Simplex	1	1	0	0	2
29	Trying to Quit Smoking	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	31	114	2	5	152

Table E2

1999-2004: Defining Lesbian

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Transwomyn at Michigan Fest	3	31	1	0	35
2	Struggle With Being Femme	1	12	2	0	15
3	Lesbians and Our Pets Issue	1	13	0	0	14
4	Lesbian Sleeps with Man	1	10	1	1	13
5	Lesbians and Our Pets Issue	1	8	3	0	12
6	Lesbian in Other Languages	1	3	1	1	6
7	Encouraging Lesbianism	1	5	0	0	6
8	“The L Word”	1	5	0	0	6
9	Transsexuals	1	4	0	0	5
10	Where <i>LC</i> Readers Live	1	2	1	0	4
11	Choosing to Be Lesbian	1	3	0	0	4
12	NRA Member	1	2	0	0	3
13	What Happened to Feminism	1	1	0	0	2
14	Teena Brandon	1	1	0	0	2
15	Sonia Johnson's Influence	1	1	0	0	2
16	O'Donnell's Coming Out	1	1	0	0	2
17	Don't Call Me Gay	1	1	0	0	2

Table E2: continued

18	The Old Butch	1	1	0	0	2
19	Queer Lesbians Invisible	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	21	105	9	2	137

Table E3

1999-2004: Relationships and Sexuality

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Sex with Animals	1	15	0	0	16
2	Not Ashamed to be Alone	1	7	0	0	8
3	Vermont Civil Union	1	5	1	0	7
4	Maintaining Relationships	1	6	0	0	7
5	Mistaken for Soft Butch	1	5	0	0	6
6	Seeing Female Sex Workers	1	5	0	0	6
7	Shenis	1	4	0	0	5
8	Same-Sex Violence	1	3	1	0	5
9	Leather and BDSM	1	4	0	0	5
10	Butch Lesbians	1	3	0	0	4
11	Camp Counselor is Molester	1	3	0	0	4
12	Polyamory	1	3	0	0	4
13	Non-Monogamy	1	3	0	0	4
14	Girlfriend Doesn't Know Me	1	3	0	0	4
15	Where Are the Femmes?	1	2	0	0	3
16	Mothers Attending Festivals	1	0	1	1	3
17	Planning Ceremony	1	1	1	0	3

Table E3: continued

18	Partner Jealous of Friends	1	2	0	0	3
19	Attracted to Straight Women	1	2	0	0	3
20	Adult/Child Relationship	1	2	0	0	3
21	Cameron Says Gay Sex Best	1	1	0	0	2
22	Loss of Sex Drive	1	1	0	0	2
23	Bereaved Courts Partner	1	1	0	0	2
24	Gay Marriage in Germany	1	1	0	0	2
25	Tax Laws in Canada	1	0	0	1	2
26	Awarded Name Change	1	1	0	0	2
27	70-year-old Finds Love	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	27	84	4	2	117

Table E4

1999-2004: Discrimination and Fear

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Fat Oppression	1	14	0	0	15
2	Canadian Subscribers Outed	1	10	1	1	13
3	Angry Feminist Needs Help	1	8	0	0	9
4	Claiming Partner as Dependent	1	6	0	1	8
5	Being Out in Academia	1	4	0	0	5
6	Conservative South	1	4	0	0	5
7	Denied Military Benefits	1	3	0	0	4
8	Mistaken for a Man	1	3	0	0	4
9	Movie Characters Distorted	1	1	1	0	3
10	Contest Winner Starts Riot	1	1	0	0	2
11	Rainbow Flag Stolen	1	1	0	0	2
12	Take a Stand	1	1	0	0	2
13	Lesbians Absent from Museum	1	1	0	0	2
14	Protest of Sexist Lyrics Banned	1	1	0	0	2
15	Discharge of Gays & Lesbians	1	1	0	0	2
16	Offensive T-Shirt	1	1	0	0	2
17	U.S. Corporations Rated	1	1	0	0	2

Table E4: continued

18	Saving Our Herstory	1	1	0	0	2
19	Couple Seeking Car Insurance	1	1	0	0	2
20	Media Messages	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	20	64	2	2	88

Table E5

1999-2004: Networking

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Black Lesbian Greeting Cards	1	5	0	1	7
2	Environmental Issues	1	4	1	0	6
3	Seeking Flannel Panty Liners	1	4	0	0	5
4	Dyke Art Retreat	1	2	1	0	4
5	Voting Machines	1	3	0	0	4
6	<i>Portrait of a Marriage</i>	1	1	1	0	3
7	Donate Lesbian Books	1	1	0	1	3
8	Nevada Barr Novel	1	1	0	1	3
9	Starting a Small Business	1	2	0	0	3
10	Quilt on <i>LC</i> Cover	1	1	1	0	3
11	Steam Ship Travel	1	2	0	0	3
12	Seeking Album	1	1	1	0	3
13	<i>Maize</i> magazine	1	1	0	0	2
14	Bird Watching	1	1	0	0	2
15	Travel for Low Income	1	1	0	0	2
16	Lesbian Dies of 9/11 Injuries	1	1	0	0	2
17	Helping Afghan Women	1	1	0	0	2

Table E5: continued

18	9/11 Notes from New York	1	1	0	0	2
19	Getting Bush Out of Office	1	1	0	0	2
20	Teaching English Abroad	1	1	0	0	2
21	Home on Wheels	1	1	0	0	2
22	Unemployed Teacher	1	1	0	0	2
23	Reusable Menstrual Napkins	1	1	0	0	2
24	Lost Disability Payment	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	24	39	5	3	71

Table E6

1999-2004: Growing Pains

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Unfunny Comic Strip	1	8	1	0	10
2	Nonprofit Burnout	1	7	0	0	8
3	CDs Get Letters from Prisons	1	6	1	0	8
4	Trying to Get Published	1	3	1	0	5
5	Cris Williamson's <i>Ashes</i>	1	1	1	1	4
6	Fund Lesbian Causes	1	2	1	0	4
7	Is Anybody Listening?	1	2	0	0	3
8	Canned Music	1	2	0	0	3
9	Perpetuating Bush Fallacy	1	2	0	0	3
10	<i>Eden Built by Eves</i> Review	1	1	0	0	2
11	Worked Crew at Michigan	1	1	0	0	2
12	Cover Revives Interest	1	1	0	0	2
13	March Magic & Mysteries	1	1	0	0	2
14	Bookstore Updates	1	1	0	0	2
15	Support Women's Bookstores	1	1	0	0	2
16	Southern Womyn's Festival	1	1	0	0	2
17	Artist Seeking Credit for Work	1	1	0	0	2

Table E6: continued

18	<i>LC</i> Ad was a Scam	1	1	0	0	2
19	El Penasco B & B	1	1	0	0	2
20	Correction	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	20	44	5	1	70

Table E7

1999-2004: Minority Lesbians

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Assisted Suicide for Disabled	1	6	0	0	7
2	Death of Kay Gardner	1	6	0	0	7
3	Lesbian Retirement Living	1	4	0	0	5
4	Dreadlocks	1	3	0	0	4
5	Living Lesbian Legends	1	2	1	0	4
6	African Am Lesbian Books	1	2	0	0	3
7	Vision Quest for 50th	1	2	0	0	3
8	Seeking Assisted Living	1	1	1	0	3
9	Honor Older, Wiser Women	1	2	0	0	3
10	Help 80-Year-Old Author	1	2	0	0	3
11	Gift of Diversity	1	2	0	0	3
12	Seeking Hungarian Dykes	1	1	0	0	2
13	Croning Ceremony	1	1	0	0	2
14	Funding for our Elders	1	1	0	0	2
15	Death of Kady VanDeurs	1	1	0	0	2
16	Death of Almitra David	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	16	37	2	0	55

Table E8

1999-2004: Isolation

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Seeking Active Community	1	4	0	0	5
2	Misses Female Camaraderie	1	4	0	0	5
3	Contact Dykes	1	3	0	0	4
4	How to Meet Lesbians	1	3	0	0	4
5	Too Old for Bars	1	2	0	0	3
6	Seeking Other Teens	1	2	0	0	3
7	Lonely Interfaith Minister	1	2	0	0	3
8	Lesbian Brunch Group	1	1	0	1	3
9	Seeking Older Lesbians	1	1	0	0	2
10	Seeking Older Lesbians	1	1	0	0	2
11	Seeking Homeless Lesbians	1	1	0	0	2
12	Doesn't Own Computer	1	1	0	0	2
TOTAL		12	25	0	1	38

Table E9

1999-2004: Children, Families, and Parenting

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Trying to Have a Baby	1	6	0	0	7
2	Adoption vs. In-Vitro	1	5	0	0	6
3	Losing Friends Over Baby	1	4	0	0	5
4	Trying to Have a Baby	1	4	0	0	5
5	Family-Friendly Vacations	1	0	1	1	3
6	Seeking Mom-Style Name	1	2	0	0	3
7	Seeking Adoption Info	1	1	0	0	2
8	Seeking Lesbians to Adopt	1	0	0	1	2
9	Caring for Relatives' Children	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	9	23	1	2	35

Table E10

1999-2004: Separatism

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Seeking Lesbian-Feminists	1	4	0	1	6
2	No Lesbian-Only Space	1	4	0	0	5
3	Women-Only is Intolerant	1	3	0	0	4
4	Won't Support AIDS Walk	1	2	0	0	3
5	Straights Feel Unwelcome	1	2	0	0	3
6	Straights Feel Unwelcome	1	1	0	0	2
7	Mourn Loss of Space	1	1	0	0	2
8	Lesbians Support Lesbians	1	1	0	0	2
9	Sonia Johnson Returns	1	1	0	0	2
	TOTAL	9	19	0	1	29

Table E11

1999-2004: Religion and Spirituality

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Lesbians & Mormons	1	2	0	0	3
2	Daughter's Bat Mitzvah	1	1	0	1	3
	TOTAL	1	1	0	1	3

Table E12

1999-2004: Category Totals

Table	Category	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
E1	Health and Mental Health	31	114	2	5	152
E2	Defining Lesbian	21	105	9	2	137
E3	Relationships and Sexuality	27	84	4	2	117
E4	Discrimination and Fear	20	64	2	2	88
E5	Networking	24	39	5	3	71
E6	Growing Pains	20	44	5	1	70
E7	Minority Lesbians	16	37	2	0	55
E8	Isolation	12	25	0	1	38
E9	Children, Families, and Parenting	9	23	1	2	35
E10	Separatism	9	19	0	1	29
E11	Religion and Spirituality	1	1	0	1	3
	TOTALS	190	555	30	20	795

Table E13

1999-2004: Top Ten Items of Discussion

No.	Title/Brief Description	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Transwomyn at Michigan Fest	3	31	1	0	35
2	Sex with Animals	1	15	0	0	16
3	Struggle With Being Femme	1	13	1	0	15
4	Fat Oppression	1	14	0	0	15
5	Lesbians and Our Pets Issue	1	13	0	0	14
6	Menopause	1	12	0	0	13
7	Lesbian Sleeps with Man	1	10	1	1	13
8	Canadian Subscribers Outed	1	10	1	1	13
9	Chronic Fatigue/Fibromyalgia	2	10	0	0	12
10	Lesbians and Our Pets Issue	1	8	3	0	12
	TOTAL	13	136	7	2	158

APPENDIX F: 1974-2004 Tables

Table F1

1974-2004: Category Totals

Category	1974- 1979	1979- 1989	1989- 1994	1994- 1999	1999- 2000	Total
Health and Mental Health	34	131	92	351	152	760
Discrimination and Fear	143	173	73	199	88	676
Relationships and Sexuality	62	228	160	104	117	671
Defining Lesbian	106	258	68	97	137	666
Growing Pains	83	165	113	183	70	614
Isolation	77	73	63	11	38	262
Separatism	102	70	21	34	29	256
Networking		19	94	77	71	261
Minority Lesbians		97	58	45	55	255
Children, Families, and Parenting		44	28	44	35	151
Religion and Spirituality		37	19	2	3	61
TOTALS	607	1295	789	1147	795	4633

Table F2

1974-2004: Top Ten Items of Discussion

No.	Title/ Brief Description	Category/Analysis Period	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Is There Sex After Incest? ^a	Health and Mental Health 1994-1999	2	64	0	4	70
2	<i>Shigella</i> Outbreak ^b	Growing Pains 1979-1989	9	60	0	0	69
3	Fat Oppression ^c	Discrimination and Fear 1994-1999	2	38	1	3	44
4	My “Lover” is Celibate	Relationships and Sexuality 1979-1989	1	35	0	0	36
5	Transwomyn at Michigan Fest	Defining Lesbian 1999-2004	3	31	1	0	35
6	Sadomasochistic Ad in <i>LC</i>	Relationships and Sexuality 1979-1989	1	32	0	0	33
7	18-Year-Old Lesbian ^d	Discrimination and Fear 1979-1989	1	31	0	0	32
8	Behind Bars	Discrimination and Fear 1994-1999	1	25	2	1	29
9	First Michigan Festival	Defining Lesbian 1994-1999	1	26	1	0	28

Table F2: continued

10	Ex-Lesbians	Defining Lesbian 1979-1989	1	26	0	0	27
	TOTAL		22	368	5	8	403

^a Since the Ambitious Amazons were unable to publish all of the responses to these letters in *LC*, they decided to publish them in a supplement and make them available upon request. When a copy of the supplement was requested for this research, the Ambitious Amazons were unable to locate a copy. The Ambitious Amazons indicated that these letters received more responses than any other topic to date. The most discussed item to date was the *Shigella* incident (Growing Pains, 1979-1989), which prompted 69 discussions. Therefore, incest would have had a minimum of 70 discussions. For the purposes of this study, the number of responses was calculated to be 70.

^b The Ambitious Amazons reported they received 69 letters about the *Shigella* outbreak at the Michigan Women's Music Festival. Only nine originals and 17 responses were published.

^c There were 2 original letters, 26 responses, 1 Editor's Note, and 3 Updates published in *LC*. The Ambitious Amazons indicated that they received "a dozen other similar responses." Therefore, 12 responses were added to the total number of letters published for a total of 38 responses.

^d The Ambitious Amazons reported they received over 30 responses to this letter. Only six responses were published. For the purposes of this study, over 30 was interpreted as 31 responses.

Table F3

1974-2004: Top 25 Items of Discussion

No.	Title/ Brief Description	Category/Analysis Period	Originals	Responses	Notes	Updates	Total
1	Is There Sex After Incest? ^a	Health and Mental Health 1994-1999	2	64	0	4	70
2	<i>Shigella</i> Outbreak ^b	Growing Pains 1979-1989	9	60	0	0	69
3	Fat Oppression ^c	Discrimination and Fear 1994-1999	2	38	1	3	44
4	My “Lover” is Celibate	Relationships and Sexuality 1979-1989	1	35	0	0	36
5	Transwomyn at Michigan Fest	Defining Lesbian 1999-2004	3	31	1	0	35
6	Sadomasochistic Ad in <i>LC</i>	Relationships and Sexuality 1979-1989	1	32	0	0	33
7	18-Year-Old Lesbian ^d	Discrimination and Fear 1979-1989	1	31	0	0	32
8	Behind Bars	Discrimination and Fear 1994-1999	1	25	2	1	29
9	First Michigan Festival	Defining Lesbian 1994-1999	1	26	1	0	28

Table F3: continued

10	Ex-Lesbians	Defining Lesbian 1979-1989	1	26	0	0	27
11	Feminine Gay Women	Defining Lesbian 1979-1989	1	25	0	0	26
12	Pen Pals	Growing Pains 1979-1989	0	20	5	0	25
13	AAA Membership ^e	Discrimination and Fear 1994-1999	1	22	1	1	25
14	Finances in Relationships	Relationships and Sexuality 1989-1994	1	22	0	0	23
15	Adoption/Insemination	Children, Families, and Parenting 1979-1989	2	20	0	0	22
16	New <i>LC</i> Format	Growing Pains 1994-1999	1	20	1	0	22
17	Ablism at Festival	Minority Lesbians 1979-1989	5	15	1	1	22
18	Open Letter to Olivia Records	Defining Lesbian 1974-1979	1	20	0	0	21
19	Responding to Abuse	Health and Mental Health 1994-1999	1	19	0	1	21
20	Thoughts on Separatism	Separatism 1974-1979	1	17	1	0	19
21	The Importance of Therapy	Health and Mental Health 1979-1989	1	18	0	0	19

Table F3: continued

22	Lesbian Atheist in AA	Health and Mental Health 1979-1989	1	18	0	0	19
23	Sadomasochism at Festivals	Relationships and Sexuality 1989-1994	11	8	0	0	19
24	Side Effects of Menopause	Health and Mental Health 1994-1999	1	17	0	1	19
25	Mainstream Ads in <i>LC</i>	Growing Pains 1994-1994	1	17	0	0	18
TOTAL			51	646	14	12	723

^a Since the Ambitious Amazons were unable to publish all of the responses to these letters in *LC*, they decided to publish them in a supplement and make them available upon request. When a copy of the supplement was requested for this research, the Ambitious Amazons were unable to locate a copy. The Ambitious Amazons indicated that these letters received more responses than any other topic to date. The most discussed item to date was the *Shigella* incident (Growing Pains, 1979-1989), which prompted 69 discussions. Therefore, incest would have had a minimum of 70 discussions. For the purposes of this study, the number of responses was calculated to be 70.

^b The Ambitious Amazons reported they received 69 letters about the *Shigella* outbreak at the Michigan Women's Music Festival. Only nine originals and 17 responses were published.

^c There were 2 original letters, 26 responses, 1 Editor's Note, and 3 Updates published in *LC*. The Ambitious Amazons indicated that they received "a dozen other similar responses." Therefore, 12 responses were added to the total number of letters published for a total of 38 responses.

^d The Ambitious Amazons reported they received over 30 responses to this letter. Only six responses were published. For the purposes of this study, over 30 was interpreted as 31 responses.

^e There was 1 original, 14 responses, 1 Editor's Note, and 1 Update published in *LC*. The Ambitious Amazons indicated that they received 8 additional responses that were not published. Therefore, 8 responses were added to the total number of letters published for a total of 22 responses.

APPENDIX G: 1974-2004 Figures

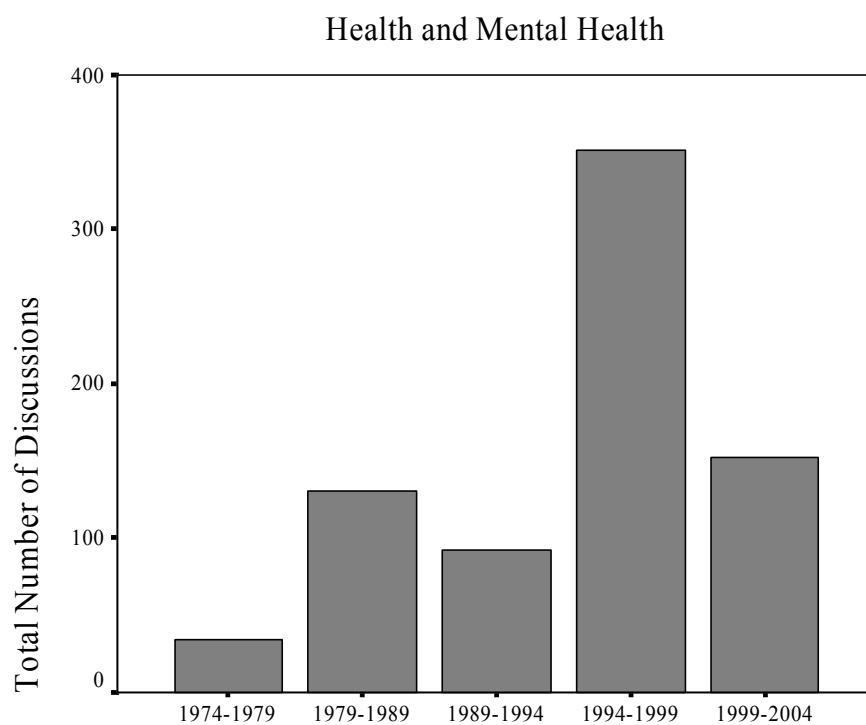


Figure G1. Total number of discussions for the Health and Mental Health category by analysis period.

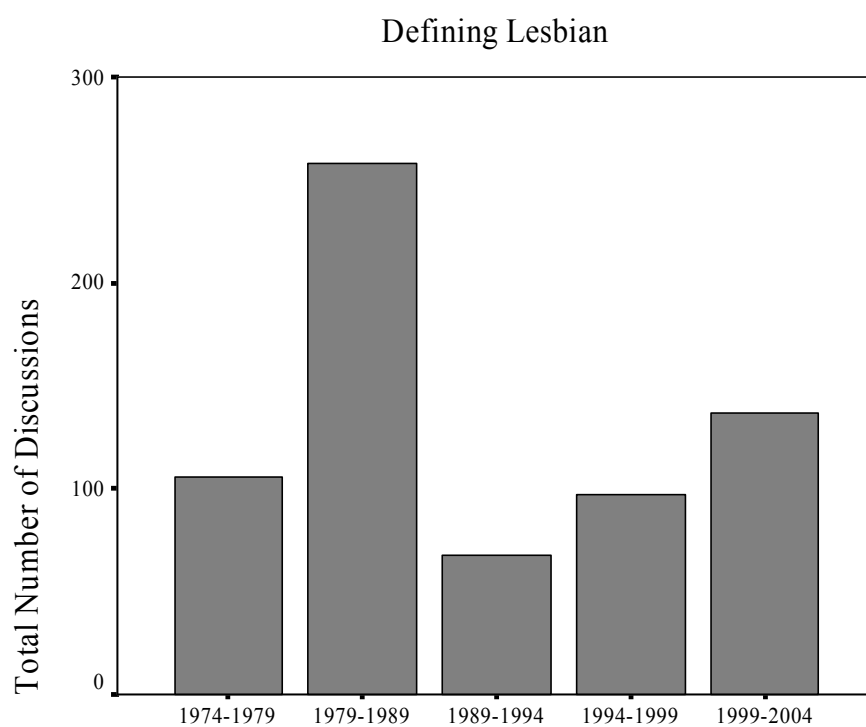


Figure G2. Total number of discussions for the Defining Lesbian category by analysis period.

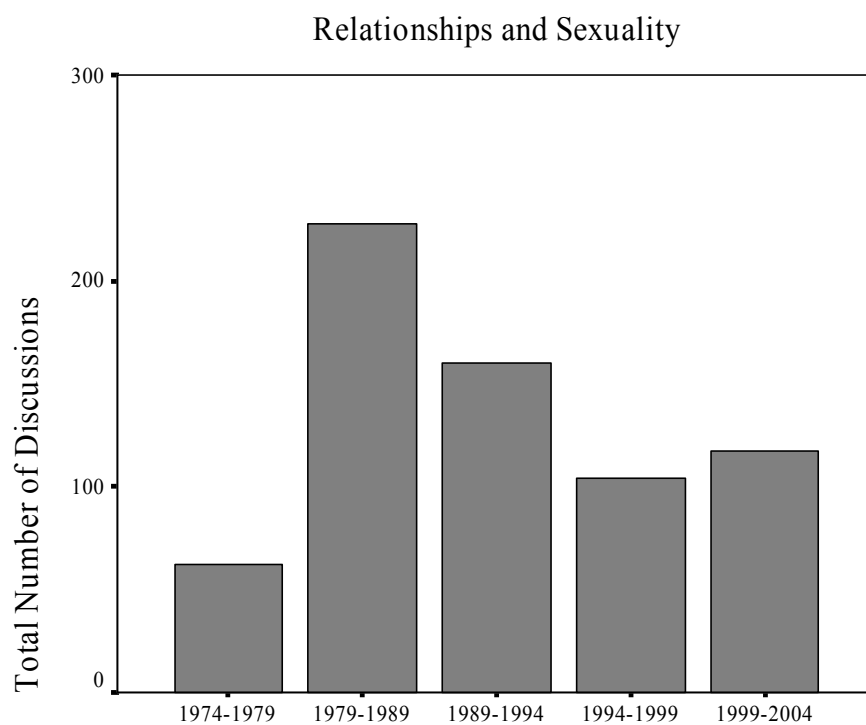


Figure G3. Total number of discussions for the Relationships and Sexuality category by analysis period.

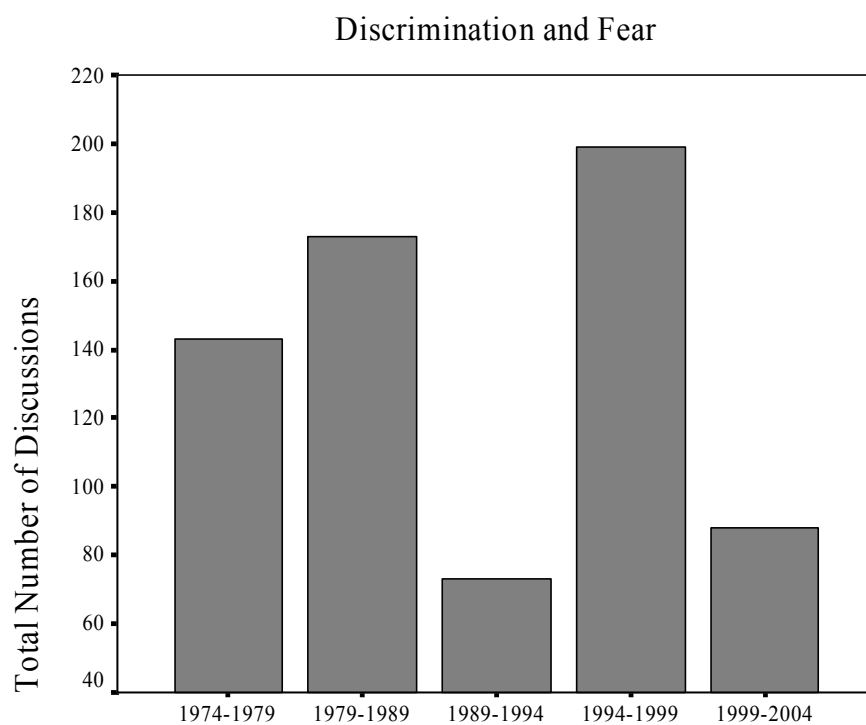


Figure G4. Total number of discussions for the Discrimination and Fear category by analysis period.

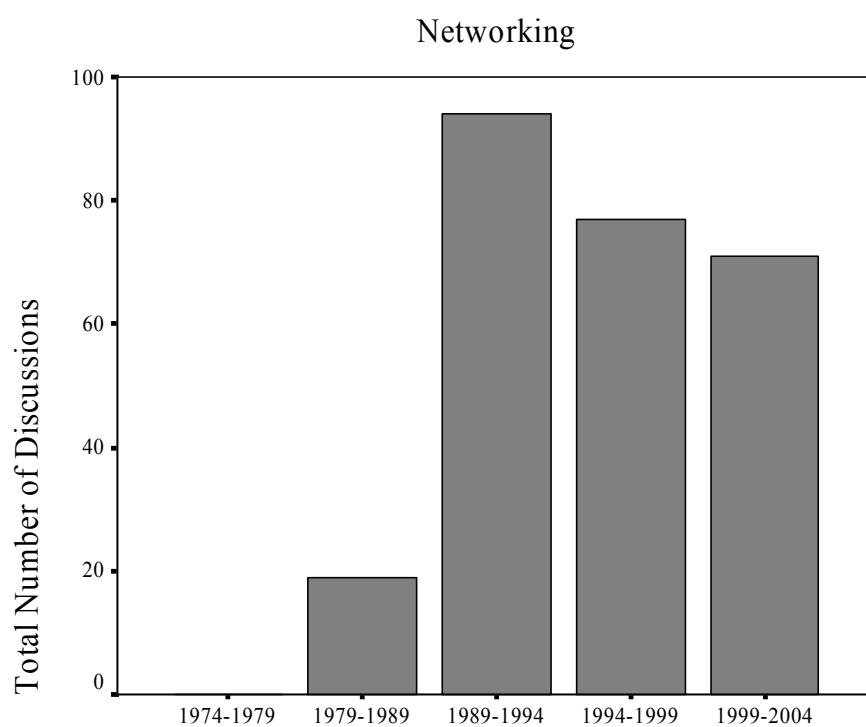


Figure G5. Total number of discussions for the Networking category by analysis period.

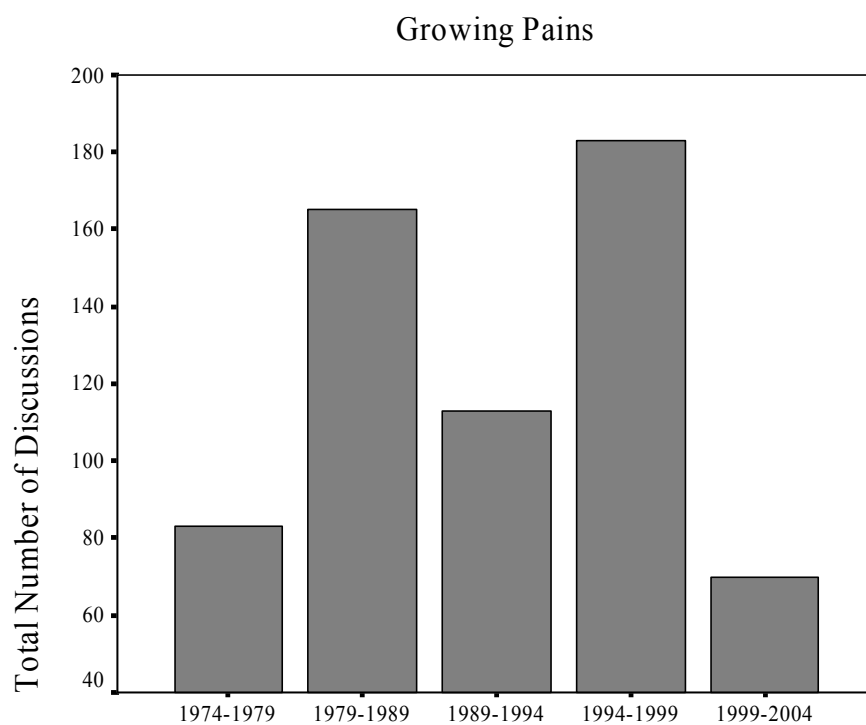


Figure G6. Total number of discussions for the Growing Pains category by analysis period.

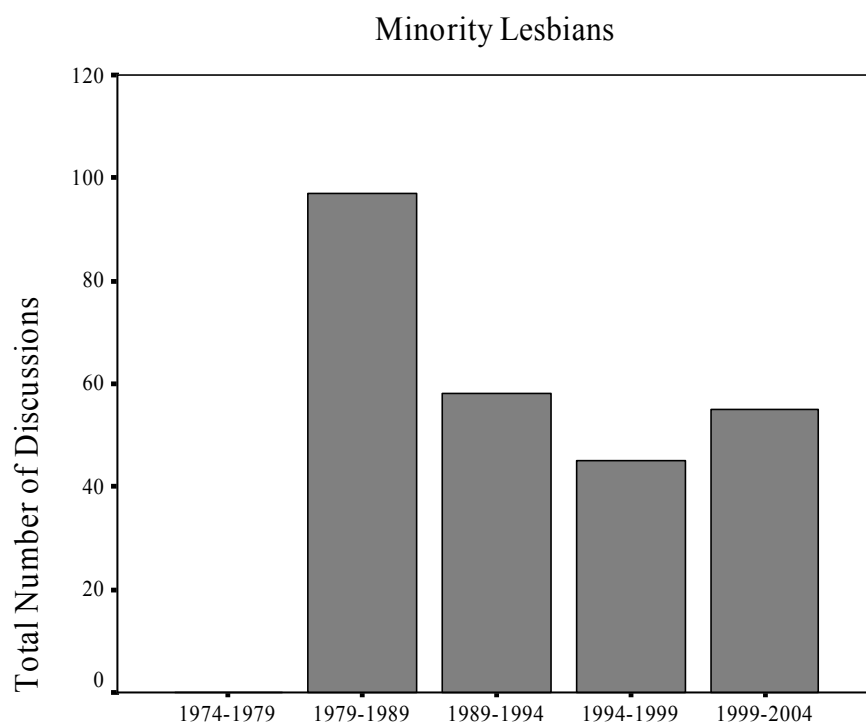


Figure G7. Total number of discussions for the Minority Lesbians category by analysis period.

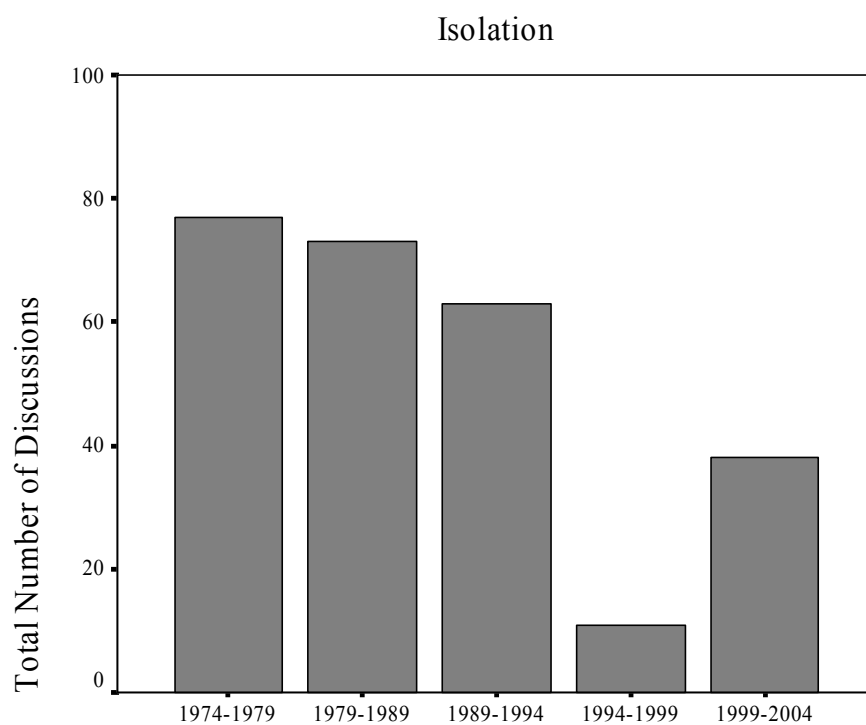


Figure G8. Total number of discussions for the Isolation category by analysis period.

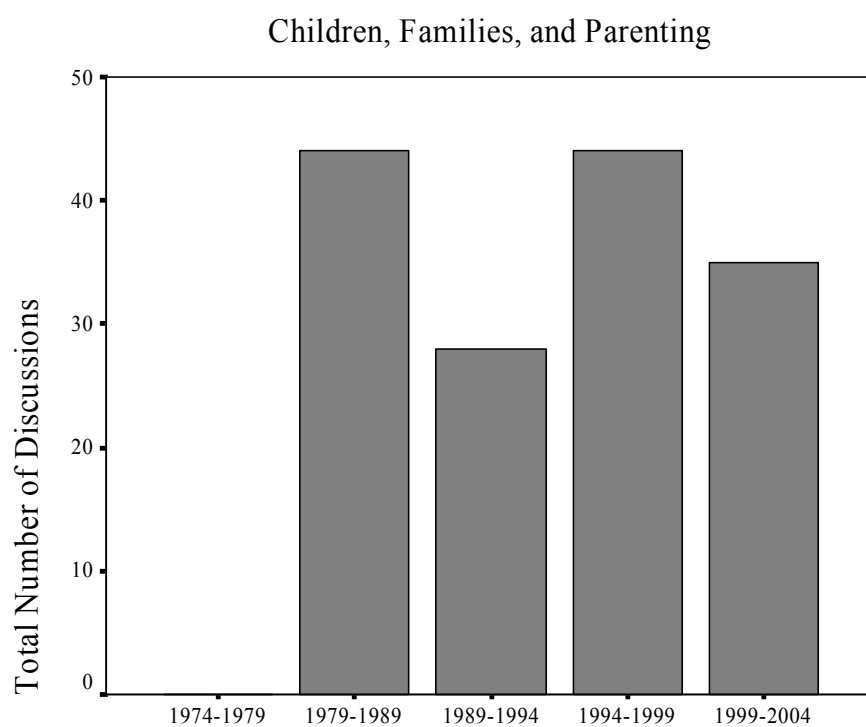


Figure G9. Total number of discussions for the Children, Families, and Parenting category by analysis period.

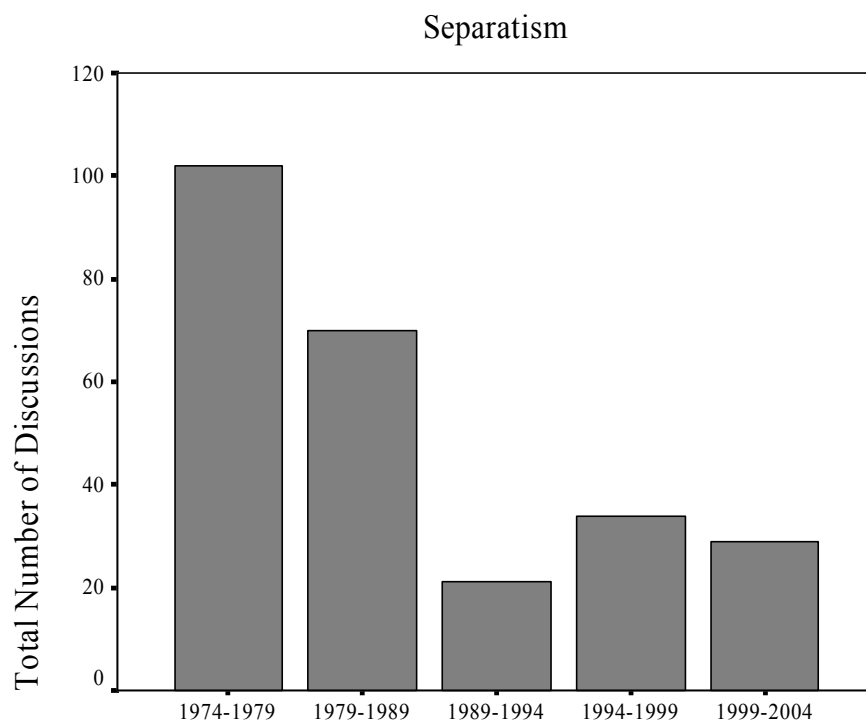


Figure G10. Total number of discussions for the Separatism category by analysis period.

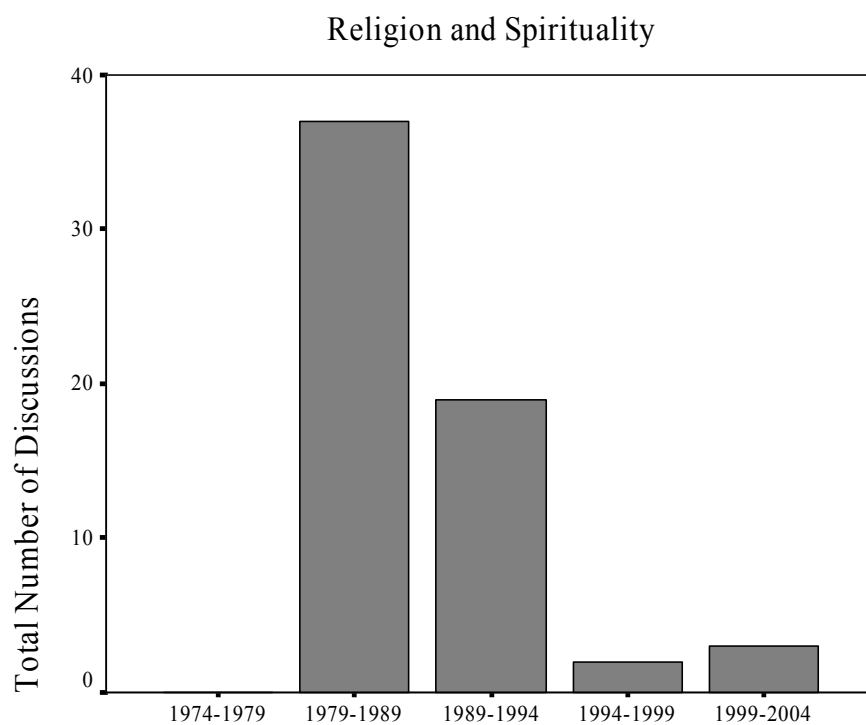


Figure G11. Total number of discussions for the Religion and Spirituality category by analysis period.

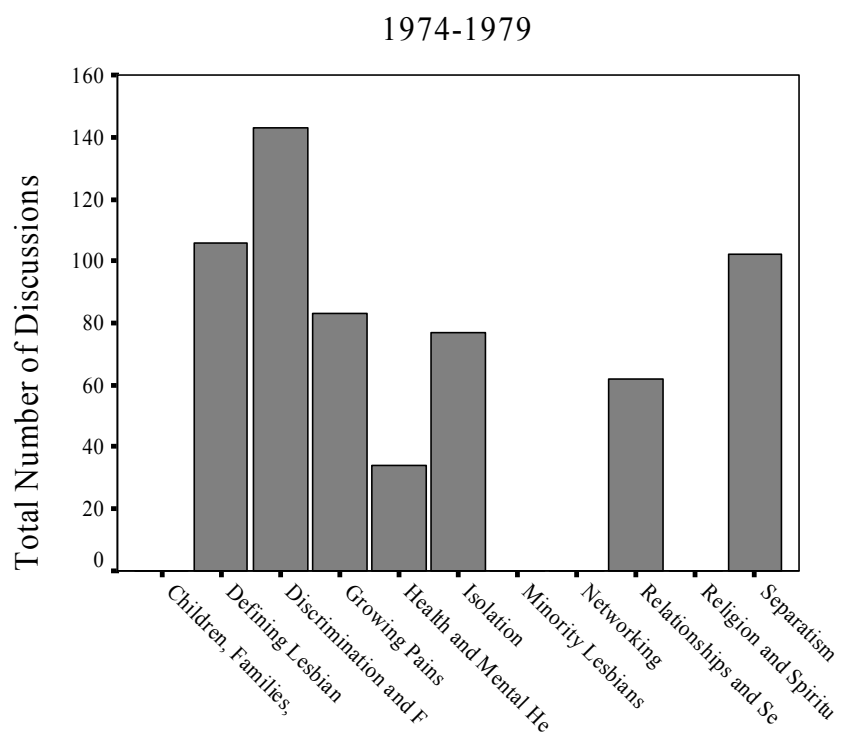


Figure G12. Total number of discussions for 1974-1979 by category.

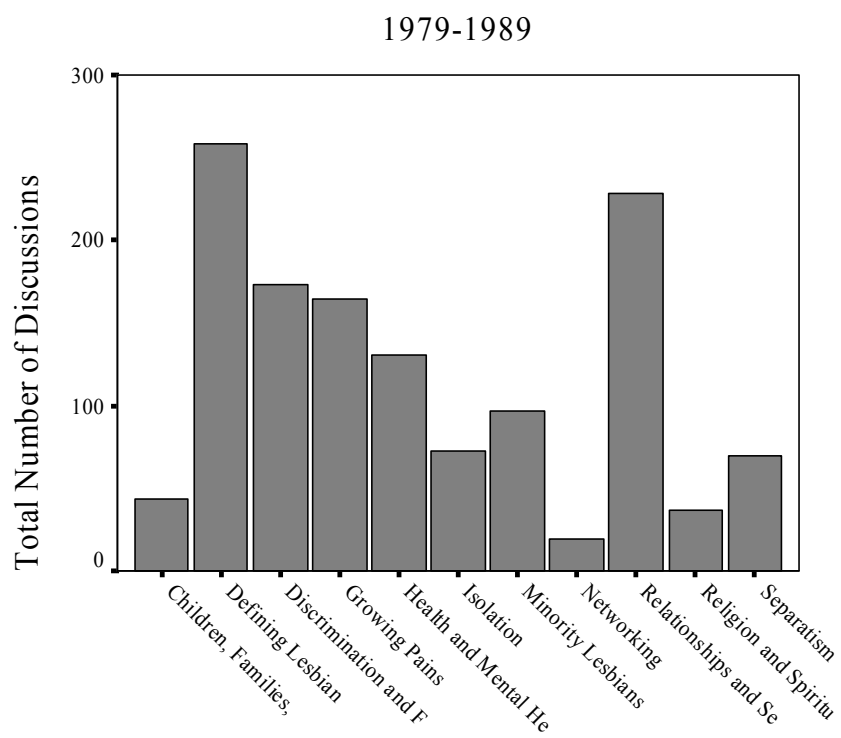


Figure G13. Total number of discussions for 1979-1989 by category.

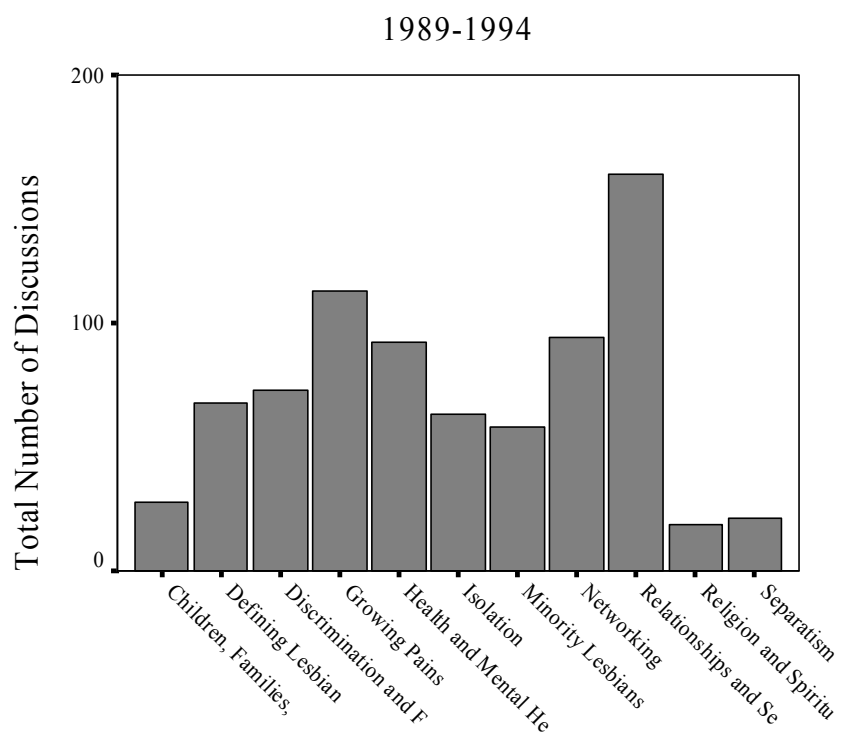


Figure G14. Total number of discussions for 1999-1994 by category.

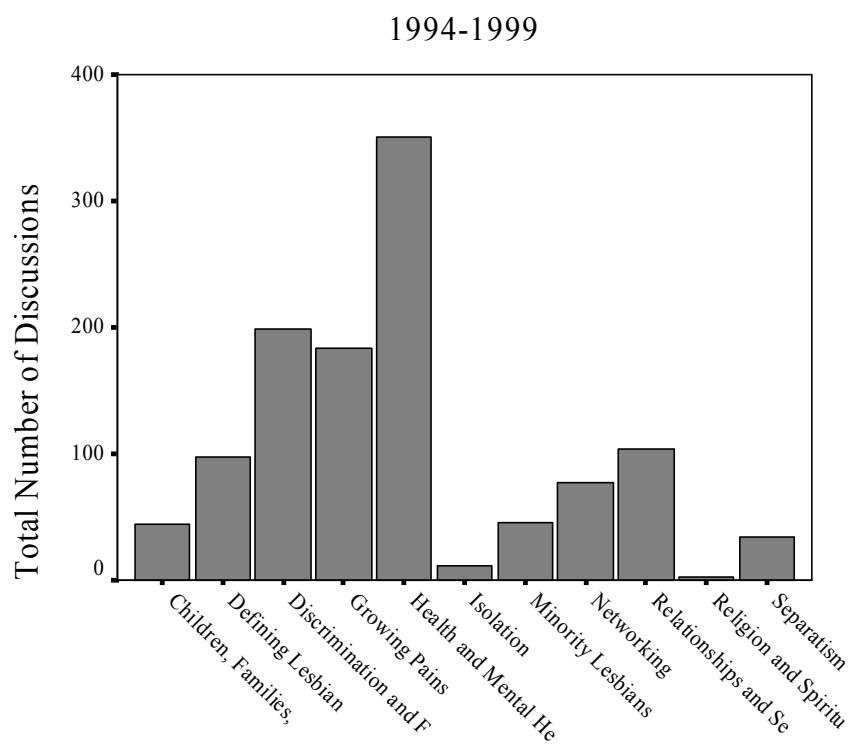


Figure G15. Total number of discussions for 1994-1999 by category.

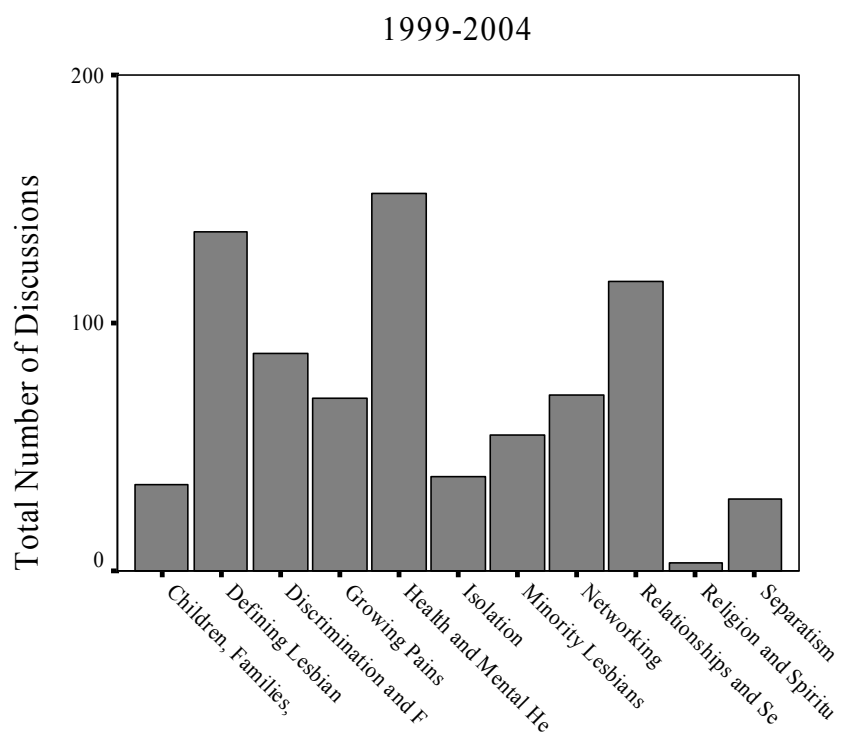


Figure G16. Total number of discussions for 1999-2004 by category.

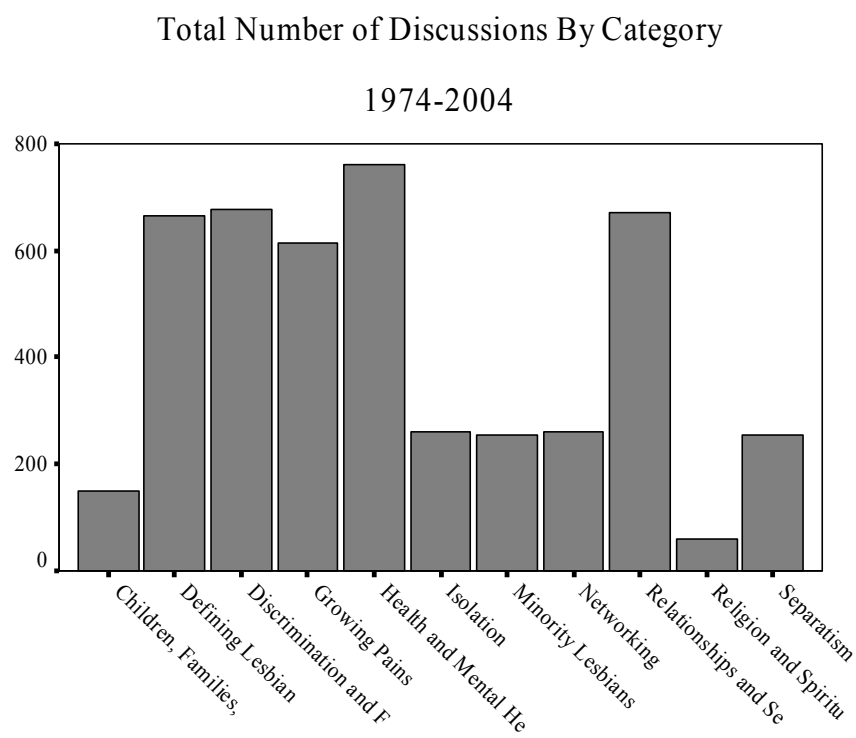


Figure G17. Total number of discussions for the full 30-year study period by category.

APPENDIX H: Correspondence with the Institutional Review Board



OHIO
UNIVERSITY

Office of the Vice President
for Research

05E119

Office of Research Compliance
Research and Technology
Center 117
Athens OH 45701-2979

T: 740.593.0664
F: 740.593.9838
www.ohiou.edu/research

A determination has been made that the following
research study is exempt from IRB review because it
involves:

Category 4 - research involving the collection or study of
existing data, documents, records,
pathological specimens, or diagnostic
specimens if publicly available or recorded

Project Title: For, By, and About Lesbians: A Qualitative Analysis of the
Lesbian Connection Discussion Forum, 1974 - 2004

Project Director: Terry McVannel Erwin

Department: EDCE

Advisor: Tracy Leinbaugh

Rebecca Cale

Rebecca Cale, Associate Director, Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board

6/1/05

Date

The approval remains in effect provided the study is conducted exactly as described in your application for review. Any
additions or modifications to the project must be approved by the IRB (as an amendment) prior to implementation.