1

**PM-1 3 1/2" x 4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT**

PRECISIONSM RESOLUTION TARGETS

**FROM DEVIANT TO CHIC:
THE REPRESENTATION OF LESBIANS IN CANADIAN MEDIA**

by

Kathryn Campbell, B.A.

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
in Canadian Studies

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

July 8, 1996

©1996, Campbell

National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395 rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

0-612-19420-5

0-612-19420-5

—

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-612-19420-5

Canada

Name Kevin

Dissertation Abstracts International is arranged by broad, general subject categories. Please select the one subject which most nearly describes the content of your dissertation. Enter the corresponding four digit code in the spaces provided.

SUBJECT TERM

SUBJECT CODE

U·M·I

Subject Categories

THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ARTS

Architecture 0729
Art History 0377
Cinema 0900
Dance 0378
Fine Arts 0357
Information Science 0733
Journalism 0391
Library Science 0399
Mass Communications 0738
Music 0413
Speech Communication 0459
Theater 0465

EDUCATION

General 0515
Administration 0514
Adult and Continuing 0516
Agricultural 0517
Art 0279
Bilingual and Multicultural 0282
Business 0686
Community College 0275
Curriculum and Instruction 0727
Early Childhood 0518
Elementary 0524
Finance 0277
Guidance and Counseling 0519
Health 0680
Higher 0745
History of 0620
Home Economics 0278
Industrial 0521
Language and Literature 0279
Mathematics 0280
Music 0522
Philosophy of 0908
Physical 0523

Psychology 0525
Reading 0447
Religious 0277
Sciences 0274
Secondary 0433
Social Sciences 0424
Sociology of 0540
Special 0529
Teacher Training 0534
Technology 0471
Tests and Measurements 0498
Vocational 0747

LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND LINGUISTICS

Language 0679
General 0184
Ancient 0290
Linguistics 0290
Modern 0291
Literature 0407
General 0294
Classical 0295
Comparative 0297
Medieval 0198
Modern 0316
African 0591
American 0316
Asian 0316
Canadian (English) 0352
Canadian (French) 0355
English 0593
Germanic 0317
Latin American 0316
Middle Eastern 0315
Romance 0313
Slavic and East European 0314

PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION AND THEOLOGY

Philosophy 0411
Religion 0411
General 0411
Biblical and Theological 0411
History of 0411
Philosophy of 0411
Theology 0411

SOCIAL SCIENCES

Anthropology 0411
Archaeology 0411
Cultural 0411
Economics 0411
General 0411
History 0411
Law 0411
Management 0411
Marketing 0411
Political Science 0411
Sociology 0411
Statistics 0411
Urban and Regional Planning 0411
Work 0411

Accounting 0411
Business 0411
Economics 0411
Finance 0411
Health 0411
History 0411
Law 0411
Management 0411
Marketing 0411
Political Science 0411
Sociology 0411
Statistics 0411
Urban and Regional Planning 0411
Work 0411

THE SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Agriculture 0473
General 0285
Agronomy 0475
Animal Culture and Nutrition 0476
Animal Pathology 0359
Food Science and Technology 0478
Forestry and Wildlife 0479
Plant Culture 0480
Plant Pathology 0817
Plant Physiology 0777
Range Management 0746
Wood Technology 0306
Biology 0287
General 0308
Anatomy 0309
Biostatistics 0379
Botany 0329
Cell 0353
Ecology 0369
Entomology 0793
Genetics 0410
Limnology 0307
Microbiology 0317
Molecular 0416
Neuroscience 0433
Oceanography 0821
Physiology 0778
Radiation 0472
Veterinary Science 0786
Zoology 0760
Biophysics 0425
General 0996
Medical

EARTH SCIENCES

Biogeochemistry 0425
Geochemistry 0996

Geodesy 0379
Geology 0372
Geophysics 0373
Hydrology 0388
Mineralogy 0411
Paleobotany 0345
Paleoecology 0426
Paleontology 0418
Paleozoology 0985
Palynology 0427
Physical Geography 0368
Physical Oceanography 0415

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Environmental Sciences 0768
Health Sciences 0566
General 0300
Audiology 0992
Chemotherapy 0567
Dentistry 0350
Education 0769
Hospital Management 0758
Human Development 0982
Immunology 0564
Medicine and Surgery 0347
Mental Health 0565
Nursing 0570
Nutrition 0380
Obstetrics and Gynecology 0354
Occupational Health and Therapy 0381
Ophthalmology 0271
Pathology 0419
Pharmacology 0572
Pharmacy 0382
Physical Therapy 0573
Public Health 0574
Radiology 0575
Recreation

Speech Pathology 0460
Taxonomy 0461
Home Economics 0462

PHYSICAL SCIENCES

Pure Sciences 0463
Chemistry 0463
General 0463
Agricultural 0463
Analytical 0463
Biochemistry 0463
Inorganic 0463
Nuclear 0463
Organic 0463
Pharmaceutical 0463
Physical 0463
Polymer 0463
Radiation 0463
Mathematics 0463
Physics 0463
General 0463
Acoustics 0463
Astronomy and Astrophysics 0463
Atmospheric Science 0463
Atomic 0463
Electronics and Electricity 0463
Elementary Particles and High Energy 0463
Fluid and Plasma 0463
Molecular 0463
Nuclear 0463
Optics 0463
Radiation 0463
Solid State 0463
Statistics 0463
Applied Sciences 0463
Applied Mechanics 0463
Computer Science 0463

Engineering 0463
General 0463
Aerospace 0463
Agricultural 0463
Automotive 0463
Biomedical 0463
Chemical 0463
Electrical and Electronic 0463
Environmental 0463
Hydraulic 0463
Industrial 0463
Mechanical 0463
Materials Science 0463
Metallurgical 0463
Nuclear 0463
Packaging 0463
Petroleum 0463
Sewage and Municipal 0463
Systems Science 0463
Textile Technology 0463
Transportation 0463
Food Technology 0463
Health Technology 0463

PSYCHOLOGY

General 0463
Behavioral 0463
Clinical 0463
Developmental 0463
Experimental 0463
Industrial 0463
Personality 0463
Physiological 0463
Psychobiology 0463
Psychometrics 0463
Social 0463

The undersigned recommend to the Faculty
of Graduate Studies and Research acceptance of the thesis

"From Deviant to Chic: The Representation of
Lesbians in Canadian Media"

submitted by Kathryn Campbell. B.A.
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

.....
Thesis Supervisor

.....
Director
School of Canadian Studies

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

July 1996

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a feminist examination of the portrayal of lesbians in mainstream Canadian magazines and newspapers over the past forty-five years, during the period from 1950 to 1995.

In this thesis, I discuss the impact of changing societal attitudes towards homosexuals, and towards sexuality in general, and the effect of feminism and the gay liberation movement on media representations of lesbians and lesbianism. I examine the trend toward increasing visibility of lesbians in mainstream Canadian media, and discuss the complex nature of this visibility.

I argue that, while increased visibility does contribute to and indicate a growing public awareness of lesbianism, and, while it can be empowering for lesbians to see lesbianism represented in mass media, some of the portrayals of lesbians found in mainstream magazines and newspapers can be seen as part of a backlash against radical feminism and the gay and lesbian liberation movements.

I conclude with a discussion of some of the changes I would like to see occur in media representations of lesbians, and with some suggestions on how individuals and groups can lobby against homophobia and heterosexism in media.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I want to thank Katherine Arnup, my thesis supervisor, for her encouragement and excellent advice, and for spending so many hours reading and re-reading this thesis. Her commitment to this project was above and beyond the call of supervisory duty. I also thank Mary Louise Adams, Barbara Freeman, and Eileen Saunders for their input, Bill Campbell for his over-the-phone computer repair service, and Patricia Rutherford and Lilja Jonsdottir, my thesis support group. Special thanks also to Patricia Rutherford and Michael Mercier, who allowed me to stay with them during the final stages of this thesis.

Thanks to Cathy Schmueck, and to all the faculty, staff, and students of the School of Canadian Studies, Carleton University. I also thank Debby Yaffe and Michèle Pujol from the Department of Women's Studies at the University of Victoria for their support, and for encouraging me to study lesbian issues.

I thank the Office of Graduate Studies and Research, Carleton University, and the David and Rachel Epstein Foundation for their financial support.

Finally, I want to thank Susan Aylard, for putting up with late nights, mood swings, and Ontario winters so that I could pursue this degree, and for being supportive through it all.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE	
Setting the Stage Theoretical Framework	11
CHAPTER TWO	
Deviance, Inversion and Unnatural Love 1950 to 1970	29
CHAPTER THREE	
“Just Plain Folks” Lesbians in Media in the 1970s	60
CHAPTER FOUR	
Acceptance or Backlash Lesbians in Media in the 1980s and 1990s	83
CONCLUSION	119
BIBLIOGRAPHY	125

INTRODUCTION

there's a suspicion between different generations of lesbians and feminists, and it has to do with people's relationship to popular culture. The generation before mine were people who felt very alienated from popular culture, and very oppressed by it. My generation has a more ambivalent relationship. We're attracted to it, but we fear assimilation and co-optation. And then when I look at the generation after me, they demand their place in popular culture. They want to be in the world, but as gay people.¹

* * *

After decades of invisibility, lesbians and lesbianism have become a popular media topic in the 1990s. In 1993, which was the peak of the 'lesbian chic' trend, the television show *Roseanne* introduced a regularly appearing lesbian character into its plot, and many of the biggest selling American magazines, including Newsweek, Cosmopolitan, Vogue, Mademoiselle, Harper's, New York, Vanity Fair and US, ran lengthy feature articles in which lesbianism was presented as "fun", "fashionable", and "trendy". In this thesis, I will examine the portrayal of lesbians in mainstream Canadian newspapers and magazines, from 1950 to 1995. I argue that, although media representations of lesbians have increased in frequency over this period, and in most cases have become less overtly homophobic, this increased visibility is complex and somewhat ambiguous. It has contributed to increased public awareness about lesbianism, but, at times, media images promote stereotypical views of how

¹Sarah Schulman, interviewed in the film "Thank God I'm a Lesbian", by Laurie Colbert and Dominique Cardona, 1992.

lesbians look and act, and fail to reflect the diversity of the lesbian population.² In addition, much of the coverage of lesbians in media from the 1980s to the present can be perceived as a backlash against lesbian feminism and radical feminism of the 1970s and 1980s. Those lesbians who are represented most frequently, and most sympathetically, tend to be those who are stereotypically attractive and not overtly radical in their politics. As Fred Fejes and Kevin Petrich have argued, "[a]spects of the gay and lesbian community that are not compatible or that too directly challenge the heterosexual regime are excluded."³

It is important, however, not to disregard the importance of media visibility for any social movement, particularly in the case of lesbians, who have been largely invisible in society for so long. Diane Hamer and Belinda Budge argue that,

...popular culture is a site where meanings can be contested, and where dominant ideologies can be disturbed. It is here, in television, magazines, films, books, music, that we are offered culture's dominant definition of ourselves.⁴

One film studies theorist has argued that, "[b]ecause, as gays, we grew up isolated not only from our heterosexual peers but also from each other, we turned to the mass

²See Steven Maynard, "What Colour are Your Underwear?: Class, Whiteness, and Homoerotic Advertising", Border/Lines, No. 32, 1994, pp. 7-8.

³Fred Fejes and Kevin Petrich, "Invisibility, Homophobia and Heterosexism: Lesbians, Gays and the Media", Critical Studies in Mass Communications, December 1993, p. 412.

⁴Diane Hamer and Belinda Budge, "Introduction", The Good, the Bad and the Gorgeous: Popular Culture's Romance with Lesbianism, p. 2.

media for information and ideas about ourselves”⁵. Thus, it is essential to examine the kind of information produced by the mass media, to lobby to change homophobic and heterosexist representations, and to create positive alternatives.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

I became interested media representations of lesbians in 1993, when my friends and I began noticing a sudden increase in the number of lesbians represented in mainstream magazines, movies and television shows. We began having discussions about the impact of this “lesbian chic” trend, and about our reactions to it. At that time, I was glad to see lesbians in media, and, along with my friends, followed the coverage avidly. However, I was somewhat disturbed by what I saw; there were thin women with makeup and designer clothes, but nowhere did I see lesbians who looked like me, or who looked like the lesbians I knew. My original intention was to write a thesis which focused solely on lesbian chic in the 1990s, but I discovered, in doing my research, that lesbian chic did not occur in Canadian media to the same extent or in the same way that it did in the American press. Lesbian chic, where it does appear in Canadian media, can be seen as largely a continuation of an American trend. In addition, I decided that, in order to gain a full understanding of the representation of lesbians in media in the 1990s, it was important to take a historical perspective, and to look at how media coverage of lesbians has changed and developed over time.

⁵R. Dyer, quoted in Alfred Kielwasser and Michelle Wolf, “Mainstream Television, Adolescent Homosexuality, and Significant Silence”, Critical Studies in Mass Communications, Vol. 9, 1991, p. 353.

From my own perspective, I feel strongly that media images of lesbians can have a significant and direct impact on readers, although these responses are highly personal, and vary from person to person. I can distinctly remember reading an article entitled, "When Someone in Your Family is Gay",⁶ in my mother's Chatelaine magazine when I was about ten years old. Although I had not read it in about fourteen years, I remembered the article in detail, including the illustration and some of the content. It was probably one of the first public discussions of homosexuality I had ever encountered (apart from "fag" jokes in the school yard), and it obviously left a lasting impression on me. I suspect that current articles on lesbians will have similarly lasting effects upon children growing up in the 1990s. As Kielwasser and Wolf have noted in their study of the effects of mainstream media representations on gay and lesbian adolescents, media is one of the key mechanisms in the maintenance of the systematic oppression of lesbians and gays in North American society,⁷ and it is essential to work towards changing these representations.

I want to emphasize that, although I am a lesbian, the arguments contained in this thesis are not necessarily reflective of the views of all lesbians. In conversations with lesbian friends and acquaintances, and in presenting my work to lesbian colleagues, I have encountered a huge range of views on the subject of lesbian media

⁶ Stevie Cameron, "When Someone in Your Family is Gay", Chatelaine, July 1981, pp. 35, 98, 102, 106-108, 110.

⁷ Kielwasser and Wolf, "Mainstream Television", p. 350.

representations. Although I tend to be critical of many of the media articles which discuss lesbianism, other lesbians and bisexual women I have met disagree, and feel that any type of media coverage of lesbians can increase public visibility and empower lesbians. Although I have not done any quantitative or qualitative study of lesbians' opinions of or responses to media articles, my informal discussions have shown me the variety of responses individual lesbians will have to a single article. These responses highlight the complexity of analyzing media representations of lesbians. When I began my project I wanted to make strong, generalized claims about the nature of the media's portrayal of lesbians, but it became clear that one cannot view either "the media" or "the lesbian community" as a monolithic entity, with a shared set of beliefs, goals, and agendas.

METHODOLOGY

In this thesis, I have examined mainstream Canadian magazines and newspapers, published between 1950 and 1995. In using the term "mainstream", I am referring to magazines and newspapers which are widely available, have a nationwide circulation, and are aimed at a broad readership, as opposed to "special interest groups". Thus, I am not including "alternative" publications, or those targeted at gays, lesbians, feminists, socialists, or political activists in my study, because the writing style, underlying assumptions, and intended audience are significantly different in these publications. I have also excluded tabloid newspapers from my study, because of the difference in journalistic style and subject matter between

tabloid and mainstream newspapers.⁸

I wanted to examine the impact of popular representations of lesbians in print media, because most of the work which has been done on representations of lesbians deals solely with film and television. Although the use of both magazines and newspapers presents some methodological difficulties, I decided that it was essential to include both of these genres. While I could have obtained a large enough data sample by looking only at newspapers, I felt I could not present an accurate analysis of the representation of lesbians in Canadian media without comparing these two genres. In mass communications research it is generally argued that the type of journalism and the intended audience for newspapers and magazines make the two genres too different to be studied simultaneously, but I found that there were many similarities between the coverage of lesbians in newspapers and in magazines. By looking at both newspapers and magazines, my argument about the nature of the representation of lesbians in Canadian media is significantly strengthened, because I am able to look at a wider variety of articles, and compare the different types of coverage which occurred.

In order to obtain primary sources, I used the Canadian Newspaper Index and

⁸It is important to acknowledge Marguerite Moritz's argument that the distinction between tabloid and mainstream publications, particularly in the United States, is becoming increasingly blurred, because "the economic imperative of the bottom line is pushing the quality press into practices and strategies previously associated with the tabloid press" Marguerite Moritz, "How the US News Media Represents Sexual Minorities", Journalism and Popular Culture, P. Dahlgren and C. Sparks, eds. (London: Sage Publication, 1992), p. 155.

the Canadian Newspaper and Magazine Index to look up articles under the subject headings "lesbianism", "homosexuality", "bisexuality", and "gay". I also used these indexes to look up the names of well known individuals who attracted media attention, such as k.d. lang and Betty Baxter.⁹ Finally, I scanned newspapers and magazines published during and shortly after significant political and social events.¹⁰ While there are undoubtedly some articles which I have missed, the computerized indexes do cross reference articles both by subject and title.¹¹

I have looked at all of the major English-language¹² news, fashion and women's magazines published in Canada, including Maclean's, Chatelaine, Flare, Saturday Night, and Canadian Living. To obtain a sample of newspaper articles, I used the largest English language papers from most of the major cities across Canada, including the Vancouver Sun, the Calgary Herald, the Winnipeg Free Press, the Globe and Mail, the Toronto Star, the Ottawa Citizen, the Montreal Gazette (formerly the Montreal Star), and the Halifax Chronicle Herald. These papers represent the most

⁹In 1993, Betty Baxter was the first openly lesbian candidate to run for a seat in the House of Commons. She ran in the riding of Vancouver Centre.

¹⁰Some of the events I used for my article search included the debate over and subsequent defeat of Bill 167 in Ontario, the 1993 Gay Games in Vancouver, annual gay pride marches, the "Kiss and Tell" photography exhibit in Toronto and Vancouver, and the airing of an episode of the television show "Roseanne" in which two women kiss.

¹¹Articles in which the words "lesbian", "gay", "bisexual", or "homosexual" were not in the title, and articles which did not clearly have lesbianism or homosexuality as the primary subject may have been missed in my article search.

¹²Although French-language material is available, because lesbian chic is primarily the result of American influences, and the relationship of French Canada to American culture is significantly different from that of English Canada, lesbian chic in Quebec would best be examined in a separate study.

widely read and influential English-language newspapers in Canada, and provide a regionally diverse sample.

Although I originally planned to do both qualitative and quantitative analyses of the articles I collected, I later decided to focus solely on qualitative analysis. Overall, there were very few articles about lesbians and lesbianism published in any one decade, and, even though this coverage has increased enormously in the 1990s, there are still only a handful of articles about lesbians and lesbianism published each year. However, because there are so few articles, each article has a much wider impact than it would have if there were a large number or a diversity of representations. Furthermore, as Marguerite Moritz has argued,

[w]hen the news media...represent a topic with which the mass audience may have little personal experience, and homosexuality no doubt is in that category, the message is particularly potent.¹³

Therefore, I decided that a quantitative analysis was not appropriate for this project, as the number of articles does not necessarily correlate with the impact that those articles had on lesbians and on the wider society.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

In Chapter One of this thesis, I begin with a discussion of some of the key terms and theoretical concepts central to my study. This section does not represent a complete review of the relevant literature, but rather serves to highlight the most

¹³Moritz, "How US News Media Represent Sexual Minorities", p. 157.

important concepts I have borrowed from the disciplines of Sociology, Mass Communications, Cultural Studies, Women's Studies, and Gay and Lesbian or Queer Studies.

Chapter Two is an historical analysis of how lesbians were represented in Canadian print media from 1950 until 1969. I discuss why Canadian newspapers and magazines began to publish articles on homosexuality during this period, and I examine selected newspaper and magazine articles on lesbianism from this period, explaining how their content reflects or contradicts the prevailing ideologies about lesbianism and homosexuality in those decades.

In Chapter Three, I examine how lesbians were portrayed in Canadian newspapers and magazines throughout the 1970s, with a particular focus on the impact of social movements such as the women's movement and gay liberation on media representations. I discuss how changes in social attitudes towards sexuality during this period led to increasing tolerance for homosexuals, and examine how these social changes were reflected in mass media. In this chapter, I argue that, although there was generally a liberal tolerance for lesbians who were "just like other [heterosexual] women", radical feminist and lesbian feminist politics were denigrated, and women who were perceived as too radical were criticized or silenced.

In Chapter Four, I begin by looking at how the right wing anti-feminist and anti-homosexual backlash of the 1980s has affected media representations of lesbians, with a particular focus on the impact of the AIDS crisis. I also examine the

development of the "gay market" in the 1980s and 1990s, as well as the impact of the lesbian chic trend of the 1990s on Canadian media. Finally, using selected articles from the period, I examine how lesbian families, lesbian relationships, lesbian sexuality and lesbian politics are represented in Canadian print media in the 1990s.

I conclude my thesis with some observations about the impact and meanings of past and current media representations of lesbians. I also offer some suggestions on how individuals can combat negative media stereotypes of lesbians and other minorities, and take action to fight homophobia, sexism, and other forms of prejudice in mainstream media.

CHAPTER ONE

Setting the Stage: Theoretical Framework

To begin my analysis of the representation of lesbians in media, it is necessary to examine closely what is meant by the term "lesbian". Although this term may seem straightforward, there has been much debate in lesbian, gay, feminist and queer studies literature about its meaning: whether the label "lesbian" is principally based on romantic attachments, love, desire, political commitments, or sexual practice. Postmodern theorists of the 1990s have suggested that "queer" is a more useful category, as it is more fluid, and allows for the acceptance of more diversity and ambiguity.¹ Although there is some value in this (as it avoids cumbersome terms such as "lesbigay"), the term "queer" tends to blur the diversity among lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgendered people. Annamarie Jagose suggests that although in the early 1980s many feminists, including Adrienne Rich and Monique Wittig, attempted to formulate a conclusive definition of "lesbian", these debates instead proved that there can be no conclusive definition, and that the definition of lesbianism must be open to interpretation.² Vera Whisman has suggested that, "[i]n the end, a lesbian must simply be anyone who calls herself one, understanding that we place ourselves

¹ Teresa de Lauretis, "Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities", Differences, Vol. 3, No. 2, 1991.

² Annamarie Jagose, Lesbian Utopics (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 10.

within that category, drawing and redrawing the boundaries in ever-shifting ways".³ Obviously, there is no one way to define a lesbian, as it is a category subject to change over time, culture, and location.⁴

My own perspective on lesbian identity is relevant, since it shapes my analysis of lesbians in media. For myself, feminist politics are an important aspect of my own lesbian identity, including a commitment to challenging compulsory heterosexuality and traditional gender roles. However, I acknowledge that not all lesbians identify as feminists, and that many lesbians have felt alienated from feminism. I am disturbed by the tendency of some recent media articles, particularly those published in popular American magazines, which imply that lesbianism is a matter of taste in music or clothing,⁵ and I would argue that sexual identity cannot and should not be divorced from lesbian identity. Thus, I see lesbian identity as complex and open to individual interpretation, but also grounded in sexual attraction. While I do not entirely agree with Whisman's assertion that a lesbian is "anyone who calls herself one", I think that her statement is important, because it acknowledges that lesbian identity must, ultimately, be individually defined, and does not mean the same thing

³Vera Whisman, "Identity Crises: Who is a Lesbian, Anyway?", Sisters, Sexperts, Queers: Beyond the Lesbian Nation, Arlene Stein, ed. (New York: Penguin, 1993), p. 60.

⁴Susan J. Wolfe and Julia Penelope, "Sexual Identity/Textual Politics: Lesbian {De/Com}positions", Sexual Practice, Textual Theory: Lesbian Cultural Theory, Wolfe and Penelope, eds. (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1993), pp. 1-3.

⁵See for example Elise Harris, "Women in Love", Mademoiselle, March 1993, pp. 180-183, 208.

to all women.

Because I will argue that many current articles on lesbians can be seen as part of a backlash against lesbian feminism, it is important to discuss what is meant by the term "lesbian feminism", and what aspects of it are under attack. It has been argued that lesbian feminism began in the late 1960s, when lesbian activists, frustrated by working in male dominated gay liberation groups, felt the need to form separate organizations to specifically address feminist concerns.⁶

In a movement that was supposed to forward their cause, lesbians grew angry at having to devote time and energy to 'reminding' men of their existence. Many lesbians suspected that gay men would be happy to accept the place befitting their sex and class while leaving the system of male domination intact.⁷

Lesbian feminists began organizing women-only meetings, organizations, and events, and, in an attempt to combat the invisibility of lesbians in society and in the gay movement, they used the term "lesbian" instead of "gay" or "homosexual".

In addition to frustration with male-dominated homophile groups, some lesbians felt equally excluded from feminist groups, which were frequently dominated by heterosexual women. As Becki Ross discusses in her examination of lesbian feminist organizing in Toronto, many lesbians experienced overt homophobia in feminist organizations, which were unwilling to address lesbian concerns or adopt

⁶ Barry D. Adam, The Rise of a Lesbian and Gay Movement (Revised Edition) (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995), p. 99.

⁷Ibid.

pro-lesbian policies.⁸

Unlike most of the lesbians who organized in previous decades, lesbian feminists identified lesbianism not as biologically or psychologically determined, but as a conscious political choice.⁹ They identified a strong connection between lesbianism and feminism, and in some cases argued that lesbianism was a “logical progression” for a woman to make after identifying as a feminist¹⁰, or that lesbianism was the “solution” to the problem of women’s oppression.¹¹ Lesbian feminists saw lesbianism as potentially liberating for women, as an alternative to the power imbalances of heterosexual marriage, the tyranny of traditional feminine roles, and manifestations of heterosexism such as the fashion and beauty industries.

Not all lesbians or feminists agreed with the tenets of lesbian feminism during this period. Lesbians who came out prior to the late 1960s often felt excluded and judged by lesbian feminist denunciations of butch and femme roles. In addition, because many lesbian feminists defined lesbian identity as an emotional or sensual orientation, rather than as an orientation based primarily on sexual desire, some lesbians of previous generations were sceptical of the commitment of lesbian

⁸Becki L. Ross, The House that Jill Built: A Lesbian Nation in Formation (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), pp. 28-30.

⁹Lillian Faderman, Surpassing the Love of Men (New York: Morrow, 1981), p. 383.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 391.

¹¹Adam, The Rise of a Gay and Lesbian Movement (Revised Edition), p. 96

feminists to lesbianism.¹² Lesbian feminists were also criticized for their patronizing and chauvinistic attitudes towards heterosexual women,¹³ and for failing to acknowledge their western and white privilege (as most lesbian feminists were white, middle-class women).¹⁴

While lesbian feminism articulated a formal protest against compulsory heterosexuality in society, and offered women alternatives to traditional feminine roles and standards of attractiveness, some current articles, particularly those associated with the "lesbian chic" trend, can be seen as a reaction against lesbian feminism, and the choices that it offered to women. In using the term 'lesbian chic', I am referring to the trend in which mainstream media focused attention on lesbians and lesbianism in the 1990s. Particularly in 1993, a number of television shows, Hollywood movies and mass circulation magazines began to include lesbian themes and lesbian characters. Lesbian chic refers not only to the volume of media coverage about lesbians in the 1990s, but to the nature of that coverage. If the coverage of lesbians had been overtly negative and derogatory, it would not be described as 'chic'. The term 'chic' suggests a current fashion or a trend, as well as sophistication or

¹²See Joan Nestle, "Butch-Femme Relationships: Sexual Courage in the 1950s", A Restricted Country (Ithaca, New York: Firebrand Books, 1987).

¹³Faderman, Surpassing the Love of Men, p. 387.

¹⁴Barbara Smith and Beverly Smith, "Across the Kitchen Table: A Sister-to-Sister Dialogue", This Bridge Called My Back: Writings By Radical Women Of Color, Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds. (New York: Kitchen Table Press, 1983), pp. 121-123.

exoticism. Thus, in the lesbian chic trend, lesbians are presented as fashionable, sophisticated, and often exotic. While lesbian feminists defined lesbianism as a primarily political orientation, lesbian chic articles deliberately depoliticize lesbianism, by presenting it as a fashion or style, rather than as a political issue. In many magazine and newspaper articles, "chic" lesbians, or young lesbians, are frequently represented as uninterested in feminism or the gay liberation movement. In contrast to the lesbian feminist rejection of the fashion and beauty industries, the lesbians depicted in mainstream media in the 1990s are usually thin, young, stereotypically attractive, and dressed in designer fashions. Steven Maynard has argued that lesbian chic is designed to appeal to and represent a certain class of lesbians: those who have access to "significant incomes"¹⁵ Maynard also notes that the homosexuals in media are exclusively white, to the extent that homosexuality itself comes to be defined as white.¹⁶ This is certainly the case with the lesbian chic trend, as there are almost no lesbians of colour represented in mainstream media.

Susan Faludi argues compellingly that, throughout the 1980s, "backlash" was a trend, played out particularly in media and popular culture, which blamed feminism and women's struggle for equality for many social problems, as well as for stress and unhappiness among women. Faludi argues that the purpose of this trend was to

¹⁵Steven Maynard, "What Colour is Your Underwear? Class, Whiteness and Homocrotic Advertising", *Border/Lines*, No. 32, 1994, p. 7

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 8.

"thwart women's progress"¹⁷ and to contain the serious threat to the status quo that feminism represented. Although Faludi does not refer to lesbianism or homophobia in her discussion of antifeminist backlash, lesbian chic can be seen to fit into this trend. As I will discuss in Chapter Four, 'chic' lesbians are frequently presented in contrast to other, 'unchic' lesbians. Usually, these 'unchic' lesbians are older, political lesbians and lesbian feminists, who came out in the 1970s and early 1980s, while the 'chic' lesbians are young, fashionable, attractive, and often apolitical. In Backlash, Faludi identifies "trend stories" as a new type of journalistic writing which arose in the 1980s.¹⁸ She argues that these trend stories, articles which describe shifts in social behaviour, are a part of the antifeminist backlash, because they almost always focus on female rather than male behaviour, because they are based on conjecture rather than fact, and because they frequently prescribe behaviour rather than describe the lives of real people.¹⁹ These articles rarely cite hard evidence or research on the "trends" they identify, and maintain authority by repeating the same points over and over, and by quoting other trend stories on the same subject. Faludi states that "[a] trend declared in one publication sets off a chain reaction, as the rest of the media scramble to get the story, too"²⁰ Many of the lesbian chic articles can

¹⁷Susan Faludi, Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women (New York: Anchor Books, 1991), p. 454.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 79.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

be identified as "trend stories", as they contain frequent repetition of ideas and sweeping generalizations about social behaviour. The articles also appeared as part of a "chain reaction", as almost every large-circulation publication published an article on lesbianism within the space of a few months in 1993. Thus, the lesbian chic trend can be seen as one among many media "trends" of the 1980s and 1990s, along with "the biological clock", "the new monogamy", "the new femininity", "the celibacy trend", and "the new morality".

Although I am utilizing the concept of antifeminist backlash in this thesis, it is important to note that some authors have argued that the term backlash is disempowering for women, as it removes women's agency and responsibility to oppose antifeminism, and portrays women as victims of forces beyond their control.²¹ Janice Newson asserts that the concept of backlash overlooks the fact that significant gains must have been made in order to attract strong opposition.²² Nonetheless, the term is a useful one because it does identify the strongly antifeminist trend in media and society, and I believe it accurately describes the homophobic and sexist representations of feminists and lesbians in mainstream media in the 1980s and 1990s.

As countless theorists have discussed, the media has a central role in socialization, and, along with other social forces, serves to shape public opinion and

²¹ Janice Newson, quoted in Sharon Dale Stone, "Feminists and the Toronto Press: A Study of Their Relations in 1988", Ph.D Dissertation, York University, 1992, p. 18.

²² Ibid.

political agendas²³ Jay Blumler and Michael Gurevitch have summarized this as follows

[t]he main thrust of agenda-setting research assigns to the mass media an ability to signal to their audiences what are the most important issues of the day, and so to construct an 'agenda for society' Thus, according to this thesis, while the media may not be able to tell people *what* to think, they may be effective in telling them what to think *about*.²⁴

In discussing the social and cultural importance of the media, feminist activist Bonnie Sherr Klein has stated,

[t]he media do not merely reflect or report reality, they *create* it because they provide so much of the information on which we base decisions They shape our personal and public agendas They define our way of seeing.²⁵

Others, such as sociologist Hilary Lips, have pointed to the media's important role as one of the primary agents of childhood socialization. As studies show that North Americans' exposure to media, particularly television, is increasing,²⁶ it seems more and more important to study the messages which children and adults receive from

²³For a good overview, see Liesbet Van Zoonen, Feminist Media Studies (London: Sage, 1994).

²⁴Jay G. Blumler and Michael Gurevitch, "The Political Effects of Mass Communication", Culture, Society and the Media, Michael Gurevitch, et al. eds. (London: Methuen, 1982), p. 262. Emphasis in original.

²⁵Bonnie Sherr Klein, "Illusions and Realities in the Media", Canadian Woman Studies, Spring 1987, p. 72. Emphasis in original.

²⁶Hilary M. Lips, Sex and Gender: An Introduction (Second Edition) (Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing, 1993), pp. 272

media. In their study on adolescent television viewing, Kielwasser and Wolf argue that media contributes to "the symbolic annihilation, silencing, and, ultimately, oppression of gay and lesbian youth",²⁷ and they directly connect the heterosexism of mainstream media to the disturbing statistics on suicide among gay and lesbian teenagers.²⁸ Dr. George Gerbner and others have demonstrated that television and other forms of media reinforce prejudice of all kinds, including racism, ageism, classism and sexism.²⁹

Marguerite Moritz has pointed out that the news media cannot be considered objective on the subject of homosexuality. Journalists, publishers, and editors carefully choose what stories to cover and what constitutes "news", therefore, they present reality in a "highly constructed" form.³⁰ Moritz argues that the invisibility of lesbians and gays in mainstream media is not accidental.

American journalism has a long history of ignoring or marginalizing many groups, including blacks, women, the poor, the disabled and the aged while privileging the world of the white, professional, straight, youthful and economically advantaged male. Perhaps no group has been excluded from media coverage more systematically

²⁷Alfred P. Kielwasser and Michelle A. Wolf, "Mainstream Television, Adolescent Homosexuality, and Significant Silence", Critical Studies in Mass Communication, Vol. 9, 1992, p. 366.

²⁸Ibid., p. 351. (Gay and lesbian teenagers are three times more likely to commit suicide than heterosexual teenagers).

²⁹Klein, "Illusions and Realities in the Media", p. 72

³⁰Marguerite Moritz, "How US News Media Represent Sexual Minorities", Journalism and Popular Culture, eds. P. Dahlgren and C. Sparks (London: Sage Publications, 1992), p. 157

than homosexuals.³¹

In looking at media, it is essential to consider its political and social implications, both in terms of the kinds of stories and articles that are published, and the messages contained within those articles. In her doctoral dissertation on the representation of feminism in Toronto newspapers, Sharon Dale Stone presents an excellent summary of current media theories on how hegemonic ideologies are transmitted and reproduced through media. She argues that the mainstream media reproduces dominant ideologies, and frequently serves to uphold the status quo. She states that, "the mass media functions to contain dissent, thereby reinforcing the existing social order."³² Journalist Joanne Kates has written about the invisible ideology in Canadian journalism. She argues that not only do editors and publishers reflect a bias in the kinds of articles they choose to publish, but those who do not subscribe to a mainstream liberal ideology will never attain those positions of power in the first place.³³ Similarly, Marguerite Moritz has stated that,

[t]he limited representations that are made rely on deeply embedded stereotypes replicated by news practitioners who themselves are not only products of the culture but who function in corporate settings that require them to interpret events from a culturally centrist viewpoint that

³¹Moritz, "How US News Media Represent Sexual Minorities", p. 157.

³²Stone, Feminists and the Toronto Press, p. 3.

³³Joanne Kates, "'Be Taller, be Thinner...': The Perils of a Feminist Journalist", Canadian Woman Studies, Spring 1987, p. 68.

works to maintain the status quo.³⁴

The importance of economic considerations, both those of advertisers and publishers, cannot be overemphasized in discussions of media. Joanne Kates has stated that,

[m]agazines survive economically not from readers' money but from ad revenue...serious discussion of what's screwed up in the world doesn't mesh well with the glitz and gloss of the Champagne lifestyle that ads suggest. When advertisers get nervous, publishers get nervous and then there's trouble...[s]o in magazines news usually has to be good.³⁵

George Gerbner has suggested that, "the real question is not whether organs of mass communication are free but rather: By whom, how, for what purpose and with what consequences are the inevitable controls exercised?"³⁶ The fact that the majority of newspapers and magazines in Canada are owned by the same three massive media conglomerates, and that these conglomerates have overtly stated neo-conservative beliefs indicates that the mass media is far from objective and diverse. For example, Hollinger International, owned by millionaire Conrad Black, controls forty-two of the one hundred and ten daily newspapers in Canada, as well as a number of magazines. The Thompson newspaper group owns another thirty newspapers.³⁷ Thus, the same

³⁴Moritz, "How the US News Media Represent Sexual Minorities", p. 158.

³⁵Kates, "Be Taller, Be Thinner...", p. 68.

³⁶George Gerbner, quoted in Klein, "Illusions and Realities in the Media", p. 72.

³⁷James Winter, "A Paper King: Conrad Black ascends the throne", Canadian Forum, November 1995, p. 9.

few voices, those of rich, white males, control most of the media in Canada. David Radler, the president of Hollinger International, once stated in an interview, "I am ultimately the publisher of all these papers, and if editors disagree with us, they should disagree with us when they are no longer in our employ".³⁸ Barry Adam has argued compellingly that fighting this capitalist media control is an essential part of any movement for the liberation of oppressed peoples:

The ongoing task of women and gay people, as well as many other subordinated peoples, can only be to push for the democratization of the communications industry in order to overcome the capitalist or state administration of ideas and to critique media discourses so deeply infused with masochism, militarism, and consumerism.³⁹

It is now widely accepted in the fields of Sociology and Mass Communications that media has an enormous role in shaping and reproducing social ideology. However, it is important to note that individual readers and viewers do not necessarily accept everything they see in media, nor do all individuals interpret the same television show or magazine article in the same way. Many poststructuralist critics have pointed out the ability of audiences to subvert media messages by interpreting them in a way which was not intended by the producers.⁴⁰ This may be particularly true for lesbians and gay men, who are used to subterfuge, and to "reading against the

³⁸James Winter, "A Paper King", p. 9.

³⁹Adam, The Rise of a Gay and Lesbian Movement, p. 164.

⁴⁰Stuart Hall, "Culture, the Media and the 'Ideological Effect'", Mass Communication and Society, James Curran, et al, eds. (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1979), p. 346.

grain". Although media tends to reproduce dominant ideologies and structures, audience members are not passive, and can reject these messages. Furthermore, audiences are not heterogeneous, and individuals bring different knowledge and sets of assumptions into play when they decode media messages, on the basis of their personal social location.⁴¹ However, media analysts Kielwasser and Wolf have stated that, "[a]t the individual level, the ability to subvert heterosexist texts--to reconstruct dominant messages into deviant meanings--must not be confused with an immunity to homophobic social forces",⁴² and argue that some gays and lesbians, such as gay and lesbian adolescents, who often do not have access to a supportive community or any kind of positive reinforcement, may have less opportunity or ability to create oppositional readings and to subvert media messages.⁴³

Liesbet Van Zoonen, in her article, "Feminist Perspectives on the Media", argues against the temptation by feminists to characterize media texts as "good" or "bad" on the basis of their representation of women.⁴⁴ She states that this method of analysis fails to account for why many women are avid consumers of so-called "bad" media, such as romance novels, soap operas and fashion magazines; to dismiss these genres, then, is to reject and patronize the women who enjoy them. Van Zoonen

⁴¹Stone, Feminists and the Toronto Press, pp. 8-9.

⁴²Kielwasser and Wolf, "Mainstream Television", p. 364.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Liesbet Van Zoonen, "Feminist Perspectives on the Media", Mass Media and Society, eds. James Curran and Michael Gurevitch (London: Edward Arnold, 1991), p. 42.

argues that "[a] call for more realistic images of women might seem self-evident, but is quite problematic... Who can define the objective reality media should transmit?"⁴⁵ Rather than lobbying for "realistic" media images of women, Van Zoonen suggests that feminists should adopt a "cultural studies" approach.⁴⁶ In this approach, media analysts study how various media texts contribute to the social construction of gender. Media texts are seen to have multiple possible meanings, and Van Zoonen suggests that feminists can resist dominant media messages by finding pleasure in these multiple meanings.

Van Zoonen's criticism of what she identifies as the "feminist transmission model of communication" provides important insights for my study of lesbians in mainstream media. Although there is a temptation to characterize media images as "negative" or "positive", as Van Zoonen argues, most media images are highly ambiguous. As I have argued, while one lesbian will appreciate a certain media article, another might be deeply offended by it. Furthermore, while media images may be partly based on stereotypes, most stereotypes do have some element of truth in them. The images cannot reflect all members of a social group, but they may provide an accurate portrayal of some individuals. However, this is not to say that one cannot or should not critically analyze media images of lesbians. Although one cannot categorize these images as entirely "good", "bad", "realistic", or "unrealistic",

⁴⁵Van Zoonen, "Feminist Perspectives on the Mass Media", p. 42.

⁴⁶Ibid. p. 44.

it is still possible to examine the political and economic motivations behind certain representations, to identify instances of sexism and homophobia, to complicate our understanding of the images, and to suggest possible alternative readings. As Van Zoonen argues, it is important not to characterize lesbians and bisexual women who enjoy popular culture as victims, or as having "false consciousness" Van Zoonen's analysis is helpful in explaining why many lesbians find pleasure in popular culture, while at the same time being aware of the homophobic messages included in those representations.

Partly because of the many possible ways of interpreting media texts, the issue of media visibility is not a simple one for lesbian activists. Lesbian theorist Annamarie Jagose has noted that the slogan "lesbians are everywhere" was adopted because public visibility was seen by some as essential for lesbian liberation.⁴⁷ In spite of the fact that some media coverage about lesbians and gays is blatantly homophobic, some gays and lesbians have argued that almost any visibility can have positive elements. For example, in 1993 Newsweek ran a cover story with the headline, "Lesbians, What are the Limits of Tolerance?"⁴⁸ Many lesbians were critical of the article, which suggested that there was, in fact, a limit to the amount of tolerance lesbians could reasonably expect. Others, such as Torie Osborn, Director of the U.S. National Lesbian and Gay Task Force, have argued that, although

⁴⁷Jagose, Lesbian Utopics, p. 1.

⁴⁸Eloise Salholz, et al. "The Power and the Pride", Newsweek, June 21, 1993, pp. 54-60.

visibility is not a substitute for political power,

[y]ou can't knock the impact of all those *Newsweeks* having being delivered to all those homes ensconced in homophobia, where Dad had to pick it up off the coffee table and see the L-word...[a]nd for all those terrified teenagers who are gay--think of the boost.⁴⁹

Sociologist Joshua Gamson has asserted that, "to break silences that are systematically and ubiquitously enforced in public life, is profoundly political".⁵⁰ Gamson does acknowledge, however, that, although this speaking out is important, it is "a complicated sort of power", because lesbians and gay men do not have the ultimate control of what gets edited out and how the issues are framed.

As I will discuss in the next chapter, Canadian gay activist Jim Egan found that when he began publishing letters and articles on homosexual rights in Toronto newspapers in the 1950s, many of his gay friends were angry with him, because they feared that, by drawing public attention to homosexuality, Egan was putting them at risk of being identified as homosexual and discriminated against.⁵¹ Even now, there are many lesbians who have very legitimate fears of visibility, and do not want public attention on lesbianism to be increased, as they stand to lose children, jobs, or family support if they are identified as lesbians. American lesbian activist Sarah Schulman

⁴⁹Lydia Martin, "Out of the Closet and into the Spotlight", *Toronto Star*, September 11, 1993, p. J1.

⁵⁰Joshua Gamson, "Do Ask, Do, Tell", *Utne Reader*, January/February 1996, pp. 79-80.

⁵¹Jim Egan, et al. *Jim Egan: Canada's Pioneer Gay Activist* (Toronto: Canadian Lesbian and Gay History Network, 1987), p. 7.

has referred to the ambivalence many lesbians feel towards media visibility, stating that "[w]e're attracted to it, but we fear assimilation and cooptation".²² This ambivalence is not suprising, considering the long history of homophobia and heterosexism in mainstream media. In the following chapter, I begin my examination of this history with some of the earliest representations of lesbians in Canadian media, from the 1950s and 1960s, and consider how this early visibility affected the lives of lesbians and gay men during this period.

²²Sarah Schulman, interviewed in , "Thank God I'm a Lesbian", a film by Laurie Colbert and Dominique Cardona, 1992.

CHAPTER TWO

Deviance, Inversion and Unnatural Love: 1950 to 1970

In this chapter, I will examine the portrayal of lesbians in mainstream Canadian newspapers and magazines between 1950 and 1970. First, I will explain some of the reasons why male homosexuality and lesbianism first began to appear in some Canadian newspapers and magazines in the early 1950s, as they had never before been considered acceptable subjects for media discussion. Second, I will discuss how the articles on lesbians fit into the context of the gender and sexual roles prescribed for women at the time they were written, and show how these magazine and newspaper articles served to reinforce and uphold these roles. I will also examine how these articles have shaped the public consciousness of lesbianism, and influenced later media images of lesbians in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

'THE LOVE THAT DARES NOT SPEAK ITS NAME'

In the early 1950s, the media silence around the subject of homosexuality slowly began to be broken, although most of the articles were very judgemental towards homosexuals, and tended to focus on the "social problem" that homosexuality presented. As activist and writer Jim Egan has noted, homosexuality was simply never mentioned in broadcast media in the 1950s and 1960s, as it was considered far too scandalous and controversial.¹

¹Jim Egan, et al, Jim Egan: Canada's Pioneer Gay Activist (Toronto: Canadian Lesbian and Gay History Network, 1987), p. 4.

The majority of the newspaper and magazine articles about homosexuality in the 1950s and 1960s referred solely to gay men. Lesbians were rarely mentioned, and the term "homosexual", when used in media articles in this period, refers only to men. When journalists did refer to lesbians, they would generally use the term "women homosexuals", or occasionally "lesbians", although this word was not commonly used even by lesbians until the mid to late 1960s.² The term "heterosexual" is also uncommon in these articles. Generally, the word "normal" is used to refer to heterosexuality. References to bisexuality were also very rare in articles from this period. The only references to bisexuality, as we understand it today, are in relation to someone with both masculine and feminine characteristics, or to homosexuals, particularly femme lesbians, who have been "cured", or become heterosexual. Even in these cases, the individual is generally not defined as bisexual. Rather, the woman is seen as essentially heterosexual or "normal", but as having been weak, lacking in judgement, or seduced by a "real" lesbian.

A major difficulty in researching media articles on lesbians from the 1950s and 60s is that women's magazines, where these articles were likely to appear, were not generally included in periodical indexes. For example, the Canadian Home Journal published an article on lesbianism in 1951, but this magazine is not included in the Canadian Periodical Index. Similarly Chatelaine, another major Canadian women's

²The Lesbians Making History Collective, "People Think This Didn't Happen in Canada", Fireweed (Lesbianics Edition), No. 28, Spring 1989, p. 83.

magazine, did not appear in the Canadian Periodical Index until 1969. In my research on the 1950s and 1960s, I located nineteen articles on homosexuality published in Canadian newspapers and magazines. Of these, only two deal exclusively with lesbianism. As I have argued in Chapter One, because of the small size of this sample, each article had a wide impact, because there was so little written on the subject, and thus the articles would seem out of the ordinary to readers.

These articles from the 1950s and 1960s were among the first explicit public discussions of homosexuality and lesbianism in Canadian media, and did influence how the public viewed gay men and lesbians. However, as Jim Egan has stated, it is impossible to measure just what impact these articles had.³ For many people, these popular media articles were their first and only source of information about homosexuality. Gary Kinsman has stated that, "[u]ntil recently, people rarely encountered visible gays or lesbians. All images were those projected by the media and those circulating in the popular culture".⁴ In the immediate post-war period, there was almost no explicit mention of homosexuality in the media, except for some very vague references to effeminate male actors and artists. The subject of homosexuality was considered too immoral to be mentioned in the media. After the British actor Sir John Gielgud was arrested for "importuning males for immoral

³Jim Egan, interviewed in the film, "Jack Loves Jim: The James Egan Story", by David Adkin Productions, 1995.

⁴Gary Kinsman, The Regulation of Desire: Sexuality in Canada (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1987), p. 29.

purposes" in 1953⁵, columnist Beverley Baxter wrote in Maclean's magazine, "[f]or several days I have debated in my mind whether or not to write this. That it will give offense to some readers of Maclean's is certain" ⁶

There are a number of reasons for the increase in media attention toward homosexuality in the early 1950s. First, public discussion of sexuality in general began to increase in this period. The Kinsey report on male sexuality was published in 1948, followed by the companion study of female sexuality in 1953. These books, and others such as Frank Caprio's Female Homosexuality, published in 1954, as well as the Wolfenden Report released by the British government in 1954⁷, attracted media attention and created some public debate on the issue of homosexuality. Sex historian Vern Bullough has written that, "[t]hough the general public accepted the importance of the [Kinsey] study", it received a great deal of criticism in academic circles.⁸ Kinsey's statistics on the frequency of homosexual activity were highly controversial, particularly those related to women.⁹ Even some individuals who had endorsed his work on male sexuality retracted their support after the publication of his study of

⁵Beverley Baxter, "The Offstage Tragedy of Sir John Gielgud", Maclean's, December 1, 1953, p. 4.

⁶Ibid.

⁷See Kinsman, The Regulation of Desire, pp. 139-143

⁸Vern L. Bullough, Science in the Bedroom. A History of Sex Research (New York: BasicBooks, 1994), p. 180.

⁹Kinsman, p. 114.

female sexuality, and as a result of the controversy over his findings he lost his research funding.¹⁰ Gary Kinsman has argued that Kinsey's studies were the first widespread challenge to heterosexism, and that they had a large influence on Canadian popular literature on homosexuals throughout the 1950s and 1960s.¹¹ One of the most important results of Kinsey's work was it "demonstrated that homosexual activity was widespread in the American population".¹² The Kinsey studies also demonstrate an increasing interest in sex as a subject for popular and media discussion. This interest in sex extended to a number of forms of sexuality, and was not exclusive to homosexuality. Thus, the increase in the number of articles on homosexuality during this period can be seen as part of a general trend of interest in various types of sexuality.

Another factor contributing to the increase in the media visibility of lesbians and gay men in the 1950s was the growth of lesbian and gay communities in major urban centres. During World War Two, many people acquired independence through leaving their families and gaining paid employment. Many lesbians and gay men met other homosexuals through military service and factory work. Canadian historian Ruth Roach Pierson and American historians Alan Bérubé and Donna Penn have argued that the independence from families and the opportunity to live with other

¹⁰Bullough, *Science in the Bedroom*, p. 181.

¹¹Kinsman, p. 115.

¹²Bullough, p. 176-177.

women during World War Two made it easier for some women to live as homosexuals.¹³ Gay communities had existed in cities prior to the 1950s, but there was a rapid growth in homosexual bar culture and social networks at this time.¹⁴ This growth of urban lesbian and gay communities in this post-war era led to increased social visibility, which in turn led to both increased media attention and increased persecution.¹⁵ Because gays and lesbians were more visible than ever before, they began to be perceived as a threat by society, media and government agencies. These fears about the perceived spread of homosexuality led to an increase in violence against lesbians and gays, usually in the form of street bashings, increased harassment and persecution of lesbians and gays by the police and government,¹⁶ and an increase in media articles denouncing homosexuality.¹⁷

HOMOSEXUALITY AS A 'SOCIAL PROBLEM'

The majority of the media articles from the 1950s and 1960s identify

¹³Ruth Roach Pierson, "They're Still Women After All": The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986), p. 219, Alan Bérubé, Coming Out Under Fire (New York: The Free Press, 1990), p. 256, and Donna Penn, "The Sexualized Woman: The Lesbian, the Prostitute, and the Containment of Female Sexuality in Postwar America", Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960, Joanne Meyerowitz, ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), p. 364.

¹⁴Kinsman, The Regulation of Desire, p. 144

¹⁵Elizabeth Kennedy and Madeline Davis, Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community (New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 69.

¹⁶Kinsman, pp. 145-146.

¹⁷See for example, Albert Warson, "Degenerates Parade, Inspector Says — Blames Lack of Public Disgust for Growth of Homosexuality", Globe and Mail, November 14, 1963, p. 13.

homosexuality as a "threat" or "social problem". In addition, almost all journalists unquestioningly accepted the medical explanation of homosexuality, which defined homosexuality as an illness or disease. Jeffery Weeks has argued that this medical model, which developed during the 1920s and 1930s, had become the dominant ideology in academic and popular literature on the subject of homosexuality by the 1950s.¹⁸ Many of these articles convey the notion that homosexuality was rapidly increasing or "spreading". Because homosexuality was usually viewed as a disease, many journalists made comparisons to plagues and contagious illnesses, particularly sexually transmitted diseases. For example, this passage is taken from an article published in 1951 in the magazine Canadian Home Journal, entitled, "The Problem That is Never Mentioned":

...although lesbianism is a very different matter from venereal disease, there is the same need to have more than a vague and horrified notion of what it is if we are to understand and help to solve the social problem it presents.¹⁹

Because of this perception of homosexuality as a mental illness or a disease, it was perceived as being curable. Thus, the popular literature on homosexuality primarily focused on finding causes and postulating possible methods of prevention, and

¹⁸Mahida Didi Khayatt, Lesbian Teachers: An Invisible Presence. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), p. 22.

¹⁹C.K. Cameron, "The Problem That is Never Mentioned", Canadian Home Journal, November 1951, p. 12.

treatment,²⁰ as I will discuss later in this chapter.

Anti-communism, though more commonly identified with McCarthyism in United States, did have a significant effect on Canadian lesbians and gay men. Gary Kinsman argues that in Canada, lesbians and gay men were targeted more by anti-communist witch hunts than any other group, including socialists.²¹ A lesbian interviewed by the Lesbians Making History Collective recalled that many lesbians, especially those employed in areas considered "sensitive", such as teaching and the military, feared losing their jobs.²² Largely in response to McCarthyist persecution and the rise in gay bashings, lesbians and gay men in the United States began to form homophile organizations in the early 1950s. Some of the earliest and most well known American homophile organizations were the Mattachine Society, which was founded in 1951, and the Daughters of Bilitis, an all-lesbian group formed in 1955.²³ While the first Canadian homophile group, The Association for Social Knowledge (ASK), was not formed until 1964²⁴, some Canadians did become members of the American homophile organizations, and these organizations did attract Canadian media attention and cause some public debate. Some Canadians, including many

²⁰Khayatt, Lesbian Teachers, p. 23.

²¹Kinsman, The Regulation of Desire, p. 121.

²²The Lesbians Making History Collective, "People Think This Didn't Happen in Canada", Fireweed (Lesbianics Edition), No. 28, Spring 1989 p. 8.

²³Kennedy and Davis, Boots of Leather, p. 67.

²⁴Kinsman, p. 203.

journalists, regarded these organizations as evidence of American decadence and social decay, and felt that Canada did not have "a homosexual problem"²⁵.

Although lesbians were considered to be "deviant", "abnormal", and "morally diseased", the so-called "homosexual problem", as constructed by the media, referred primarily to male homosexuality. While lesbians were reviled in the media, they were not considered to be as dangerous to society as gay men. This is one reason why lesbians were given less media attention than gay men. In Sexual Behavior in the Human Female, which was published in 1953, Kinsey and his colleagues state that, "[i]nterestingly enough, there is much less public concern over homosexual activities among females [than among males]".²⁶ Kinsey attributed difference in the public perception of gay men and lesbians to several factors, such as the fact that there are fewer formal religious sanctions against female than male homosexuality, their finding that homosexual activity is less common among women than men, the social taboos against anal sex, public ignorance of lesbian sexual practices, the fear of paedophilia, and the fact that many men find the idea of lesbianism arousing.²⁷ Gary Kinsman notes that lesbians were given less media attention partly because, unlike male homosexuals, their activities were not illegal, and thus there were no arrests or

²⁵Kildare Dobbs, "Shocking Charge", Canadian Forum, Vol. 40, August 1960, p. 100.

²⁶Alfred Kinsey, et al, Sexual Behavior in the Human Female (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Co., 1953), p. 477.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 485-486.

court cases to report.²⁸ Certainly, lesbians were rarely arrested for “indecent” or public sex acts as gay men were.

Finally, as Didi Khayatt has argued,

...another plausible speculation [for the invisibility of lesbians] is that men’s interest in women’s sexual behavior is frequently limited to regulating it to ensure legitimate heirs, to control their access to women’s sexuality and labor, and to maximize their own pleasure. Laws and customs reflect the central position men have reserved for themselves, particularly in sexual matters.²⁹

In addition, other reasons for the invisibility of lesbians in the mass media of the 1950s and 1960s include the overall invisibility of women in the media and in the public realm, and the popular notion that women are basically asexual, and thus have no sexuality at all without men. Khayatt clearly describes these factors in the following way:

...it is undeniable that the male homosexual--as homosexual--has been more visible longer in history.... Some reasons for this may simply be that men are usually more concerned with what other men do, think, or say; that men’s sexual lives are often conducted in the public as well as the private spheres (which makes them more obvious and therefore more vulnerable to charges); and that, traditionally, women’s homosexuality was seldom acknowledged as sexual.³⁰

A 1966 Chatelaine article quotes one “expert”, who states that, “[j]ust as with other

²⁸Kinsman, The Regulation of Desire, p. 17.

²⁹Khayatt, Lesbian Teachers, p. 13.

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 12.

women, the emotional-supportive relationship counts more than the sex act".³¹ As the Kinsey Report stated, "[w]hen a female's homosexual experience interferes with her becoming married or maintaining a marriage into which she has entered, social interests may be involved."³² Thus, lesbianism was only seen as socially important, or as a potential threat, in the event that it affected men, the institution of the family, or the socialization of children.

BUTCHES, FEMMES, AND 'GENDER INVERTS'

Although the "social problem" of homosexuality, as presented in the media, was attributed mostly to gay men, journalists also considered lesbians and lesbianism itself to be potentially dangerous. In particular, butch lesbians were frequently depicted as sexual predators who would corrupt "innocent" heterosexual women. A news story published in the Globe and Mail in 1963 states that, "[a] policewoman who ventured in to the Jukebox Club on Yonge St., which was a hangout for lesbians, was warned she would be raped by another woman if she went into the washroom".³³ In many articles from the 1950s and 1960s, a clear distinction is made between "active" lesbians, who are aggressive and "mannish" in appearance, and "passive" lesbians, who are more traditionally feminine in appearance.³⁴ These categories of "active" and

³¹Renate Wilson, "What Turns Women to Lesbianism?", Chatelaine, October 1966, p. 131.

³²Kinsey, Sexual Behavior in the Human Female, p. 486.

³³Warson, "Degenerates Parade, Inspector Says", p. 13.

³⁴For examples, see C. K. Cameron, "The Problem that is Never Mentioned", Canadian Home Journal, November 1951, pp. 12, 103- 106, and Warson, "Degenerates Parade, Inspector

"passive" were borrowed from articles on sexuality and homosexuality published in psychology journals, as was much of the other information on homosexuality imparted to readers of mainstream media.³⁵ Passive lesbians were usually said to have been seduced by active lesbians, often someone older, more confident and more experienced. In this way, butch or "active" lesbians were characterized as being more sinister and dangerous than their femme counterparts, who appeared less threatening to the status quo, as they did not transgress their assigned gender roles.³⁶

Often, informed by the medical model of lesbianism prevalent at the time, journalists did not accept that feminine-looking women could be lesbians at all. These femme or "passive" lesbians were said to be more easily "cured", or restored to heterosexuality than "mannish" lesbians. Canadian Home Journal offered the following advice to parents:

psychiatric treatment...is easier and more apt to be successful if it is begun soon rather than late. In the special case of lesbianism, its chances of success are on the whole greater where the tendency is toward a passive role rather than an active one, and greatest of all where there has never been any physical act of unnatural love.³⁷

Chatelaine readers were told that, "[f]emmes are more pliable and passive,

Says"

³⁵For example, see John K. McCreary, "Psychopathia Homosexualis", Canadian Journal of Psychology, Vol. 4, No. 2, June 1950, pp. 63-74.

³⁶It is important to note here that the terms "butch" and "femme" were not commonly used in mainstream or psychological articles in this period. Terms such as "mannish", "masculine", "feminine", "active" and "passive" were more frequently used.

³⁷Cameron, "The Problem that is Never Mentioned", p. 105.

often swinging in and out of lesbianism, and sometimes ending up in a normal heterosexual marriage.³⁸ Sometimes femme lesbians were not considered to be true lesbians at all, since the medical model dictated that some degree of gender inversion was an inherent characteristic of all lesbians.³⁹ Rather, these femme women were perceived as merely weak, having been led astray by an aggressive lesbian.⁴⁰ Femme women were frequently portrayed as naive, innocent, and even somewhat stupid for accepting the advances of butch women. One "passive" lesbian, referred to as "a pretty little creature,"⁴¹ is described in the following way:

At first Mary was too innocent to understand why Agatha was forever calling her up...[e]ven when Agatha began kissing her as a man might, Mary still didn't understand. But Agatha dominated her by the force of her personality, and talked her into accepting an unnatural relationship...[Mary] went to live with her as her wife--a submissive and dependent wife, who relies on Agatha not only for her keep but for advice and guidance in everything she does and thinks.⁴²

This passage is said to describe a "composite portrait of many such cases".⁴³ That this fictitious description is seen as a typical portrait of lesbianism clearly shows the underlying sexism which informed media representations of lesbianism during the

³⁸Wilson, "What Turns Women to Lesbianism?", p. 134.

³⁹Jennifer Terry, "Lesbians Under the Medical Gaze: Scientists Search for Remarkable Differences", Journal of Sex Research, August 1990, p. 320-321.

⁴⁰Khayatt, Lesbian Teachers, p. 23.

⁴¹Cameron, "The Problem That is Never Mentioned", p. 12.

⁴²Ibid., p. 103.

⁴³Ibid, p. 12.

1950s and 1960s. In accordance with sexist ideology, masculinity is equated with aggression, and femininity is linked to passivity, ignorance and spinelessness. Any woman who does not display "ideal" feminine characteristics is defined as mannish or a "third sex", and not a woman at all, and any feminine-looking woman who has sex with other women is assumed to have been seduced or tricked, rather than having acted out of free will. As historian Jennifer Terry has written, sexual initiative was seen as an inherently masculine trait, so the idea of a sexually assertive, feminine woman was inconceivable.⁴⁴

While femme women were not seen as "real" lesbians, butch women were not seen as "real" women. Generally, their lesbianism was not viewed as a sexual preference, but as a rejection of femininity and womanhood. One expert clearly stated that, "the butch type especially wants 'not to be a woman'".⁴⁵ In media articles from the 1950s and 1960s, lesbians were mainly condemned for breaking gender roles, rather than for their sexual behaviour, which was generally ignored. Lesbians were identified as socially dangerous and mentally ill because they were seen as unfeminine or a "third sex". This explains why femme lesbians were not considered "real" lesbians; lesbianism was seen to be primarily about gender, rather than about sexuality. As Terry states, "it was basically assumed that lesbian sexual desire was

⁴⁴Terry, "Lesbians Under the Medical Gaze", p. 32

⁴⁵Wilson, "What Turns Women to Lesbianism?", p. 134.

an *effect* produced by the female sex variant's masculinity".⁴⁶ Thus, it was the lesbian's atypical gender role which was seen as the root of her problem, rather than her sexuality, which was viewed as a symptom of her gender "inversion" or "confusion". In fact, lesbian historians Madeline Davis and Elizabeth Kennedy argue that it was around 1950 that the popular and medical definition of lesbianism began to shift.⁴⁷ They argue that prior to the mid 1940s,

...[g]ender was so identified with sexuality that it was not choice of a partner of the 'same sex' that indicated homosexuality, but the taking on of the role of the 'opposite sex' in the pursuit of sexual relations with the 'same sex'.⁴⁸

SEX RESEARCH AND JOURNALISM: THE SEARCH FOR A CAUSE

As lesbianism was thought to be a medical or psychological condition during this period, journalists usually got their information on the subject from doctors, mental health professionals, and other supposed "experts". Media articles relied heavily on this "expert" advice, and quoted frequently from books and interviews. By appealing to science and quoting statistics, journalists attempted to establish their own objectivity and credibility on the subject of homosexuality. Medical experts, almost all of whom were male, were considered the authorities on the subject of

⁴⁶Terry, p. 322. Emphasis in original.

⁴⁷Kennedy and Davis, Boots of Leather, p. 325.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 325.

lesbianism, and the opinions of lesbians themselves were rarely even mentioned. For example, one article states that “very little research-based fact is known about lesbianism”.⁴⁹ Facts on the subject of lesbianism were only considered valid if they came from researchers, and lesbians themselves were considered biased, and, of course, mentally ill.

Since heterosexuality was considered to be an inherent characteristic for all women, journalists frequently endeavoured to explain to readers how lesbianism was “caused”. One article stated that, “[f]ree choice is also thought not to be a factor except in circumstances such as prisons where normal sex is impossible”.⁵⁰ The supposed causes, almost always the theories of the “expert” psychologists and sexologists in the field, varied. Some suggested causes include glandular abnormalities, genetic disorders, hormonal imbalances, and birth defects. Occasionally, traumatic experiences with men were listed as a cause, but this is usually attributed to a young woman’s irrational, paranoid fears, rather than to a truly negative experience.⁵¹ The most frequent “cause” of lesbianism presented in media articles during this period is parental failure, usually on the part of the mother.

Both overprotectiveness and a lack of supervision and attention by mothers were cited as causes of lesbianism, as were too much and too little affection between

⁴⁹Wilson, “What Turns Women to Lesbianism?”, p. 33.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 132.

⁵¹Wilson, p. 134, and Cameron, “The Problem That is Never Mentioned”, p. 103

parents. A mother could be too negative about sex, and turn her daughter off men, or she could be too frank and explicit, which would have the same effect. According to the psychological and medical literature of the time, appropriate gender role modelling by parents was the most important factor in ensuring "normal" heterosexual development in children.⁵² Thus, if parents transgressed the rigid boundaries of their assigned gender roles, they risked producing "abnormal" children. These messages from the medical establishment were popularized through the media, through advice to parents. Media articles informed readers that a mother who was too overbearing or dominant, disagreed with or criticized her husband, or worked outside of the home could turn her daughters into lesbians.

Similarly, a father who was weak or "ineffectual" would not provide a proper male role model, and cause his daughter to despise men and become a lesbian.⁵³ One article informed readers that a girl's father "should often play the kind of rousing and affectionate games with her which stress his masculinity",⁵⁴ but too much of this activity was considered equally dangerous, as it could turn a girl into a "hardbitten tomboy". This advice to mothers, imparted through articles in women's magazines, served to uphold traditional gender roles, heterosexuality and the nuclear family model by suggesting that mothers who did not conform could damage their children.

⁵²Terry, "Lesbians Under the Medical Gaze", p. 336.

⁵³Wilson, "What Turns Women to Lesbianism", p. 134.

⁵⁴Cameron, "The Problem That is Never Mentioned", p. 104.

Although these articles may seem laughable to readers in the 1990s, the same messages are present in current articles which warn against the dangers of single mothers or lesbian mothers raising children without male role models.

‘REBELLIOUS TOMBOYS’: REJECTING SEX ROLES

Feminist historians have established that in the post-World War Two era, heterosexuality and “family life” were vigorously promoted in North America, to compensate for the massive social changes which occurred during the war, and to promote consumer spending.⁵⁵ Ruth Roach Pierson has argued that World War Two gave more women the opportunity to live as lesbians, and the vigorous promotion of the heterosexual nuclear family in the media during this period can be seen as a reaction against the kinds of social changes which gave women this kind of independence. Heterosexual marriage was presented as the only “normal” situation for women. The following quote by Gaye Tuchman demonstrates this promotion of compulsory heterosexuality through the mass media:

[s]tudying a random sample of issues of *Ladies Home Journal*, *McCall's* and *Good Housekeeping*, between the years 1940 and 1970, Helen Franzwa found four roles for women: ‘single and looking for a husband, housewife-mother, spinster, and widowed or divorced--soon to remarry’. All the women were defined by the men in

⁵⁵See Dolores Hayden, Redesigning the American Dream, Lillian Faderman, Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers, and Kennedy and Davis, Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold for discussion of the changing roles of women in the post World War II period.

their lives, or by their absence.⁵⁶

Although I did not undertake a comprehensive survey of the roles presented for women in Canadian media, it is obvious that lesbianism was not presented as a viable alternative to the heterosexual nuclear family. Rather, heterosexual marriage was considered not only the ideal role for women, but was generally seen as essential for women's happiness. Unmarried women, when they appeared in the media at all, were frequently portrayed as bitter, unhappy, and, most importantly, abnormal. Just as in the American magazines analyzed by Helen Franzwa, the images of women presented in Canadian media, both in articles and advertisements, were exclusively heterosexual roles. When lesbians were presented, they were either vilified or seen as objects of pity, and of the few articles which did discuss lesbianism, most had an explicit agenda of teaching mothers how to detect and prevent this "disorder".⁵⁷ The 1966 Chatelaine article even suggests that the "butch" lesbian may be "in rebellion against the social indignities of women; she sees her mother's way of life as not desirable, as lacking in respect and independence".⁵⁸ This does acknowledge that women suffer "social indignities", but rather than suggesting that women may truly need more independence and respect, concerned readers were given the following

⁵⁶Gayc Tuchman, "The Symbolic Annihilation of Women by the Mass Media", The Manufacture of News: Social Problems, Deviance and the Mass Media, eds. Stanley Cohen and Jock Young (London: Constable, 1973), p. 177. Emphasis in original.

⁵⁷Cameron, "The Problem That is Never Mentioned", pp. 103-106, and Wilson, "What Turns Women To Lesbianism?", p. 134.

⁵⁸Wilson, p. 134.

advice, in order to prevent their daughters from becoming lesbians:

...a mother can ask herself have I taught my daughter that being a woman is a fine rewarding thing which carries joy and fulfilment, or have I stressed the negative aspects such as painful childbirth, 'giving in' to demanding males, and so on?⁵⁹

This passage is ambiguous, because it shows that lesbianism could be and was interpreted as a rebellion against traditional feminine roles, but it also seems to suggest that mothers should not criticize their assigned roles, for if they complain too loudly and "stress the negative", they might turn their daughters into lesbians

HETEROSEXUAL HEGEMONY IN MASS MEDIA

In the 1950s and 1960s, even more than in the present day, the intended audience for mainstream news, papers and magazines was heterosexual. Thus, even when an article was written about homosexuality, it was aimed at heterosexual readers, who were assumed to know little or nothing about the subject. Gary Kinsman explains that the media, rather than reflecting the opinions and values of readers, constructs "the public" and "public opinion".⁶⁰ The journalist, when writing, places him or herself as the voice of the "common man", so that readers will identify with what is written. This makes the judgements of journalists about what is normal and abnormal, moral and immoral, seem more credible, and more representative of public opinion. Even when the writer is not a man, or is not heterosexual, he or she must

⁵⁹Wilson, "What Turns Women to Lesbianism?", p. 134

⁶⁰Kinsman, *The Regulation of Desire*, p. 203.

write from a majority perspective, or risk being perceived by readers as an unreliable source.⁶¹ This was probably even more true in the 1950s and 1960s than it is now, as there were few women journalists, and no space at all for lesbian and gay perspectives.

Because of this enforced heterosexual hegemony in media, all of the articles about homosexuals written during this time period were written from a heterosexual perspective, usually that of a man, and lesbians were rarely given an opportunity to speak for themselves. Even if some of the articles were written by lesbians or gay men, they would have had to hide their sexuality and take on a heterosexual perspective in order to remain credible and protect their careers. For example, in one article which is essentially a critique of the 1969 Criminal Code Amendment from a gay perspective, the author wrote the article in the form of a dialogue with an unnamed "friend".⁶² This format allowed him to express relatively radical opinions, while maintaining the "balance" and "objectivity" that were considered essential in journalistic articles. If he had written, "I think Canada is an uptight, homophobic county, and the new law will not make any difference", Batten's article would probably not have been published, but by having his "friend" say these things, he could still claim some degree of journalistic objectivity if challenged.

⁶¹Lana Rakow and Kimberlie Kranich, "Women as Sign in Television News", Journal of Communication, Winter 1991, p. 12.

⁶²Jack Batten, "The Homosexual Life in Canada: Will Trudeau's change in the law make any difference?", Saturday Night, September 1969, pp. 29-31.

LESBIANS IN THE 'YELLOW PRESS'

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, tabloid newspapers, such as Toronto's Justice Weekly, True News Times, Tab, and Hush, printed articles on homosexuality quite frequently.⁶³ These tabloid papers, also known as "scandal sheets" or the "yellow press", printed articles on homosexuality mainly for shock value. Because of this, most of the coverage of homosexuality in the tabloid newspapers was extremely inflammatory, and often fictitious or exaggerated. When gay men were charged with "gross indecency", and when gay bars were raided, these tabloids printed the names of those arrested, in order to capitalize on scandal and sensationalism.

Although the coverage of homosexuality in the tabloid newspapers was mostly judgemental and lurid, Jim Egan, one of Canada's first gay rights activists, has argued that gay men and lesbians still read those papers, and they became very important to the gay community, because they were the only place homosexuality was even mentioned, other than in a few novels. Many Canadian gays and lesbians subscribed to the newsletters of American homophile organizations, such as The Ladder, One and The Mattachine Review. However, many people were afraid to put their names on mailing lists, as these publications were often seized at the border by Canadian

⁶³For excerpts and a historical analysis of many of these tabloid articles, see Jim Egan: Canada's Pioneer Gay Activist (Toronto: Canadian Lesbian and Gay History Network, 1987).

customs officials⁶⁴, or else the United States Post Office would refuse to deliver them.⁶⁵ Under pressure from Egan, the Toronto tabloid Justice Weekly occasionally printed articles from these American homophile journals, as well as articles and letters written by Egan himself,⁶⁶ and thus was the only Canadian publication that covered homosexual issues on a regular basis in the 1950s. However, Egan admits that the reason the editors of Justice Weekly agreed to publish the letters and articles was because they were considered bizarre and scandalous, and not because they were taken seriously by the publishers of the newspaper.⁶⁷

As in the larger newspapers, almost all of the articles from the tabloids deal with male homosexuality rather than lesbianism, but there was one article specifically about lesbians, published in Flash in 1951. The headline read, “‘Women Shun Us!-- Men Scoff At Us!’ Toronto Lesbian Tells All! Can’t Help Being ‘Different’ Is Plea of ‘Third Sexer!’”.⁶⁸ The article is supposedly written by a lesbian, under the pseudonym “Sapho” [sic]. The author points out that lesbianism “is old as time itself”, and argues that lesbians “do nobody any harm”⁶⁹ and should not be ostracized. She writes that, “[b]efore I was twenty I had read and digested Freud, Jung, Havelock

⁶⁴Kinsman, The Regulation of Desire, p. 119.

⁶⁵Sidney Katz, “The Homosexual Next Door”, Maclean's, February 1964, p. 30.

⁶⁶Egan, Jim Egan: Canada's Pioneer Gay Activist, p. 120.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, p. 120.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*

Ellis and Kraft-Ebing". This background in psychoanalysis and sexology is apparent in her description of lesbianism, which reads,

...[l]esbians fall into three groups: those who are homosexual because of a glandular deficiency; those who, while normal at birth, become homosexual as a result of a psychic shock, and those who, in maturity, turn voluntarily to Lesbianism as a release from the vulgarity and bestiality of men...This latter group is largely made up of prostitutes...[b]ut these girls are not true Lesbians.⁷⁰

Although this description is rather lurid and sensational, it is basically the same as other definitions of lesbianism published in more reputable newspapers and magazines during this time period.

Although this article was probably very important to some lesbian readers, as so little was published on the subject during this period, this article does seem designed to appeal to readers' prurient interests. There is a lengthy discussion of lesbian prostitutes, and readers are told about brothels that cater to female clients.

Because of [prostitutes'] wide experience with so-called 'normal' sex, these girls frequently reach a supremely delicate and fulfilling Lesbian technique which it would take a natural Lesbian years to acquire. They know every erotic zone of the female body, instinctively understand what motions and caresses will bring it to the zenith of passion, and are artists in working themselves and their partner up to the true, complete Lesbian orgasm.⁷¹

⁷⁰Egan, Jim Egan: Canada's Pioneer Gay Activist, p. 24.

⁷¹Ibid.

THE 1960S: THE BEGINNINGS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Although this chapter focuses on articles written between 1950 and 1970, it is important to note that significant social changes took place during these two decades, which were reflected in the changing portrayals of lesbians in the mass media. As stated previously, in the early 1950s, homosexuality was rarely mentioned in the mainstream press. By the early 1960s references to homosexuality were becoming more common, though lesbianism was still largely invisible. This increase in media coverage was partially due to changing social perceptions of sexuality, and the so-called sexual revolution. Also, the Wolfenden Report, which recommended that homosexual acts between consenting adults in private be decriminalized, was debated in the British House of Commons in 1960.⁷² This debate created much discussion in Canada, and was covered by Canadian media. Homophile organizing in Canada increased in the mid 1960s, with the formation of ASK in Vancouver and discussion groups in Toronto and other large cities. Some of these groups began to pressure the Canadian government to decriminalize male homosexuality, and this also led to an increase in public discussion and media attention.

Partly due to this increase in homophile organizing in Canada in the mid-1960s, several of the largest Canadian newspapers and magazines, including the

⁷²Jeanine Locke, "The Homosexual Problem Troubles the Conscience Of Victims and Society", Toronto Daily Star, June 29, 1960, p. 7.

Toronto Daily Star,⁷³ Maclean's,⁷⁴ and Chatelaine,⁷⁵ ran feature articles or series of articles on homosexuality. For a brief period in 1964 and early 1965, homosexuality (particularly male homosexuality) was a "hot" topic with journalists. As I will discuss in subsequent chapters, there have been other, similar periods in which homosexuality has become a trendy media topic for a number of months, such as in 1975 and in 1993. In between these peaks in media coverage, there tends to be a virtual media silence on the subject.

In 1965 two significant events occurred in Canada which attracted public attention to the subject of homosexuality. The Anglican Church formed the Canadian Council on Religion and the Homosexual, a group which attracted some media attention.⁷⁶ Also, in March of 1965, Everett George Klippert was declared a "dangerous sexual offender" by a judge in the Northwest Territories, and was sentenced to indefinite detention.⁷⁷ Klippert was charged with four counts of "gross indecency" after having admitted, during the course of an unrelated police

⁷³See Jeannine Locke, "Britain Opens Debate on the Plight of the Homosexual", Toronto Daily Star, June 28, 1960, p. 7, and "The Homosexual Problem Troubles the Conscience of Victims and Society", June 29, 1960, p. 7.

⁷⁴See Sidney Katz, "The Harsh Facts of Life in the Gay World", Maclean's, February 22, 1964, pp. 10-11, 28-30, and "The Homosexual Next Door", March 7, 1964, pp. 18, 34-38.

⁷⁵Wilson, "What Turns Women to Lesbianism?"

⁷⁶"Church Council Aims to Aid Homosexuals", Globe and Mail, June 2, 1965, p. 9.

⁷⁷Sidney Katz, "Gentle George Klippert--must he serve LIFE?", Toronto Daily Star, November 18, 1967, p. 10.

investigation, to having private, consensual homosexual relationships.⁷⁸ The Klippert case did not attract much media attention at the time, but in 1967 his sentence was upheld by the Supreme Court of Canada. This Supreme Court decision received a great deal of media coverage, and although most articles did not argue in favour of the decriminalization of homosexual sex, most journalists agreed the Klippert's sentence was unfair. Klippert was repeatedly described as "gentle", "harmless", and "mild-mannered", and his sentence was seen as far too harsh.

The Klippert case led to increased lobbying by Canadian homophile groups, and Pierre Trudeau, then Justice Minister under Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson, promised to introduce legislation to decriminalize private homosexual activity between consenting adult men. This legislation was first introduced to Parliament in December 1967, when Trudeau introduced an omnibus bill to amend the Criminal Code of Canada, and made his famous claim that "the state has no business in the bedrooms of the nation".⁷⁹ The bill did not pass until May 1969, and in the intervening year and a half there was much debate about the legislation and the issue of homosexuality in the Canadian media⁸⁰. In fact, the omnibus Criminal Code amendments bill included one hundred and four clauses to revise the Criminal Code, including clauses to legalize therapeutic abortions, to tighten gun control laws, and

⁷⁸Kinsman, The Regulation of Desire, pp. 161-163.

⁷⁹Canadian News Facts (Toronto: Stephen D. Pepper and Barrie Maitland, 1969), p. 274.

⁸⁰See for example Jack Batten, "The homosexual life in Canada".

to control gambling and lotteries. Although the clause to decriminalize homosexuality did receive significant media attention, the abortion amendment caused the most controversy, and there were far more media articles written about the lottery amendment than about the decriminalization of homosexuality. Nonetheless, there was more Canadian media attention given to homosexuality during this period than ever before in Canadian history. Although this media attention did not focus on specifically on lesbians, as most of the homosexuals charged with "gross indecency" under the criminal code were men, it did serve to create public discussion of some of the relevant issues.

Partly because of his support for abortion rights and the decriminalization of homosexuality, Trudeau was labelled a communist (and at times a homosexual) by many of his political opponents and by some journalists. The 1968 election was probably the first Canadian election in which homosexuality was a campaign issue, although most candidates avoided the subject as much as possible, and journalists did not consider it a central issue. Trudeau was strongly criticized for his support of the Omnibus Bill, and was said by right-wing opponents to have been tainted with "the stench of Sodom".⁸¹ This demonstrates that anti-communism was still a part of Canadian society in the late 1960s, and was still used to discredit those who demanded social change. As historian Donna Penn has argued, during the Cold War

⁸¹"Campaign Notes", Globe and Mail, June 15, 1968, p 7

period in the United States, those who transgressed sexual boundaries were perceived as a "threat to the nation".⁸² Gary Kinsman's work on the anti-homosexual campaigns in the Canadian civil service shows that this Cold War political climate had a marked effect on the lives of lesbians and gays in Canada.⁸³

THE IMPACT OF EARLY MEDIA COVERAGE

Throughout this chapter I have argued that media attention towards gay men, and, to a lesser degree, lesbians, gradually increased throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Jim Egan, after having written and been interviewed for several articles on homosexuality, encountered some hostility from other gay men, who feared that once the public knew how common homosexuality was, gay men would be even more persecuted and hated, and would face even greater risks of public exposure.⁸⁴ This fear was probably legitimate, because around 1975, after the rise of the gay liberation movement and a significant increase in media coverage, there was a backlash against gays and lesbians in Canada, which resulted in increased harassment and the closure of some bars, bathhouses and bookstores.⁸⁵

The articles on homosexuality which were published during the 1950s and 1960s were almost always highly judgemental towards homosexuals, and the 'facts'

⁸²Penn, "The Sexualized Woman", p. 361.

⁸³Gary Kinsman, The Regulation of Desire: Homo and Hetero Sexualities (Second Edition), (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1996).

⁸⁴Egan, Jim Egan: Canada's Pioneer Gay Activist, p. 7.

⁸⁵Kinsman, The Regulation of Desire (First Edition), p. 206.

presented by journalists usually upheld myths and stereotypes, such as the effeminacy of gay men and the "mannishness" of lesbians. As is the case in the 1990s, lesbians and gay men were rarely allowed to speak for themselves, and thus their media images, and to a large extent public opinion, were controlled by heterosexual writers and editors. In addition, the fact that lesbians were so invisible compared to gay men reinforced sexist ideologies both within gay communities and in the wider culture. Lesbian political organizing was and still is taken less seriously than the activities of gay men, for the reasons I have discussed in this chapter. However, partly due to this media invisibility, lesbians have had a certain freedom that gay men have not, as their activities were not subject to the same amount of public scrutiny and regulation. Although I have argued that this early media coverage of male homosexuality in the 1950s and 1960s did lead to some public discussion and awareness of lesbianism, it also set up men as the "norm" in discussions of homosexuality, and increased rather than reduced the marginalization of lesbians. Gary Kinsman has argued that lesbians are often viewed as merely the female version of homosexual men, because there is no well known category which describes lesbians in a manner distinct from gay men.⁸⁶ Thus, it is essential for lesbians to have media visibility in order for their political concerns to be recognized as distinct from those of gay men.

CONCLUSION

⁸⁶Kinsman, The Regulation of Desire (First Edition), p. 17.

Before one can examine the media's portrayal of lesbians in the 1990s, it is important to provide a historical context for these representations. Although most journalists did not directly address lesbianism, the articles on homosexuality published in the 1950s were important in shaping the "discourse of homosexuality" in Canadian and American cultures. The paradigm of homosexual "deviance", popularized through the mass media in the 1950s, can still be detected in some articles published today, and still informs the way many politicians, educators, and lawmakers think about the issues of homosexuality and lesbianism. Because the articles on homosexuality published in the 1950s were among the first to reach the mainstream press, they were instrumental in shaping the way the public viewed the subject. As well these articles were very important to gay men and lesbians, as these media articles were among the only sources of information on homosexuality, and for many isolated gays and lesbians, possibly their only contact whatsoever with the gay community. In addition, the 1950s and early 1960s was the formative period for homophile organizing in Canada, and many of these early activists were influenced a great deal by these media images. For example, it was the biased and unfair representation of gay men in Toronto's newspapers that first incited Jim Egan to write letters of complaint, and begin his years of struggle for lesbian and gay rights. In later chapters, I will further discuss the impact of these media images of lesbians, both on lesbians and on heterosexual readers.

CHAPTER THREE

"Just Plain Folks": Lesbians in Media in the 1970s

By the late 1960s, academic and popular literature on the subject of homosexuality had slowly begun to change. Some progressive sociologists, psychologists, and other academics began to recognize gay identity as an orientation or preference, rather than as an illness or disease, as it had been viewed in previous decades.¹ By 1973 even the American Psychiatric Association, under pressure from lesbian and gay activists, had removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders, although only about fifty percent of its members supported this decision.² As Gary Kinsman has argued, this change in the perception of homosexuality from a "sickness" to an "orientation" allowed more gays and lesbians to come out and to organize against homophobic oppression.³ By the early 1970s, the notions of "deviance" and "inversion" which had dominated the media in the 1950s and early 1960s had begun to be replaced by a more politicized view of homosexuals as an oppressed minority who were not inherently abnormal.⁴

¹Madiha Didi Khayatt, Lesbian Teachers. An Invisible Presence (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), p. 26.

²The Alyson Almanac: A Treasury of Information for the Gay and Lesbian Community (Boston: Alyson Publications, 1990), p. 33.

³Gary Kinsman, The Regulation of Desire: Homo and Hetero Sexualities (Second Edition) (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1996), p. 288.

⁴Although journalists frequently emphasized the fact that homosexuals should not be considered ill or abnormal, their continuing speculations about the "causes" of homosexuality tended to contradict this assertion.

The two most significant social trends of the late 1960s and early 1970s which changed the representation of lesbians and gay men in media were the women's movement and the gay liberation movement. The impact of these two movements on the mainstream media cannot be over-emphasized. Media analysts Fejes and Petrich highlight the importance of the gay liberation movement in changing media representations of lesbians and gays. They argue that although media portrayals of lesbians and gays became less blatantly homophobic after 1969, this change cannot simply be attributed to "more enlightened social attitudes".⁵ Rather, they state that "the activism of gays and lesbians in confronting and challenging negative stereotyping played a decisive role in the change".⁶ Although representations of lesbians and gays did change during this period, as a result of social activism and changing societal attitudes, it is important to note that this change was not immediate, and did not necessarily affect all aspects of mainstream media. As Marguerite Moritz has suggested, "[a]s the culture evolves...representations may change, but this process does not always play out in a linear progression".⁷

With the influence of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, as well as the re-emergence of feminism, the notions of oppression and discrimination

⁵Fred Fejes and Kevin Petrich, "Invisibility, Homophobia and Heterosexism: Lesbians and Gays in the Media", Critical Studies in Mass Communications, December 1993, p. 412.

⁶Ibid

⁷Marguerite Moritz, "How US News Media Represent Sexual Minorities", Journalism and Popular Culture, P. Dahlgren and C. Sparks, eds. (London: Sage Publications, 1992), p. 158.

became popularized, and this change in view also influenced how lesbians and gay are portrayed in media. Previously, because the difficulties of living as a homosexual in a heterosexual world were rarely recognized or acknowledged, lesbians and gay men were frequently blamed for the problems they faced. If they tended towards depression or alcoholism, this was seen as evidence of their moral weakness or degeneracy. By the mid-1970s there was some media discussion of discrimination against lesbians and, in particular, gay men, largely because gay and lesbian groups had been organizing, protesting, and mounting court challenges in order to end this discrimination.

In addition to an increasing social acceptance of the notions of oppression and discrimination, the gay liberation movement was aided by increasing social tolerance towards sexuality in general. Although many feminists in the 1990s agree that the so-called "sexual revolution" of the late 1960s and early 1970s was not necessarily liberating or empowering for women, as they remained subject to strict social censure for transgressing sexual boundaries, nonetheless attitudes towards sexuality did undergo a rapid shift during this period. Historian Lillian Faderman has suggested that the "sexual permissiveness" of the 1960s allowed for a wider social acceptance of lesbian sex and of other forms of nonreproductive sex.⁸ A column published in Chatelaine in 1976 stated that,

⁸Lillian Faderman, Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers. A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America (New York: Penguin, 1991), p. 201

People have traditionally scorned homosexuals because their relationship did not lead to marriage (the only setting in which sexual activity was condoned) or to childbearing (thought to be the only justification for sex). Homosexuals, by contrast, were obviously engaged in sex for its own rewards; with the introduction of the Pill, however, the idea of sex as a means of intimacy and pleasure has become more realistically tolerated.⁹

This increased social interest in and acceptance of sexuality was clearly demonstrated in popular culture and media of the 1970s. Many Canadian and American women's magazines began publishing articles on various aspects of sexuality, and Cosmopolitan magazine, which focused the majority of its articles on sexuality, became an enormous commercial success during the late 1960s. The representation of lesbians in media did increase marginally during the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s. As historians John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman have argued, "[t]he collapse in the 1960s of strictures against the portrayal of sexual matters gave the media license to turn its attention to homosexuality".¹⁰ However, for the most part homosexuality, and lesbianism in particular, were still invisible in mainstream media during this period, and the overwhelming majority of articles on sexuality dealt exclusively with heterosexual sex.

THE BIRTH OF THE GAY PRESS

As Lillian Faderman has pointed out, it was in the early 1970s that gay,

⁹Sheila Kieran, "Homosexuality", Chatelaine, December 1976, p. 10.

¹⁰John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), p. 312

lesbian, and feminist periodicals began to flourish, giving rise to an alternative voice to the mainstream media.¹¹ The importance of these alternative newspapers and magazines to the gay and lesbian movement should not be underestimated, particularly since openly gay or lesbian journalists were not welcome at mainstream publications.¹²

With the 'straight press' still wary of covering gay issues, gay newspapers offered a blend of news, interviews, and book and movie reviews, spiced with advice columns and listings of bar happenings. They were also sold openly on newsstands, a major change from the days before Stonewall.¹³

Becki Ross has stated that newsletters produced by Canadian lesbian and gay organizations "served as cultural/political/social lifelines to people living in small towns".¹⁴

As I discussed in Chapter One, many Canadian lesbians and gays were avid readers of American homophile journals such as One, The Mattachine Review, and

¹¹Faderman, Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers, p. 196. See also Rodger Streitmatter, Unspeakable: The Rise of the Gay and Lesbian Press in America (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1995), p. 116.

¹²Tyrone Newhook, "Coming Out in the Newsroom", Ryerson Review of Journalism, Spring 1994, p. 44.

¹³Neil Miller, Out of the Past: Gay and Lesbian History from 1869 to the Present (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), p. 419. It is important to note here that although Miller defends the importance of the gay press, he also acknowledges that, "[t]he gay press reflected the absence of lesbians in the gay political movement of the time" (page 419).

¹⁴Becki Ross, The House That Jill Built: A Lesbian Nation in Formation (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), p. 31.

The Ladder, and later gay liberation publications such as Christopher Street and The Lesbian Tide. In 1971, the Body Politic, the first Canadian gay liberation periodical, was launched.¹⁵ Other periodicals from the era include Vancouver's Gay Tide, Long Time Coming, (a Montreal-based lesbian magazine), and the feminist journals The Pedestal, Broadside, and The Other Woman, all of which included lesbian content. These publications not only "played an important role in disseminating the ideas of the movement to a wider homosexual public",¹⁶ but also contributed to the rapid growth of gay and lesbian communities during this period.¹⁷

During the 1970s, many lesbian activists struggled with the question of media representation. Feminist publications served an important role for lesbians in this period, but some were wary of devoting too much space to "lesbian issues", for fear of alienating heterosexual readers, and publications aimed at an exclusively lesbian audience were frequently unable to produce the revenue require to continue publishing.¹⁸ Although, as Neil Miller has suggested, lesbians were under-represented in the "gay press", some lesbians found working with male-dominated gay publications preferable to supporting the mainstream press, which had a history of

¹⁵Kinsman, The Regulation of Desire (Second Edition), p. 292.

¹⁶Miller, Out of the Past, p. 420.

¹⁷ For a discussion of the growth of the "gay community" during this period, see Kinsman, The Regulation of Desire (Second Edition), pp. 293-294.

¹⁸Rodger Streitmatter, Unspeakable: The Rise of the Gay and Lesbian Press in America (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1995), pp. 138-141.

"sensationalizing and misrepresenting grass-roots feminism and gay liberation".¹⁹ Several journalists who wrote for mainstream publications referred to the difficulty they had in locating lesbians who were willing to grant mainstream media interviews, as many lesbians avoided the mainstream press on principle, or because they feared being misrepresented, patronized, or ridiculed.²⁰ One lesbian, interviewed for an article in Maclean's magazine, stated that, "[w]e've had all kinds of people come in and write their papers on us. And they always seem to know in advance how they're going to see us. We're subjects to them, not people".²¹ Certainly many lesbians had good reason to be suspicious of mainstream media, as many articles in the 1970s were intent on "explaining lesbianism", and some journalists, such as Penney Kome, were blatantly homophobic in their approach, although most claimed to be "unprejudiced" and "unbiased".²² Nonetheless, a minority of lesbian activists argued for the need to engage with the mainstream press in order to facilitate social change and counteract the negative messages about lesbians in the popular press:

While asserting ourselves in our own sympathetic media
may make us a more cohesive community, it is not

¹⁹Ross, The House That Jill Built, p. 80.

²⁰See for example Penney Kome, "Couples", Maclean's, December 1972, p. 45, and Dorothy Sangster, "Gay Women: A Minority Report", Chatelaine, July 1977, p. 24.

²¹Kome, "Couples", p. 45.

²²Penney Kome begins her article by stating that she is "unprejudiced". She then describes a situation, completely unrelated to her article, in which a woman kissed her when she was fifteen years old: "...[t]he reaction was instinctive and immediate. I turned my head the other way and vomited... So I found that I have the fine, hard line inside that makes my love for other women sisterly rather than sensual..." (page 45).

enough. We must have a higher profile in the ugly, amorphous mess of the straight establishment press and broadcast media. We must, as much as possible, set our own terms when we deal with them. We have to counteract centuries of invisibility. We have to respond to their every slight, however slight it may seem. The lesbian image is not going to change until we decide to change it. And we must.²³

Lesbians remained largely invisible in the mainstream media of the 1970s and 1980s. I was able to locate eighteen Canadian newspaper and magazine articles published on homosexuality between 1970 and 1982, five of which referred exclusively to lesbianism. Just as in the 1950s and 1960s, the term "homosexual", when used in media, still referred exclusively to gay men, and "gay women", as they were most commonly called, were frequently referred to only as an afterthought, if at all. This may have been due in part to the lesbian feminist rejection of male-dominated mass media, but can also be attributed to a large extent to the same factors which rendered lesbians invisible in the 1950s and 1960s: they were not seen as a significant social threat, women's activities were deemed less important and less worthy of media attention, and they were viewed as asexual and less interesting than gay men. In addition, as a 1973 University of Waterloo handbook on homosexuality, suggested:

[o]f all the homosexually oriented women in North America 20 per cent have children and since these women are considered to be unfit mothers they hide in

²³Chris Bearchell, quoted in Ross, The House That Jill Built, p. 81.

order to keep their children.²⁴

Thus, because many lesbians feared losing their children and their jobs, they were often reluctant to seek out mainstream visibility the way some gay male activists did.

When "gay liberation" was discussed in the media in the 1970s, it was usually presented as a male movement, and the majority of media articles quoted only male activists. As I have discussed in Chapter One, the early gay liberation movement was, in fact, largely male dominated, many lesbians felt that the movement did not address their needs as women and as feminists, and that some gay male activists were unwilling to overcome their sexism.²⁵ I would argue that the mainstream media's tendency to overlook lesbians and focus public attention on gay men served to exacerbate this problem, and caused lesbians to become even more marginalized within the gay liberation movement. In Feminist Organizing For Change, Adamson, Briskin and McPhail have discussed how the mass media tends to choose certain individuals as "stars" in social movements, while at the same time ignoring the hundreds of people working to make the movement possible.²⁶ Journalists frequently look for leaders or key personalities when reporting on social movements, in order to

²⁴Excerpt from *Operation Socrates Handbook*, reprinted in "Male Homosexuality", Sexual Behaviour in Canada: Patterns and Problems, Benjamin Schlesinger, ed (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p. 151. See also Katherine Arnup, "Introduction", Lesbian Parenting: Living with Pride and Prejudice, Katherine Arnup, ed. (Charlottetown: Gynergy Books, 1995)

²⁵See Ross, The House That Jill Built, pp. 33-37

²⁶Nancy Adamson, et al., Feminist Organizing For Change: The Contemporary Women's Movement in Canada (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp 154-155

give the movement a "face", and connect the movement to an individual or small group of individuals rather than with a large, disparate group. These "stars" then become identified with the movement, and are frequently sought out for quotes in other articles and by other journalists. Thus, mainstream media has an important role in determining the leadership of an activist group or social movement. Because these leaders or spokespeople for the homophile movement were usually men,²⁷ even those lesbians who were in leadership positions within the gay liberation movement did not have access to media to the same extent as gay male activists, and did not have as large a voice.²⁸

THE BEGINNING OF GAY LIBERATION

In 1969, after intense lobbying from gay and lesbian activists, the federal government amended the Canadian Criminal Code, decriminalizing homosexual acts between consenting adults.²⁹ The changes in the law were, in part, fuelled by the fact that more and more gays and lesbians were coming out, demanding equal rights, and creating a visible presence in Canadian society. The reduction of the legal prohibitions against homosexuality, in turn, allowed more gays and lesbians to come

²⁷For example, George Hislop, the President of the Community Homophile Association of Toronto (CHAT), was quoted in almost every Canadian article about lesbians and lesbianism written in the 1970s.

²⁸It is important to note here that although gay men had more access to media publicity than lesbians, the coverage of gay and lesbian issues was infrequent, and gay male activism was not always given favourable media coverage.

²⁹For more discussion of the 1969 Canadian Criminal Code amendments, see Chapter Two.

out. Thus, after the Criminal Code was amended, more individuals were able to become active in the gay and lesbian rights movement. The growing visibility of lesbians and gay men in society, and the rise of the gay liberation movement, increased media attention towards homosexuality during this period.³⁰

Nineteen sixty-nine was a critical year for gay activists in the United States, as well. On June 28, 1969, patrons of the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in New York City, resisted a police raid, fighting back against the police. The riots, which were a protest against the frequent harassment of gays and lesbians by police, continued for several nights in the streets near the Stonewall Inn, and have been seen by most gay and lesbian historians as the beginning of the modern lesbian and gay movement.³¹ Although the Stonewall riots were largely ignored by Canadian newspapers and magazines, they had an enormous impact on Canadian lesbian and gay activists.³² Shortly after Stonewall, a number of gay and/or lesbian liberation groups were formed in Canada, including the University of Toronto Homophile Association, and the Vancouver Gay Liberation Front.³³ Although by 1971 most major Canadian cities had at least one gay or lesbian liberation group (or caucus within another activist group),

³⁰Kinsman, The Regulation of Desire (Second Edition), p. 288.

³¹ See The Alyson Almanac, p. 30, Michael Bronski, Culture Clash: The Making of Gay Sensibility (Boston: South End Press, 1984), p. 87, and Gary Kinsman, The Regulation of Desire: Sexuality in Canada (First Edition) (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1987), p. 179.

³²Kinsman, The Regulation of Desire (First Edition), p. 179.

³³Kinsman, The Regulation of Desire (Second Edition), p. 291.

the mainstream media in Canada rarely published stories on the gay liberation movement before 1977.³⁴

Between 1977 and 1979, there was a sudden and distinct increase in the coverage of lesbian and gay issues in the Canadian,³⁵ American, and British³⁶ presses. This journalistic trend of the late 1970s can in part be explained by the growing activity and influence of the gay rights movement in North America. Some journalists explicitly referred to the tenth anniversary of the decriminalization of homosexual acts in Canada as an important time to examine the role and status of homosexuals in Canadian society.³⁷ In addition, the release in 1977 of a book entitled Sexual Behaviour in Canada,³⁸ by University of Toronto Social Work professor Benjamin Schlesinger, received considerable attention in Canadian media. A number of Canadian mainstream media articles published between 1977 and 1980 refer to Schlesinger's book, which was described as "authoritative",³⁹ and a "landmark

³⁴One exception to this is Penney Kome, "Couples", pp. 44-45, 62, 64.

³⁵For some Canadian examples, see "Gay Women: A Minority Report", Chatelaine, July 1977, pp. 24, 79-84, "Gay in the Seventies", Weekend Magazine, December 17, 1977, p. 1-2, 12-14, "The Inside Track", Saturday Night, March 1979, pp. 3-5, "Homosexual rights: is militancy necessary?", Chatelaine, July 1979, p. 24, "Almost half of all Canadians find homosexuality easy to accept", Weekend Magazine, August 18, 1979, p. 3.

³⁶For discussion of this trend in the British press see Susan Hemmings, "Horrific Practices: How Lesbians Were Presented in the Newspapers of 1978", Homosexuality: Power and Politics, Gay Left Collective, ed. (London: Allison and Busby, 1980), pp. 157-158.

³⁷See "Gay in the Seventies", p. 2.

³⁸Benjamin Schlesinger, ed. Sexual Behaviour in Canada: Patterns and Problems (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977).

³⁹"Almost half of all Canadians find homosexuality easy to accept", p. 3.

study".⁴⁰ Schlesinger described this anthology as "the first Canadian book devoted to the study of human sexual behaviour". The collection included an essay entitled, "Lesbianism: knowns and unknowns".⁴¹ In contrast to most academic literature on homosexuality published prior to 1977, the authors strongly criticized psychoanalytic perspectives on lesbianism, arguing that,

[w]e feel it is crucial for counsellors to see how these myths [about homosexuality as an illness or neurosis] have been generated and perpetrated, how they have shaped our thinking, created our biases, and how totally ridiculous they now seem.⁴²

The authors also criticized mass media representations of lesbianism, stating that,

[t]he mass media have done much to popularize and promote psychological and psychiatric theories and opinions. Results of studies are usually in abbreviated forms for a public that has no way of evaluating the merits of such reports.⁴³

The impact of the gay liberation and feminist movements on mass media are clearly demonstrated in Dorothy Sangster's 1977 article, "Gay Women. A Minority Report". This article stands in sharp contrast to Chatelaine's last feature article on lesbians, "What Turns Women to Lesbianism", published in 1966. In 1966, Renate Wilson wrote in Chatelaine that, "sexual deviation, like the neuroses of alcoholism

⁴⁰"Gay in the Seventies", p. 13.

⁴¹Susan Hanley, Benjamin Schlesinger, and Paul Steinberg, "Lesbianism: knowns and unknowns", Sexual Behaviour in Canada.

⁴²Ibid., p. 130.

⁴³Ibid., p. 132.

and drug addiction, is considered an illness which can be treated".⁴⁴ Dorothy Sangster's article completely rejects the view of homosexuality as illness or disease, instead stating that, "true homosexuality is a natural and irreversible variation of sexual behaviour, and should not be tampered with".⁴⁵ Sangster quotes lesbian author Jane Rule, who advises those who wish to understand lesbianism to "steer clear of psychology".⁴⁶ These statements indicate that the notions of lesbianism as a form of 'deviance' and moral weakness, prevalent in articles from the 1950s and 1960s, had become less popular by the 1970s. Like several other journalists of the period,⁴⁷ Sangster wrote at length about some of the difficulties faced by lesbians living in a heterosexual society, supporting Didi Khayatt's assertion that an understanding of oppression had become widespread by the late 1970s.⁴⁸ Part of this change in Chatelaine's representation of lesbians from 1966 to 1977 can be attributed to changing social attitudes towards homosexuality, but it is also important to note that, by the late 1970s, under the editorial direction of Doris Anderson, Chatelaine had a clear feminist agenda, and frequently ran articles on feminist topics such as the women's liberation movement, sexuality, and women in the workplace.

⁴⁴Renate Wilson, "What Turns Women to Lesbianism?", Chatelaine, October 1966, p. 134.

⁴⁵Sangster, "Gay Women", p. 82.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷See for example "The Inside Track", pp. 3-5, "Gay in the Seventies", p. 13, and "Homosexuality", p. 10.

⁴⁸Khayatt, Lesbian Teachers, p. 26.

SEXUALITY: GOOD GIRLS AND BAD BOYS

In contrast to similar articles published around the same time, or even to lesbian chic articles published in the 1990s, the 1977 Chatelaine article was relatively sexually frank. Sangster states that,

...this article isn't about lesbian love-making either, since 'what they do' and 'how they do it' is surely a private concern. It should be enough to suggest that women have lips and hands, and can please other women without having to imitate men. Dildos are kinky for a few sophisticates, but most women apparently don't use them or need them.⁴⁹

This is quite different from most other articles of the period, which avoided discussing "what they do", instead focusing on friendship between women. For example, a newspaper article published in 1981 stated unequivocally that, "[l]esbian relationships focus more on emotion than sex", and "[u]nlike homosexual men, lesbians don't place much importance on physical attraction".⁵⁰ Another article, published in Saturday Night, stated that "[l]esbians tend to rate affection as more important than sex, and they are oriented more to domesticity than to the bar scene".⁵¹ In many articles, when lesbians were mentioned, it was often to compare their monogamy with the supposed

⁴⁹Sangster, "Gay Women", pp. 24, 79

⁵⁰Carola Vyhnak, "Lesbians suffer society's wrath", Toronto Star, February 20, 1981, p. C1

⁵¹Paul Delany, "The Homosexual Factor", Saturday Night, February 1981, p. 32.

"promiscuity" of gay men.⁵² In some ways, lesbians were presented as the "good" homosexuals. Unlike gay men, who were considered to be inclined to promiscuity, public sex, and sadomasochism, lesbians were often considered to be loving, monogamous, domestic and maternal, and journalists cited statistics and quoted psychologists to prove this assumption.⁵³ In an article in the Toronto Star entitled, "'Friendship, love' are basis of lesbian ties", psychiatrist Ingrid Pacey is quoted as saying,

[t]he emphasis in the lesbian community is on lasting relationships--most often monogamous, with a strong basis of love and friendship and the intent of stability and long-term commitment... That differs from the male homosexual pattern which more often includes brief encounters, cruising and prostitution.⁵⁴

Similarly, Sangster wrote in Chatelaine,

Generally, gay women struck me as less promiscuous than their male counterparts, and often eager to make something intimate and lasting of a love affair. Some couples are apt to avoid the bar scene entirely, preferring

⁵²For example, Paul Delany, in his article, "The Homosexual Factor", states that "[a] study in West Germany found that gay men had fifteen times as many sexual partners as a corresponding group of lesbians" (page 32).

⁵³I do not wish to argue here that gay men are never promiscuous, and never engage in public sex, but rather I suggest that the media's representation of gay and lesbian sexuality was too simplistic. In fact, some gay men were and are monogamous, just as some lesbians were and are promiscuous and engage in activities such as public sex. The important issue here, in my opinion, is not the actual sexual activities of gay men and lesbians, but the way in which gay men were condemned for "immoral" sexual behaviour, while lesbian sexuality was ignored almost completely, and the way in which gay male and lesbian sexuality were compared.

⁵⁴Lillian Newbery, "'Friendship, love' are basis of lesbian ties", Toronto Star, October 2, 1980, p. D1.

to entertain at home.⁵⁵

As Didi Khayatt has argued, lesbianism is often viewed as primarily emotional rather than sexual, because women are seen as asexual and lacking in physical desire.⁵⁶ It is also important to note here that this division in sexual behaviour between gay men and lesbians was not entirely a media construction, but was at least in part a reflection of beliefs held by some lesbian feminists at that time, who viewed lesbianism as a primarily emotional and political rather than sexual identity.⁵⁷

As I have discussed previously, gay men tended to receive more media attention because they were seen as more threatening, both socially and sexually. While gay men were generally presented as radical, lesbians were said to want "public acceptance, good jobs, the blessing of the church, even kids".⁵⁸ Thus, lesbians were more acceptable, and more "normal" than gay men, because they were not seen as rejecting appropriate gender roles. In most of the articles which were sympathetic towards lesbianism, authors emphasized the fact that lesbians were "just like other women", or "just plain folks".⁵⁹ So-called "radical" lesbians, who rejected monogamy

⁵⁵Sangster, "Gay Women", p. 24.

⁵⁶Khayatt, Lesbian Teachers, p. 12-13

⁵⁷Barry D. Adam, The Rise of a Gay and Lesbian Movement (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987, p. 95.

⁵⁸Sangster, "Gay Women", p. 24.

⁵⁹Kome, "Couples", p. 44.

and criticized heterosexuality, were presented as a minority among lesbians.⁶⁰ Dorothy Sangster, in her article, "Gay Women: A Minority Report", wrote that, "...this article isn't about radicalesbians, that politically motivated, totally woman-oriented m of the feminist movement".⁶¹ Statements such as this one imply that "radical" or "politically motivated" lesbians are somehow beyond the realm of acceptability. One lesbian quoted in a newspaper article stated that men dislike lesbianism because it threatens their power, but the author of the article rejected her view as "a little extreme".⁶² British author Susan Hemmings has suggested that women's magazines, in particular, tend to focus on the similarities between lesbians and heterosexual women so that heterosexual women, the target audience for the magazines, will be able to identify and sympathize with the lesbian subjects.⁶³ Hemmings argues that this approach upholds the notion that heterosexual women are the only "real" women, and dismisses the unique struggles and hardships faced by lesbians.⁶⁴

Journalists also criticized butch and femme roles, which were presented as an "out of date" phenomenon,⁶⁵ found only among working class couples.⁶⁶ This,

⁶⁰Newbery, "Friendship, love", p. D1.

⁶¹Sangster, "Gay Women", p. 24.

⁶²Vyhnak, "Lesbians suffer society's wrath", p. C1.

⁶³Susan Hemmings, "Horrific Practices", p. 161.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Sangster, "Gay Women", p. 82.

however, is consistent with the lesbian feminist politics of the era, as the majority of lesbian feminists were against "role-playing".⁶⁷ The acceptable, "normal" lesbians presented in articles such as Dorothy Sangster's are clearly middle class lesbians, with houses and jobs. Lesbians with jobs such as doctor, teacher, and published writer were considered legitimate, and were quoted as authorities, while working class lesbians, or those who did not have long term partners, were generally overlooked. Those lesbians who were favourably portrayed in media articles were generally those who conformed to the sex and gender roles prescribed for women, and were appropriately feminine. For example, Dorothy Sangster describes two of the lesbians she interviewed in the following way:

I'm looking at a couple of open-faced young women in their twenties, with short curly haircuts and no makeup, relaxing at home in flowered shirts and jeans after a busy day at the factory. Alice, 'the gardener of the family', gets up to water a thirsty begonia. Adele excuses herself to put a casserole in the oven--after dinner, there's weekly church choir practice.⁶⁸

These women are presented as being a typical lesbian couple in Canada in 1977. The image of domesticity and wholeness is emphasized by the flowered shirts, the plants, the casserole, and the choir practice, they are acceptable because they do not challenge the maternal, domestic role to which women are supposed to adhere, unlike

⁶⁶Newbery, "Friendship, love", p. D1

⁶⁷See Penney Kome, "Couples", Maclean's, December 1972, p. 45, and Ross, "The House the Jill Built", p. 15.

⁶⁸Sangster, p. 24.

"the foul-mouthed, leather-jacketed 'stompin' butch'.⁶⁹ Thus, in contrast to articles from the 1950s and 1960s, in which lesbians were presented as abnormal, readers in the 1970s were reassured of the lesbians' normality. Although this change in representation can be seen as a step forward, as lesbians were no longer portrayed as deviant, these articles from the 1970s and early 1980s set up a narrow code of appropriate lesbian behaviour. Lesbians were tolerated, and were even considered normal, as long as they did were not too "radical", too masculine, or too "promiscuous", in which case they were either ignored or ridiculed.

An earlier article, published in Maclean's in 1972, offered a similar view of lesbians.⁷⁰ Although ostensibly a profile of two lesbian activists who worked with CHAT,⁷¹ the interview focuses on subjects such as baking and pets. Once again a cosy domestic image is constructed. The author, Penney Kome, comments several times on how their kitchen is arranged, and how their apartment is decorated.⁷² The article includes almost no information on the women's political beliefs, although the second half of the article, which is an interview with two gay male activists, focuses extensively on the politics of the gay liberation movement. Thus, the article implies that although gays and lesbians may be challenging the status quo, men are still

⁶⁹Sangster, "Gay Women", p. 24

⁷⁰Penney Kome, "Couples", pp. 44-45, 62, 64.

⁷¹Community Homophile Association of Toronto

⁷²Ibid., p. 44.

concerned with politics while women are concerned with baking and domestic life.

LESBIAN MOTHERS COME OUT

Prior to the early 1980s, lesbian mothers were almost invisible in both the media and in society in general. Although as early as 1973 it was suggested that approximately twenty percent of lesbians were mothers,⁷³ lesbian mothers were almost entirely invisible in mainstream media. As Katherine Arnup has suggested, in the early 1970s,

few people outside the 'homosexual' community knew of the existence of lesbian mothers. Indeed, 'lesbian mother' was considered a contradiction in terms--a physical and social impossibility.⁷⁴

The social invisibility of lesbian mothers began to decrease, to some extent, during the 1970s. Historian Lillian Faderman attributes this increasing acceptance of lesbian mothers to the liberalization of social attitudes towards sexuality, which "had taken the sting out of single parenting".⁷⁵ She also suggests that the stigma against working mothers had decreased somewhat by the 1970s.⁷⁶ Both Lillian Faderman and Becki Ross point to the increasing number of women choosing to become mothers through artificial insemination *after* coming out as lesbians as a factor contributing to the

⁷³"Male Homosexuality", Sexual Behaviour in Canada, p. 151

⁷⁴Arnup, "Introduction", Lesbian Parenting, p. vii

⁷⁵Faderman, Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers, p. 290.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, p. 291.

growing visibility of lesbian mothers in the late 1970s and early 1980s.⁷⁷

In addition, for the first time, some openly lesbian mothers engaged in court cases to fight for the custody of their children

Prior to the 1970s, few lesbian mothers contested custody in court. Fearing the implications of open court battles and recognizing that they were almost assured of defeat at the hands of a decidedly homophobic legal system, many women 'voluntarily' relinquished custody, in exchange for 'liberal' access to their children.⁷⁸

These early court cases did attract a limited amount of media attention.⁷⁹ The first Canadian legal ruling on the issue of lesbian mothers was in 1974; Dorothy Sangster's 1977 article on lesbians included a lengthy discussion of the legal issues and other concerns of lesbian mothers.⁸⁰ None of the previously published mainstream media articles on lesbianism dealt with this issue. Sangster's article is sympathetic towards lesbian mothers, especially on the issue of custody. However, she avoids making a strong statement in favour of lesbian parenting, and concludes her section on mothering with quotes from two psychiatrists, who argue that lesbian parenting is "not

⁷⁷Faderman, Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers, p. 290 and Ross, The House That Jill Built, p. 246.

⁷⁸Katherine Arnup, "Living in the Margins: Lesbian Families and the Law", Lesbian Parenting: Living with Pride and Prejudice (Charlottetown: Gynergy Books, 1995), pp. 378-379. Arnup discusses the tendency of judges to deny custody to lesbian mothers, especially if they were open about their lesbianism, or were in any way active in the lesbian or gay communities.

⁷⁹See for example, "Gay in the Seventies", p. 13.

⁸⁰Sangster, "Gay Women", pp. 80-82.

primarily desirable" due to the lack of male role modelling.⁸¹ Thus, the overall message on lesbian parenting remains ambiguous.⁸²

CONCLUSION

I have argued throughout this chapter that, although the 1970s were a period of increasingly liberal social views on homosexuality, lesbians in media were largely invisible, and were represented positively only insofar as they remained within their appropriate feminine gender roles and did not present a challenge to the institution of heterosexuality. With the rise of the gay liberation movement, explanations of homosexuality as an "orientation" or "preference" replaced the notions of illness or deviance popular in the 1950s and 1960s. This change in view was adopted by most mainstream journalists, and profoundly affected the representation of lesbians in media. Articles paid much more attention to the problems and discrimination faced by lesbians, and, while many articles still attempted to explain the "causes" of homosexuality, few suggested ways to prevent it, as they had in previous decades.

⁸¹Sangster, "Gay Women", p. 82

⁸²For more discussion on lesbian mothering, particularly as represented in media in the 1980s and 1990s, see Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR

Acceptance or Backlash?: Lesbians in Media in the 1980s and 1990s

While the 1970s were, in general, a period of increasing liberalization in societal views of homosexuality, the 1980s can be seen as a decade of intense backlash. This right wing, anti-feminist, anti-homosexual backlash has been linked to the Reagan and Bush administrations in the United States, and to Thatcherism in Britain. Gary Kinsman has argued that, "[t]he media have played a key role in organizing this social backlash".¹ In a number of media articles published in this period, gay and lesbian activists are presented as having gone too far, or as "too militant",² and are repeatedly referred to as "aggressive".³ Many articles on the AIDS epidemic vilified gay men, and sometimes even lesbians, and portrayed homosexuals as diseased, malevolent, and a threat to society. Barry Adam has stated that, "[f]rom the beginning, AIDS was socially constructed along a series of moral oppositions that defined gay men as disease carriers polluting an innocent population".⁴

The entrance of openly gay men into mainstream politics, and the newly

¹Gary Kinsman, The Regulation of Desire: Sexuality in Canada (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1987), p. 201.

²David Lewis Stern and Erna Paris, "Homosexual rights: is militancy necessary?", Chatelaine, July 1979, p. 24

³See Stern and Paris, "Homosexual rights", p. 24, and Herbert Gold, "Frisco's homosexuals show way out of the closet", Toronto Star, November 5, 1977, p. C5.

⁴Barry D. Adam, The Rise of a Gay and Lesbian Movement (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987), p. 157.

perceived political power of lesbians and gays attracted considerable media attention, and caused concern among conservatives in Canada and the United States. As Gary Kinsman has stated, "[t]he growth of the gay community and its organization as a political constituency poses a threat to sections of the ruling apparatus and to right-wing and conservative groups".⁵ By the early 1980s, most major newspapers and newsmagazines in Canada had run features on the emerging political power of gays, and throughout the 1980s, right wing magazines such as Alberta Report ran dozens of articles on the threats to society posed by homosexual men. The emergence of radical queer rights and anti-AIDS groups such as ACT-UP⁶ and Queer Nation in the mid to late 1980s also attracted a great deal of media attention, much of which was very judgemental, and warned against political tactics which would cause "divisiveness" and "alienation".⁷ However, while gay and lesbian politics were frequently denigrated in the media, and were characterized as a threat to "family values", Canadian journalists did begin to take lesbian and gay politics more seriously. Fejes and Petrich have argued that many newspapers began reporting on gay and lesbian issues on a somewhat regular basis during the 1980s. Although Fejes and Petrich look only at American sources, I would argue that this trend occurred in

⁵Kinsman, The Regulation of Desire, p. 203.

⁶AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power

⁷See Eloise Salholz, "The Future of Gay America", Newsweek, March 12, 1990, pp 20-25, Howard Fineman, "Marching to the Mainstream", Newsweek, May 3, 1993, pp 42-45, and Bruce DeMara, "New -style activists in gay rights fight", Toronto Star, January 3, 1994, p. A14.

a similar way in Canadian media. The nature of the coverage varied depending on the management of the paper, however, and gay and lesbian politics were often framed as "lifestyle" stories, rather than as political or social issues.⁸ Fejes and Petrich also report that many journalists were reluctant to grant lesbian and gay activism the same status as other civil rights movements.⁹

THE IMPACT OF THE AIDS EPIDEMIC

A number of media analysts have suggested that in spite of the ammunition it gave to the backlash against homosexuals, "the AIDS epidemic forced the mainstream media to confront the existence of a growing gay and lesbian community".¹⁰ Toronto Star columnist Antonia Zerbisias wrote that, "AIDS not only forced gays to get organized, it also forced the media to pay attention"¹¹ Others, such as Sue O'Sullivan and Rachel Giese, have attributed the rise of the lesbian chic trend in the 1990s to the AIDS crisis. O'Sullivan argues that, "[i]t was the unexpected, the wild card of AIDS which I suggest served to prise open the magazines' covers slightly and allowed a sexual diversity to seize some space within their pages. AIDS forced a recognition

⁸Fred Fejes and Kevin Petrich, "Invisibility: Homophobia and Heterosexism: Lesbians and Gays in the Media", Critical Studies in Mass Communication, December 1993, pp. 403-404.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 404.

¹⁰Fejes and Petrich, p. 403. See also Marguerite Moritz, "How US News Media Represent Sexual Minorities", Journalism and Popular Culture, P. Dahlgren and C. Sparks, eds. London: Sage Publications, 1992), p. 155.

¹¹Antonia Zerbisias, "Gay, lesbian issues now mainstream news", Toronto Star, July 24, 1993, p. E4.

that sexual diversity existed and it did it relatively quickly"¹² In her view, the AIDS epidemic made frank public discussions of male homosexuality, and of sexual practices in general, more acceptable and more common This may partially account for the increase in media attention toward various types of sexuality which has occurred in recent years, and has, to some extent, opened the door for representations of lesbianism to become acceptable, and even fashionable O'Sullivan argues that AIDS has made gay men, and by extension, lesbians, more visible "There is a more general recognition, as famous people announce their HIV status or become ill with AIDS, that homosexuals really are 'everywhere' and that these deviant men have sisters"¹³ In addition to the increase in gay and lesbian visibility due to AIDS, a number of authors have suggested that lesbians are popular media subjects in the 1990s because they represent an appealing and safe sexual image in an era marked by fears of AIDS and economic recession Rachel Giese writes that lesbians "were the perfect image for the scaled-down, nesting 1990s Their sex was safe and their relationships were long lasting".¹⁴ Harper's magazine editor, Vicki Woods, stated that "[l]esbianism is the big thing at the moment [i]t's the ultimate form of safe-sex,

¹²Sue O'Sullivan, "Girls Who Kiss Girls and Who Cares", The Good, the Bad and the Gorgeous, Diane Hamer and Belinda Budge, eds (London: Pandora, 1994), p. 82

¹³O'Sullivan, "Girls Who Kiss Girls and Who Cares?", p. 83

¹⁴Rachel Giese, "Lesbian Chic: I Feel Pretty and Witty and Gay" Border/Lines, No. 32, 1994, p. 27.

completely risk-free”¹⁵ As lesbian theorist Annamaria Jagose has noted, “[i]n 1992, supermodel Cindy Crawford shocked Hollywood by announcing that, in the age of AIDS, lesbianism was a safe way to explore sexuality”¹⁶ Thus, lesbians have become fashionable partly because they are perceived as “safe” from AIDS, unlike gay men and heterosexuals.¹⁷

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE “GAY MARKET”

One of the most significant trends of the 1980s in regard to the media representation of homosexuals was the development of the “gay market” In the 1970s, gay men were coming out in unprecedented numbers, and, by 1977, most newspapers in Canada had published articles on the economic potential of marketing to gay men,¹⁸ and articles on a trend known as “gay style”.¹⁹ Gay men were (and still are) perceived by market analysts as an ideal market for consumer products because

¹⁵Lisa O’Kelly, “Lesbian chic: Sapphic sisterhood goes mainstream”, The Vancouver Sun, Saturday, June 18, 1994, p. B5.

¹⁶Annamaria Jagose, Lesbian Utopias (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 159.

¹⁷There is little conclusive evidence as to the risk factors for HIV transmission from female to female sexual contact. For more information, see The Boston Women’s Health Collective, The New Our Bodies Ourselves: Revised and Expanded for the 90s (New York: Touchstone, 1992), p. 332.

¹⁸See “Gay capitalism proves big business”, Winnipeg Free Press, July 23, 1977, p. 12, and “The Rise of Gay Capitalism”, Toronto Life, September 1976.

¹⁹See Lawrence O’Toole, “Gay style--why it’s everywhere”, Maclean’s, February 18, 1980, pp 46-47. Gay style was a trend of the late 1970s in which certain types of music, clothing, art and interior decorations made popular in gay communities such as San Francisco’s Castro Street and New York’s Greenwich Village became popular in mainstream magazines, and among mainstream consumers. A good example of this is the popularization of disco music and dancing, which originated primarily in gay clubs.

they are considered to have high incomes, no dependent spouses or children, and an interest in fashion and leisure activities.²⁰ Although the demographics on the high incomes and consumer-driven lifestyles of gay men tend to rely more on stereotypes than on actual facts,²¹ and the data on gay and lesbian incomes are highly questionable,²² gay marketing was and continues to be an important trend in North American society.

After a brief hiatus during the anti-homosexual backlash of the mid-1980s, the "gay marketing" trend has re-emerged in the 1990s, regaining the media prominence it had attained in the late 1970s. Throughout the 1990s, dozens of articles on the growing popularity of the "gay market" were published in advertising industry journals and business sections of Canadian and American newspapers. In January 1993 and again in May 1994, The Advertising Age, an American trade paper for advertisers, ran two entire issues devoted to "Marketing to Gays and Lesbians". Although lesbians were not included in stories on gay style and the gay market in the 1970s and early 1980s, by the 1990s they were usually considered as part of the trend. However, as feminist Barbara Smith has argued, the inclusion of lesbians in the "gay market" is somewhat problematic, as "[n]o one would guess from the recent stories about wealthy and 'powerful' white lesbians that women earn 69 cents on the dollar

²⁰Paul Delany, "The Homosexual Factor", Saturday Night, February 1981, pp. 33-34

²¹Kinsman, The Regulation of Desire, p. 183

²²Amy Gluckman and Betsy Reed, "The Gay Marketing Moment: Leaving Diversity in the Dust", Dollars and Sense, November/December 1993, pp. 16-17

compared with men and that black women earn even less".²³

There is a long history in the advertising industry of appropriating the language and images of counter-cultural social movements in order to sell products. Recent examples include the "commercialization" of feminism in the 1970s, when advertisers equated products such as menstrual pads and pantyhose with "freedom" and "liberation" for women,²⁴ and the development of "environmental consumerism" and "green products" in the 1980s. Similarly, "gay style" and the "gay market" can seem as a cooptation of the gay liberation movement, particularly during its initial stages in the late 1970s. In a 1980 Maclean's article, journalist Barbara Amiel wrote, "the greatest effect of the gay rights movement was to give homosexual themes a fashionable tinge"²⁵. Certainly, many gay and lesbian activists would argue that becoming fashionable was not their primary goal. Also, because gays were only fashionable in a superficial way, and homosexuality itself was still very taboo, gay style, like lesbian chic in the 1990s, gave an unrealistic impression of the social acceptance of homosexuality. Many articles on gay style promoted some of the most common myths and stereotypes about gay men, stating that gays are hedonistic, that

²³Barbara Smith, "Queer Politics: Where's The Revolution", The Nation, July 5, 1993, p. 14.

²⁴See Susan Faludi, Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women (New York: Anchor Books, 1991), p. 76.

²⁵Barbara Amiel, "Gay Impact", Maclean's, February 18, 1980, p. 42.

"[g]ays always seem to wear the fashions first",²⁶ that "[g]ays are more aware of their bodies than heterosexuals and that "[t]he gay has a detached view of society"²⁷ Statements such as these indicate that the gay style trend did little to combat homophobia in society. Historian Steven Maynard has pointed to the tendency of gay and lesbian marketing firms to depoliticize sexuality, stating that they, "define being lesbian and gay in terms of what we buy. Such a view of our sexualities may define us as consumers, but not necessarily as people with political rights"²⁸

Maynard also argues that a class analysis is essential when looking at trends such as gay marketing and lesbian chic, because,

[i]t is clear, for example, that while advertisers talk about the gay market, they are not actually talking about lesbians and gays in general, but about a particular class-, race-, and gender-specific segment of the lesbian/gay communities.²⁹

In a 1994 article published in the business section of the Toronto Star, Michael McGaraughty, marketing manager of the Toronto gay and lesbian newspaper Xtra, states that the Toronto gay and lesbian community is "well-educated" and "wealthy", with one quarter of Xtra readers having household incomes of \$75,000 per year or

²⁶Amiel, "Gay Impact", p. 41

²⁷O'Toole, "Gay Style", p. 45

²⁸Steven Maynard, "What Colour are Your Underwear? Class, Whiteness, and Homoerotic Advertising", Border/Lines, Vol. 32, 1994, p. 9

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 7.

2

OF/DE

2

PM-1 3 1/2 x 4 PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT

PRECISIONSM RESOLUTION TARGETS

more³⁰ McGaraughty is quoted as saying, "most of my peers will not have children...[t]hey're also a little more cultured and they spend their money".³¹ These statements show how gay marketing, as a strategy, relies on stereotypes and an essentialist view of gay people, and erases class, race and gender differences among lesbians and gays.

In her article, "Commodity Lesbianism",³² Danae Clark describes "gay window advertising", which is a marketing trend that initially became popular about 1984. Through gay window advertising, advertisers appeal to homosexual consumers by incorporating subtle homosexual 'codes' such as motorcycles or leather jackets, but because the appeal to gay men or lesbians is subtle rather than overt, heterosexual consumers are not excluded or discouraged from buying the product. Thus, advertisers can reach the potentially lucrative gay and lesbian markets without having their products negatively associated with homosexuality. Michael Bronski has pointed out that gay images in advertising are frequently used to connote non-conformity and exoticism, "granting straight consumers a longed-for place outside the humdrum mainstream".³³ There is no consensus among lesbian and gay theorists

³⁰David Isrealson, "Tapping the Gay Market", Toronto Star, September 18, 1994, p. D8.

³¹Ibid.

³²Danae Clark, "Commodity Lesbianism", The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader, David Halperin, et al., eds. (London: Routledge, 1993)

³³Michael Bronski, Culture Clash: The Making of Gay Sensibility (Boston: South End Press, 1984), p. 187.

about the value and implications of gay window advertising. Steven Maynard outlines this debate, suggesting that although gay window advertising does "represent an important claim on some significant spaces in the realm of popular culture",³⁴ and can hold pleasure for queer viewers through identification and desire, it also promotes a notion of gays and lesbians as thin, white, rich, solely interested in consumerism, and largely apolitical. Danae Clark has stated that although lesbian and gay readers can find pleasure in looking at gay window advertising, its presence in mainstream media is motivated by the desire for profit, and "can hardly be attributed to a growing acceptance of homosexuality as a legitimate lifestyle".³⁵ However, as Amy Gluckman and Betsy Reed have argued, gay window advertising has led to the inclusion of more mainstream media articles about and aimed at lesbians and gays, due to the necessity for "complementary editorial representation", because "for ads to have optimum effect, they have to be placed in the right environment".³⁶

In his book Unspeakable: The Rise of the Gay and Lesbian Press in America, Rodger Streitmatter has argued that in the late 1980s and early 1990s, partly because advertisers had discovered the potentially lucrative "gay market", economic interests began to dominate the gay and lesbian press. For the first time, mainstream

³⁴Maynard, "What Colour are Your Underwear", p. 9.

³⁵Clark, "Commodity Lesbianism", p. 195.

³⁶Gluckman and Reed, "The Gay Marketing Moment", p. 17.

advertisers became willing to advertise in gay and lesbian publications³⁷

[b]y 1995 it was clear that the latest chapter in the history [of the gay and lesbian press] was the emergence of a bumper crop of slick, upscale magazines brimming with the same full-page ads appearing in tony mainstream magazines. Most of the editorial content wrapped around the ads was decidedly moderate in tone, reading like the inoffensive articles some advertisers demand. Largely absent from the glossy gay magazines were the sexually explicit images, unique lexicon, and defiant editorial stances that had defined earlier generations of the genre³⁸

Although Streitmatter acknowledges that more politically oriented publications continue to be published, he is very critical of the move towards glossy, lifestyle-oriented gay and lesbian magazines such as Out, 10 Percent, and Deneuve,³⁹ and argues that, as long as homophobia exists, the primary purpose of the gay and lesbian press should be to fight for equal rights⁴⁰. Streitmatter also asserts that mainstream advertisers' willingness to publish ads in gay and lesbian magazines, and to use images of gays and lesbians, does not indicate a growing acceptance of homosexuality; rather, it is motivated by the desire for profit, as market research has indicated that "guppies" (gay urban professionals) have more money than the political

³⁷Rodger Streitmatter, Unspeakable: The Rise of the Gay and Lesbian Press in America (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1995), p. 309.

³⁸Streitmatter, pp. 308-309. Emphasis in original

³⁹The lesbian magazine Deneuve is now published under the name Curve

⁴⁰Streitmatter, pp. 336-337

and religious conservatives who oppose these ads ⁴¹

LESBIAN CHIC IN CANADIAN MEDIA

As I have argued in Chapter One, by 1993 the visibility of lesbians in mainstream media had reached an unprecedented level, and lesbians were frequently portrayed as "chic" and "trendy". While Canadian magazines did not take part in the lesbian chic trend to the extent that many American magazines did, there was a marked increase in the number of articles on lesbianism published in major Canadian magazines and newspapers between 1990 and 1995 ⁴². Although there is no clear reason why American magazines participated more in the lesbian chic trend, I believe the main reason has to do with the type of magazines published in Canada. Most American lesbian chic articles occurred in magazines which focused on "lifestyles", such as Details, New York, and Vanity Fair. There are far fewer magazines published in Canada than in the U S, and almost none of them fall into the "lifestyle" genre. Rather, most Canadian magazines focus on fashion, news, homemaking, or other topics. However, as I have argued in Chapter One, American magazines are sold extensively in Canada, and often have a larger readership than those published within Canada. Thus, American journalistic trends do have a significant impact on Canadian readers.

⁴¹Streichmatter, Unspeakable, pp. 316-317.

⁴²For a definition of what is meant by the phrase "lesbian chic", please see Chapter One.

There were a number of factors which contributed to the development of the lesbian chic trend. As I have discussed, the perception that lesbians were "safe" from AIDS, and the inclusion of lesbians in the "gay market" led to an increase in the representation of lesbians in North American media. Journalist Tyrone Newhook has argued that as more women became journalists during the 1980s, the traditionally macho atmosphere of newsrooms was challenged, and both sexism and homophobia became less acceptable within the profession. Also, he argues that as some lesbian journalists have begun to come out at work, they have been able to include more stories on lesbian issues.⁴³ However, despite the relatively large amount of newspaper coverage of lesbians in the 1990s, more articles focus on gay men than lesbians, and gay men still get more attention in articles discussing homosexuality or the gay and lesbian rights movement. Other factors contributing to the lesbian chic trend include the increasing visibility of lesbians in mainstream politics,⁴⁴ the increasing public interest in sexuality as a media topic,⁴⁵ and increasing pressure from

⁴³Newhook, "Coming out in the Newsroom," p. 44. See also Fejes and Petrich, who argue that as more and more lesbian and gay journalists came out, and as some journalists became ill with AIDS, "it became evident that the gay and lesbian community did not exist only "out there", like some foreign, exotic culture, but also had a very active, if closeted, presence in media organizations" Fejes and Petrich, "Invisibility, Homophobia and Heterosexism", p. 404

⁴⁴For example, in 1993 Betty Baxter was the first out lesbian candidate for the Canadian House of Commons, and Roberta Achtenberg, a lesbian activist, was appointed to an influential position by the United States senate.

⁴⁵See John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), p. 319

lesbians themselves to see lesbian images in media⁴⁶

Feminist theorists such as Danae Clark have argued that, with the development of identity politics and the lesbian "style wars" of the late 1980s, lesbians have been able to consider style and cultural representations in a new way, which is more open to the images of popular culture⁴⁷. Rather than rejecting popular culture and mainstream fashion as a "tool of the patriarchy" which exploited women, as lesbian-feminists have done in the past, many lesbians have accepted that these representations can be ambiguous, and that audiences are not passive viewers of media and popular culture, but can interact with it, and influence the ways that the images are interpreted. Some feminists now see mainstream fashion and popular culture as a potential site of pleasure, political choice, and self-representation, rather than as purely oppressive to women⁴⁸. Danae Clark has written that, "earlier feminism's anti-fashion stance has been largely replaced by a new sense of fashion as a site for female resistance and masquerade"⁴⁹. Clark attributes this acceptance of popular culture and fashion by some lesbians in part to a rebellion "against a lesbian-feminist credo of political correctness that they perceive as stifling", but notes that

⁴⁶Sarah Schulman, interviewed in the film, "Thank God I'm a Lesbian", by Laurie Colbert and Dominique Cardona, 1992.

⁴⁷Clark, "Commodity Lesbianism", p. 199

⁴⁸O'Sullivan, "Girls Who Kiss Girls and Who Cares?", p. 94.

⁴⁹Clark, p. 186.

this shift "may also be a response to the marketing strategies of consumer culture" ⁴⁰

LESBIANS AND THE FAMILY

One of the first "lesbian" issues to catch the attention of the mainstream media in the 1990s was the issue of homosexual "marriages" or commitment ceremonies. Most of the articles on this subject include lengthy discussions of the relationship between Christianity and homosexuality, and the positions of various churches on homosexual marriage ⁴¹. This media interest in Christianity and homosexuality is not new, throughout the 1980s, the majority of newspaper articles on the subject of homosexuality focused on the controversy over gay ministers in the Anglican and United Churches.

The majority of mainstream articles on same-sex unions the 1990s argued in favour of lesbian and gay commitment ceremonies or "marriages". One journalist wrote that commitment ceremonies are "shattering the myth that all gays are promiscuous, giving same-sex relationships a more stable image" ⁴². However, none of these articles suggested that Canadian laws should be changed to formally recognize homosexual relationships, and few mention that not all lesbians and gays are in favour of same-sex marriage. These articles demonstrate an increasing

⁴⁰Clark, "Commodity Lesbianism", p. 189.

⁴¹See for example Alicia Priest, "Next Best Thing", *Vancouver Sun*, October 27, 1990, pp C1, Maureen Downey, "Lesbian Couples Embrace Marriage", *Vancouver Sun*, October 27, 1990, p C1, and Janice Turner, "State of the Union", *Toronto Star*, April 23, 1994, p H1.

⁴²Turner, "State of the Union", p. H1.

acceptance of homosexuality and of homosexual relationships on the part of mainstream journalists, although there is tendency to privilege monogamous relationships over other, less "respectable" gay and lesbian lifestyles

While these articles suggest that there was a growing acceptance of lesbian and gay families in the 1980s and 1990s, others, such as a 1994 Macleans cover story entitled, "The Family Tradition Under Siege"⁴³, indicate that there was also a significant backlash, in which homosexual families were ignored or reviled as a threat to "traditional families". This article, written by Mary Nemeth, was published immediately after the defeat of Ontario's Bill 167⁴⁴. The description of the article featured on the "Contents" page states that,

[a] raucous debate over same-sex spousal benefits has called into question the very definition of family. The issue arises at a time when Canadians--already worried about high divorce rates, a poor economy and violence in society--fear that the family is in crisis. In fact, the institution is changing.⁴⁵

Thus, before one even reads the featured article, the message is clear: the happy, healthy family on the cover of the magazine is threatened, or "under seige", because of the suggestion that same-sex couples should be entitled to legal recognition. The article itself, which focuses on a 1994 Angus Reid survey on the family, does not

⁴³Mary Nemeth, "The Family Tradition Under Siege", Macleans, June 20, 1994, pp. 30-32

⁴⁴Bill 167 would have expanded the definition of spouse to include same-sex relationships.

⁴⁵Nemeth, p. 3

explain how the word "family" was defined for the purposes of the survey, and gays and lesbians are excluded from a list of the types of families found in Canada.⁵⁶

LESBIAN PARENTING

As I discussed in Chapter Three, lesbian motherhood became visible for the first time in the 1970s, and this visibility has increased throughout the 1980s and 1990s, largely because more lesbian mothers have been able to be open about their sexuality. As historian Lillian Faderman has stated, "the 1980s saw the birth of the first generation of openly gay parents."⁵⁷ By 1989, the "lesbian baby boom" had become a popular topic for newspaper and magazine articles. The Toronto Star ran an article on January 5, 1989, with the headline, "U.S. homosexual couples experiencing baby boom." Most of these "lesbian baby boom" articles concentrated on two subjects: artificial insemination and custody battles. Unlike previous decades, there were no articles which condemned lesbian parenting, or argued that lesbians made bad mothers, although the issue of the importance of male role models was raised repeatedly.⁵⁸

⁵⁶A chart representing the marital status of survey respondents, said to be "reflective of the general population", is reproduced on page 31 of the article. There are nine categories of marital status on this chart: "single", "single with kids", "widowed with kids", "divorced/separated no kids", "divorced/separated with kids", "common-law no kids", "common-law with kids", "married no kids", and "married with kids". No category on this survey includes lesbian and gay couples with or without children. Nemeth, "The Family", p. 31.

⁵⁷Lillian Faderman, Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America (New York: Penguin, 1991), p. 291.

⁵⁸See for example Susan Chira, "Gay parenthood no longer invisible", Montreal Gazette, January 3, 1993, p. B5.

Susan Hemmings has suggested that the frequent references to "psychosexual development", male role modelling, and the "effects" of homosexuality on the children of lesbian mothers are evidence of extreme heterosexism; it is acceptable for lesbians to mother, as long as they raise heterosexual children⁵⁹ An article published in the American magazine Newsweek states that,

[p]sychologists have investigated the impact of gay parents on children with somewhat surprising results. all 35 studies on homosexual parents from the previous 15 years found no adverse effect on the kids. A study found that the daughters of lesbians tended to have strong female identities, while the boys like to hang out with the guys and play sports.⁶⁰

By describing the results of these studies as "surprising", the author implies that gay and lesbian parents might reasonably be expected to have an "adverse effect" on their children, and in this context, an "adverse effect" refers to the possibility of becoming homosexual. Another article, published in the Montreal Gazette, makes this link between normality and heterosexuality very clear, by stating that, "the vast majority of studies show no psychological disadvantages for children being raised by gay parents. None of the studies found any impact on sexual orientation"⁶¹

In a 1990 Chatelaine article entitled, "My folks are gay", the issue of the

⁵⁹Susan Hemmings, "Horrific Practices: How lesbians were presented in the newspapers of 1978", Homosexuality: Power and Politics, Gay Left Collective, eds. (London: Allison and Busby, 1980), p. 165-166

⁶⁰Eloise Salholz, "The Future of Gay America", Newsweek, March 12, 1990, p. 25.

⁶¹Chira, "Gay parenthood", p. B5.

impact gay parents have on their children's emotional and sexual development is a recurring theme. The subheading of the article, printed in large text, reads, "[d]oes this new kind of parent produce a different kind of child?"⁶¹ As Susan Hemmings has suggested, the fact that lesbian parents may want to raise children who are different is never acknowledged.⁶² The author, Kathy Uyllott, acknowledges that homophobia has a negative impact on the children of lesbians, because they may feel that they have to keep secrets, they may be taunted by other children, and they may not have anyone to confide in. However, the author also suggests that having lesbian parents may cause "gender confusion"⁶³ or "gender disorders."⁶⁴

The article also subtly implies that lesbian parents may raise children who are unhappy or maladjusted in other ways, in addition to their "gender confusion." In discussing Erin, the eldest daughter of the family featured in the article, the author emphasizes that Erin was sexually active at an early age, broke curfews, smoked in the house, and disobeyed rules. The author states that,

Erin insists that her early promiscuity was in no way an effort to prove she was heterosexual, and of course, many teenagers rebel. The question is, how much did Erin's rebellion have to do with her mother's being gay? Erin herself has no way of knowing.⁶⁵

⁶¹Kathy Uyllott, "My folks are gay", *Chatelaine*, November 1990, p. 103

⁶²Hemmings, "Horrific Practices", p. 167

⁶³Uyllott, p. 107

⁶⁴*Ibid.*

⁶⁵Uyllott, "My folks are gay", p. 107

Although Erin was twenty at the time of the interview, she is assumed to be unable to account for her own emotions and actions. The possibility that her "rebellion" may have been triggered by her biological parents' difficult divorce is discounted.

Another interesting aspect of this article is the way Mary, the children's biological mother, is portrayed as somewhat selfish for her decision to come out. It is true that having a lesbian parent or parents can cause difficulties for children. However, there is an implication in the article that if Mary were a truly good mother, she would have been self-sacrificing and remained in the closet, at least until her daughters finished school.

Mary's coming out of the closet drove her daughters into a closet of their own. The mother's need to be less secretive meant a new secret life for her children.⁶⁷

As Katherine Arnup has discussed, this "good mother" versus "bad mother" distinction is not new. Women who are open about their lesbianism are frequently labelled "bad mothers", and are often blamed for the taunting their children may receive from their peers.⁶⁸ The lesbian mother who is "discreet" and does not challenge traditional heterosexual values may be acceptable.

[I]nsofar as she represents a fundamental and ongoing challenge to the structures of heterosexuality and the nuclear family, however, the existence of the lesbian

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 105.

⁶⁸Katherine Arnup, "Living in the Margins: Lesbian Families and the Law", Lesbian Parenting: Living with Pride and Prejudice, Charlottetown: Gynergy Books, 1995), p. 382.

mother must be denied"⁶⁹

SEXUALITY

Many articles on lesbianism published in the 1990s have been criticized for ignoring lesbian sexuality.⁷⁰ For example, one article, which discusses the lack of safer sex information for lesbians and the lack of research done on female to female HIV transmission, fails to specify what kinds of sexual practices are high risk for lesbians, or how these risks might be decreased.⁷¹ As author Marilyn Frye has pointed out, because lesbian sex does not fit into the heterosexual notion of what sex is, it is invisible, and is often not considered to be sex at all.⁷² In media articles, lesbianism is more often defined in terms of love rather than lust or desire.⁷³ In many of the articles which describe the coming out process, falling in love is emphasized, while first sexual experiences are almost never mentioned. At times, lesbian attraction seems to be almost deliberately separated from sexuality. One article includes the following description

⁶⁹Katherine Arnup, "'Mothers Just Like Others' Lesbians, Divorce, and Child Custody in Canada", Canadian Journal of Women and the Law, Vol. 3, 1989, p. 32

⁷⁰See Giese, "Lesbian Chic", p. 29. Giese states that "[t]he 'chic media lesbian' is sexy but never has sex"

⁷¹"Lesbians upset over exclusion from AIDS debate", Toronto Star, February 10, 1994, p. E10.

⁷²Marilyn Frye, "Lesbian 'Sex'", Willful Virgin: Essays on Feminism (Freedom, California: The Crossing Press, 1992), pp. 109-119

⁷³See for example "From dyke to transgender, a glossary of gay and lesbian terms", Vancouver Sun, July 29, 1994, p. B4.

"It was like I had been hit by lightning. I didn't have a name for what I was feeling. All of my attention was suddenly sucked in her direction...[i]t was a really strong attraction, *but not sexual*"⁷⁴

Although this passage seems to describe sexual attraction, readers are given the contradictory message that this is not, in fact, sexual. Sexuality and sexual attraction are not mentioned once in this two page article, although there are lengthy discussions about love relationships. Although many articles feature the subject of lesbian marriages and commitment ceremonies, I could find no articles which described or interviewed lesbians who chose to be single or non-monogamous. Even an article which described a lesbian strip club focused on the attire of the dancers and the club patrons, and did not discuss sex explicitly.⁷⁵ One of the few exceptions to this silence on the subject of lesbian sexuality is an article by Katherine Monk, published in the Vancouver Sun, describing an all-women sex show. In this article, Monk uses deliberately sexual phrases such as, "[f]or more than four hot, smoky hours, they watched with open legs and open eyes".⁷⁶ She does this because, as she writes. "[t]his whole idea of 'lesbian chic' really has nothing to do with sex. All the images we've seen over the last year or so have been completely de-sexed".⁷⁷

⁷⁴Mia Stainsby, "Coming out: an odyssey through hell to happiness", Vancouver Sun, September 21, 1991, p. D8. Emphasis added.

⁷⁵Blumenfeld, "Dancers, feminists at odds", p. F1.

⁷⁶Monk, "All-women Sexpertcase", p. C6.

⁷⁷Monk, "All-women Sexpertcase", p. C6.

An article entitled "Happily hetero, but hankering after a lesbian fling",⁷⁸ reveals one of the reasons why recent articles on lesbianism tend to ignore lesbian sex. These articles are, at least in part, aimed at heterosexual women, who find the idea of lesbian relationships appealing, but the idea of lesbian sex foreign or distasteful. This article describes three married heterosexual women who fantasize about (and in one case pursues) lesbian relationships in order to fulfil their needs for friendship, emotional intimacy, and sexual variety, which they do not receive from their husbands. The author, Beverly Kemp, emphasizes that the women she interviewed were not lesbians, latent or overt, "[n]or have they ever felt a vital ingredient was missing in their relationships with men".⁷⁹ The article is in fact very contradictory, because, in spite of the Kemp's assurances that the three women are all happily and irrevocably heterosexual, one woman has been having a lesbian relationship for eighteen months, and another states that, "I have absolutely no desire for sex with my husband now; any we do have is purely penetration. It feels like a violation of my body, almost like a quiet form of rape".⁸⁰

Kemp's article is very similar to a 1995 Chatelaine article by Judith Timson, entitled, "Do Lesbians Have More Fun?". Timson portrays lesbian relationships not as sexually passionate, but as intimate and emotional. The sub-heading to the article

⁷⁸Beverly Kemp, "Happily hetero, but hankering after a lesbian fling", The Globe and Mail, November 13, 1993, p. D5.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Ibid.

reads, "[m]any straight women believe a relationship with another woman would offer a fusion of mind and body, emotional support and mutual friendship".⁸¹ Thus, lesbianism seems to be appealing to the mainstream for its "emotional" and "spiritual" qualities, but not necessarily for political or sexual reasons. Much of this popularity, then, is based on the common stereotype that lesbian relationships are friendly, loving and nurturing, rather than sexual.

According to Timson, many of her heterosexual friends see lesbian relationships as utopian; however, Timson reassures readers that this has nothing to do with sex. She states that, although she and a female friend have joked that they should be married to each other,

we both know there is not a scintilla of sexual attraction involved. It would be...more relaxing. There'd be more laughs.... We could trade clothes....⁸²

Thus, Timson's article is typical of 1990s articles on lesbianism in its denial of lesbian sexuality. Lesbianism is presented as appealing because of shared housework, borrowed clothes, and female camaraderie, and sex is not mentioned as a part of this appeal.

Despite the fact that these articles tend to overlook lesbian sexuality, at the same time they also break new ground insofar as they reveal something that has almost never been acknowledged in mainstream media: heterosexual women think

⁸¹Judith Timson, "Do Lesbians Have More Fun?", *Chatelaine*, April 1995, p. 46.

⁸²Ibid.

about lesbianism, and sometimes even find it appealing. Generally, sexual orientation has been seen as rigid and unchanging, particularly for heterosexuals, and bisexuality is rarely referred to in mainstream media. Journalist Lisa O'Kelly has argued that magazines like Vanity Fair have found that, "featuring straight-looking lesbians is a way of tapping into non-lesbian women's fantasies about each other".⁸¹ To acknowledge in a major newspaper that heterosexual women fantasize about each other may contribute to breaking down these rigid categories of sexual orientation, and moving (a short way) towards an acceptance sexual diversity. However, this trend is ambiguous, because lesbians themselves, particularly those who look butch or unfeminine, are still excluded. O'Kelly includes a quote from novelist Joanna Briscoe, who states that, "[t]his sort of thing [chic, straight-looking lesbians] is much nearer to where most women are than any previous imagery of lesbianism".⁸⁴ Thus, lesbian sexual imagery in popular culture is still being defined by what heterosexual women may find appealing, and not by or for lesbians.

LESBIAN POLITICS: HIGHLIGHTING DIVISIONS

Many articles which discuss lesbian and gay political issues emphasize divisiveness within the "gay movement", including conflicts between gay men and lesbians, between lesbians and heterosexual feminists, between homosexuals and

⁸¹Lisa O'Kelly, "Lesbian Chic. Sapphic sisterhood goes mainstream", Vancouver Sun, June 18, 1994, p. B5.

⁸⁴Ibid.

bisexuals, and between different generations of lesbians. These divisions do exist, and have been the subject of debates within gay, lesbian and feminist communities for the past two decades. However, by stressing the weaknesses rather than the strengths of lesbian and gay political groups, the mass media often portrays the gay and lesbian rights movement as disorganized and politically immature. One of the reasons that the mainstream media became interested in lesbians was because their political power was perceived to be growing.⁸⁵ This was particularly the case in the United States. By stressing the differences of opinion and conflicts among lesbians, and between lesbian and gay men, this political power is downplayed. A 1991 article from The Globe and Mail concludes,

[t]he future harmony, or lack of it, within the gay and lesbian communities is harder to predict, although some believe the fragile glue now holding men and women together on civil-rights issues will fast disintegrate when the rights are won. Or even before. Already some are making veiled threats that men and women may well end up on opposite sides of a different class- or gender related fight. As for the others, those thousands of men and women across Canada, the smart money has most of them drifting off into quiet couples and families after the rights are won, living peacefully with their fellow Canadians.⁸⁶

While it is the case that lesbian and gay male activists do not always have the same priorities or interests, nonetheless, lesbians and gay men have been organizing

⁸⁵See for example, "Gay Political Power", New York Times, October 11, 1992, p. 1, and Howard Fineman, "Marching to the Mainstream", Newsweek, May 3, 1993, pp. 42-45.

⁸⁶Alanna Mitchell, "Gay in the Nineties", The Globe and Mail, June 29, 1991, p. D4.

together to fight homophobia for at least forty years, and are still doing so today in groups like Queer Nation, ACT-UP, and the Campaign for Equal Families. Thus, to characterize the bond between gay and lesbian activists in the 1990s as "fragile" is somewhat misleading, as it is probably less fragile now than it was in the late 1970s. Furthermore, this Globe and Mail article, like many similar articles on gay politics,⁸⁷ refuses to acknowledge that many lesbians and gays are struggling not just for civil rights, but for an end to heterosexism and compulsory heterosexuality, and for radical changes in society's notions of families, sexuality and gender.

Another article, entitled, "Dancers, feminists at odds over lesbian strip club",⁸⁸ emphasizes conflicts between lesbians and heterosexual feminists, as well as older and younger lesbians. In this article, lesbians who support the strip club are described as "beautiful", "bright-eyed", "strong", and "progressive".⁸⁹ Their attire is described in detail, including lipstick colour, and hairstyle. Lesbians of the "older generation" are portrayed as serious, dull and inflexible. Most importantly, the older lesbians are portrayed as being anti-sex and anti-male, while the "younger" lesbians are described several times as being "fun". The article ends with the following quote:

"I'm very much a feminist and it's [dancing in a strip

⁸⁷See for example, Eloise Salholz, et al., "The Power and the Pride", Newsweek, June 21, 1993, pp. 54-60, and Howard Fineman, "Marching to the Mainstream", Newsweek, May 3, 1993, pp. 42-45.

⁸⁸Laura Blumenfeld, "Dancers, feminists at odds over lesbian strip club", Toronto Star, September 12, 1991, p. F1, F2.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, p. F1.

club] not degrading,” she says, struggling with the snaps on her garter belt. “We’ve been screaming about women’s liberation long enough. Let’s do something fun”⁹⁰

In addition to emphasizing that younger lesbians are more “fun” than older lesbians, the statement, “[w]e’ve been screaming about women’s liberation long enough” implies that radical feminism and lesbian feminism are obsolete, and that older feminists are at fault for depriving women of “fun”. Sue O’Sullivan has written that,

[t]oday the so-called loony, ugly (read not stereotypically feminine) lesbian, increasingly designated as an arbiter of rigid political correctness, remains a figure for derision and hatred, especially whenever the *politics* of feminism or lesbian feminism became a contentious issue in the larger society.⁹¹

Another article, published in the Vancouver Sun in 1994, also pits different generations of lesbians against each other, and stresses that older and younger lesbians have nothing in common and do not agree politically. The article focuses on Leone, a forty-eight year old lesbian, who states that,

I find that a lot of young kids today, they’re so wrapped up in being lesbian and trying to be feminist to the degree that everything they hate about the male part of the world, they end up doing the same thing to men... We accuse the heterosexual community of discrimination against us. I find a lot of out people are very discriminatory against the heterosexual world.⁹²

⁹⁰Blumenfeld, “Dancers, feminists at odds”, p. F2.

⁹¹O’Sullivan, “Girls Who Kiss Girls and Who Cares?”, p. 79. Emphasis in original.

⁹²Kevin Griffin, “Staying partly in the closet spares some from lingering prejudice”, Vancouver Sun, July 31, 1994, p. B3.

This quote not only emphasizes the political differences between lesbians of different generations, but also portrays feminism as too extreme, and as a form of "reverse discrimination" Sue O'Sullivan has argued that feminism, particularly lesbian feminism, is frequently portrayed as "excessive" in media

These 'excesses' include much of the radical political agenda of feminism, including its analyses of the social, cultural and economic. By excess, I mean feminism's and lesbian feminism's challenge to femininity, to what it is to be womanly, to fashion, to the uses of language, to notions of the naturalness of motherhood, to male domination, to violence against women. In this discourse lesbianism itself in its *lesbian-feminist* guise is often construed as an excess.⁹³

This trend of criticizing lesbian feminism, and of pitting younger and older lesbians against each other is also found in the American media. A 1993 Newsweek article covertly criticizes lesbian feminism, by stating that, "in the '70s, the prevailing outlook was separatist and even prudish"⁹⁴, and contrasts this with the current "vital, 'sex-positive' scene" In the glossary included with this article, 'sex-positive' is defined as "Flaunts female-to-female eroticism, no-guilt, feel-good sex"⁹⁵ Although the connection is not made overtly, one assumes that lesbian feminism is therefore sex-negative, guilty, and secretive. Another article, published in the March

⁹³O'Sullivan, "Girls Who Kiss Girls and Who Cares?", p. 91. Emphasis in original

⁹⁴Salholz, "The Power and the Pride", p. 59.

⁹⁵Ibid, p. 58.

1993 issue of the American fashion magazine Mademoiselle,⁹⁶ had a subheading which read "young lesbians" having staked out their own issues, they're now defining a new style".⁹⁷ The words "youth" and "young" are repeated throughout the article, and young lesbians are described as "fresh", which suggests an unfavourable comparison to older lesbians who are, presumably, stale. Although there is no overt discussion of feminism, the "older" lesbians referred to in the article are clearly feminists of the 1970s and early 1980s. Readers are told that,

[s]o different is the baby dyke from the previous generation of lesbians that every aspect of her experience--from dating to politics--is different. Her issues are her own, not her older sister's.⁹⁸

This statement very clearly separates the "young lesbian" from all older lesbians. According to this statement, young lesbians share nothing at all with lesbians who came out before, and apparently, the gay and lesbian movement is not relevant to their lives. This clearly demonstrates a critique made by Rachel Giese, who argues that lesbian chic presents lesbianism without any kind of historical context. She states that, "[i]t was as though the Stonewall Riots, the feminist and civil rights movements and the creation of a rich feminist/lesbian culture of writing, film and music, never existed"⁹⁹ Giese also argues that, "[t]his divide and conquer routine is often used on

⁹⁶Elise Harris, "Women in Love", Mademoiselle, March 1993, pp. 180-183, 208.

⁹⁷Ibid, p. 180.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Giese, "Lesbian Chic", p. 28

minority groups .[a]nd now we're seeing the good lesbian pitted against the bad lesbian" ¹⁰⁰ Many articles criticize lesbian feminists by portraying them as intolerant, judgmental, and prudish. It is important to note that many of these criticisms of lesbian feminism were not manufactured strictly by the media, but are concerns shared by some younger lesbians. These divisions have existed within the lesbian community for some time, particularly during the lesbian "sex wars" of the 1980s, in which lesbians engaged in frequently bitter debates about issues such as monogamy, pornography, and sado-masochism. However, the majority of media articles do not put these debates into any historical or political context. Instead they portray "young lesbians" and "older lesbians" as two monolithic groups, when in fact there is great diversity within these groups. While many media articles have highlighted divisions among lesbians, few mention shared concerns and instances in which lesbians have been able to work with each other, and with gay men, on successful political campaigns. Susan Faludi has argued that the press, as part of its anti-feminist backlash, frequently focuses attention on conflicts between women, to further the notion that women cannot get along with each other, and to make the women's movement seem less threatening ¹⁰¹ Recent media articles indicate that a similar process of "divide and conquer" is taking place regarding lesbian activism and the lesbian and gay rights movement.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 29

¹⁰¹Faludi, Backlash, p. 82

THE "CULT OF PERSONALITY"

As media theorist Marguerite Moritz has noted, in some cases certain individuals have so often been linked with lesbianism in the media that they, as individuals, come to signify lesbianism¹⁰² For example, it would be almost impossible to examine the representation of lesbians in Canadian media without at least mentioning k d lang, Canada's most visible lesbian. Billie Jean King and Martina Navratilova are also excellent examples of this "cult of personality", in which one famous individual's sexuality is reported on and speculated about repeatedly in the media, while other gay and lesbian issues, such as political events, remain invisible. Moritz argues that the media is very reluctant to cover stories dealing with homosexuality, except in cases involving a celebrity. In these cases, the stories are reported on almost excessively, because they are viewed as exciting, scandalous, and attractive to readers¹⁰³ Journalist Victoria Brownworth has argued that this tendency to focus on celebrities has a negative effect on lesbian visibility overall, stating that,

...there's a handful of lesbians who are very visible, and they're always the same people. Nobody sees anybody else. And I think that, until we start hearing from lesbians in the middle of the country, in the South, in the Southwest, places that aren't California and New York and Washington, we can't really say that lesbian

¹⁰²Moritz, "How US News Media Represent Sexual Minorities", p. 155.

¹⁰³Ibid.

visibility has happened¹⁰⁴

Feminist author Susan Cole has suggested that, because there is so little lesbian visibility overall, a single article can have an enormous impact, either positive or negative; this puts enormous, frequently unwanted, pressure on the few lesbians who are publicly known¹⁰⁵ Cole uses the example of *Vanity Fair's* 1993 feature on k.d. lang, in which lang stated that she has "a little bit of penis envy"¹⁰⁶ Cole argues that because lang is one of only a few famous lesbians in the world,

there is more invested in the visible choices she makes
I wish she were one of hundreds of lesbians who were
public and proud so that it didn't matter if she was guilty
of a lapse in taste or political judgment on the cover of
Vanity Fair. But as it is, the visuals accompanying the
article made it look like lesbians suffer from a terminal
case of penis envy.¹⁰⁷

Although her criticism of k.d. lang may be somewhat harsh, as lang never really wanted or claimed to be a spokesperson for lesbians or lesbian politics,¹⁰⁸ Cole is correct her assertion that, because there are so few famous out lesbians, the actions of these individuals do have a wide impact. As Marguerite Moritz has noted,

¹⁰⁴Kate Brandt, "From 'Lesbian Chic' to 'Damn Lesbians': The Mainstream Media Discover (Some) Dykes", *Deneuve*, July/August 1993, p. 21.

¹⁰⁵Susan G. Cole, "Losing it on Lesbian Chic", *Horizons*, Winter 1994, p. 35

¹⁰⁶Leslie Bennetts, "k.d. lang's Edge: Crossing Over, Catching Fire", *Vanity Fair*, August 1993, p. 99.

¹⁰⁷Cole, p. 35.

¹⁰⁸Brian D. Johnson, "A Lighter Side of Lang", *Maclean's*, November 6, 1995, p. 69

even though these news stories [on famous lesbians] are personality centred, the meanings they offer audiences are not restricted in any such way. Indeed, the meanings fan out over a much larger terrain than the original personality that prompted the story.¹⁰⁹

Thus, stories on lesbian celebrities such as k d lang and Martina Navratilova are also stories about lesbianism itself. Moritz explains how, in 1981, Billie Jean King quickly became a media representative for all lesbians, female athletes, and feminists in the mainstream press.¹¹⁰ Similarly, k d lang has become the lesbian "poster child" of the 1990s, as her photo was featured on the cover New York magazine when they ran the first magazine feature on lesbian chic,¹¹¹ her now-famous Vanity Fair cover photo with Cindy Crawford had the third largest sales in the magazine's history,¹¹² and her name is mentioned in almost every article on lesbians and lesbianism published in the 1990s.

CONCLUSION

The 1990s have been a period of unprecedented visibility for lesbians in mainstream media, however the overall nature of this coverage has been ambiguous. While some lesbians have become more visible, others, such as lesbians of colour, working class lesbians, and lesbians with disabilities, may have become marginalized

¹⁰⁹Moritz, "How US News media represent sexual minorities", p. 156.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹¹Jeanne Russell Kasindorf, "Lesbian Chic: The Bold, Brave New World of Gay Women", New York, May 10, 1993, pp. 30-37.

¹¹²Johnson, "A Lighter Side of Lang", p. 69.

even further, as lesbianism has been almost exclusively associated with whiteness, middle-class identity, able-bodiedness and physical attractiveness. The association of lesbianism with youth, and the frequent derision of "older" lesbians can be seen as part of a backlash against feminism and lesbian feminism. A number of theorists have argued that lesbianism is increasingly divorced from politics, and is portrayed as a matter of "lifestyle"

Danae Clark argues that, due to the development of the "gay market", current representations of lesbians in media are influenced strongly by economic interests

contemporary advertisers are more interested in lesbian consumers than lesbian politics. Once stripped of its political underpinnings, lesbianism can be represented as a style of consumption.¹¹³

As Amy Gluckman and Betsy Reed argue, "[l]iberation is not the bottom line for many of the interests that have molded. depictions of lesbians and gay men--money is".¹¹⁴

Although lesbianism has attained some degree of acceptability and trendiness in the 1990s, it is still a very marginal identity, and the normality and centrality of heterosexuality is never questioned. Kevin Petrich and Fred Fejes suggest that, in the media of the 1990s, homophobia has been replaced by heterosexism. Even though lesbians are more visible, and the images of lesbians in media are not as blatantly

¹¹³Danae Clark, "Commodity Lesbianism", The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader, Henry Abelove, et al, eds. (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 197

¹¹⁴Gluckman and Reed, "The Gay Marketing Moment", p. 16

hateful as they were in previous decades, the "heterosexual regime" is rarely challenged.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵Fred Fejes and Kevin Petrich, "Invisibility, Homophobia and Heterosexism: Lesbians, Gays and the Media", Critical Studies in Mass Communication, December 1993, pp. 396-422.

CONCLUSION

As I have argued throughout this thesis, although representations of lesbians in Canadian media have generally improved over the past forty-five years, this improvement has been very gradual, and has been characterized by periods of anti-feminist and anti-homosexual backlash. Recent representations of lesbians, which portray lesbianism as matter of style rather than politics, or of fashion rather than desire, downplay the problem of homophobia in society. Because lesbians are presented as hip and "chic", readers may tend to forget that lesbians can still be fired from their jobs, beaten on the streets, and exiled from their families. "Older" lesbians, and lesbian feminists are frequently portrayed as ugly, strident, narrow-minded, and boring. Journalist Rachel Giese notes,

...for the moment, it's hip to be a lesbian--as long as you're thin, under 25 and wear lipstick...most conspicuously absent [from the media] is the feminist lesbian of the 1970s. Depicted as aggressive, humourless and worst of all masculine, she is occasionally brought out for comparison with her younger, hipper sisters.¹

In contrast, these 'new', 'young' lesbians are no longer seen as 'ugly' or 'man-hating'; they are attractive and titillating. The public can now enjoy the bad girl image of the attractive, sexy lipstick lesbian, without having to deal with feminism or hairy legs.

As a means for fighting homophobia and gaining equal rights and respect for

¹Rachel, Giese, "The Suspect Image of Lesbian Chic", Globe and Mail, July 2, 1993, p. A24.

lesbians, I would argue that the potential of lesbian chic is limited. The trouble with attaining visibility through a quirk of fashion is that styles go out just as quickly as they come in. In the world of magazines and consumer culture, little attention is given to last year's trends. Magazines may even begin to avoid lesbian issues, not wanting to appear outdated. Reflecting on her experience as a feminist journalist, Joanne Kates explains,

[b]y definition, style changes. The only style that's interesting is new style, as in the very word: 'News...paper'. If it's not new, it's not news and if it's not news it doesn't belong in print or on the radio or on TV: that's the rule. Taking a careful look at an issue is almost impossible because almost every issue (especially women's issues) has already been mentioned. That makes it old news, *ergo* unprintable.²

It has been argued that "some...*recognizable* representational form is a political necessity for gay people".³ Feminist activist Bonnie Sherr Klein suggests that,

[i]f my own perceptions about life as I experience it are not reflected in the media, I doubt my perceptions. And as I doubt myself, I lose my power to act, to change, even to speak.⁴

From my own perspective, the two questions which remain are these: what kind of

² Joanne Kates, "'Be Taller, be Thinner...': The Perils of a Feminist Journalist", Canadian Woman Studies, Spring 1987, p. 66. Emphasis in original.

³ Alfred Kielwasser and Michele Wolfe, "Mainstream Television, Adolescent Homosexuality, and Significant Silence", Critical Studies in Mass Communication, Vol. 9, 1992, p. 353. Emphasis in original.

⁴ Bonnie Sherr Klein, "Illusions and Realities in the Media", Canadian Woman Studies, Spring 1987, p. 72.

representation would I like to see? and how can it be attained? Obviously, there are no simple answers or easy solutions. I would argue that although lesbians are more visible now than ever before in media and in society, they are still largely invisible. Because there was a virtual silence on the subject of lesbianism until the 1990s, the recent increase in coverage sometimes seems like an explosion; however, it is really just the beginning. Only a handful of articles on lesbians are published in the mainstream press in Canada each year, and even "gay and lesbian" publications, for the most part, contain much more coverage of gay men and gay male issues. Hopefully, as more out lesbians are able to become journalists, editors, and publishers, in both mainstream and alternative publications, they will be able to influence the quantity and nature of coverage about lesbians and lesbianism in Canadian media. As Liesbet Van Zoonen has argued, it is unproductive to call for more "realistic" media representations, as reality is subjective.⁵ Therefore, I would suggest that what we need is a wide diversity of media representations of lesbians, in both mainstream and alternative publications, which include not only stereotypically attractive, white lesbians, but lesbians of all ages, races, classes, and sizes.

As journalism professor Barbara Freeman once pointed out to me, there is little point in criticizing the media if you do not attempt to change it. Some media analysts, such as Fred Fejes and Kevin Petrich, are very confident that media activism and

⁵Liesbet Van Zoonen, "Feminist Perspectives on the Media", Mass Media and Society, eds. James Curran and Michael Gurevitch (London: Edward Arnold, 1991), p. 42.

organized lobbying by gays and lesbians can work.⁶ Thus, I feel that it is important to conclude this thesis by suggesting some strategies for challenging the media representations of lesbians, women, and other marginalized groups.

First, I would argue that it is essential to have a diversity of lesbian voices to speak and give input into media. However, as Joanne Kates has argued, feminist analyses are rarely welcomed in the mainstream press, and the myth of journalistic objectivity remains a part of the publishing industry.⁷ Thus, editors still want pieces that are "balanced", rather than those which have a strong argument for social change. There is no easy solution to these problems, but possible strategies include supporting lesbian and feminist journalists, working to change the curriculum in journalism schools, and lobbying newspapers and magazines to implement equity in hiring practices.

As I have argued throughout this thesis, consumer capitalism, which drives the mainstream magazine and newspaper industries, makes implementing real changes in Canadian media difficult. Publishers rely on advertising revenue, and thus they must please potential advertisers, and publish articles which promote advertised commodities. Due to government cutbacks and economic difficulties, many alternative publications and media venues have been forced to close, or must rely increasingly on advertising revenue. The reduction of postal subsidies by the

⁶Fejcs and Petrich, "Invisibility, Homophobia and Heterosexism, p. 400.

⁷Kates, "Be Taller, be Thinner...", p. 66.

Canadian government has had a negative impact on small periodicals in Canada,⁸ the CBC is facing increased funding cuts, and the National Film Board's Studio D, which produced films made by and for women, will soon be closed. It is important to lobby the various levels of government, and the management of bodies such as the National Film Board, to ensure that these sites of alternative media are not eliminated altogether.

MediaWatch, a volunteer feminist organization dedicated to eliminating sexist and violent images of women in the media, advocates consumer complaints as one of the most effective ways to lobby for changes in media representations. They suggest that individual complaints do have an important impact on editors, managers, the CRTC⁹, and, most importantly, advertisers. According to MediaWatch, advertisers estimate that one complaint represents the opinion of approximately 44 consumers.¹⁰ Therefore, if ten people complain about the same ad, it will likely be removed. In order to combat media stereotypes and offensive media messages, MediaWatch suggests letter writing campaigns, phone calls, and demonstrations. As well, by cancelling subscriptions and writing letters to publishers to explain the reason for the cancellation, consumers can have a direct impact on publishing companies.

⁸Task Force on the Canadian Magazine Industry. A Question of Balance: The Report of the Task Force on the Canadian Magazine Industry. Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1994.

⁹The Canadian Radio Television Telecommunications Commission

¹⁰Tova Wagman. "Strategies for Social Change: MediaWatch (and Other) Complaint Actions", Canadian Woman Studies, Spring 1987, pp. 11-13

I feel strongly that individuals, particularly young people, need to be educated about how to critically examine media. Many studies have shown that media is one of the primary ways in which ideology is transmitted into a culture, and that this impact is increasing rapidly due to the expansion of media technologies.¹¹ MediaWatch has developed a Media Literacy Program, which is aimed at teaching children and young adults how to critically evaluate the messages of popular culture. Parents and community groups should lobby school boards for inclusion of this type of material into curricula.

Although these four strategies only represent a small portion of what must be done to eradicate homophobia and heterosexism from media and from society, I believe that fighting for more diversity in the representations of lesbians in media is an important starting place. As Bonnie Sherr Klein has argued,

[w]hite male ownership and control of the media, worldwide, has created an imbalance, a distortion, which prevents us from hearing the multiplicity of voices that make up our world...voices we must hear if we are to have an accurate picture of the world and our place in it.¹²

¹¹See for example Kielwasser and Wolf, "Mainstream Television", p. 353-354.

¹²Sherr Klein, "Illusions and Realities in the Media, p. 74.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

- "Almost half of all Canadians find homosexuality easy to accept", Weekend Magazine, August 18, 1979, p. 3.
- Amiel, Barbara. "Gay Impact", Maclean's, February 18, 1980, pp. 41-46.
- Batten, Jack. "The homosexual life in Canada: Will Trudeau's change in the law make any difference? An answer from the gay world", Saturday Night, September 1969, pp. 29-31.
- Baxter, Beverley. "The Offstage Tragedy of Sir John Gielgud", Maclean's, December 1, 1953, pp. 4, 85-87.
- Bennetts, Leslie. "k.d. lang's Edge: Crossing Over, Catching Fire", Vanity Fair, August 1993, pp. 94-100.
- Black, Larry. "Behaviour: A gay backlash", Maclean's, September 10, 1990, p. 48.
- Blumenfeld, Laura. "Dancers, feminists at odds over lesbian strip club", Toronto Star, September 1991, p. F1, F2.
- Boone, Mike. "Lestians at 11: CBC sheds staid image", Montreal Gazette, October 13, 1993, p. F9.
- Bruning, Fred. "The new U.S. enemy within: homosexuals", Maclean's, February 15, 1993, p. 15.
- Cameron, C.K. "The Problem That is Never Mentioned", Canadian Home Journal, November 1951, pp. 12, 103-106.
- Cameron, Stevie. "When Someone in Your Family is Gay", Chatelaine, July 1981, p. 35, 98, 102, 106-108, 110.
- "Cases of Deviates Cited: Metro Police Oppose U.K. Homosexual Law", Globe and Mail, July 7, 1967, p. 5.
- Chira, Susan. "Gay parenthood no longer invisible", Montreal Gazette, January 3, 1993, p. B5.

"Church Council Aims to Aid Homosexuals", Globe and Mail, June 2, 1965, p. 9.

"Criminal Code To Be Revised--No Homosexual Life Sentences", Toronto Daily Star, November 8, 1967.

Delany, Paul. "The Homosexual Factor", Saturday Night, February 1981, pp. 30-36.

DeMara, Bruce. "New-style activists in gay rights fight", Toronto Star, January 3, 1995, p. A14.

Dobbs, Kildare. "Shocking Charge", The Canadian Forum, Vol. 40, August 1960, pp. 100-101.

Downey, Maureen. "Lesbian couples embrace marriage", Vancouver Sun, October 27, 1990, p. C1.

Eaton, S. Catherine. "A Matter of Pride: Being a Gay Woman in the Nineties", Cosmopolitan, November 1993, pp. 226-9.

Egan, James. "Civil Liberties and the Homosexual", Toronto Daily Star, October 23, 1963, p. 7.

Fineman, Howard. "Marching to the Mainstream", Newsweek, May 3, 1993, pp. 42-45.

Fraser, Graham. "Bill protects gay and lesbian rights", The Globe and Mail, December 11, 1992, p. A4.

"Freeing lesbians to adopt", Maclean's, May 22, 1995, p. 29.

"From dyke to transgender, a glossary of gay and lesbian terms", Vancouver Sun, July 29, 1994, p. B4.

"Gay Political Power", New York Times, October 11, 1992, p. 1.

"Gay in the Seventies", Weekend Magazine, December 17, 1977, pp. 10-14.

"Genetic influence found in lesbian twins", The Globe and Mail, March 12, 1993, p. A10.

- Gershbain, Nikki. "'Coming out' is still an important political statement", Toronto Star, July 4, 1995, p. A15.
- Goddard, Peter. "k.d. gets real", Chatelaine, September 1992, pp. 60-63, 127.
- Gold, Herbert. "Frisco's homosexuals show way out of the closet", Toronto Star, November 5, 1977, p. C5.
- Gray, Charlotte. "Out of the closet and into the fire?", Chatelaine, October 1995, pp. 113-114, 116, 129-130.
- Gray, Kenneth G. "Sexual Deviation: Problem and Treatment", Saturday Night, November 26, 1955, pp. 9-10.
- Griffin, Kevin. "Staying partly in the closet spares some from lingering prejudice", Vancouver Sun, July 31, 1994, p. B3.
- Grosskurth, Phyllis. "Havelock Ellis, defender of the gays", Saturday Night, November 1979, pp. 24-35.
- Hannon, Gerald. "How gay society is blazing a trail for the future", The Globe and Mail, June 27, 1992, p. D1, D4.
- Harris, Daniel. "Out of the Closet and into Never-Never Land", Harper's, December 1995, pp. 52-53.
- Harris, Elise. "Women in Love", Mademoiselle, March 1993, pp. 180-183, 208.
- Hurst, Lynda. "Coming Out", Toronto Star, June 26, 1993, p. D1, D4.
- "Lesbians march out of the closet", Vancouver Sun, July 12, 1993, p. C5.
- "The Inside Track: At Least They Have a Mutual Enemy", Saturday Night, March 1979, p. 4.
- Israelson, David. "Tapping the Gay Market", Toronto Star, September 18, 1994, p. D1, D8.
- Jetter, Alexis. "Sexual Politics: Goodbye to the Last Taboo", Vogue, July 1993, pp. 86-88, 92.

Johnson, Brian D. "A Lighter Side of Lang", Maclean's, November 6, 1995, pp. 68-70.

Kasindorf, Jeannie Russell. "Lesbian Chic: The Bold, Brave New World of Gay Women", New York, May 10, 1993, pp. 30-37.

Katz, Sidney. "Gentle George Klippert--Must He Serve LIFE?", Toronto Daily Star, November 18, 1967, p. 10.

----- "The Harsh Facts of Life in the 'Gay' World", Maclean's, March 7, 1964, pp. 18, 34-38.

----- "The Homosexual Next Door", Maclean's, February 1964, pp. 10-11, 28-30.

----- "Medical News: Exploding Homosexual Myths", Chatelaine, December 1981, p. 38.

----- "'We're Society's Scapegoats': Homosexuals Shocked By Life Term Ruling", Toronto Daily Star, November 11, 1967, p. 5.

Kemp, Beverly. "Happily hetero, but hankering after a lesbian fling", The Globe and Mail, November 13, 1993, p. D5.

Kieran, Sheila. "Your Sexuality: Homosexuality", Chatelaine, December 1976, pp. 10, 12.

Klein, Naomi. "Coming out isn't everything", The Globe and Mail, July 15, 1993, p. A1, A4.

Kome, Penney. "Couples", Maclean's, December 1972, pp. 44-45, 62, 64.

Lasovich, Mary. "Coming Out, Coming Home!", Vancouver Sun, October 8, 1993, p. A17.

LeBlanc, Susan. "Attitudes towards lesbians improving", Halifax Chronicle Herald, April 3, 1993, p. A1, A2.

----- "Invisiblility mixed blessing for lesbians", Halifax Chronicle Herald, April 3, 1993, p. B1, B2.

"Lesbian Family Life", Chatelaine, February 1970, p. 10.

"Lesbians upset over exclusion from AIDS debate", Toronto Star, February 10, 1994, p. E10.

Lipovenko, Dorothy. "What Kind of Mothers are Lesbians?", The Globe and Mail, May 31, 1979, p. T1.

Locke, Jeannine. "Britain Opens Debate on the Plight of the Homosexual", Toronto Daily Star, June 28, 1960, p. 7.

----- "The Homosexual Problem Troubles the Conscience of Victims and Society", Toronto Daily Star, June 29, 1960, p. 7.

Martin, Lydia. "Out of the Closet and into the Spotlight", Toronto Star, September 11, 1993, p. J1, J11.

Mayes, Allison. "Living Life in the Shadows", Calgary Herald, Saturday June 20, 1992, p. A15

Maynard, Rona. "Parents and Kids: When your teen is gay", Chatelaine, September 1992, p. 40.

McCreary, John K. "Psychopathia Homosexualis", Canadian Journal of Psychology, Vol. 4, No. 2, June 1950, pp. 63-74.

Mitchell, Alanna. "Gay in the Nineties", The Globe and Mail, June 29, 1991, p. D1, D4.

Monk, Katherine. "All-women Sexpertise attracts both buzz-cut butches and white-haired grannies", Vancouver Sun, February 17, 1994, p. C6

"Most Canadians think homosexuals are 'sick people'", Weekend Magazine, December 17, 1977, p. 2.

Nemeth, Mary. "The Family: Tradition Under Siege", Maclean's, June 20, 1994, 30-32.

Newbery, Lillian. "'Friendship, love' are basis of lesbian ties", Toronto Star, October 2, 1980, p. D1.

- Nicolosi, Michelle. "High levels of male hormone found in lesbians", Toronto Star, June 21, 1994, p. E5.
- O'Kelly, Lisa. "Lesbian chic: Sapphic sisterhood goes mainstream", Vancouver Sun, June 18, 1994, p. B5.
- Ormsby, Mary. "Fired national volleyball coach fighting back", Toronto Star, August 22, 1993, p. B3.
- O'Toole, Lawrence. "Gay Style--Why It's Everywhere", Maclean's, February 18, 1980, pp. 46-47.
- Priest, Alicia. "The Next Best Thing", Vancouver Sun, October 27, 1990, p. C1.
- Robertson, Heather. "A Lesbian Ordeal", Saturday Night, August 1986, pp. 22-27.
- Ross, Val. "Glad Day case tests community standards", The Globe and Mail, December 17, 1992, p. C1.
- "Lesbian lit comes out", The Globe and Mail, April 16, 1994, p. C1, C7.
- Salholz, Eloise, et al. "The Power and The Pride", Newsweek, June 21, 1993, pp. 54-60.
- Sangster, Dorothy. "Gay Women: A Minority Report", Chatelaine, July 1977, pp. 24, 79-84.
- Schmalz, Jeffery. "Gay Politics Goes Mainstream", New York Times Magazine, October 11, 1992, pp. 18-21, 29, 41-42, 50, 53.
- Seiden, Howard. "Homophobia, not homosexuality, is the disorder", Montreal Gazette, October 22, 1994, p. 18.
- Siggins, Maggie. "How Fathers Turn Daughters on to Women's Lib", Chatelaine, May 1972, pp. 25, 54-57.
- "She's here, she's queer, and she's telling the world to get used to it", People, March 10, 1993, p. 50.
- "Shocking Pictures", Financial Post, September 12, 1964, p. 14.

- Smith, Vivian. "Opening doors on gay partner abuse", The Globe and Mail, July 29, 1993, p. A11.
- Stainsby, Mia. "Coming out: an odyssey through hell to happiness", Vancouver Sun, September 21, 1991, p. D8, D9.
- Steele, Scott. "Coming Out", Maclean's, May 16, 1994, pp. 40-43.
- Stein, David Lewis and Paris, Erna. "Homosexual rights: is militancy necessary?", Chatelaine, July 1979, p. 24.
- "Student charges harassment", Calgary Herald, May 26, 1995, p. A11
- Timson, Judith. "Family matters: Do lesbians have more fun? The truth about relationship utopia", Chatelaine, April 1995, p. 46.
- Turner, Janice. "State of the Union", Toronto Star, April 23, 1994, p. H1, H11
- Ulyott, Kathy. "My folks are gay", Chatelaine, November 1990, p. 103, 105, 107.
- "U.S. homosexual couples experiencing baby boom", Toronto Star, January 5, 1989, p. H4.
- Vyhnak, Carola. "Lesbians suffer society's wrath", Toronto Star, February 20, 1981, p. C1.
- Walker, Pamela. "Dramatic changes in notions of what is normal", Toronto Star, August 3, 1991, p. E12.
- Warson, Albert. "Degenerates Parade, Inspector Says. Blames Lack of Public Disgust for Growth of Homosexuality", Globe and Mail, November 14, 1963, p. 13.
- Wasserstein, Wendy. "The Wendy Chronicles: Chic Love", Bazaar, October 1993, pp. 112, 116.
- Webster, Nancy Coltun. "Playing to gay segments opens doors to marketers", Advertising Age, May 30, 1994, p. S6.
- Wente, Margaret. "When k.d. came out", The Globe and Mail, October 14, 1995, p. D7.

Wigod, Rebecca. "Bid to limit test-tube births questioned", Vancouver Sun, December 2, 1993, p. A3.

-----, "Lesbian couple who want child denied sperm", Vancouver Sun, July 22, 1993, p. A1.

Wilson, Renate. "What Turns Women to Lesbianism?", Chatelaine, October 1966, pp. 32, 130-132, 134.

Wyman, Max. "Boom--or bubble? The dilemma of gay literature", Vancouver Sun, December 10, 1994, p. D3.

Zerbisias, Antonia. "Gay, lesbian issues now mainstream news", Toronto Star, July 24, 1993, p. E4.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Adam, Barry D. The Rise of a Gay and Lesbian Movement (Revised Edition). New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995.

Adams, Kate. "Making the World Safe for the Missionary Position: Images of the Lesbian in Post World War II America", Lesbian Texts and Contexts: Radical Revisions, Karla Jay and Joanne Glasgow, eds. New York: New York University Press, 1990.

Adamson, Nancy, et al. Feminist Organizing for Change: The Contemporary Women's Movement in Canada. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Arnup, Katherine. "Living in the Margins: Lesbian Families and the Law", Lesbian Parenting: Living With Pride and Prejudice, Katherine Arnup, ed. Charlottetown: Gynergy Books, 1995.

-----, "'Mothers Just Like Others': Lesbians, Divorce, and Child Custody in Canada", Canadian Journal of Women and the Law, Vol. 3, 1989, pp. 18-32.

Bennet, Tony. "Theories of the Media, Theories of Society", Culture, Society and the Media, Michael Gurevitch et al, eds. London: Methunen, 1982.

Berger, Arthur A. Media Analysis Techniques (Revised Edition). Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1991.

- Berubé, Allan. Coming Out Under Fire: The history of Gay Men and Women in World War Two. New York: Free Press, 1990.
- Blackman, Inge and Perry, Kathryn. "Skirting the Issue: Lesbian Fashion for the 1990s", Feminist Review, Special Issue, Perverse Politics: Lesbian Issues, No. 34, Spring 1990, pp. 67-78.
- Blumler, Jay G. and Gurevitch, Michael. "The Political Effects of Mass Communications", Culture, Society and the Media, Michael Gurevitch, et al, eds. London: Methuen, 1982.
- Brandt, Kate. "From 'Lesbian Chic' to 'Damn Lesbians': The Mainstream Media Discover (Some) Dykes", Deneuve, July/August 1993, pp. 20-21, 56.
- Bronski, Michael. Culture Clash: The Making of Gay Sensibility. Boston: South End Press, 1984.
- Bullough, Vern L. Science in the Bedroom: A History of Sex Research. New York: Basicbooks, 1994.
- Caprio, Frank. Female Homosexuality: A Psychodynamic Study of Lesbianism. New York: The Citadel Press, 1954.
- Carney, T.F. Content Analysis: A Technique for Systematic Inference from Communications. London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1972.
- Castle, Terry. The Apparitional Lesbian: Female Homosexuality and Modern Culture. New York: Columbia University Press: 1993.
- Chauncey, George Jr. "From Sexual Inversion to Homosexuality: The Changing Medical Conceptualization of Female 'Deviance'", Passion and Power: Sexuality in History, Kathy Peiss and Christina Simmons, eds. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989.
- Chomsky, Noam and Herman, Edward S. Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media. New York: Pantheon, 1988.
- Cirksena, Kathryn and Cuklanz, Lisa. "Male is to Female as _____ is to _____: A Guided Tour of Five Feminist Frameworks for Communications Studies", Women Making Meaning, Lana Rakow, ed. New York: Routledge, 1992.

- Clark, Danae. "Commodity Lesbianism", The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader, Abelow, Barale, and Halperin, eds. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Cohen, Stanley and Young, Jock, eds. The Manufacture of News: Social Problems, Deviance and the Mass Media. London: Constable, 1973.
- Cole, Susan. "Losing it on Lesbian Chic", Herizons, Winter 1994, p. 35.
- Colbert, Laurie and Cardona, Dominique. *Thank God I'm a Lesbian*. Film, 1992.
- de Lauretis, Teresa. The Practice of Love: Lesbian Sexuality and Perverse Desire. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1994.
- , "Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities". Differences, Vol. 3, no. 2, 1991.
- D'Emilio, John. "The Homosexual Menace: The Politics of Sexuality in Cold War America", Passion and Power: Sexuality in History, eds. Kathy Peiss and Christina Simmons. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989.
- , Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.
- D'Emilio, John and Freeman, Estelle B. Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America. New York: Harper and Row, 1988.
- Egan, Jim, et al. Jim Egan: Canada's Pioneer Gay Activist. Toronto: Canadian Lesbian and Gay History Network, 1987.
- Elliot, Stuart. "Big Marketers Divided on Issue of Homosexuality", New York Times, February 23, 1994, pp. D1, D18.
- Evans, Caroline and Gamman, Lorraine. "The Gaze Revisited, or Reviewing Queer Viewing", A Queer Romance: Lesbians, Gay Men and Popular Culture, eds. Paul Burston and Colin Richardson. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Ewen, Stuart. Channels of Desire: Mass Images and the Shaping of American Consciousness, Second Edition. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992.

- Faderman, Lillian. Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America. New York: Penguin Books, 1991.
- . Surpassing the Love of Men. New York: Morrow, 1981.
- Faludi, Susan. Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women. New York: Crown Publishers, 1991.
- Fejes, Fred and Petrich, Kevin. "Invisibility, Homophobia and Heterosexism: Lesbians, Gays and the Media", Critical Studies in Mass Communication, December 1993, pp. 396-422.
- Ferguson, Marjorie. Forever Feminine: Women's Magazines and the Cult of Femininity. London: Heinemann, 1983.
- Forbidden Love: The Unashamed Stories of Lesbian Lives*. National Film Board of Canada, 1992.
- Foster, Marion and Murray, Kent. A Not So Gay World: Homosexuality in Canada. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972.
- Freiberg, Peter. "Women's Magazines Take on the 'L' Word", The Washington Blade, January 14, 1994, pp. 35-36.
- Gamson, Joshua. "Do Ask, Do Tell", Utne Reader, January/February 1996, pp. 79-83.
- Giese, Rachel. "Lesbian Chic. I Feel Pretty and Witty and Gay", Border/Lines, No. 32, 1994, pp. 27-29.
- . "Sleeping with the enemy", This Magazine, November 1994, pp. 12-15.
- . "The Suspect Image of Lesbian Chic", Globe and Mail, July 2, 1993, p. A24.
- Gluckman, Amy and Reed, Betsy. "The Gay Marketing Moment: Leaving Diversity in the Dust", Dollars and Sense, November/December 1993, pp. 16-19, 35.
- Griffin, Gabriele, ed. "Introduction", Outwrite: Lesbianism and Popular Culture. London: Pluto Press, 1993.

- Hamer, Diane and Budge, Belinda, eds. "Introduction", The Good, the Bad and the Gorgeous: Popular Culture's Romance with Lesbianism. London: Pandora, 1994.
- Hayden, Delores. Redesigning the American Dream. New York: Norton, 1984.
- Hemmings, Susan. "Horrific Practices: How Lesbians Were Represented in the Newspapers of 1978", Homosexuality: Power and Politics, Gay Left Collective, ed. London: Allison and Busby, 1980.
- Higgins, Ross. "Montreal Gays and Lesbians in the Yellow Press of the 1950s", Canadian Lesbian and Gay History Network Newsletter, No. 2, September 1986, pp. 9-11.
- Hoffman, Wayne. "Lesbians Can Be *Cosmo* Girls, Too", The Washington Blade, November 19, 1993, p. 49.
- Howell, Sharon. Reflections of Ourselves: The Mass Media and the Women's Movement, 1963 to the Present. New York: Lang, 1990.
- Jacobs, Andrew. "Market Forces: Advertisers Discover the Gay Dollar", The Globe and Mail, June 28, 1994, p. A17.
- Jaddou, Liliane and Williams, Jon. "A Theoretical Contribution to the Struggle Against the Dominant Representations of Women", Media, Culture and Society, Vol. 3, 1981, pp. 105-24.
- Jagose, Annamarie. Lesbian Utopics. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Johnson, Bradley. "Economics holds back lesbian ad market", Advertising Age, January 18, 1993, p. 34-35.
- , "The gay quandary", Advertising Age, January 18, 1993, pp. 29, 35.
- Kates, Joanne. "'Be Taller, Be Thinner...': The Perils of a Feminist Journalist", Canadian Woman Studies, Spring 1987, pp. 66-68.
- Kennedy, Elizabeth Lapovsky and Davis, Madeline D. Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of A Lesbian Community. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Khayatt, Mahida Didi. Lesbian Teachers: An Invisible Presence. Albany, New York:

State University of New York Press, 1992.

- Kielwasser, Alfred P. and Wolf, Michelle A. "Mainstream Television, Adolescent Homosexuality, and Significant Silence", Critical Studies in Mass Communication, Vol. 9, 1992, pp. 350-373.
- Kinsey, Alfred, et al. Sexual Behavior in the Human Female. Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Co., 1953.
- Kinsman, Gary. The Regulation of Desire: Sexuality in Canada. Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1987.
- , The Regulation of Desire: Homo and Hetero Sexualities (Second Edition). Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1996.
- Klein, Bonnie Sherr. "Illusions and Realities in the Media", Canadian Woman Studies, Spring 1987, pp. 71-74.
- The Lesbians Making History Collective. "People Think That This Didn't Happen in Canada", Fireweed (Lesbianics Edition), No. 28, Spring 1989, pp. 81-84.
- Lips, Hilary M. Sex and Gender: An Introduction (Second Edition). Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing, 1993.
- Manson, Katherine. A Discourse Analysis: The Media Construction of Judy Rebick and Ovide Mercredi. Master of Arts Thesis, Carleton University, School of Canadian Studies, 1994.
- Martin, Biddy. "Feminism, Criticism, and Foucault", Feminism and Foucault: Reflections on Resistance, Irene Diamond and Lee Quimby, eds. Northeastern University Press, 1988.
- Martin, Del and Lyon, Phyllis. Lesbian/Woman (Twentieth Anniversary Edition). Volcano, California: Volcano Books, 1991.
- Masterman, Len. Teaching the Media. London: Comedia, 1986.
- Maynard, Steven. "What Colour is Your Underwear: Class, Whiteness and Homoerotic Advertising", Border/Lines, No. 32, 1994, pp. 4-9.
- McFarlane, J.A. and Clements, Warren. The Globe and Mail Style Book. Toronto.

Infoglobe, 1990.

McLeod, Jack M., et al. "On Understanding and Misunderstanding Media Effects", Mass Media and Society, James Curran and Micheal Gurevitch, eds. London: Edward Arnold, 1991.

Meyerowitz, Joanne. "Beyond the Feminine Mystique: A Reassessment of Postwar Culture", The Journal of American History, March 1993, pp. 1455-82.

Miller, Neil. Out of the Past: Gay and Lesbian History from 1969 to the Present. New York: Vintage Books, 1995.

Moritz, Marguerite. "How the US News Media Represent Sexual Minorities", Journalism and Popular Culture, P. Dahlgren and C. Sparks, eds. London: Sage Publications Ltd., 1992.

Nestle, Joan. "Butch-Femme Relationships: Sexual Courage in the 1950s", A Restricted Country. Ithaca, New York: Firebrand Books, 1987.

Newhook, Tyrone. "Coming Out in the Newsroom", Ryerson Review of Journalism, Spring 1994, pp. 44-50.

Nussel, Frank. The Image of Older Adults in the Media. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1992.

O'Sullivan, Sue. "Girls Who Kiss Girls and Who Cares?", The Good, the Bad and the Gorgeous: Popular Culture's Romance with Lesbianism, Belinda Budge and Diane Hamer, eds. London: Pandora, 1994.

Padgug, Robert A. "Gay Villain, Gay Hero: Homosexuality and the Social Construction of AIDS", Passion and Power: The History of Sexuality, Kathy Peiss and Christina Simmons, eds. Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1989.

Parenti, Michael. Inventing Reality: The Politics of the Mass Media. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986.

Penelope, Julia, and Wolfe, Susan J. "Sexual Identity/Textual Politics: Lesbian {De/Com}Positions", Sexual Practice, Textual Theory: Lesbian Cultural Criticism. Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1993.

- Penn, Donna. "The Sexualized Woman: The Lesbian, the Prostitute, and the Containment of Female Sexuality in Postwar America", Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960, Joanne Meyerowitz, ed. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994.
- Pierson, Ruth Roach. "They're Still Women After All": The Second World war and Canadian Womanhood. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986.
- Rakow, Lana and Kranich, Kimberlie. "Women as Sign in Television News", Journal of Communication, Vol. 41, No. 1, Winter 1991, pp. 8-23.
- Rich, Adrienne. "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence", Blood, Bread, and Poetry: Selected Prose 1978-1985. London: Virago Press, 1986.
- Ringer, Jeffrey, ed. Queer Words, Queer Images: Communication and the Construction of Homosexuality. New York: New York University Press, 1994.
- Ross, Becki L. The House the Jill Built: A Lesbian Nation in Formation. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995.
- , "Whatever Happened to 'A is for Amazon?': The High-Wire Performance of Lesbian Subjectivity in the 1990s", Resources for Feminist Research, Fall/Winter 1991, Vol. 20, No. 3 and 4, pp. 124-129.
- Russo, Vito. The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Movies (Revised Edition). New York: Harper, 1987.
- Schlesinger, Benjamin, ed. Sexual Behaviour in Canada: Patterns and Problems. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977.
- Schudson, Michael. "The Sociology of News Production", Media, Culture and Society, No. 11, 1989, pp. 263-82.
- Smith, Barbara. "Queer Politics: Where's the Revolution?", The Nation, July 5, 1993, pp. 12-16.
- Smith, Dorothy. "Femininity as Discourse", Becoming Feminine. The Politics of Popular Culture, Leslie Roman et al, eds. London. The Falmer Press, 1988.
- Smith, Marilyn Croft. "Feminist Media and Cultural Politics", Women in Mass

- Communication, Second Edition, Pamela J. Creedon, ed. London: Sage Publications, 1993.
- Snitow, Ann, et al. Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality. Boston: Monthly Review Press, 1983.
- Sochen, June. Enduring Values: Women in Popular Culture. New York: Praeger, 1987.
- Stein, Arlene. "All Dressed Up But Nowhere to Go? Style Wars and the New Lesbianism", Out/Look, Winter 1989, pp. 34-42.
- Stone, Sharon Dale. Feminists and the Toronto Press: A Study of Their Relations in 1988. Doctoral Dissertation, York University, Department of Sociology, 1992.
- Streitmatter, Rodger. Unspeakable: The Rise of the Gay and Lesbian Press in America. Boston: Faber and Faber, 1995.
- Strinati, Dominic. "The Taste of America: Americanization and Popular Culture in Britain", Come on Down? Popular Media Culture in Post-War Britain, Dominic Strinati and Stephen Wagg, eds. London: Routledge, 1992.
- Task Force on the Canadian Magazine Industry. A Question of Balance: The Report of the Task Force on the Canadian Magazine Industry. Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1994.
- Terry, Jennifer. "Lesbians Under the Medical Gaze: Scientists Search for Remarkable Differences", The Journal of Sex Research, Vol. 21, No. 3, August 1990, pp. 317-339.
- Torres, Sasha. "Television/Feminism: **Heartbeat** and Prime Time Lesbianism", The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader, Ablove, Barale and Halperin, eds. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Tuchman, Gaye. "The Symbolic Annihilation of Women by the Mass Media", The Manufacture of News: Social Problems, Deviance and the Mass Media, Stanley Cohen and Jock Young, eds. London: Constable, 1973.
- Van Zoonen, Liesbet. Feminist Media Studies. London: Sage Publications, 1993.
- , "Feminist Perspectives on the Media", Mass Media and Society, James

- Curran and Micheal Gurevitch, eds. London: Arnold, 1991.
- Vipond, Mary. The Mass Media in Canada (Second Edition). Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1992.
- Wagman, Tova. "Strategies for Social Change: MediaWatch (and other) Complaint Actions", Canadian Woman Studies, Spring 1987, pp. 11-13.
- Weeks, Jeffrey. "Movements of Affirmation: Sexual Meanings and Homosexual Identities", Passion and Power: The History of Sexuality, Kathy Peiss and Christina Simmons, eds. Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1989.
- Whisman, Vera. "Identity Crises: Who is a Lesbian, Anyway?", Sisters, Sexperts, Queers: Beyond the Lesbian Nation, Arlene Stein, ed. New York: Plume, 1993.
- Wilkins, Leslie. "Information and the Definition of Deviance", The Manufacture of News: Social Problems, Deviance and the Mass Media, Stanley Cohen and Jock Young, eds. London: Constable, 1973.
- Wilson, Clint C. II, and Gutiérrez, Félix. Minorities and the Media: Diversity and the End of Mass Communication. London: Sage, 1985.
- Winship, Janice. Inside Women's Magazines. London: Pandora, 1987.
- Wolf, Michelle A. and Kielwasser, Alfred P., eds. Gay People, Sex and the Media. New York: Haworth Press, 1991.

END

1 7 0 6 - 9 7

FIN