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BULLETIN

VOLUME 14, NUMBERS 3 & 4, 1983 ISSN 0146-5562

homophobia ho·mo·pho·bi·a (hō'mə-fō'bē·ə) *noun* [*homosexual* + *phobia*]
1. fear, dislike or hatred of gay men and lesbians 2. discrimination against lesbians and gay men.
—ho'mo·pho'bic (-fō'bĭc) *adjective*.

Homophobia and Education

How to Deal with Name-Calling

BULLETIN

VOLUME 14, NUMBERS 3 & 4

1983

SPECIAL DOUBLE ISSUE ON HOMOPHOBIA
GUEST EDITOR: LEONORE GORDON

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COVER

While the term "homophobia" has appeared in dictionary supplements for at least ten years, it remains excluded from the standard lexicons. An exception is the 1982 Second College Edition of the American Heritage Dictionary.

Indexed in
Alternative Press Index
Education Index
 ERIC IRCD

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Why CIBC Is Dealing With Homophobia

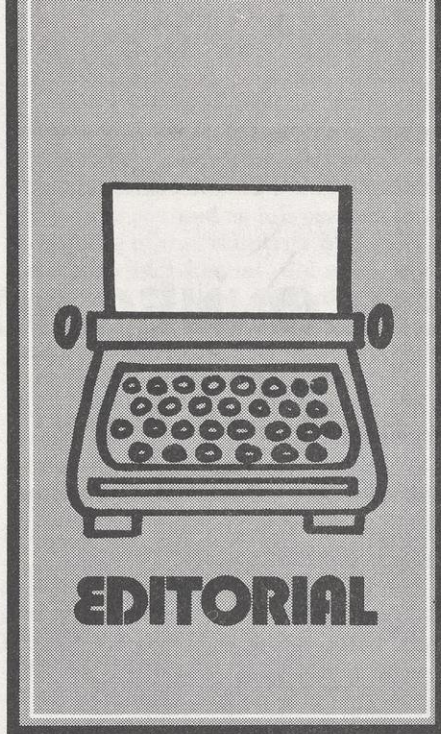
Phobia is defined in Webster's dictionary as "an exaggerated and often disabling fear." "Homophobia" is not yet found in most dictionaries, but its meaning is clear — a fear and hatred of homosexuals. CIBC has prepared this special *Bulletin* on homophobia and education for three reasons: First, homophobia oppresses at least one-tenth of our population, and we feel that education should be a vehicle for counteracting *all* forms of oppression. Second, homophobia is the ultimate weapon in reinforcing rigid sex-role conformity, and we believe that sex-role conformity oppresses all females and limits male options as well. Third, young people are generally appallingly misinformed about homosexuality, whereas education should provide accurate information about realities in this world.

1. Homophobia and oppression:

Gay men and lesbians—approximately one out of every ten people, according to current research—face discrimination, particularly in jobs and housing. They also face name-calling, taunting, hatred and violence. Much of the violence is carried out by groups of fourteen- to nineteen-year-olds, and such violence is escalating sharply. Attacks by young people represent a clear failure of our schools and other social institutions to educate against violence and against homophobia.

Educators committed to "justice for all" and human rights need to examine their own responsibilities in this situation. There are children in almost every classroom who are gay or lesbian. Many children have gay or lesbian parents. These children need support and protection. Other targets of societal oppression, such as children of color or children with disabilities, can count on support from their family and community. Few gay children have any support or guidance. While gay teachers could offer guidance and serve as reassuring role models for these youngsters, most gay teachers cannot risk "coming out" for fear of losing their jobs. It is the responsibility of non-gay teachers to help gay students—and to help their gay colleagues—by working to counteract heterosexism in their school. (As Audre Lorde points out elsewhere in this issue, heterosexism is a belief in the inherent superiority of one pattern of loving over all others and thereby its right to dominance.)

2. Homophobia and sex-role con-



formity: The second reason for educators to deal with this topic is that homophobia serves to reinforce rigid sex-role behaviors. Boys who fail to display prescribed "masculine" traits are called "sissy"—even before kindergarten, and any child will define a sissy as someone who is fearful, a crybaby or who "acts like a girl." Later they're called "fag." The fear of such name-calling makes boys toe the gender line and refrain from any display of caring and nurturing emotions. That fear also encourages them to develop aggressive, domineering behaviors.

Similarly, name-calling—from "tomboy" to "lezzie"—inhibits girls from developing their strengths or acting as equals to boys. Homophobia thus prevents the broadening of sex-role options. In fact, the women's movement is frequently attacked as "just a bunch of lesbians." This attack is calculated to make women toe the gender line. Until such time as non-gay people defend the rights and humanity of gay people and learn to shrug off homophobic labels, such name-calling will continue to oppress and inhibit everyone.

3. Homophobia and misinformation: CIBC's third reason for wanting to counteract homophobia in the classroom is that we believe all children—gay and non-gay—are entitled to honest information about sexuality or any other topic of relevance to their lives.

Educators can provide factual information to help counter the misinformation that promotes homophobia and to assist *all* children who are in the process

of coming to terms with their sexuality.

It is important to note that those most actively involved in trying to prevent objective discussions of homosexuality are the same white right-wing fundamentalists who seek to prevent students from learning about racism, sexism, poverty and movements for social change. Norma Gabler, a leader of the white fundamentalist right's attack on textbooks, criticized a textbook discussion of homosexuality as being in "direct contradiction to the fact that God has identified this act as wrong regardless of the beliefs or actions of society about this abnormal relationship."

We must be wary of those who use religion to justify oppression. Similar arguments have been used to legitimize slavery, racial segregation, anti-Semitism and the domination of women by men. (It is also important to note that many religious groups advocate the civil rights of lesbians and gay men, and organized caucuses of different faiths are working towards increased rights for, and acceptance of, gays and lesbians within religious communities.)

To even raise the subject of homophobia in these pages, never mind in the classroom, is certain to elicit some outrage. Any consideration of homosexuality or heterosexism can often evoke profound fears and an insistence that homosexuality be rejected as "unnatural."

Our perception of what is "natural" is all too often a product of socialization. What has long been proscribed, legislated and condemned can come to be seen as "unnatural." It is instructive to note, for example, that homosexuality was considered "natural" in most European societies until the 13th century, when church and state began a concerted effort to declare it unnatural (see John Boswell's *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality*, University of Chicago Press, 1980, for a fuller discussion).

Before concluding, it is necessary to deal with the question of "proselytizing," since this concern is frequently raised when efforts are made to discuss homosexuality. Many educators (and this of course includes parents) fear that such discussions will somehow "lure" youngsters from heterosexuality. Many believe that being gay or lesbian is a matter of free choice—not of pre-determination. They imagine that they have the power to guide children to make the "proper"—that is, heterosexual—choice, and they do not want to be accused of in-

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INTERCONNECTIONS

By James S. Tinney

While we do not know how or why people are homosexuals (any more than we know why or how they become heterosexuals), there is something in the orientation of most lesbians and gay men that is not reducible to, or explainable by, any specific combination of social factors, but reappears in all human societies, conditions and socio-economic and racial groupings.

Our unanimous testimony and feeling and "sense" about ourselves is that our condition (as differentiated from our acceptance of "being different") has existed for as long as we can remember, and that there is nothing that we (or others) can do to change our sexual orientation. This almost universal agreement among lesbians/gays should mean something non-dismissable.

Among other things, it means that we are a specific "kind" of people, who share certain things in common about our sexuality that distinguish us from others who we call heterosexuals. It means that one of our chief "traits" is our different affectional "nature." It means that our difference is related to our physical being, to our bodies (and/or embodiment); therefore we have this in common with persons of color and with women (though some of us are persons of color and women also) that the "difference" for which society discriminates against us is similarly a "bio-physical" difference. That means it is related somehow to our physical beings (although it is also related to our psychological/spiritual beings); and it is related somehow to our most intrinsic selves before adult consciousness, becoming a part of us before or during or soon after biological birth. It may be related to some genetic, chromosomal or hormonal characteristic which, as yet, we do not understand or know about, or it may not be. Regardless, it is still as intrinsic to our being as some genetically conditioned or determined fact. Even as persons of color cannot change their complexion (in most in-

stances), so lesbians and gays cannot change their orientation.

Our condition is as honorable as it is to be Black or white or to be a woman or a man. In this sense, therefore, we speak of "racial and sexual minorities" only because this is a political category representing those persons in the human family, who for no reason other than some bio-physical difference, are negated and denied and discriminated against and oppressed. We are "minorities" not because we are few in number (persons of color are a numerical minority in the U.S., but not in the world, whereas women constitute 51 per cent of the U.S. population and are thus not a numerical minority in this country, and no one knows how many lesbians/gays there are), but because we are politically excluded from proportionate roles and responsibilities in the major institutions of power. We are minorities in that we receive less than our share—a disproportionately minor amount of goods, services, values, rewards, power, prestige and prerogatives.

And who oppresses us? Who excludes us from our proper roles and responsibilities and real entitlements? The same ones who occupy most of—hence, a majority of—the instruments and institutions of power in the entire world: heterosexual white males. The enemy of all racial and sexual minorities is the same enemy.

Three cautions are in order, however. First, not all "straight" white males are oppressors, though all tend to be. Our belief in the potential of humanity necessitates the idea that a person can exist who is male, but not patriarchal; who is white, but not racist; and who is heterosexual, but neither heterosexist nor homophobic.

Second, others besides racial and sexual minorities may also be oppressed. All the poor are oppressed. There are also oppressions based on age and physical incapacity. But these oppressions are quali-

tatively and quantitatively different than oppressions based on race or sex or sexual orientation. Any one who is middle-income may lose their income and become poor; everyone (if they live) will become old; and anyone may become sick or disabled (and likely will if they live). But no one who is white will become Black; no one who is heterosexual will become homosexual; and (disregarding special situations) no one who is born one gender will likely become another gender. Racial and sexual minorities, unlike other persons, are oppressed for their most intrinsic and personal being and existence. There is little or nothing they can do to change the bio-physical identity which is the cause for their discrimination.

Third, persons may be subjected to multiple oppressions and those who are oppressed may themselves act oppressively toward others—although the sphere of oppression-by-the-oppressed tends to be limited. Institutional discrimination tends to affect *all* racial and sexual minorities (though not necessarily in identical ways). Thus a Black lesbian may experience personal rejection at some time because the person she encounters does not like Blacks (of whatever gender), while at another time encountering another person, she may experience rejection because that person does not like women or lesbians (of whatever race). Triple minority-status does not necessarily correspond to triple jeopardy *at the same time*. It is important to realize this lest some feel they are "more oppressed"—"super righteous"—and lest others condescendingly treat one another as "super-oppressed"—with "super pity" or "super privileges."

It does no good to compare oppressions for the purpose of proving that one group is more oppressed than another. Each oppression is like some other and unlike some other. For every way in which one oppression may seem to be "less" than another, there is probably another way in which it is uniquely "worse."

Neither does it benefit anyone to argue over which oppression came first. Since none of us was there at the beginning, none of us knows for sure. The debate is also a useless one, for the most part, since whatever was the original oppression has now been extended by other kinds. Whichever came first, all oppressions now tend to simultaneously operate with almost autonomous fury, as well as reinforce each other.

What is needed is a powerful blow that will fell all hierarchies of injustice in one grand sweep. We cannot afford to concentrate on only one today, and wait until tomorrow to deal with the other. None of us can be truly free until all of us are free.

Having said that, one more word of caution: coalition must not be viewed in one group's self-interest, as if it were merely good pragmatism or practical strategy to build coalitions. If the only reason white gay males become willing to join with other minorities is to get a few more reciprocal votes for a gay rights bill, then coalition-building with gays is doomed before it starts. Only if gays realize that their destiny is comingled with the destiny of other minorities will coalition-building succeed. We must not make the mistake of supporting some group simply because it is politically expedient to do so; rather, we must come to a full knowledge of how all sexual and racial minorities belong to each other, suffer at the hands of the same oppressor, and can only attain liberation by jointly beating down the door to those whose fortunes are due to our misfortunes.

Injustices of all types can be organized under three broad categories which often overlap: institutional oppression, collective oppression and individual oppression.

Institutional. This category refers to those discriminations which prevent equal participation in associations and/or which prevent the bestowal of equal benefits by those associations. Endless examples might be given, but only three will be mentioned to demonstrate the way people of color, women and lesbians/gays are all affected.

The lack of prior claims to rights and privileges is one way all racial and sexual minorities are oppressed. Prior claim is held by men over women; women had to make subsequent claims and demonstrations to secure the right to vote, although men already had it. (Similarly, men do not find it necessary to pass an Equal Rights Amendment for them-

selves; they have prior claim to, not equal rights, but superior rights.) Similarly, Blacks were not even regarded as citizens or counted as full persons in the beginning of this country's history. "All men are created equal" did not apply to Black men (let alone women). Frederick Douglass said that power concedes nothing without a demand; and since power was always the possession of white men, its prior existence necessitated a Black demand. Prior rights of all kinds are assumed by heterosexuals. We have yet to even effectively convince heterosexuals of the legitimacy of our pleas for rights—which demonstrates most clearly that, by definition, "rights" have been and remain the prerogative of only one group consistently (that group is composed of white heterosexual males).

The limitation of life chances is another way all racial and sexual minorities are oppressed. In all three critical areas of education, income and health, all minorities rank far below white straight males. We should look at the large gap between all of us who are minorities and the privileged white heterosexual males.

The lack of protection by judicial and police authorities is another way in which institutional oppression faces all racial and sexual minorities. Women who are raped, Blacks who are victims of crime and gay men who are molested or endure fag-bashings, all uniformly report the slowness with which police respond to their cause, the absence of follow-up to complaints, the near impossibility of getting justice from a court, and the general patterns of disbelief or blaming the victim.

Collective. This category refers to those discriminations which result from collective norms, values and mores that work within a society to legitimize oppressions. Here again, only a few examples will be given.

The denial of culture is one way all racial and sexual minorities are abused by collective oppression. "Black people have no culture," we were told in the 60s (and often still hear). The idea that women share certain special psychological or physical or spiritual affinities that can be expressed in literature or art is also ridiculed. And who dares to take seriously the claim that there is anything such as "gay culture"? Everywhere the reaction to the idea of minority cultures is met with obstinate denial. The National Council for Black Studies annually conducts special seminars on the decline of Black studies programs. (Academic minority studies programs are good indica-

tors of the conceptual validity of minority cultures among straight white males.) Gay studies are almost unknown; in San Francisco and a few other places, a course or two on gay topics are offered, but there are no gay studies departments. Even women's studies, which seemed to gain popularity a few years ago, now suffer from not-so-benign neglect. Everywhere the story is the same for Black/gay/women's studies: courses are not accepted for credit toward majors, teachers cannot get tenured and often cannot even get anything other than a dual-department appointment (a very poor arrangement), and such courses are universally regarded by other professors and administrators as "weak," "watered down," "useless preparation for any job," "non-transferable" and "lacking in academic integrity as a legitimate discipline."

The denial of popular strength is another way all racial and sexual minorities are discriminated against. Society refuses to believe how many Blacks there are in this country "passing" for white, and how many lesbians and gays there are "out there" passing as heterosexuals.

The same denial exists relative to the strength of liberation movements among the oppressed. The media never believed that the following of the "Black power" movement was as large as it was. Neither does the media, or the general public, today believe that feminists "really represent" very many women, let alone the "average American woman" (whoever that is). In lesbians/gays themselves, homophobia similarly operates to keep persons from acknowledging even to themselves that they are lesbian or gay.

Closely related are two other phenomena: the fear of over-visibility and the conspiracy to silence. Society operates collectively to prevent feminists and Black-consciousness adherents and lesbians and gays from declaring themselves and acknowledging their presence. It also operates to prevent too many such persons from congregating in any one place. Thus, establishments call themselves integrated if they have one person of color; if too many Blacks and Hispanics start attending, then the procedures or the music or some other item will be changed to convey the message that "we don't want Blacks 'taking over.'" In fact, educational sociology has shown that there is a "tipping point" of 30 per cent in public schools. As long as minorities are less than that percentage of the total student body, only a few

white families move or transfer their children; but once the percentage of minority pupils reaches 30 per cent, whites *in toto* will withdraw from both the school and its neighborhood, producing a "white flight" that quickly transforms the school into a 90 per cent Black or Hispanic institution almost overnight. Anytime racial or sexual minorities get together as a small group, or establish the right-of-presence, they are accused of "taking over." The presence of a token woman or a token Black or a token gay is sufficient to make "straight" white males think they have bent-over-backwards to be equitable.

This fear of over-visibility is related to the conspiracy to silence. "It doesn't matter to us what color you are; we're color blind," they always say. It is amazing how many whites suddenly become neutral about the matter of race or gender when anyone mentions the need for quotas or proportional goals. It is also amazing how many lesbians and gays are advised that "nobody cares who you go to bed with, so don't make it a public issue." In both cases, the message is, "keep quiet," "don't rock the boat," "it's all right, but just don't talk about it." The real question, of course, is, "If it's not so important, why do straight white males make such a fuss about it?" Someone has said the law's message to all minorities is, "Renounce yourself or be suppressed; do not appear or you will be made to disappear."

The creation of a defined public space for racial and sexual minorities is another way society collectively oppresses. Under certain conditions, this is called colonization, and straight white males have always been the colonialists of the world. Under other conditions, these spaces are called ghettos. The enforced segregation of Blacks in central cities, Hispanics in barrios, women in the home and gays on Castro Street in San Francisco (or its gay equivalent in other cities), bespeaks this "colonization" or "ghettoization" of all racial and sexual minorities. This segregation is an oppressive society's way of regulating and watching and confining dissident populations short of actual incarceration in camps or jails. Sometimes the market forces will even permit expansion or relocation of the "public space" beyond its original borders, but this is done only at the will of the oppressor. In this manner, women were permitted to go outside the home, but only to work in certain occupations such as elementary teaching. Likewise, Blacks are now being shifted out of

central cities, since whites have decided that the costs of commuting from suburbs and the rising price of gasoline have once again made the city an economical place to live.

The denial of self-labeling is yet another way society collectively oppresses racial and sexual minorities. Closely related to the denial of self-definition, this phenomenon manifests itself by the refusal to cease calling Blacks "Negroes," to cease calling women "ladies" and to cease calling gays "perverts." It also manifests itself by creating and using derogatory names instead of proper ones, so that (in addition to racially offensive terms) feminists are called "libbers," women are called "bitches and dames and chicks and broads," gays are called "faggots and sissies and freaks," and lesbians are called "dykes and studs." Yet one of the principles of self-liberation is that each person and each people have the right to name themselves. Where does this leave gay men (who in homophobic reaction manifest the same principle), refusing to hear lesbians when they tell us that the words "gay" and "homosexual" do not include them? Shall gay men similarly deprive lesbians of their right to name themselves also?

Negative Symbolism

Negative symbolism is another way society collectively oppresses racial and sexual minorities. Thus black has scores of denotations and connotations, all of them negative, referring to sin, evil, fear, crime, dirt, uncleanness and death. (The one exception is for one's financial status to be "in the black.") Woman also is symbolic of all kinds of negative images: the "temptress" Eve, the weaker vessel, the impossible virgin or the detestable whore, a mere rib (or part) of what man is. Gays too are negatively symbolic of perversity, unnaturalness, crimes against nature, and both inordinate self-love and sorrowful unrequited love. Of course, religion has also perpetuated much of this negative symbolizing of racial and sexual minorities. Originally, the churches taught that Blacks did not have souls and therefore could not be baptized or saved; later it determined that it had been in error, and now Blacks can have their hearts "washed white as snow." Until recently, churches refused to ordain women or even to permit them to serve as deacons or elders at the lay level. This was because women were thought more prone to sin, and because God and Christ were both thought to be

males. Women also, at an earlier time, could not secure their salvation independently of a man, but were saved only if they belonged to the covenant, were baptized by a man or belonged to a household whose father or husband was a believer. Today, of course, women can be saved: they become a "new man in Christ," even as Blacks become white. Still, in most churches, women are subject to men, and there are few women bishops. This repression also happens to lesbians and gays, who are not accepted to the priesthood or clergy of any major denomination generally (although isolated ordinations of allegedly non-practicing lesbians/gays have occurred), because they symbolize rebellion and perversion and those cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (which probably were never "guilty" of homosexuality in the first place). All of this negative symbolism affects the entire society.

Individual. These discriminations are based more on personal prejudice, misinformation and stereotyping than on institutionalized exclusion or collective cultural norms and values. For this reason, individual inter-personal oppression is both easier to notice and easier to combat. Major overhauls of societal social arrangements are required to counteract and eliminate institutional and collective oppressions, whereas the educational process alone is often sufficient to cause a readjustment in personal consciousness.

Only three individual stereotypes will be mentioned here, although many many more exist: the idea that racial and sexual minorities are all hypersexual, animal-like and heretics.

The illusion that minorities are all hypersexual surfaces in many forms. Racial minorities are considered "breeders," whose lack of schooling and employment is due more to a desire to stay home (or carouse) and have sex than systemic lack of jobs. Women, of course, are considered to be perpetually "in heat," just waiting for a man to screw them. Even when they say "no," women are thought to mean "yes." And rape is extremely low on the list of provable and punishable crimes since, according to most men's ideas, women place themselves in a vulnerable position or allure the rapist by their dress or even probably "enjoy it." This same myth of hypersexuality extends to lesbians and gay men also. The common misconception that the term "homosexual" adequately defines gayness (with its emphasis on sex rather

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The author, as a Black woman, as a lesbian, as a feminist and as an activist, shows how major "isms" intimately and violently intertwine

Homophobia: Why Bring It Up?

By Barbara Smith

In 1977 the Combahee River Collective, a Black feminist organization in Boston of which I was a member, wrote:

The most general statement of our politics at the present time would be that we are actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression and see as our particular task the development of integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking. . . . We . . . often find it difficult to separate race from class from sex oppression because in our lives they are most often experienced simultaneously.*

Despite the logic and clarity of Third World women's analysis of the simultaneity of oppression, people of all colors, progressive ones included, seem peculiarly reluctant to grasp these basic truths, especially when it comes to incorporating an active resistance to homophobia into their every day lives. Homophobia is usually the last oppression to be mentioned, the last to be taken seriously, the last to go. But it is extremely serious, sometimes to the point of being fatal.

Consider that on the night of September 29, 1982, 20-30 New York City policemen rushed without warning into Blues, a Times Square bar. They harassed and severely beat the patrons, vandalized the premises, emptied the cash register and left without making a single arrest. What motivated such brutal behavior? The answer is simple. The cops were inspired by three

cherished tenets of our society: racism, classism and homophobia: the bar's clientele is Black, working class and gay. As the police cracked heads, they yelled racist and homophobic epithets familiar to every school child. The attackers' hatred of both the queer and the colored, far from making them exceptional, put them squarely in the mainstream. If their actions were more extreme than most, their attitudes certainly were not.

The Blues bar happens to be across the street from the offices of *The New York Times*. The white, upper middle-class, presumably heterosexual staff of the nation's premier newspaper regularly calls in complaints about the bar to the police. Not surprisingly, none of the New York daily papers, including the *Times*, bothered to report the incident. A coalition of Third World and white lesbians and gay men organized a large protest demonstration soon after the attack occurred. Both moderate and militant civil rights and anti-racist organizations were notably absent, and they have yet to express public outrage about a verifiable incident of police brutality, undoubtedly because the Black people involved were not straight.

Intertwining "isms"

What happened at Blues perfectly illustrates the ways in which the major "isms" including homophobia are intimately and violently intertwined. As a Black woman, a lesbian, a feminist and an activist, I have little difficulty seeing how the systems of oppression interconnect, if for no other reason than that their meshings so frequently affect my

life. During the 70s and 80s political lesbians of color have often been the most astute about the necessity for developing understandings of the connections between oppressions. They have also opposed the building of hierarchies and challenged the "easy way out" of choosing a "primary oppression" and downplaying those messy inconsistencies that occur whenever race, sex, class and sexual identity actually mix. Ironically, for the forces on the right, hating lesbians and gay men, people of color, Jews and women go hand in hand. *They* make connections between oppressions in the most negative ways with horrifying results. Supposedly progressive people, on the other hand, who oppose oppression on every other level, balk at acknowledging the societally sanctioned abuse of lesbians and gay men as a serious problem. Their tacit attitude is "Homophobia, why bring it up?"

There are numerous reasons for otherwise sensitive people's reluctance to confront homophobia in themselves and others. A major one is that people are generally threatened about issues of sexuality, and for some the mere existence of homosexuals calls their sexuality/heterosexuality into question. Unlike many other oppressed groups, homosexuals are not a group whose identity is clear from birth. Through the process of coming out, a person might indeed acquire this identity at any point in life. One way to protect one's heterosexual credentials and privilege is to put down lesbians and gay men at every turn, to make as large a gulf as possible between "we" and "they."

There are several misconceptions and attitudes which I find particularly de-

* The Combahee River Collective, "A Black Feminist Statement" in *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies*, pp. 13, 16 (The Feminist Press), 1982.

structive because of the way they work to isolate the concerns of lesbians and gay men:

1. **Lesbian and gay male oppression is not as serious as other oppressions. It is not a political matter, but a private concern.** The life-destroying impact of lost jobs, children, friendships and family; the demoralizing toll of liv-

ing in constant fear of being discovered by the wrong person which pervades all lesbians and gay men's lives whether closeted or out; and the actual physical violence and deaths that gay men and lesbians suffer at the hands of homophobes can be, if one subscribes to this myth, completely ignored.

2. **"Gay" means gay white men with large discretionary incomes, period.** Perceiving gay people in this way allows one to ignore that some of us are women *and* people of color *and* working class *and* poor *and* disabled *and* old. Thinking narrowly of gay people as white, middle-class, and male, which is just what the establishment media want people to think, undermines consciousness of how identities and issues overlap. It is essential, however, in making connections between homophobia and other oppressions, not to fall prey to the distorted reasoning that the justification for taking homophobia seriously is that it affects some groups who are "verifiably" oppressed, for example, people of color, women or disabled people. Homophobia is in and of itself a verifiable oppression and in a heterosexist system, all non-heterosexuals are viewed as "deviants" and are oppressed.

3. **Homosexuality is a white problem or even a "white disease."** This attitude is much too prevalent among people of color. Individuals who are militantly opposed to racism in all its forms still find lesbianism and male homosexuality something to snicker about or, worse, to despise. Homophobic people of color are oppressive not just to white people, but to members of their own groups — at least ten per cent of their own groups.

4. **Expressions of homophobia are legitimate and acceptable in contexts where other kinds of verbalized bigotry would be prohibited.** Put-downs and jokes about "dykes" and "faggots" can be made without the slightest criticism in circles where "nigger" and "chink" jokes, for instance, would bring instant censure or even ostracism. One night of television viewing indicates how very acceptable public expressions of homophobia are.

How can such deeply entrenched attitudes and behavior be confronted and changed? Certainly gay and lesbian/feminist activism has made significant inroads since the late 60s, both in the public sphere and upon the awareness of individuals. These movements have served a highly educational function, but they have not had nearly enough impact

upon the educational system itself. Curriculum that focuses in a positive way upon issues of sexual identity, sexuality and sexism is still rare, particularly in primary and secondary grades. Yet schools are virtual cauldrons of homophobic sentiment, as witnessed by everything from the graffiti in the bathrooms and the put-downs yelled on the playground, to the heterosexist bias of most texts and the firing of teachers on no other basis than that they are not heterosexual.

In the current political climate schools are constantly under hostile scrutiny from well-organized conservative forces. More than a little courage is required to challenge students' negative attitudes about what it means to be homosexual, female, Third World, etc., but these attitudes *must* be challenged if pervasive taken-for-granted homophobia is ever to cease. I have found both in teaching and in speaking to a wide variety of audiences that making connections between oppressions is an excellent way to introduce the subjects of lesbian and gay male identity and homophobia, because it offers people a frame of reference to build upon. This is especially true if efforts have already been made in the classroom to teach about racism and sexism. It is factually inaccurate and strategically mistaken to present gay materials as if all gay people were white and male. Fortunately, there is an increasing body of work available, usually written by Third World feminists, that provides an integrated approach to the intersection of a multiplicity of identities and issues (see box).

Perhaps some readers are still wondering, "Homophobia, why bring it up?" One reason to bring it up is that at least ten per cent of your students will be or already are lesbians and gay males. Ten per cent of your colleagues are as well. Homophobia may well be the last oppression to go, but it will go. It will go a lot faster if people who are opposed to every form of subjugation work in coalition to make it happen. □

About the Author

BARBARA SMITH is co-editor with Gloria T. Hull and Patricia Bell Scott of *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies* (The Feminist Press) and editor of *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology* (Persephone Press, 1983). "Lesbian Literature: A Third World Feminist Perspective," a dialogue with Cherrie Moraga, recently appeared in *Lesbian Studies, Margaret Cruikshank, editor* (The Feminist Press, 1982).

Recommended Reading

Recent titles which contain useful information, particularly about lesbians of color, are:

All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies, Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott and Barbara Smith, co-editors, The Feminist Press, Old Westbury, NY 11568, 1982, \$8.95.

Black Lesbians: An Annotated Bibliography, J.R. Roberts, compiler, Naiad Press, P.O. Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302, 1981, \$5.95 individuals, \$8 institutions.

Conditions: Five, The Black Women's Issue, Lorraine Bethel and Barbara Smith, co-editors, Conditions, Box 56, Van Brunt Station, Brooklyn, NY 11215, 1979, \$4.50.

Cuentos: Stories by Latinas, Alma Gomez, Cherrie Moraga and Mariana Romo-Carmona, editors, Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, Box 592, Van Brunt Station, Brooklyn, NY 11215, 1983, \$7.95.

Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology, Barbara Smith, editor, Persephone Press, P.O. Box 7222, Watertown, MA 02172, 1983, \$10.95.

This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color, Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, editors, Persephone Press, P.O. Box 7222, Watertown, MA 02172, 1981, \$8.95.

Zami: A New Spelling of My Name, Audre Lorde, Persephone Press, P.O. Box 7222, Watertown, MA 02172, 1982, \$7.95.

Also recommended because they contain many works by women of color are:

Lesbian Fiction: An Anthology, Elly Bulkin, editor, Persephone Press, P.O. Box 7222, Watertown, MA 02172, 1981, \$8.95.

Lesbian Poetry: An Anthology, Elly Bulkin and Joan Larkin, co-editors, Persephone Press, P.O. Box 7222, Watertown, MA 02172, 1981, \$10.95.

Noted author Audre Lorde holds that if we truly intend to eliminate oppression, heterosexism and homophobia must be addressed

There Is No Hierarchy of Oppressions

By Audre Lorde

I was born Black, and a woman. I am trying to become the strongest person I can become to live the life I have been given and to help effect change toward a liveable future for this earth and for my children. As a Black, lesbian, feminist, socialist, poet, mother of two including one boy and a member of an interracial couple, I usually find myself part of some group in which the majority defines me as deviant, difficult, inferior or just plain "wrong."

From my membership in all of these groups I have learned that oppression and the intolerance of difference come in all shapes and sizes and colors and sexualities; and that among those of us who share the goals of liberation and a workable future for our children, there can be no hierarchies of oppression. I have learned that sexism (a belief in the inherent superiority of one sex over all others and thereby its right to dominance) and heterosexism (a belief in the inherent superiority of one pattern of loving over all others and thereby its right to dominance) both arise from the same source as racism—a belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby its right to dominance.

"Oh," says a voice from the Black community, "but being Black is NORMAL!" Well, I and many Black people of my age can remember grimly the days when it didn't used to be!

I simply do not believe that one aspect of myself can possibly profit from the oppression of any other part of my identity. I know that my people cannot possibly profit from the oppression of any other group which seeks the right to peaceful existence. Rather, we diminish ourselves by denying to others what we have shed blood to obtain for our children. And those children need to learn that they do not have to become like each other in

order to work together for a future they will all share.

The increasing attacks upon lesbians and gay men are only an introduction to the increasing attacks upon all Black people, for wherever oppression manifests itself in this country, Black people are potential victims. And it is a standard of right-wing cynicism to encourage members of oppressed groups to act against each other, and so long as we are divided because of our particular identities we cannot join together in effective political action.

Within the lesbian community I am Black, and within the Black community I am a lesbian. Any attack against Black people is a lesbian and gay issue, because I and thousands of other Black women are part of the lesbian community. Any attack against lesbians and gays is a Black issue, because thousands of lesbians and gay men are Black. There is no hierarchy of oppression.

It is not accidental that the Family Protection Act, which is virulently anti-woman and anti-Black, is also anti-gay. As a Black person, I know who my enemies are, and when the Ku Klux Klan goes to court in Detroit to try and force the Board of Education to remove books the Klan believes "hint at homosexuality," then I know I cannot afford the luxury of fighting one form of oppression only. I cannot afford to believe that freedom from intolerance is the right of only one particular group. And I cannot afford to choose between the fronts upon which I must battle these forces of discrimination, wherever they appear to destroy me. And when they appear to destroy me, it will not be long before they appear to destroy you. □

About the Author

AUDRE LORDE'S latest work is *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*, Persephone Press.

Continued from page 3

fluencing young people to become gay.

Though the direction of one's sexual activity is a matter of choice for a small percentage of adults, the majority of lesbians and gay men become aware that they are somehow "different" from the heterosexual "norm" when they are quite young. This awareness generally occurs in profoundly anti-gay social settings and in spite of a heterosexist society that "proselytizes" the superiority of heterosexuality and the inferiority of homosexuality. Given the pervasiveness of heterosexual influences (the media, the educational system, countless role models, etc.), the fact that lesbians and gay men succeed in discovering their identities at all provides a strong argument that sexual orientation is not influenced by "proselytizing."

To date, science has not determined how sexual orientation develops. We know only that homosexuality, like heterosexuality, has existed in all types of families, in all societies and cultures throughout history. (Asking why homosexuality develops is based on the heterosexist assumption that homosexuality is an "abnormality" with a specific cause or causes.) The evidence indicates that it is a difference—like left-handedness—and that it represents part of the range of human sexual/affective expression. For young people who are gay or lesbian, it is as much a "condition of their being" as the color of their skin, their gender or their age. CIBC believes that no one should be oppressed for their "condition of being."

If we truly intend to eliminate oppression and achieve human liberation, heterosexism and homophobia must be addressed. As in the struggle against racism and sexism, courage, commitment and integrity are required. □

"Much of the hostility that homosexuals complain about coming from the Black community is not so much intolerance as it is irritation at having the Black struggle used as a band-wagon for white people. It's annoying to hear white gay activists speaking in public, compare being gay with being Black, as if they had some kind of first-hand knowledge of what "being Black" is like. — Leonard Andrews, Jr., in "Personal Reflections on Gay Liberation from the Third World" in *A Book of Readings: For Men Against Sexism*, Times Change Press, 1977

A noted feminist counters the common myths and misinformation by which homophobia is used to reinforce rigid sex roles

The Secret Fear That Keeps Us from Raising Free Children

By Letty Cottin Pogrebin

In the 19th century when women of all races began their drive for the vote, what was the argument most often used against them?

That voting was a masculine concern, and that therefore women who attempted it would become (or already were) “mannish,” “unwomanly” and “unnatural.” In short, sexually suspect.

In the 20th century when young men objected to the rationale for the U.S. military presence in Vietnam, what was the argument most used to discredit their protest?

That refusing a masculine enterprise like war made them “like a woman,” “soft,” “scared” and therefore sexually suspect.

It's time we faced head-on the most powerful argument that authoritarian forces in any society use to keep people—male or female—in line: the idea that you are not born with gender but must earn it, and thus the threat that if you don't follow orders you will not be a “real man” or “real woman.”

Even those of us who have long since stopped worrying about this conformity for ourselves may find that our own deepest conditioning takes over in the emotional landscape inhabited by our children and our feelings about child-rearing. It is this conditioning that the right wing plays on to prevent change, no matter how life-enhancing. And it is these fears that sometimes inhibit pro-child attitudes in the most well-intentioned parents; the fear

1. that sex roles determine sexuality;
2. that specific ingredients *make* a child homosexual; and
3. that homosexuality is one of the worst things that can happen.

ASSUMPTION 1: SEX ROLES DETERMINE SEXUALITY.

It was inevitable that the cult of sex differences would lead us to the familiar romantic bromide—*opposites attract*. Most people truly believe that the more “masculine” you are, the more you'll love and be loved by females, and the more “feminine” you are, the more you'll love and be loved by males.

If you believe this quid pro quo, you will systematically raise your daughters and sons differently so that they become magnets for their “opposites,” and you will fear that resistance to stereotyped sex roles might distort their behavior in bed as adults.

Clever, this patriarchy. In return for conformity, it promises a “normal” sex life for our children. But it can't deliver on that promise, because all available evidence proves that *sex role does not determine sexual orientation*.

During the last decade thousands of homosexual men and women have “come out” from behind their “straight” disguises, and we discovered that except for choice of sex partner, they look and act so much the same as everyone else that as sexologist Dr. Wainright Churchill put it, “they may not be identified as homosexuals even by experts.” Most female and male homosexuals have tried heterosexual intercourse; many have been married and have children; and sometimes they are remarkable only for being so *unlike* the “gay” stereotype.

Take a quintessential “man's man,” David Kopay—six feet one, 205 pounds, ten-year veteran of pro football. “I was the typical jock,” writes Kopay in his autobiography (*The David Kopay Story*, Bantam). “I was tough. I was successful.

And all the time I knew I preferred sex with men.”

And great beauties, “feminine-looking” women, married women, mothers of many children have, for centuries, had lesbian love affairs with one another, disproving the opposites-attract theory with a vengeance, and reminding us again that sex roles do not determine sexuality.

ASSUMPTION 2: SPECIFIC INGREDIENTS MAKE A CHILD HOMOSEXUAL.

Although no one knows what causes homosexuality, there is no shortage of theories on the subject. Sociobiologists and other behavioral scientists pursue the idea that “genetic loading” can create a predisposition toward homosexuality, a theory that will remain far-fetched until researchers find many sets of identical twins both members of which became homosexual although reared separately.

Proponents of *hormone theory* have tried to find a definitive connection between testosterone level and homosexual orientation. However, various biochemical studies of the last decade show directly contradictory results, and even when hormonal differences are found, no one knows whether hormones cause the homosexuality or the homosexual activities cause the hormone production.

The biochemical “explorers,” like the geneticists, perpetuate the idea that homosexuals are a different species with a hormonal disturbance that chemistry might “cure.” So far, attempts to alter sexual orientation with doses of hormones have only succeeded in increasing the *amount* of sex drive, not in changing its direction.

The *conditioned-response theory* holds that sexual orientation depends not on biology or "instincts" but on learning from experience, from the same reward-and-punishment process as any other acquired behavior, and from sexual trigger mechanisms, such as pictures, music or certain memories, that set off homosexual or heterosexual responses the way the bell set Pavlov's dog salivating.

The conditioning theory, logical as far as it goes, leads us down several blind alleys. Why might one child experience a certain kind of stroking as pleasurable when a same-sex friend does it but *more* pleasurable when a friend of the other sex does it, while another child feels the reverse? Why do some children "learn" to overcome the effects of a frightening early sexual experience, while others may be hurt by it forever, and still others "learn" to merge pain with pleasure?

Doesn't cultural pressure itself "teach" children to avoid a particular sexual response, no matter what the body has learned to like? Otherwise, how do millions of adolescents move from masturbation to homosexual experimentation—often their *only* interpersonal sexual pleasure—to heterosexuality?

Perhaps the conditioned-response theory can explain the man who has felt homosexual since childhood, but how does it account for the woman who, after 20 years as an orgasmic, exclusive heterosexual, had a lesbian encounter and found she didn't have to "learn" to like it?

One research psychiatrist reminds us that we don't yet understand the basic mechanism of sexual arousal in the human central nervous system, and until we do, questions about homosexual or heterosexual arousal are entirely premature.

Psychoanalytic Theory

Psychoanalytic theory, the most steadfast and intimidating of all the causation theories, is the one that "blames" homosexuality on the family. To challenge it, we must begin at the beginning.

In 1905, Sigmund Freud declared that human beings are innately *bisexual* at birth and their early psychosexual experiences tip the scales one way or the other.

To ensure a heterosexual outcome, the child is supposed to identify with the same-sex parent, to "kill them off" so to speak, as an object of sexual interest. For example, a girl's psychodynamic is "I become like Mother, therefore I no longer

desire Mother; I desire Father, but I can't have him so I desire those who are like him."

If instead the girl identifies with the other-sex parent ("I become like Father"), he is killed off as object choice ("therefore I do not desire Father"), and the girl will be a lesbian ("I desire Mother or those who are like her"). For the boy, obviously, the same psychodynamic is true in reverse.

According to this theory, female homosexuality derives mainly from too much *hostility* toward the mother for passing on her inferior genital equipment. The lesbian girl identifies with Father and compensates for her hatred of the inferior mother by loving women, while rejecting "femininity" (meaning passivity, masochism, inferiority) for herself. Male homosexuality derives mainly from too much *attachment* to the mother; *i.e.*, a Momma's Boy can't be a woman's man.

Although many contemporary psychologists now believe otherwise, and despite the fact that Freud's views are unsupported by objective evidence, it is his ideas that millions of lay people have accepted—the view that human beings grow "healthy" by the Oedipal resolution: fearing and thus respecting one parent (Dad) and disdaining the other (Mom). Since our parents stand as our first models of male and female, this primal fear and disdain tends to form a paradigm for lifelong sexual enmity, suspicion, betrayal and rejection.

Father is supposed to represent reality and Mother is associated with infant dependency. In order to gain their independence, both girls and boys must form an alliance with Father against Mother. Politically, this translates to male supremacy ("alliance with Father") and cultural misogyny ("against Mother"). Psychologically, the message is conform or you might turn out "queer."

The hitch is, as we've noted, that sex role and sexual orientation have been shown to be totally unrelated. Modern practitioners may know this, but since they have not loudly and publicly revised psychoanalytic theories on homosexuality, they are in effect supporting the old lies. What's more, their silence leaves unchallenged these contradictions within psychoanalytic theory itself:

- A human *instinct* by definition should be the same for everyone, everywhere; yet in societies where sex stereotypes do not exist, the supposedly instinctual Oedipal psychodrama doesn't exist either.

- If the castration complex, the fear of losing the penis, is the founding element of "masculinity," how is it that Dr. Robert Stoller, professor of psychiatry at UCLA Medical School, found boys who were born without penises believed themselves boys anyway?

- How do we account for millions of children who become heterosexual though raised in father-absent homes? How do these mothers arouse fear and respect in the boy and the requisite penis envy in the girl?

- Why do batteries of psychological tests *fail to show any significant difference* between lesbians and heterosexuals on the psychological criteria that are supposed to "cause" female homosexuality?

- How can one say that male homosexuals identify with Mother and take on "feminine" ways, when mothers of homosexuals are supposedly "masculine," dominant and aggressive?

- If a woman's compensation for her missing penis is a baby boy, then of course she'll overprotect her son as a hedge against a *second* castration—losing him. It's a cruel tautology to posit motherhood in these terms and, at the same time, to hold Mother responsible for overprotection of the one treasure she's supposedly spent her whole life seeking.

- Could it be that girls and women envy the *privileges* that accrue to people whose distinguishing feature happens to be the penis, without envying the penis?

- Freud declared the "vaginal orgasm" to be the diploma of heterosexual maturity, yet in *Human Sexual Response*, William Masters and Virginia Johnson have proved the clitoris to be the physiological source of all female orgasms. Why require a girl to unlearn clitoral pleasure when in every other instance Freud believed that "urges dissipate when they become satisfied"? Is it because the clitoral orgasm is active, not receptive; because it doesn't require a penis and it doesn't result in procreation? Was the promotion of the "vaginal orgasm" patriarchy's way of keeping females passive, male-connected and frequently pregnant?

A Final Point

We could devote pages and pages to poking holes in psychoanalytic theory, but these final points should do the trick: studies show that the classic "homosexual-inducing" family produces plenty of "straight" children; other kinds of

families raise both heterosexual and homosexual siblings under the same roof; and totally "straight" family constellations rear homosexual kids.

And so, all speculations have been found wanting, and we are left with one indisputable fact: *no one knows what causes homosexuality.*

ASSUMPTION 3: HOMOSEXUALITY IS ONE OF THE WORST THINGS THAT CAN HAPPEN TO ANYONE.

Studies show that the majority of people in our society want homosexuality "cured." Yet the facts—when this volatile subject can be viewed factually—prove that homosexuality is neither uncommon, abnormal, nor harmful to its practitioners or anyone else.

When the "naturalness" of heterosexuality is claimed via examples in the animal kingdom, one can point to recorded observations of homosexuality among seagulls, cows, mares, sows, primates and many other mammals. But more important, among humans, "there is probably no culture from which homosexuality has not been reported," according to Drs. Clellan Ford and Frank Beach in *Patterns of Sexual Behavior* (Harper). And no matter what moral or legal prohibitions have been devised through the ages, none have ever eliminated homosexuality. In fact, the incidence of homosexuality is greater in countries that forbid it than in those that don't. With all the fluctuations of public morality, many sources confirm that 10 per cent of the entire population consider themselves exclusively homosexual at any given place and time.

No Differences Found

Aside from choosing to love members of their own sex, lesbians and homosexual males have been found no different from heterosexuals in gender identity or self-esteem, in drinking, drug use, suicide rates, relationships with parents and friends and general life satisfaction. One study actually found lower rates of depression among lesbians; another study measured higher competence and intellectual efficiency; still another found more lesbians (87 per cent) than heterosexual women (18 per cent) experienced orgasm "almost always"; and two important recent reports revealed that homosexuals seem clearly far *less* likely than heterosexuals to commit child abuse or other sexual crimes. In short, many homosexuals "could very well serve as models of social comportment

and psychological maturity." And yet, parents feel obliged to protect their children from it.

Why?

In a word, *homophobia*—fear and intolerance of homosexuality. Despite the facts just enumerated, millions still believe homosexuality is the worst thing. In one study, nearly half of the college students questioned labeled it more deviant than murder and drug addiction. Others revealed their homophobia by sitting an average of ten inches further away from an interviewer of the same sex wearing a "gay and proud" button than from an interviewer wearing no button. Another group said they wouldn't be able to form a close friendship with a gay person.

The Worst Insult

In a society that works as hard as ours does to convince everyone that Boys Are Better, homosexual taunts, whether "sissy" or "faggot," say *non-boy*. In pure form, the worst insult one boy can scream at another is "you girl!" That curse is the coming home to roost of the cult of sex differences. Indeed, sexism and homophobia go hand in hand. The homophobic male *needs* sharp sex-role boundaries to help him avoid transgressing to the "other side." His terror is that he is not different enough from the "opposite" sex, and that his "masculine" facade may not always protect him from the "femininity" within himself that he learned as a boy to hate and repress. Among men, homophobia is rooted in contempt for everything female.

A homophobic man cannot love a woman with abandon, for he might reveal his vulnerability; he cannot adore and nurture his children because being around babies is "sissy" and child care is "women's work." According to his perverse logic, making women pregnant is "masculine," but making children happy is a betrayal of manhood. One man complained that his child wouldn't shake hands and was getting too old for father-son kissing. How old was "too old"? Three.

Homophobia, the malevolent enforcer of sex-role behavior, is the enemy of children because it doesn't care about children; it cares about conformity, differences and divisions.

If women seem to be less threatened by homosexuality than men and less obsessed with latent homosexual impulses, it's because the process of "becoming" a woman is considered less arduous for the female and less important to society than

the process of "proving" one's manhood. "Masculinity" once won is not to be lost. But a girl needn't guard against losing that which is of little value.

Like male homosexuals, the lesbian doesn't need the other sex for physical gratification. But the lesbian's crime goes beyond sex: she doesn't need men at all. Accordingly, despite the relative unimportance of female sexuality, lesbianism is seen as a hostile alternative to heterosexual marriage, family and patriarchal survival.

Young Homophobics

Before children have the vaguest idea about who or what is a homosexual, they learn that homosexuality is something frightening, horrid and nasty. They become homophobic long before they understand what it is they fear. They learn that "What are you, a sissy?" is the fastest way to coerce a boy into self-destructive exploits.

While homophobia cannot prevent homosexuality, its power to destroy female assertiveness and male sensitivity is boundless. For children who, for whatever reason, would have been homosexual no matter what, homophobia only adds external cruelty to their internal feelings of alienation. And for those who become the taunters, the ones who mock and harass "queers," homophobia is a clue to a disturbed sense of self.

It's all so painful. And so unnecessary. Eliminate sex-role stereotypes and you eliminate homophobia. Eliminate homophobia and you eliminate the power of words to wound and the power of stigma to mold a person into something she or he was never meant to be. So here's my best advice on the subject: *Don't worry how to raise a heterosexual child; worry about how not to be a homophobic parent.* □

The article above is excerpted from *Growing Up Free: Raising Your Child in the 80's* © 1980 by Letty Cottin Pogrebin (McGraw-Hill, 1980, \$15.95, 641 pages; Bantam, 1981, \$8.95 paper, 641 pages), an excellent book on non-sexist child-rearing. The studies referred to in the text are cited in the chapter notes in the back of Pogrebin's book.

About the Author

LETTY COTTIN POGREBIN, the mother of three teenagers, is an editor of Ms. Magazine and the author of two books on women and work. Her new book, Family Politics, will be published by McGraw-Hill in October.

A look at recent books with lesbian and gay characters reveals offensive stereotypes and inaccuracies

Out of the Closet, But Paying the Price: Lesbian and Gay Characters in Children's Literature

By Jan Goodman

When I first realized that I was a lesbian, I didn't know other lesbians, so I went to the library to find some support.

I checked the card catalogue. There were no books devoted entirely to lesbianism. However, there were several "helpful" cross-references: LESBIANISM—see HOMOSEXUALITY, male; PSYCHOLOGY, abnormal; SEXUALITY, deviant; GENDER IDENTITY, improper; also related chapters under ALCOHOLISM; SUICIDE.

In the past decade, there has been a marked increase in the number of children's books dealing with lesbianism and male homosexuality. This is heartening. A close look at the fiction for children and young adults, however, reveals that in spite of increased gay visibility, homophobic attitudes generally pervade children's literature.

This study focuses on children's books published since 1969 which contain lesbians and gay males as central characters. Examined were 14 young adult titles, 3 books for young children plus 5 books written for adults but suitable for teenage readers.

Presented below are the disturbing assumptions, stereotypes and inaccuracies communicated by the novels considered. The personal anecdotes that appear in italics reflect the fact that literature about gay people creates and reinforces homophobic attitudes that affect real people's lives.

Several years ago, a student of mine was seeing a therapist. The boy was having difficulty making friends. He was very creative and sensitive, tended to bond with the girls in the class, and clearly was not growing up into a typical "macho male." The therapist was concerned.

"S. knows he is different," the therapist

said. "He clearly has an 'atypical' gender identification. I am worried about his future."

"Do you think he may grow up to be gay?" I asked.

"There's not much I can do to change THAT," said the therapist. "I am afraid that if he keeps going down this path, he'll be a victim of homosexual rape by the time he's thirteen."

"Maybe," I said, "by the time he's thirteen he'll feel good enough about himself to develop a caring relationship with another boy who's thirteen."

1. It is still physically dangerous to be gay. In almost half of the YA works, gay adolescents continue to be victims of violence and tragedy, an implied "punishment" for being gay. In *Happy Endings Are All Alike*, a teenaged lesbian, who feels generally positive about her relationship with another young woman, is raped by a disturbed male classmate who has seen the young women kissing. In *Trying Hard to Hear You*, Phil is killed in a car crash while on a date with a girl as he tries to prove that he is heterosexual. Poor Tom of *Sticks and Stones*, who is only rumored to be gay, is critically injured while driving a male friend home. The message to readers: Being gay could cost you your life!

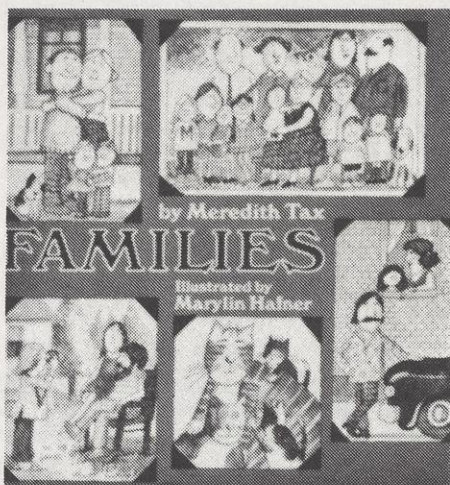
2. Your future is bleak if you are gay. If lesbian and gay characters are lucky enough to survive, they are likely to face severe hardships and misfortunes. In *Crush*, Jinx (is her name intended ironically?) is expelled from high school after being betrayed by her female friend and one-time lover. Gay teachers in two novels—*Annie on My Mind* and *Mr. Forster*—are fired because of their homosexuality. A young gay man in *I'll Love You When You're More Like Me* isolates himself in a small town where he

may never act on his homosexual feelings; his heterosexual friends, on the other hand, plan for bright futures.

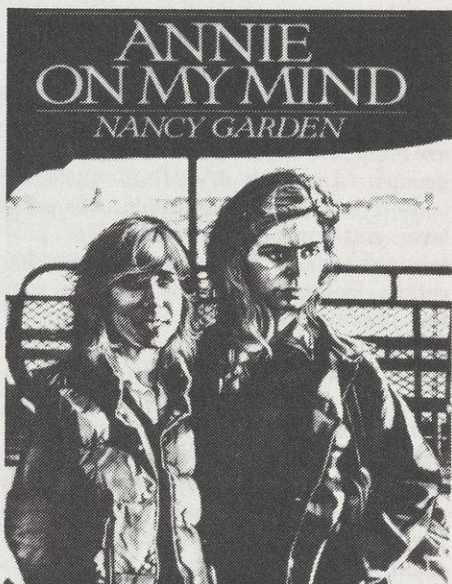
A friend's mother used to say, "Don't you want to do something besides relate to women? Isn't that a little boring?"

3. Gay people lead lonely lives, even if they're happy with each other. Not one novel notes the availability of a support system for both young and older lesbians and gay male characters. Even in cases where gay relationships are long-lasting, neither male nor female couples have other gay friends or are members of political or social support groups. (*Annie on My Mind*—the only book that depicts adult lesbians as positive role models for teenage protagonists—nonetheless shows the older couple isolated from any support system.) In fact, there is usually no mention of another lesbian or gay man in the school, town or city where each book is set. Furthermore, gay characters almost always lose the support of heterosexual friends, and often of their parents as well. Thus, even the happiest of couples appear destined to make their homes together in semi-solitary confinement.

4. Gay adults should not be around children because they'll influence them to be homosexual. In several novels, "impressionable" adolescents are "influenced" by older gay characters. The protagonist of *The Man Without a Face* becomes sexual with an older man who has befriended him. In the generally excellent *Annie on My Mind*, two lesbian schoolteachers are accused of facilitating a student's lesbian relationship and fired after many years of competent service. An elementary school teacher in *Mr. Forster* is automatically dismissed because some parents suspect that he is a



Only three books for very young readers depict (in two cases seem to depict) gay characters. Families, above, shows a variety of family groupings; one of them consists of two women. Books almost never depict positive role models for gay and lesbian teenagers. Annie on My Mind, below, is the only book that presents an adult lesbian couple who provide support for teenage protagonists.



Continued from page 13

homosexual. (Even more unfortunate is the degree of passivity with which the teachers in these two books accept their fate. The message: Gay people accept their oppression, perhaps because they deserve the punishment.)

When I told my mother that I was a lesbian, she was not surprised. She looked at me and said, "Jan, you know that all I want is for you to be happy. You certainly seem much happier than you've ever been. You have a good relationship and you

look terrific. My only question is, "What did I do wrong to make you this way?""

5. Something traumatic in a gay person's past makes her/him homosexual. Absent, deceased or irresponsible parents are found in half the novels. There are homes with divorced parents, overbearing and self-involved mothers, loveless families and neglected children. Some gay characters have negative experiences with members of the opposite sex. These situations sometimes blatantly, sometimes subtly, imply that homosexuality is caused by something gone awry in a character's home environment or upbringing. I have yet to read a novel that attempts to find the negative causes of heterosexual relationships!

A friend's story: "In answering routine questions for our family doctor, I said I was a lesbian. The doctor said to me, 'So, your father wasn't satisfied with three sons. You're the fourth. Ha ha ha!'"

6. Gay men want to be women and lesbians want to be men. There are frequent stereotypic references to "feminine" gay males and "masculine" lesbians. (Charlie, the gay character in *I'll Love You When You're More Like Me*, has a "high-pitched sibilant voice" and a "strange, small-stepped, loping walk.") Gay males tend to be more quiet, sensitive and thoughtful than their peers. (In fact, when two boys spend a sexual night together in *I'll Get There* . . . they need to have a fist fight to prove their masculinity and be friends again.) Young lesbians are frequently portrayed as active in sports or with short, "closely cropped" hair, affirming the stereotype that gay females are "tough," like men. Daphne, in *Ruby*, is an arrogant, domineering and controlling person who needs to have the traditionally male upper hand in her lesbian relationship.

7. SEX: Don't worry. If you do "it" once, you may not be gay. It may only be a phase. Heterosexual experimentation is considered a natural aspect of adolescent sexual development, but teenage characters who explore same-sex relationships are often horrified. They are inevitably reassured that they aren't necessarily homosexual, and will "straighten" out in the future.

The protagonist of *I'll Get There* . . . assures his dad that although he "made out" with another boy, "I'm not queer or anything." In *Ruby*, the protagonist attempts suicide when her lesbian relationship ends, but she is comforted by

the possibility that she will find fulfillment with a boy she knows. The tentativeness of gay sexuality is exemplified by Tom's statement in *Sticks and Stones*: "I do have these tendencies . . . but by now I've learned that what I need is real love."

Too many books end with gay characters hoping that "maybe tomorrow" they'll be heterosexual. This assumption is particularly dangerous because it implies that gay relationships 1) are only determined by the "sex" act itself and 2) don't last. Meanwhile, heterosexual characters continue to explore their sexuality without having to reassure anyone—"Don't worry. I'm not straight or anything!"

A lesbian: "I really love my mother. I want her to know everything that's important to me. I want her to understand me when I say I have a lover that I really care about. I want her to see that it's a really good thing and say, 'That's wonderful.' I want her to be happy for me and realize that I'm not sitting around waiting for a man and wishing I were married."

8. Gay relationships are mysterious. Generally, so little detail is given about gay relationships that they remain vague and incomprehensible. Books for young readers are full of information about heterosexual attraction and relationships—what draws couples together (even if it's only how "cute" someone is), how they spend their time together, how they interact with their community; comparable insights about the gay lifestyle are not offered. *Bouquets for Brimbal*, for example, provides great detail about a heterosexual relationship but Annie's relationship with Lola is only sketchily alluded to. *Breaking Up* refers to a positive relationship between two lesbian adults, yet gives the reader little sense of what is important to the women and why they love each other.

Most books for young adults are not graphic about heterosexual sexual activity, but even the little information that they offer is missing from these books. Instead, there are vague allusions to "something" that happened the night before that leaves the characters frightened and awkward the next morning.

9. All gays are middle/upper-middle class and white. Poor and working-class lesbians and gay men as well as gay people of color are almost non-existent in the books studied; instead, the characters (white, of course) live in comfortable

or wealthy communities and attend boarding schools or luxurious summer camps. Only two books suggest that there are other realities. *Ruby*, set in Harlem, offers a powerful—and singular—exception to the all-white world depicted by these books: Ruby is a Black West Indian and her lover is an African American. *Annie on My Mind* presents a young woman who is from a working-class Italian family, but there is a danger that the reader may pity her rather than understand her because her life is so hard. The books' lack of racial and socioeconomic diversity among gay characters does little to support the fact that gay people are members of all cultures and economic levels.

I was teaching in a preschool. The four-year-olds decided to act out the fairy tale, "Sleeping Beauty," but none of the boys (or girls) would be the prince. The kids asked me to be the prince. "No," I replied. "But I'll be the Princess."

The kids were startled. "We need a Prince!" they insisted. "Sleeping Beauty needs to be in love with a Prince!"

"Why can't it be a Princess who she loves?" I challenged.

The kids paused. After much thinking, one child suddenly blurted out, "That's right. It doesn't have to be a Prince!"

10. As far as young children know, there's no such thing as a gay person.

Lesbian and gay characters are as good as invisible in books for preschool and early elementary-age children. Thousands of picture books have been published since 1969, but I could find only three books that depict same-sex relationships, and, it's interesting to note, all are about women. Two picture books about families—*Your Family, My Family* and *Families*—each show two women living together; although the nature of these relationships is not spelled out, these books at least provide some hint that not all couples are heterosexual. The books also offer support to children living in lesbian households. *When Megan Went Away* tells of a child's sadness when her mom and Megan end their relationship. It is a wonderful, sensitive book, yet it too suggests that gay relationships do not last. (For more information on these three books, see the bibliography beginning on page 16.)

There's hope. Fortunately, there are books worth recommending. *Annie on My Mind* presents a very positive, detailed portrayal of young lesbian love. Scoppettone's books, though sometimes

dismal and violent, provide good material for sensitive discussion about prejudice, as does *Sticks and Stones*. These and other positive YA titles are discussed in the bibliography that follows.

In addition, several adult novels that present strong, positive models of lesbian and gay characters are quite suitable for young adults: *Rubyfruit Jungle*, *Patience and Sarah*, *Consenting Adult* and other titles are discussed in the accompanying bibliography of recommended materials. There are also some good non-fiction books on lesbianism and male homosexuality (see pp. 16 and 20).

I was working in a progressive public school. We were struggling to clarify our goals to present to new parents and the School Committee. Amongst our principles were: to combat racism, classism and sexism within the school community. I suggested that we add "homophobia." The chairperson quickly moved on to the next item.

The future. If we are to achieve true human and sexual liberation, lesbianism and male homosexuality should be presented as equally viable, visible and healthy alternatives to heterosexuality. Young and older children alike should read positive and diverse portrayals of gay people as main characters and as members of the general community. Lesbian and gay adolescents must find validation for their feelings and hope for a bright future that involves self-affirmation, not denial.

There are too few books with lesbians or gay men, and even fewer good books. There are too many negative messages, and too little accurate information. There is too much acceptance of prejudice and too little resistance. Sadly, the best literature has yet to be written.

I was reading aloud to my students when a fourth grader suddenly interrupted by saying, "Hey, Jan, did you know that Alexander the Great was a homosexual?"

I paused. "I didn't know that," I said. "But it would make sense. If one in every ten people is gay, then chances are that one in every ten people who are in history books must be gay." With that casual remark, I went back to the story. □

Books Analyzed

Preschool/Early Elementary Fiction

Drescher, Joan. *Your Family, My Family*. Walker, 1980.

Severance, Jane. *When Megan Went Away*. Lollipop Power (Chapel Hill, NC), 1979.

Tax, Meredith. *Families*. Little, Brown, 1981.

Young Adult Fiction

Bargar, Gary W. *What Happened to Mr. Forster?* Clarion, 1981.

Donovan, John. *I'll Get There. It Better Be Worth the Trip*. Harper & Row, 1969.

Forster, E.M. *Maurice*. Norton, 1971.

Futcher, Jane. *Crush*. Little, Brown, 1981.

Garden, Nancy. *Annie on My Mind*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1982.

Guy, Rosa. *Ruby*. Viking, 1976.

Hall, Lynn. *Sticks and Stones*. Follett, 1972.

Hautzig, Deborah. *Hey, Dollface*. Greenwillow, 1978.

Holland, Isabel. *The Man without a Face*. Harper & Row, 1972.

Kerr, M.E. *I'll Love You When You're More Like Me*. Harper & Row, 1977.

Klein, Norma. *Breaking Up*. Pantheon, 1978.

Reading, J.P. *Bouquets for Brimbal*. Harper & Row, 1980.

Scoppettone, Sandra. *Trying Hard To Hear You*. Harper & Row, 1974.

Adult Fiction

Brown, Rita Mae. *Rubyfruit Jungle*. Daughters, Inc. (Plainfield, VT), 1973.

Hobson, Laura. *Consenting Adult*. Warner, 1976.

Miller, Isabel. *Patience and Sarah*. Fawcett, 1976.

Reid, John. *The Best Little Boy In The World* (autobiography). Ballantine, 1976.

Zilinsky, Ursula. *Middle Ground*. Lipincott, 1969.

Resources

Hanckel, F. and Cunningham, J. "Can Young Gays Find Happiness in Y.A. Books?" in *Wilson Library Bulletin*, March, 1976, pp. 528-534.

Mitchell, Judith. "Search and Find" in *Voice of Youth Advocates*, February, 1983, pp. 17-18.

Olson, Ray. "Almost Grown and Gay" in *Voice of Youth Advocates*, April, 1980, pp. 19-23.

About the Author

JAN M. GOODMAN has taught pre-school and elementary school in the metropolitan Boston area for nine years. A frequent contributor to the Bulletin "Bookshelf," she is active in the feminist and gay movement in Boston. In a sudden burst of lesbian pride and affirmation, she has decided to sign her actual name to this article instead of her usual pseudonym, Jay Meryl.

An annotated bibliography of books to help counter common misconceptions and provide accurate information about lesbians and gay men

Recommended Books on Gay/Lesbian Themes

By C.A. Jenkins and Julie L. Morris

The annotated bibliography that begins below is preceded by an article analyzing recent books for young readers on gay/lesbian themes (see p. 13); it is followed by an analysis of sex education materials (see p. 20).

FICTION

For Young Readers

Severance, Jane. *When Megan Went Away*. Illustrated by Tea Schook. Lollipop Power (P.O. Box 1171, Chapel Hill, NC 27514), 1979, \$2.75, 32 pages, grades p.s.-2.

There are many children's books about divorce, but here, finally, is a "divorce book" for children of lesbian mothers. Young Shannon is dealing with the loss of Megan, her mother's lover, who has been a parent to Shannon as well. We see all the small (and large) disruptions that separation creates. Shannon moves from self-blaming and fear to anger and tears; she finally shares her feelings with her mother as they console each other. The illustrations show some racial diversity and also reflect the income level of the average woman-headed family, brick-and-board bookshelves and all, and the house will look like home to those familiar with "women's communities" across the country. Unfortunately, the illustrations are very awkwardly drawn, floating somewhere between cartoons and an uneasy realism, but this is probably more bothersome to adults than to children.

For Older Readers

The books listed below include those written for adults but suitable for high school students and books written specifi-

cally for young adults; the latter are coded YA.

Brown, Rita Mae. *Rubyfruit Jungle*. Bantam, 1973, \$3.50, 217 pages.

This growing up and coming out story is told by Molly Bolt, a young, white, working-class southern girl. She is adopted, smart-mouthed and tough as nails: "After the storm the sky stayed dark, but across the horizon was a brilliant rainbow. . . . Leroy bet me I couldn't find a pot of gold at the end, and I told him that was a stupid bet because the rainbow was enough." The book follows Molly from age seven, in rural Florida, to her early twenties, in New York City, in her tenacious search for that rainbow. *Rubyfruit Jungle* is a semi-autobiographical book written from a working-class perspective. It is a non-stereotypic, ground-breaking classic written at the beginning of the gay liberation movement—original and very funny.

Forster, E.M. *Maurice*. Norton, 1971, \$5.95, 240 pages.

Written in 1913 and published after the author's death, this is the story of a young gay male in pre-World War I England. The book follows Maurice, an upper middle-class white "gentleman," through public school, Cambridge and his early work life. He gradually becomes aware of his attraction to other men, and this realization slowly enables him to view the world around him with greater thoughtfulness than his class would suggest. After considerable agony, Maurice finds true and lasting love—a direct challenge to the old lie of the inevitably sad and lonely gay life.

Garden, Nancy. *Annie on My Mind*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1982, \$10.95, 234 pages, YA.

Liza and Annie are two New York

high school students who meet by chance at a museum. Their friendship grows into attraction and love. Among the many aspects of their relationship is the class differences between working-class/public school Annie and upper-middle-class/private school Liza, but unfortunately, this is not explored in any depth. However, the reader also meets two lesbians who teach at Liza's school; they have lived together for many years and provide Annie and Liza with additional assurance that their love is possible. Although both young women face conflicts in accepting their feelings for each other, this is a positive story that captures the magic and intensity of first love.

Hall, Lynn. *Sticks and Stones*. Follett, 1977, \$5.95; also Dell (paper), o.p., 188 pages, YA.

Tom is a newcomer at a small town high school in rural Iowa. One of his new friends may or may not be gay, but their association marks Tom in the eyes of his classmates. This novel deals with the motivation and destructiveness of gossip and vividly portrays the intense paranoia that homophobia can cause. Hall creates a stark picture of homophobia and the ignorance from which it grows. An ideal book for stimulating discussion.

Hautzig, Deborah. *Hey, Dollface*. Greenwillow Books, 1978, \$7.95, 151 pages, YA.

Fifteen-year-old Val Hoffman meets Chloe Fox at an exclusive all-white private high school in New York City. Both new students, they feel like outsiders in a world of debutantes and status-conscious classmates, and their perceived outcast status draws them together. Val's constant observation and questioning of the world around her is a finely

drawn portrait of adolescence ("How can someone have a sexual fantasy until they have sex and know what to think about?" "When I thought of gay people having sex it seemed really strange. But then, any sex seemed a little strange." "How do you separate loving as a friend and sexual love, or do they cross over sometimes?"). It is also refreshing that Val is clearly identified as Jewish throughout the book; this is not an "issue," but simply a fact. A funny and tender narrative of Val and Chloe's friendship and the difficult process of growing up.

Hobson, Laura Z. *Consenting Adult*. Warner, 1976, \$2.95, 256 pages.

Tess, a successful book editor, wife and mother in her mid-40's, receives a letter from her seventeen-year-old son Jeff, in which he tells her that he is a homosexual and asks for money for therapy so that he can be "cured." While telling the story of Tess, Jeff and their family, this novel documents the change in public attitude toward gayness between 1960 and 1973. It also captures the coded messages and interchanges between members of an upper-middle-class family (à la *Ordinary People*). *Consenting Adult* is easy reading and gives the reader a fair amount of pre-movement gay history; it also provides support for parents of gay children. This family finally reaches a happy resolution, as Tess can finally see Jeff as a "consenting adult."

Lynn, Elizabeth A. *Chronicles of Tor-nor* (trilogy). Berkley Books, 1978-80.

This fantasy trilogy is set in a feudal society of border wars, brave deeds and witchcraft. It is also a world in which there is no homophobia, where both opposite and same-sex relationships are accepted without question. At the same time, sex roles and social relations are more strictly defined, which makes for an interesting juxtaposition of tradition and radical values. The society is also racially integrated (again, with no comment, it just *is*), although there is some stereotyping in the second book, as the exotic, Arab-appearing desert people are far more intolerant of those with psychic "witchcraft" powers than the rest of the society.

- In *Watchtower* (\$2.75, 1978), the adventures of a high-ranking soldier lead him to question, and finally accept, his own sexuality.

- In *The Dancers of Arun* (\$2.50, 1979), a scholar and psychic seeks a place for himself in a society where men are raised to be warriors.

- In *The Northern Girl* (\$2.50, 1980), a

young woman who is adopted searches for her origins. She is an excellent role model—strong, independent, non-stereotypic, she learns from her mistakes.

Miller, Isabel. *Patience and Sarah*. Fawcett, 1976, \$2.50, 217 pages.

Patience and Sarah are two women who fall in love and live together in early 19th century New England. Their story is told in several sections, alternately narrated by Patience, a twenty-eight-year-old middle-class painter and "old maid aunt" living with her married brother, and Sarah, a younger woman raised as her father's helper, the "boy" in a boyless working-class family. They know of no precedent for their love, but they find that they must follow their feelings in creating a life together. The book is based on the life of Mary Ann Willson, an American primitive painter, and her companion, Miss Brundage. It is beautifully written in a style reminiscent of early American diaries. As a thirteen-year-old reader said, "If *Patience and Sarah* was about a man and a woman instead of two women, it would be required reading for teenagers, so we could see what a really good relationship can be like."

Scoppettone, Sandra. *Happy Endings Are All Alike*. Harper & Row, 1978, \$6.95, 202 pages, YA.

Jaret and Peggy are two teenage girls who confront and surmount the problems of being gay and in high school. Their relationship faces a crisis when Jaret is raped by Mid, a boy who is a classmate of her brother's. The narrative shifts between a sympathetic account of the girls' relationship and Mid's disturbing inner monologue while spying on Jaret and Peggy. After the rape, issues of "coming out" are raised; they are threatening enough to frighten Peggy away from the relationship, albeit temporarily. Jaret's matter-of-fact acceptance of her own gay feelings is a refreshing change from the torment most fictional gay teenagers go through. This is indeed a young adult "problem novel," but the problem is that of rape and public reaction to homosexuality, rather than gayness itself.

Scoppettone, Sandra. *Trying Hard To Hear You*. Harper & Row, 1974, \$8.95, 264 pages, YA.

Camilla tells the story of her summer of '73, of her close-knit high school summer stock theater crowd, and of Jeff and Phil, who are part of that crowd—UNTIL they fall in love. Most of the young men's peers react with confusion and outright hostility. Camilla shares in these reac-

tions, but she eventually progresses from shock and disbelief ("They're my friends, so they *can't* be gay") to an acceptance of her friends' sexual preference—and the reader is educated along with her. This book has been justly criticized for its superficial portrayal of Blacks and for the stereotypical ending (Phil dies driving into a tree while on a date trying to "prove" his straightness). However, there are several positive messages as well. The reader sees that ordinary, boy-next-door-type friends can be gay, and that homophobia is not just a fag joke here and there, but a sickness that can literally destroy lives, both from within and without. *Trying Hard To Hear You* continues to be a very popular book with teenagers, and, considering the non-existence of gays in 99 per cent plus of YA realistic fiction, this is remarkable in itself.

NON-FICTION

For Young Readers

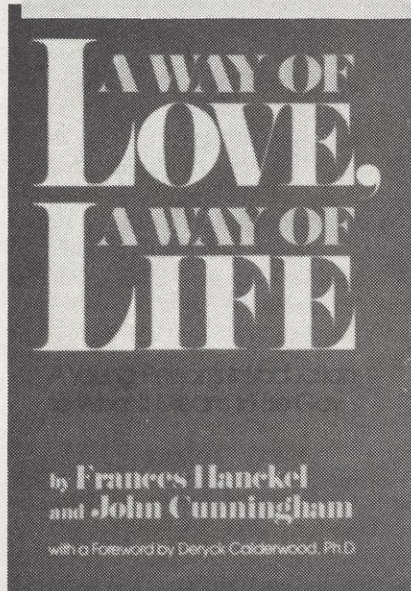
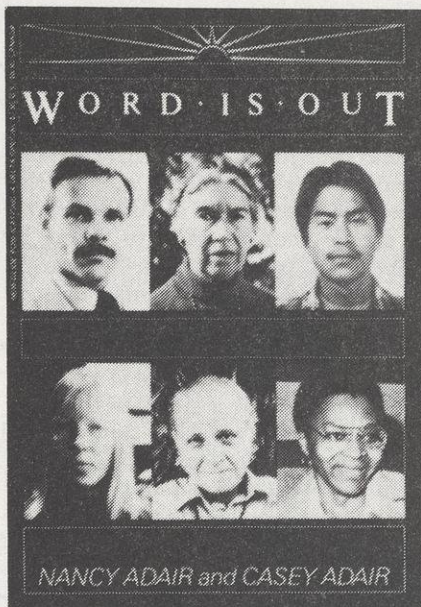
Drescher, Joan. *Your Family, My Family*. Walker, 1980, \$7.95, 32 pages, grades 2-5.

Tax, Meredith. *Families*. Illustrated by Marilyn Hafner. Little, Brown, 1981, \$7.95, 32 pages, grades 1-3.

Picture books about families are common, but *very* few include gay parents. Here are two that will be of particular interest to children who live with a gay parent and that parent's partner.

Your Family, My Family describes many different families. Among those shown: "Margo and Rita are Peggy's family. Although Margo is her real mother, Peggy feels as if she has two mothers." Various racial groups are included in the illustrations, and a diversity of family groupings, including adoptive families, foster homes and extended families, are shown. There is a minimum of sex-role stereotyping, but some ageist assumptions. The book also neglects to show any disabled adults or children (with the exception of one older man walking with a cane), and the term "real parents" is used instead of biological parents. However, the merits of this book definitely outweigh the flaws.

"Families are who you live with and who you love" begins *Families*, an often humorous narrative by six-year-old Angie, who lives with her mother in New York City, but spends vacations in Boston with her father, stepmother and half



brother. She describes the families of her friends and neighbors, as well as ant, lion and chicken families. The illustrations are lively, filled with interesting details, and show people of a variety of races, ages and sizes. Family configurations include single parent (both mother- and father-headed), nuclear, adult and Susie's family: "Susie lives with her mother and godmother." Unfortunately, the featured families include only one Black family—a grandmother, mother and son (named Frederick Douglass!)—and the mother in the one Hispanic family shown works in a dress factory. (There is no Asian or Native American family.) Despite these problems, this engagingly written and illustrated book will delight a young audience.

For Older Readers

The books listed below include those written for adults but suitable for high school students and books written specifically for young adults; the latter are coded YA.

Adair, Nancy and Adair, Casey. *Word Is Out: Stories of Some of Our Lives*. Dell, 1978, \$7.95, 337 pages.

Word Is Out began as a movie—one of the first documentaries to portray the diversity of the lives of gay men and lesbians. (The film is now available as either a feature-length movie or a 45-minute version edited for classroom use from New Yorker Films, 16 W. 61 St., New York, NY 10023.) This book contains the transcripts and some still photos from in-depth interviews with the 26 lesbians and gay men shown in the movie. These men and women differ in age, race, class and lifestyles—from a life totally within the urban gay male subculture to country veterinarian, from businessman to factory worker, from bartender to poet. Whites, Blacks and Asian Americans are interviewed; Native Americans and disabled people are not represented, but the filmmakers discuss this in their account of the making of the film. A lengthy, varied annotated bibliography is also included. A must read.

Alyson, Sasha, ed. *Young, Gay and Proud!* Alyson Publications (order from Carrier Pigeon, 75 Kneeland St., Room 1506, Boston, MA 02111), 1980, \$3.50, 95 pages, YA.

This is an excellent introduction to the subject of gayness, written primarily by and for young people. The topics covered are those especially relevant to teenagers, and the information is interspersed with anecdotes and letters

and replies dealing with gay issues. Chapter titles include: You're Not the Only One, Why Are We Hassled?, Who Are Our Friends?, Telling Other People, and Telling Your Parents. The illustrations are clear and frequent; although they are usually of whites, some people of color are included. The book draws parallels between gays and other minorities when talking about the damage done by stereotyping, but it neglects to mention that members of other minority groups may indeed be gay themselves. However, despite these omissions, a lot of information is given here in a clear and sympathetic manner, and the price is certainly right as well.

Bell, Ruth. *Changing Bodies, Changing Lives: A Book for Teens on Sex and Relationships*. Random House, 1980, \$7.95, 320 pages, YA.

The emphasis here is on health, development (both physical and emotional), relationships and sexuality in the lives of young people. Each chapter includes teenagers' personal stories, poems, photos and anecdotes, along with a straight-forward presentation of information. The chapter on exploring sex with someone else deals with both opposite and same-sex experiences. The section on gay relationships discusses growing up gay, coming out to oneself, friends and family, meeting other people, sex and issues in gay relationships. There is information for non-gays as well; especially helpful is a piece on how homophobia hurts straight people. Photos and cartoons are multiracial in the book as a whole, but show mostly whites in the section on gayness. The format of this book is similar to its quite well-known predecessor, *Our Bodies, Ourselves*.

Bullough, Vern. *Homosexuality: A History*. New American Library, 1979, \$4.95, 196 pages.

A relatively brief history of homosexuality in the Western world, which begins with ancient Greece and ends with today's gay liberation movement. It covers medical definitions from Krafft-Ebing's studies of sexual pathology to current, conflicting theories of the development of sexual preference. Religious and legal treatment of homosexuality is also covered, although the focus is entirely on European history and tradition. A chapter on scapegoating and the function of gays as political victims is a good overview that puts current gay oppression in a historical context. Although there is a chapter on lesbians, the book deals almost exclusively with men.

Fairchild, Betty and Hayward, Nancy. *Now That You Know: What Every Parent Should Know About Homosexuality*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979, \$6.95, 228 pages.

Written by two founders of the nationwide organization "Parents of Gays," this book is dedicated "to all our gay children—yesterday, today and tomorrow." The authors speak from their own and other parents' experiences as they discuss the various emotional reactions parents might have on learning of their child's gayness. This book provides the information and support that parents of gays need to come to terms with their child's sexual preference. However, no mention is made of racial or class differences that might also affect families in dealing with the issue of homosexuality. The coming-out experience is told from both parents' and children's points of view, and practical advice is given on how best to open up communication between parents and children. This book is what all gay people probably wish their parents would read.

Hanckel, Frances and Cunningham, John. *A Way of Love, A Way of Life: A Young Person's Introduction to What It Means To Be Gay*. Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 1979, \$8.50, 188 pages, YA.

The most comprehensive book to date on gayness written specifically for young people. Chapters cover a wide range of topics, from family relationships and friends to legal and historical aspects of gayness. The chapter "A Dozen Gay Lives" includes a somewhat diverse group of gay men and lesbians, although no Asian American or Native American or disabled gays are represented. This book addresses the particular concerns of teenagers—name-calling, how to tell if you're gay and how to meet other gay people. The chapter on teenage sexuality is one of the best available anywhere.

Katz, Jonathan. *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A.: A Documentary*. Crowell, 1976, \$9.95, 690 pages; also Avon (paper), \$3.95, 1063 pages.

This is a comprehensive collection of articles, letters, narratives and photos documenting the history of lesbians and gay men in the U.S. Here are accounts of a wide range of gay lives and lifestyles from a wide variety of sources, covering over 400 years from pre-colonial times to the early 1970's. Katz divides gay history into several sections: Trouble—the persecution gays have suffered from the legal, medical and religious establishment; Treatment—the various "cures"

offered by these establishments; Passing Women—women who have successfully "passed" as men; Native Americans/Gay Americans—a lengthy section on gay people in Native American cultures; Resistance—the continual struggle of gays against oppression; and Love—a collection of love letters and stories.

Klaich, Delores. *Woman Plus Woman: Attitudes Toward Lesbianism*. Morrow, 1974, \$5.95, 288 pages.

A well-written account of lesbians and their history from Sappho to the present. It explains the origins of societal attitudes against gay people and explores the ways lesbians have been hidden from history in Western society. Klaich includes in-depth interviews with lesbians who have chosen to remain "invisible" and with those who have chosen to be openly gay. The book provides clear information, reassurance and enjoyable reading.

Pogrebin, Letty Cottin. *Growing Up Free: Raising Your Kids in the 80's*. McGraw-Hill, 1980, \$15.95, 641 pages; also Bantam (paper), \$8.95, 641 pages.

A primer on role-free child-raising with clear, straight-forward observations and advice on child behavior and relationships. The author treats sexuality—both our own and our children's—with intelligence and reason. Of special interest is the chapter, "Homosexuality, Hysteria and Children: How Not To Be a Homophobic Parent," which explores at length the various myths and theories on the development of sexual preference and successfully challenges the assumption that "homosexuality is one of the worst things that can happen to anyone" (see excerpt beginning on page 10).

Silverstein, Charles. *A Family Matter: A Parent's Guide to Homosexuality*. McGraw-Hill, 1977, \$4.96, 214 pages.

A Family Matter is written by a psychologist "for families who want to learn how to deal with a homosexual son or daughter, and come to terms with their own feelings about homosexuality." The book is divided into three sections: Information for Parents; Four Families—accounts of their acceptance/nonacceptance of their gay children; and Society, Medicine and Homosexuality—a survey of gay stereotypes in our society and advice on how gay people can best cope with the homophobia they find both from society and within themselves. This book provides support for all members of a gay person's family. A very gentle approach to a sensitive topic.

Vida, Ginny, ed. *Our Right to Love: A Lesbian Resource Book*. Prentice-Hall,

1978, \$12.95 hardcover, \$10.95 paper, 318 pages.

A comprehensive anthology and guide for lesbians and their parents, teachers, students, children, friends and associates. Here are stories of "lesbian mothers, Black lesbians, working-class lesbians, lesbians in their teens and their sixties, prosperous lesbians, lesbian lovers and lesbians alone." Contains personal testimony, politics, feminism, religion, culture, sexuality, and health information written from a wide variety of perspectives. A bibliography of over 200 titles is also included.

Youth Liberation. *Growing Up Gay*. Youth Liberation Press (order from Carrier Pigeon, 75 Kneeland St., Boston, MA 02111), 1978, \$2.50, 40 pages, YA.

Articles written by young lesbians and gay males give first-hand glimpses into the lives of high school gays, with approaches ranging from humorous anecdotes to a serious analysis of ageism within the gay community. Article titles include: "School Is Not a Gay Place To Be, But It's Getting Better"; "I Came Out in Class!" and "What Can You Do If You're Fourteen and Gay? Organize!" Although the contributors are mostly white midwesterners, several articles are by and/or about gay youth of color. This pamphlet is essential reading for young people and those who work with them.

Twenty Questions About Homosexuality. National Gay Task Force (80 Fifth Ave., Suite 1601, New York, NY 10011), n.d., \$1.00, 32 pages.

This pamphlet contains clear and direct answers to commonly asked questions about homosexuality. Its format makes it ideal for library pamphlet files.

Fricke, Aaron. *Reflections of a Rock Lobster: A Story About Growing Up Gay*. Alyson Publications (order from Carrier Pigeon, 75 Kneeland St., Room 309, Boston, MA 02111), 1981, \$4.95, 120 pages.

Aaron Fricke gained national attention when he took a male date to his high school prom in Cumberland, Rhode Island. This is a clearly written autobiographical account of growing up gay in contemporary America, and the social, political and (finally) legal battle Fricke fought for the right to attend the dance with the date of his choice.

About the Authors

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Sex education materials, though somewhat less anti-gay than in the past, still convey extremely negative attitudes about homosexuality

“Friendly Fire”: Homophobia in Sex Education Literature

By Katherine Whitlock and Elena M. DiLapi

The illustration shows a man leaning against a tree, watching students leave school. He is wearing a trenchcoat. The caption reads: “A male homosexual may wait patiently around a high school day after day, until he thinks he can safely approach and befriend a student.” The accompanying chatty text warns that “Homosexual adults sometimes abuse teenagers,” and that “Active homosexuals are generally unsatisfied with any one partner for very long. Consequently, they are usually on the lookout for new ones.” Teen readers are cautioned to be alert for “homosexual prowling,” but that they must not confuse this with a “light display of affection” from “an emotionally healthy adult who is genuinely friendly.” Although the writers evoke the image of “the homosexual” (typically male, though cursory references are made to women) as an abuser of adolescents and state that homosexuals can be “devious,” they also say homosexuals “may be worthwhile, intelligent and perfectly decent people. . . .” Any teenager worried about her/his own “inclinations” is advised to discuss the “problem” with a physician who may refer them to a psychiatrist or psychologist for treatment. Emotional maturity is linked to enjoyment of “a heterosexual relationship that focuses on a mutually satisfactory sex life.”

This example of some of the worst in sex education material available to teens comes from a book—*Masculinity and Femininity*—currently in use in at least some public schools in the Philadelphia area. For those who think such homophobic portrayals disappeared with the advent of a strong gay movement, the news is mixed. Yes, some of the more vitriolic anti-gay bias is not appearing in

newer books. But no, all the extreme, anti-gay diatribes are not out of circulation. And yes, sex education materials are getting better in their treatment of homosexuality. But alas, no, the homophobia is not gone from even the more recent works.

This article explores the treatment of some of the major lesbian/gay issues in sex education materials for young readers. The works analyzed (see list at the end of this article) are fairly representative of the popular sex education literature available throughout the country. (It should be noted that the state of sex education in public schools is, at best, confusing. While there is a growing trend to include sex education in public school curricula, there is also a strong, fundamentalist movement to halt sex education and to censor textbooks and library material. Where sex education courses have been instituted and managed to survive, there is little consistency in the curricula, not only from state to state, but also from school district to school district. It is, therefore, difficult to make specific comments about the materials that are used in classrooms.)

Some of the works analyzed are very recent; others date back to the mid-1970's but are still being reprinted. Many of these works are utilized by community-based sex education programs as well as in schools. Most of them appear on sex education bibliographies, recommended reading lists or in catalogues of sex education literature. The emphasis is on material for teens, but some of the works are designed or appropriate for pre-teens. A list of questions we developed and used in evaluating the works for their attitudes toward

homosexuality appears in the box on the next page; the list is by no means exhaustive but may prove to be useful to others. Our findings follow.

Inclusion and integration of information on homosexuality. Most of the books reviewed included *some* information on homosexuality, although *What's Happening to Me?* omits any discussion of homosexuality. This guide to puberty, written for readers from ages twelve to fourteen, presumes that all boys are physically attracted to girls and all girls are physically attracted to boys. *You Would If You Loved Me*, a compendium of “lines” young men give young women to persuade them to have heterosexual intercourse plus some responses young women can give, also presumes heterosexuality. Homosexuality is mentioned only in a pejorative fashion, as one of ways men attempt to coerce women into having sex. A sample line: “What’s wrong with you? Don’t you like me? Are you a dyke or something?”

More common is the ghettoization of information on homosexuality—that is, mentioning it, but restricting discussion to a single section or chapter. Typical of this approach are *Sex With Love: A Guide for Young People* in which homosexuality is invisible except for a chapter on “Same Sex Relationships,” *The Young Person's Guide to Love* with its negative tone about homosexuality in the chapter called “Would You Call It Love If—,” and *Answers to Questions Adolescents Have About Sex* with its “Homosexuality” chapter. This treatment implies that homosexuality is less significant than or inferior to heterosexuality—an auxiliary form of sexuality, if you will, and somehow just not “the real thing.”

Nevertheless, there are hopeful signs. *Learning About Sex: The Contemporary Guide for Young Adults* is a refreshingly down-to-earth book which discusses sexual preferences in one chapter ("Different Strokes for Different Folks") but also includes lesbian/gay references and information throughout the work. The treatment of lesbian/gay issues in *Learning About Sex* is limited and not completely sensitive, but it is a step in the right direction. *The Teenage Body Book* attempts the same approach (it is one of the very few books reviewed that addresses gays' concerns about sexually transmitted disease; however, its recommended reading list is of questionable value). *Changing Bodies, Changing Lives: A Book for Teens on Sex and Relationships* has a section on homosexuality, but references to the lives and concerns of lesbian/gay youth can be found throughout the book. It is a courageous attempt at integrated treatment.

All of the volumes reviewed are seriously deficient in illustrations and photographs. Lesbians and gay men are, for the most part, absent. Where a drawing or photograph does suggest a gay relationship, it is generally of adult whites, often male. The literature would hardly inform the reader of the existence of lesbians/gay men of color, lesbian/gay adolescents or lesbians/gay men who are disabled.

Language and attitude toward homosexuality. Many books use a conversational "you" voice throughout—but when discussing homosexuality, they switch to a much more distant "they." The switch in voice is a clear signal to the reader—"We don't want you to turn out to be one of them." It is assumed that the author, the reader and almost everyone else is or should be heterosexual. This heterosexist assumption is dishonest and serves to reinforce the sense of isolation experienced by many lesbian/gay adolescents. *Why Am I So Miserable If These Are the Best Years of My Life?* is an exception. Although the positive but limited treatment of lesbianism in this anti-sexist book for young women is hardly adequate, it is refreshing to continue through the discussion with no jarring change to "they."

Ubiquitous in the literature is what we call "The Homophobic Disclaimer." Fearful of the possibility that pre-puberty same-sex play and adolescent same-sex crushes just might be an indicator of the extensiveness of lesbian/gay feelings, the authors rush, almost as one, to

Guidelines for Evaluating Sex Education Materials for Homophobia

- Does the work include or omit information on homosexuality and on the lives of lesbians and gay men? Do bibliographies and resource listings contain gay/lesbian-sensitive materials, organizations and so on? Are lesbians/gay men shown in illustrations?
- Is information on homosexuality integrated throughout the text or is it limited primarily to a single section or chapter?
- Is homosexuality discussed as completely and explicitly as heterosexuality? Is the tone consistent throughout the book or does the author "distance" when discussing homosexuality by switching from use of a conversational "you" to "they"?
- Is the work based on "The Heterosexual Assumption"—that is, the assumption that everybody (including the reader) is or probably should be heterosexual? Is the concept of a "sexual relationship" based on a norm of heterosexual intercourse as the primary and/or superior form of sexual expression between partners?
- Does the work contain "The Homophobic Disclaimer"—the explicit or implicit message that while many young people may have homosexual thoughts, feelings, experiences and so on, these probably are (or should be) only passing phases through which adolescents will move on their way to "normative" heterosexuality?
- If the work attempts to address the "causes" of homosexuality, does it also address the "causes" of heterosexuality?
- Is lesbianism/gayness seen as normal or deviant? If it is defined as deviant, how does the author view "deviancy"?
- If homosexuality is seen as problematic, is it viewed as a problem of the individual or is the problem defined as homophobia?
- Does the material reflect a social consciousness concerned with: (a) the society in which lesbians/gay men must live; (b) changing views on homosexual behavior and individuals who prefer same-sex relationships; (c) ensuring the dignity and the human/civil rights of lesbians and gay men?
- Are the presentations of lesbians and gay men stereotypic or are stereotypes and homophobic attitudes challenged?
- Does the work rely on a "monolithic" homosexual image—that is, the image of a homosexual "type" relatively undifferentiated by class, race/ethnicity, age, physical status, political perspective and so on? If a single "homosexual" image is presented, is it of a white, middle-class, non-disabled male?
- Are there equal amounts of information about lesbians and gay men?
- Does the work acknowledge the existence of lesbian/gay youth or does it presume homosexuality to be an adult sexual preference? Would the book be a helpful, supportive resource for a young lesbian/gay reader?
- Is there a focus on the sexual activity of lesbians/gay men to the exclusion of other issues, including relationships, coming out, confronting discrimination, dealing with family and so on?
- Are reproductive and sexual response systems identified and discussed separately?

contain this phenomenon within the strict bounds of heterosexist ideology. Here are some examples from *The Teenage Body Book*:

Most people who participate in masturbatory games with those of the same sex during the adolescent years are not—and do not become—homosexual.

Many teen-agers worry about homosexuality. Perhaps they worry because of group masturbation or fantasies. . . . But it can hurt to be different and it can be frightening, too, to feel that your sexual preferences may expose you to scorn or hatred from some people. . . . Most teens who worry

about homosexuality are not homosexuals. . . .

If right now you have problems relating to the opposite sex, you may be shy, not gay.

Facts About Sex For Today's Youth simply assumes there really is no homosexuality prior to adulthood. Same-sex feelings, experiences, fantasies are subsumed as part of the usual heterosexual growing-up process. *Sex Education for Physically Handicapped Youth* (which at least does not reinforce the stereotype that disabled people are asexual), provides the disclaimer in this way:

If you are a boy and feel sexually attract-

ed to another boy, or a girl and are sexually attracted to another girl, do not become too concerned because many teenagers have these feelings as they grow up. The possibility of your becoming a homosexual decreases when you get accurate information about sex and about any secret fears you may have concerning the opposite sex.

The now-classic *Girls and Sex* (in 1979, it was in its sixth printing) says it is not the same-sex activity *per se* but the amount of it that determines lesbianism. No parallel argument is made, of course, about opposite-sex activity.

Apart from The Homophobic Disclai-

mer, the literature often gives very mixed messages about lesbians, gay men and homosexuality. The more recent, progressive literature acknowledges the essential humanity of people who are gay, but often depicts lesbians and gay men having a stormy, occasionally tormented life that really is more trouble than it's worth. It is as if the literature is saying, "Yes, we know lesbians and gay men are people, too. We just don't want anybody to be one." *Girls and Sex* sums it up neatly:

In conclusion, homosexual relationships can be as pleasurable, as deep and as worthwhile as relationships with males, but because our society is so oriented in the direction of heterosexuality and has such strong taboos against homosexuality, it seems to me that girls should think long and hard before rejecting sexual activity with boys in preference to girls.

Sex Education for Physically Handicapped Youth muddies the waters with a reference to child molestation, evoking the gay child abuser while failing to mention that most child sexual abuse is committed by adult heterosexual men against female children. *The Young Person's Guide to Love* is more straightforward in its negativism:

Even though nowadays we have become used to the idea of homosexuality, many people find the question silly or ridiculous. They feel that homosexuality is sick or disgusting or that it is a perversion, and therefore can't ever have anything to do with real love.

Almost every book contains mixed messages which will confuse young readers, especially those struggling to gain a positive acceptance of themselves as lesbian or gay. Young heterosexual readers will be reinforced in their probably-already-existing bias against lesbians and gay men.

With this said, however, we must acknowledge those books which directly address the question of lesbian/gay civil rights and which point to a social origin of homophobia, either taking a lesbian/gay-supportive stance or suggesting that such a stance makes sense. *Love and Sex in Plain Language* defines homophobia and generally describes the gay rights movement. The author hedges his bets on personal support for the movement, but his tone is supportive. *Learning About Sex* and *Changing Bodies* also take a supportive position on civil rights.

Most of the progressive literature is relatively free of the typical lesbian/gay stereotypes: the bulldyke, the drag queen and so on. There is an almost-obligatory mention in many books that "you can't tell who the homosexuals are just

Using Books as a Resource

By Leonore Gordon

In offering children information about gays and lesbians, books are an excellent resource. They can be assigned as homework to be followed by class discussion, or shorter books can be read to the class, with interruptions for questions and response. There are good books that provide elementary and high school students with a glimpse into lesbian and gay lifestyles (see page 16), and these books can be used constructively by teachers already sensitive to the issue.

Often, a book can be used to explore several issues. I read *When Megan Went Away* to my fifth grade class to supplement the books I had already used about the emotional effect of divorce on children. The book, reviewed more fully on page 16, is about a young girl's feelings after her mother's woman lover had moved out. (Over half of the children in my class had divorced parents, and three daughters of lesbians had seen the endings of relationships their mothers had been in. As I read the book aloud, I asked them such questions as, "Why do you think she felt that way?" or "Have any of you ever felt mad enough to do that?" etc. They responded with tremendous feeling, making connections to their own lives and sharing a great deal with one another. Although my questions focused on divorce, the students themselves commented positively on the fact that the book depicted a lesbian couple. Several noted that the book would be particularly reassuring for children with gay or lesbian parents.

With a seventh grade class, I used *Word Is Out*, a compilation of the interviews with 26 lesbians and gay men that was the basis of a movie of the same name (see page 18). After a discussion on what the class thought lesbian and gay men were like, I read them several chapters from the book, pausing throughout to ask for responses. Not only did the students want me to continue past the end of the period, but a large group asked if I could continue reading during lunch hour. The book was borrowed frequently for a good month following the discussion, and we discussed a few more interviews during class time. The students were particularly interested in the photographs of those interviewed, since a wide variety of people—Blacks, whites, Asian Americans, young and old—are included. Seeing real people's pictures and hearing their stories helped the students to be less prone to stereotyping gays and lesbians.

Teachers can also use books that do *not* mention gays or lesbians by simply adding to these books when they are read aloud. Just as some teachers have used racist or sexist books as discussion starters, books that ignore homosexuality can teach children about bias and omission. For example, a child brought into class an essentially well-written book for pre-pubescents about puberty. However, in discussing sexuality, often explicitly, it never once mentions the possibility of homosexual experimentation or the existence of gays or lesbians. As I read this book to the class, I came across this statement (addressed to the girls): "And, of course, by the time you're sixteen, you'll be interested in boys!" Remembering the isolation I felt because of my own ignorance as a child, I quickly added, "And, if you're a lesbian, you might be interested in girls." A page directed towards the boys states, "You'll probably get an erection if you really like a certain girl," at which point I added, "Or if you like a particular boy." The children seemed somewhat surprised by my supplementary comments, and I did hear several titters, but they seemed basically accepting.

With ingenuity and awareness, teachers can use books at both elementary and high school levels to prevent homophobia and validate the same-sex preferences that some students are undoubtedly already experiencing.

About the Author

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by the way they look and act" and *Sex Education for Physically Handicapped Youth* actually acknowledges the existence of lesbians/gay men in heterosexual marriages. However, the gay-as-recruiter-of-children stereotype does appear in at least one work.

Dealing with sex and sexuality. Most of the works define sexuality in much broader terms than simply sexual acts. However, heterosexual intercourse continues to be the sexual norm. *Facts About Sex* . . . , for example, defines celibacy as "not having sexual intercourse." Other books tend to view intercourse as "the" sexual norm, but most suggest that sexual expression can take a variety of forms. Some (Kelly, Bell, McCoy and Wibbelsman, for example) begin to deal directly with lesbian/gay lovemaking, though none are as explicit as they are in describing heterosexual lovemaking. Since oral and anal sex tend to be given only general mention in almost all of these books, major forms of lesbian/gay sexual expression are left to the imagination.

The literature is mixed when it addresses lesbian/gay sexuality and relationships. *Learning About Sex*, for example, includes sensitive mention of gay relationships, giving them a greater-than-genital focus. *The Young Person's Guide to Love*, on the other hand, serves as the eternal naysayer:

. . . Certain homosexual relationships have nothing to do with love. . . . Many homosexuals have nothing but loveless relationships with their same-sex partners. But a good many others do have romances or love affairs that last anywhere from a weekend to a lifetime. According to most of the specialists who have studied homosexual life, the majority of these romances and love affairs are intense but shallow, and are troubled by many conflicts. Most of them burn out rather rapidly, or are torn apart by the same basic problem: the need for one or both partners for other sexual conquests—a need which is even more widespread among homosexuals than among straight people.

Finally, most of the literature fails to address sexual health care concerns especially important to lesbians/gay men, including information on sexually transmitted diseases and related health concerns for which gay men in particular appear to be at higher risk.

Toward a lesbian-gay sensitive approach. With the possible exceptions of *Changing Bodies, Changing Lives* and *The Teenage Body Book*, lesbian and gay adolescents are unlikely to find any positive, strong images of people who are homosexual. The flaws in these books

(and we could not begin to list them all in a brief article) make them of only limited use to all readers seeking a more comprehensive understanding of the realities and diversity of lesbian/gay life and of lesbians and gay men themselves. The quest for broader understanding will not be served by a continued rehashing of tired old myths, misconceptions, shibboleths and simplistic generalizations. Brand-new, slicker, more sophisticated versions of the lesbian/gay ghetto in sex education materials will not do the job. Rather we need entirely new works which are explicitly anti-homophobic and which weave information on homosexuality, lesbians and gay men into every major thematic discussion. We need visibility not only in content, but also in illustrations. And the visibility must reflect awareness that there are lesbians/gay men of color, disabled gay people, adolescent lesbians/gay men.

The new literature should also expand our understanding of what a positive, non-exploitative, non-abusive sexuality can be for heterosexuals and homosexuals (and bisexuals, too, for that matter), spending less time preoccupied with questions of causality. The heterosexual assumption should give way to a more honest understanding that some people are heterosexual, some bisexual, some lesbian/gay. We do not need to determine moral correctness based on head counts.

While this literature is being developed, we need much wider circulation of the sensitive literature produced by lesbians and gay men: Ginny Vida's *Our Right to Love: A Lesbian Resource Book* (Prentice-Hall, 1978); Frances Hanckel and John Cunningham's *A Way of Love, A Way of Life: A Young Person's Introduction to What It Means to Be Gay* (Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 1979); Aaron Fricke's autobiography, *Reflections of a Rock Lobster* (Alyson Publications, 1981); and the lively compendium, *Young, Gay & Proud!* (Alyson Publications, 1981). In 1983, Alyson will issue *One Teenager in Ten*, a companion volume to *Young, Gay & Proud!*, which promises to be a useful addition to the literature. □

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The authors wish to thank Giovanni's Room, a gay and feminist bookstore in Philadelphia, for their special help in making available review copies of several of the books discussed in this article.

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An evaluation of children's encyclopedias reveals that even these supposedly "neutral" resources are inaccurate, misleading and biased

Homophobia in Encyclopedias

By Dale C. Burke

Theoretically, encyclopedias are concise, accessible sources of factual information. Adolescents questioning and assessing their own sexual identity often consider encyclopedias a safe (*i.e.*, private) resource. What do encyclopedias teach young readers about homosexuality?

To find out, the Gay Task Force of the American Library Association has been evaluating encyclopedia entries on homosexuality. The Task Force's Encyclopedia Project has already reviewed the major encyclopedias (see box below), and a summary of its findings follows.

In evaluating articles, the following criteria were used: currency (how up-to-date are the listings?), inclusion and currency of bibliographic information; qual-

ifications of the authors; objectivity/bias; and accuracy of biographies of prominent gay men and lesbians.

The project's findings are very discouraging. All of the encyclopedias reviewed are unsatisfactory—inaccurate, misleading and biased against lesbian and gay lifestyles. (There is one acceptable article—"Gay Activism" in the *Academic American*—but it must be noted that this same encyclopedia's entry for "Homosexuality" is as poor as the others.)

Encyclopedias Analyzed

Academic American Encyclopedia. Danbury, Conn.: Grolier Education Corp., 1980.

Collier's Encyclopedia. New York: Macmillan Education Corp., 1979.

Encyclopedia Americana. Danbury, Conn.: Americana Corp., 1979.

Merit's Student Encyclopedia. New York: Macmillan Education Corp., 1980.

New Encyclopedia Britannica. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1980.

Worldbook. Chicago: Worldbook-Childcraft, 1980.

Although all of the encyclopedias have recent publication dates, most of the articles on homosexuality and lesbianism seem to have been written prior to the Stonewall Rebellion of 1969 and the changes it spurred. In one case (*Americana*), the exact same article appears in the pre-1970 edition. In another case, an early article has been changed for the worse. The 1971 *Encyclopedia Britannica* article, written from a British perspective, shows the rather more progressive attitudes of that country. The 1980 edition of the encyclopedia "updates" that article by adding such adjectives as "deviant"!

The articles show little awareness of recent changes in societal attitudes, and no attempts are made to trace the development of cultural or community awareness among gay men and lesbians. The 1973 decision by the American Psychiatric Association to remove homosexuality from its classification manual of mental disorders is mentioned only in the previously noted entry on "Gay Activism" in *Academic American*. In addition, references are often dated, with Sigmund Freud and Alfred Kinsey the only authorities cited. No mention is made of any of the less biased research studies conducted since 1970.*

The bibliographies are similarly dated. Of the articles that do provide bibliographies, most do not list any materials published after 1970. Only the *Academic American* includes recent books in its bibliography.

Furthermore, in many cases the qualifications of the authors of the pieces are questionable. Several of the articles are unsigned or written by encyclopedia staff members. In a few cases people with very limited or unrelated qualifications have written the articles. Sometimes even authors who would seem to be qualified reveal bias. Judd Marmor, who went on to become president of the American Psychiatric Association, writes:

Any major solution to the problem of homosexuality will come only through more adequate preventative measures. (*Americana*, Vol. 14, p. 335)

The encyclopedias all claim to be unbiased but on homosexuality and lesbianism, they fall far short of this goal.

Continued on page 38

* Two helpful publications that list resources about the gay and lesbian experience are "A Gay Bibliography" (\$1.00 per copy) and "Gay Aids for Counselors" (50¢ for two copies). Both are available from Barbara Gittings, Gay Task Force/ALA, P.O. Box 2383, Philadelphia, PA 19103.

What Do We Say When We Hear "Faggot"?

By Leonore Gordon

Alice is eleven. She walks down the school halls with her arm around her best friend, Susan. During lunch, they sit on the floor holding hands or combing each other's hair. Lately, Alice has been called "dyke," and boys have been told not to be her friend.

Brian refuses to take part in a fight on his block. As he makes his way home, he hears cries of "faggot" and "sissy." Suddenly he begins to run, realizing that the other children may now attack him.

Carl is gifted musically; he would like to join the elementary school chorus. Although he hesitates for several weeks, the music teacher persuades him to join. One morning soon after, he enters the classroom tense and angry after chorus, muttering that several boys have called him "gay."

Some children play a "game" called "Smear the Queer," in which one child suddenly attacks another, knocking him to the ground. The attacker shouts "Fag!" and then runs away.

Homophobic name-calling is pervasive. Even first graders are now using such terms as "faggot" to ridicule others, and such name-calling is increasingly common in the older grades. Homophobic name-calling is devastating to young people experiencing homosexual feelings. For youngsters who are not gay, such name-calling creates or reinforces hostility towards the gay and lesbian population. And it forces all children to follow strict sex-role behaviors to avoid ridicule.

Because homosexuality is such a charged issue, teachers rarely confront children who use homophobic name-calling to humiliate and infuriate other children. Many teachers do not realize that this sort of name-calling can be

dealt with in much the same way as other kinds of bigotry and stereotyping.

Teaching children to be critical of oppression is teaching true morality, and teachers have the right, indeed the obligation, to alert their students to *all* forms of oppression. Educating children not to be homophobic is one way to show the difference between oppressive and non-oppressive behavior.

Challenging homophobic name-calling by teaching children non-judgmental facts about homosexuality and by correcting myths is also intrinsically connected to anti-sexist educational values, since homophobia is used to reinforce rigid sex roles. (For a fuller discussion of this issue, see the article on page 10). Furthermore, if adults criticize other forms of name-calling but ignore anti-gay remarks, children are quick to conclude that homophobia is acceptable because gay men and lesbians deserve to be oppressed.

Boys are far more likely to be the object of homophobic name-calling than girls, perhaps because sex roles for boys remain, to some extent, more rigidly defined. A boy involved in a traditional "female-only" activity such as sewing or cooking risks out-and-out contempt from his peers, as well as the possibility of being called a "faggot" or "sissy." Girls are more able to participate in activities that have traditionally been for boys, such as sports or shop, without loss of peer approval.

At the late elementary and junior high school levels, physical affection between girls is far more acceptable than between boys, but a girl will be called a "dyke" if she does not express, by junior high, a real interest in pleasing boys or in participating with other girls in boy-cen-

tered discussions. I know a twelve-year-old who is being labelled a "dyke" for just these reasons, and she is valiantly trying to maintain her integrity and individuality while feeling lonely and ostracized by many of her peers.

As an elementary school teacher, I have made an awareness of oppression and of the concept of "majority" and "minority" a focus of current events, history and social studies. Throughout the year we discuss those who are not in the majority in this country: Native Americans, Puerto Ricans, Blacks, Chicanos, disabled people, older people and many others. We also discuss women, a generally powerless majority. (I should add here that the school I teach in is particularly open to such discussions. It is a New York City private school for middle to upper-middle income Black, white and Hispanic families. Many parents have already introduced anti-racist and anti-sexist values to their children. However, I have also seen these issues discussed in public schools at elementary or high school levels.)

If oppression is being discussed, it is impossible to ignore lesbians and gay men as a group that faces discrimination. Children in the middle grades have a strong sense of justice, and they can understand the basic injustice of people being abused because they are different from the majority. They can also identify with the powerlessness of oppressed groups because children themselves are often a verbally, and sometimes a physically, abused group.

When initiating a discussion of name-calling, teachers can explain that there are two kinds of name-calling. One kind of name-calling, unrelated to any particular group, is often scatological or sexual (*i.e.*, the four-letter words). The other

is group-biased; it uses the name of a group—"nigger," "chink," "polack," etc.—as the insult and implies that there is something wrong about being a member of that group.

Group-biased name-calling can be handled in a variety of ways.* Sometimes children do not truly understand why a word is offensive. If a teacher simply takes the time to tell the class that a particular word insults or demeans a group of people, children will often stop using the word. (Occasionally, children do not even know what a term means. One New York City ten-year-old who frequently called others "faggot" told me that the word meant "female dog." A twelve-year-old said that a lesbian is a "Spanish Jew.")

Discussions about the meaning of homophobic words can often be quite consciousness-raising. When I hear a child use the word faggot, I explain that a faggot, literally, is a stick used for kindling. I also explain that gay people used to be burned in medieval times simply for being gay, and they had to wear a bundle of sticks on their shirts to indicate that they were about to be burned. (At times, gay men were used as the kindling to burn women accused of witchcraft.) After the discussion that ensues from this revelation, I make it clear to my students that the word is not to be used again in my classroom, and it rarely is.

A structured lesson for elementary school children that I find to be quite successful appears on page 28. First, we list the slurs commonly applied to a particular group. Next, the children shut their eyes and pretend they are a member of that group as I shout out the slurs they have just listed. When they open their eyes, they are asked to write or discuss how it felt to be called those names. Next they imagine how it feels to be the name-caller. At the end, I ask for "comebacks," replies that would educate the name-caller.

When I list the words "lesbian" and "gay men," there is always a stir of discomfort, so I ask what those words mean. I am told fairly quickly that a gay man is one who loves other men and that a lesbian is a woman who loves other women. I am also usually told that a gay man is an "effeminate" man. We discuss the stereotyping inherent in that myth, as

* This article focuses on anti-gay name-calling. A discussion on the handling of racial slurs—"The word NIGGER Is What's Not Allowed" and "Dealing with Racial Slurs"—appears in Vol. 11, Nos. 3 & 4 of the *Bulletin*.

well as the fact that "effeminate" means "behaving like a woman," and the class begins to realize that "behaving like a woman" is viewed negatively.

When asked what it really means to be called a "faggot" and why it is insulting for a boy to be called "gay," students will often respond that saying a boy is like a girl is the worst insult imaginable. At this point, girls are likely to sense that something unjust has been touched upon, and they will often take up their own defense, while simultaneously having their own consciousness raised.

Children may also come up with the myth that sexual orientation is related to reproductive ability. Should this happen, a teacher can mention that some gays and lesbians have been married, and some have children that they raise after the marriage ends. Some choose to have children before recognizing that they are lesbian or gay; others have children when fully aware of their sexual orientation.

Before we go on with the lesson plan, I usually attempt to reach a consensus on definitions. Here are some that have seemed acceptable: "Someone who loves someone of the same sex," "Someone who loves someone of the same sex, but can be close to people of the opposite sex if they want to" and "Someone who romantically loves someone of the same sex." We added the word "romantically" in one class after a boy commented in a confused tone, "But I love my father. . . ." When discussing definitions, it is important to tell children that gays and lesbians are as different from one another as are heterosexual men and women. There is no such thing as a "typical" lesbian or gay man.

When we continue with the lesson plan and students are asked to imagine being called names as they walk with a close friend of the same sex, they describe feeling "different," "dumb," "weird," "afraid" and "embarrassed." (One very different response was, "I'd feel loved, because the main thing would be walking with someone I loved.") When asked how they would feel as one of the name-callers, children usually admit that they "would feel like part of the group."

Suggested responses to homophobic attacks have included, "It's my choice"; "We like each other, and for your information, we're not homosexual"; "I'm not ashamed"; "I'm just as different as you are"; "I don't care" and "So what!"

Children participating in this exercise have been extraordinarily honest about

how it felt to be called names; they have also been honest about how it felt to be the name-callers. They began to understand both how painful it is to be called such names, and how much needing to be accepted and feel important have to do with name-calling. They have also been able to link the oppression of gays and lesbians with that of other groups.

Music as a Teaching Tool

I have also used the music of Holly Near to teach about oppression. Songs are an effective tool in reaching children, and they seem to retain information presented in this mode quite easily. Near sings about the oppression of many different groups and her songs help students make linkages between their struggles. Her songs are always very popular with my classes, and one year most of my class attended one of her concerts. When they discovered that she was a lesbian (she made no secret of it), they began to process the idea that anyone could be a lesbian, even someone who sang songs they loved. They seemed both intrigued and excited with this discovery and realized how often they automatically assume that everyone is heterosexual—an assumption society and education encourage.

Another way to combat homophobia—particularly for older students—is to invite a speaker from a gay organization to talk to the class. Members of various gay speakers groups (see p. 34) have been invited to high schools and colleges to demystify homosexuality. Listening to a gay or lesbian who is also a living, breathing human being—someone who has parents, siblings and looks a little nervous in front of a group—is often a decisive factor in breaking down homophobic stereotypes.

Homophobic attitudes can also be countered in discussions about sex roles. Students can be asked, "What does a boy have to do to 'act like a girl'?" (and vice versa). The stereotypic behaviors that are mentioned can usually be quickly discounted by asking children to consider their own home lives. Many children, particularly those with single or divorced parents, have seen their mothers working and their fathers cleaning the house. Boys are often relieved to argue that a boy can read, sing or clean up without losing respect. However, these same boys will worry that other children will continue to believe in sex-role myths. These fears are often strong enough to keep children in traditional

sex roles even when they become aware of the unjust nature of these roles.

Another classroom activity is to ask students to look in any standard dictionary or thesaurus for the definitions of "male" and "female," "masculine" and "feminine," "husband" and "wife," etc. The definitions are often so blatantly offensive and stereotypic that they create a small sensation when read aloud, thus challenging children to rethink their own definitions.

Discussing homophobic concepts is one thing; enduring homophobic name-calling is an entirely different matter. The pressure to conform is especially overwhelming within the school/peer structure, and it is vital that teachers try to instill the courage needed to function independently when one is the object of ridicule.

Similarly, adults often try to change the behaviors of "effeminate" boys in the illusion that it will prevent their becoming gay; girls are often discouraged from "tomboy" activities for the same reason. These so-called "effeminate" boys or "tomboy" girls may or may not be gay. In any case, it is a violation of a child's integrity to try to change behaviors that come naturally. It is also sexist to insist on narrow, traditional gender-determined behaviors. In addition, forcing someone to inhibit or rechannel natural feelings of same-sex love is no different than forcing a left-handed child to write with the right hand because left-handedness is "deviant."

I attempt to teach my students to be willing to defend not only their own rights but the rights of others to live free from oppression as well. Sometimes this means challenging "the way things are" (as defined by adults) and thus realizing that all adult rules are not absolute. This is an important lesson. Social change can only occur when children acquire the ability to look critically at existing structures.

We can begin to nurture a critical eye at the elementary school level, as children begin to lose their egocentricity and observe the surrounding world. Because name-calling is so common among children, and because it embodies the bigotry learned from adults, it is a good place for educators to begin. □

About the Author

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Continued from page 6

than love or politics), that gays are constantly "on the cruise," that children and "straight" men are vulnerable to attack (at worst) or enticing persuasion (at best) whenever in the company of gays, and that all lesbians and gays are promiscuous and incapable of monogamous relationships, are all examples. Not only are all sexual and racial minorities deemed hypersexual, but most of the other discriminations they experience are believed to be caused by, or exacerbated by, their hypersexuality.

The illusion that racial and sexual minorities are animal-like evidences itself in several ways. All minority individuals are alike, so the story goes, in that they want to "cause trouble" and love to hold demonstrations. This reveals their animal-like, uncivilized nature which acts according to aggressive instinct rather than to rational compromise. All are also inclined to riot in the streets, "like dogs." Because they have been deprived of the "finer things of life," minorities are also thought prone to follow the "baser," "cruder," "sensuous and sensual" things in life. This "animal-like nature" is also responsible for the belief that once minorities get in power they will turn against the white heterosexual male class in revenge.

The illusion that racial and sexual minorities are heretics is also pervasive. Partly because people of color, women and gays are symbolized so negatively as evil, they are believed to be natural enemies of religion. In order to account for the obviously contradictory fact that Blacks and Hispanics are statistically more frequent church goers (and certainly more demonstrative and fervent in worship), and the fact that the membership of most white churches is largely women, the religious experience itself (of minorities) is regarded as suspect. Thus the Black church is regarded as not quite the equivalent of the white church in orthodoxy; Blacks and Hispanics and women and gays are all thought to be more emotional in worship because they are less rational (hence, less intelligent) in their belief. And even the predominantly-gay Metropolitan Community Church still is denied representation in the legitimizing National Council of Churches. Most minorities are also imaged as rebellious, since rebellion against God's law (and society's law and order) is a fundamental definition of sin.

We must consider the ways we should respond to our oppressions.

First, people must educate themselves

by reading, listening, discussing and otherwise interacting with those who are at the forefront of the struggle to end oppressions. This act of consciousness-raising, or politicization, or conscientization, is an on-going effort for the truly human person who wants to understand others and work with them to end oppressions of all types.

Second, all people must make an effort to continuously and consciously recognize and reject (by intent, if no other way) all expressions of negation, false definition, stereotyping, institutional and collective and individual discrimination, whenever and wherever these come to one's attention. One must refuse to repeat or believe symbology which is negative toward any racial or sexual minority.

Third, one should experience a real conversion to minority causes and especially to one's own "difference." Normally, such a conversion will occur after one has begun the process of self-education in consciousness-raising. It will occur after one has built connections to people of color, women and gays. And it will normally occur at some emotional point in life. (Perhaps the conversion has already taken place regarding your own identity, and instead needs to become a conversion to coalition with all other racial and sexual minorities as well.)

Fourth, one should immediately, or as soon as possible, follow conversion with an act of "bridge-burning." Such an act involves taking some kind of public stand on an issue, joining a feminist political-action group, participating in public rallies. The actions that become "bridge-burners" are innumerable and just as varied as the personality and style of each individual. ("Coming out" as a lesbian or gay man is also an act of "bridge-burning.")

Fifth, one should determine for one's self exactly how one can best support the struggle for coalition-building and eventually liberation, and then do it! Each person has specific skills and experiences which especially suit some task, some role, some contribution, to coalition-building and liberation. There is a need you can satisfy, a part you can play, and a dream you can help fulfill—as long as you never forget that we are all in this together, and none of us can be completely free until we are all free. □

About the Author

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A discussion of differences can sensitize students to a variety of oppressive attitudes and name-calling

Countering Homophobia: A Lesson Plan

The lesson plan below was adapted from a plan developed by Polly Kellogg.

Objectives:

- To sensitize students to the feelings of others who are called names because they are “different” from other people.
- To develop an understanding of how and why we react to people who are unlike us.
- To provide students with the verbal tools to protect themselves and to discourage name-calling.

Time Needed: Two class periods

Grade Level:

For grades 4–8. The procedures for all grades are the same, but students in grades 7 and 8 may fill out columns two and three of their worksheets independently.

Materials Needed:

The name-calling worksheets and the list of feelings that appear on the next page.

Background Reading:

Read the articles in this issue of the *Bulletin* on homophobia, particularly “What Do We Say When We Hear ‘Faggot?’” by Leonore Gordon (p. 25), noting the myths that are generally brought up in classroom discussions.

Teacher Preparation:

Do the background reading suggested above. Review teaching procedures outlined below. Duplicate sufficient copies of name-calling worksheets for each student. Prepare feelings list by writing list of adjectives on newsprint or on chalkboard.

Procedure:

Note: It is important that teachers feel confident of their ability to provide students with accurate information. Each opportunity must be utilized during class discussion to correct myths and misconceptions about the particular group under discussion.

Place feelings list on easel or chalkboard for use as needed; students can add to this list during discussion. Distribute worksheets.

Call students’ attention to first type of person listed on the work sheet, *i.e.*, short. Ask students to suggest different labels or “put-downs” generally used for people who are short.

List each put-down or label suggested by students on chalkboard. Have students list these labels in column two on their worksheets.

Help students discover how it feels to be the object of name-calling and put-downs. Ask students to close their eyes and imagine that they are a short person. Have them imagine themselves in various situations—walking down the street, trying out for a school team, etc.

Call out the put-downs and labels suggested by students (all name-calling is to be done by teacher). Ask students how they felt when they heard the put-downs; discuss students’ feelings about this experience.

Draw on students’ own experiences by asking whether they or any one they know have been called any of these names, cautioning them that a person’s name must not be given if they are talking about the experiences of others.

Have students select the words from the feelings list that best describes how they felt during the name-calling; enter adjectives in column three of name-call-

ing sheet. (Add other words if necessary.)

Note: This discussion can be quite extended as children become involved in sharing their feelings. Discussion of some types of put-downs will naturally take longer than others.

After this part of discussion has been concluded, ask the students to imagine that they are now the name-callers. Have them select words from the feelings list to describe their reactions.

Allow the students two minutes to answer the question “If you’ve ever . . .” at the bottom of the worksheet.

Discuss students’ reactions to the imaginary experience of being name-callers.

Follow the same procedure for each word in column one of the name-calling list until the phrase “gay man” is reached.

Elicit put-downs and labels as before. Then elicit students’ definitions of term.

Provide explanation of terms gay and lesbian. (You might say something like, “You know how most men grow up to marry because they want the close company of a woman. Some men prefer the close company of another man instead. Likewise, some women prefer a life partner who is a woman and their deepest feelings of love and closeness go toward other women. These people are called lesbians and gay men.” Definitions that have been used in a classroom include “Someone who loves someone of the same sex” and “Someone who romantically loves someone of the same sex.”)

Follow previous procedures after explanation of terms has been provided.

Continue through the worksheet. After this procedure has been followed for each word on list, discuss people’s negative responses to those who are per-

NAME-CALLING WORKSHEET

DIFFERENT TYPES OF PEOPLE	LABELS OR PUT-DOWNS	HOW YOU WOULD FEEL IF YOU WERE THESE PEOPLE AND WERE PUT-DOWN	COMEBACKS YOU COULD USE
short			
tall			
developmentally disabled			
Black			
woman			
overweight			
gay man			
physically disabled			
student who is popular with teacher			
Puerto Rican			
smart student			
lesbian			
teenager			
Vietnamese refugee			
five-year-old			

If you've ever used one of these names when talking to or about somebody, how did it make you feel? (ashamed? cool?)

ceived as being "different" using questions similar to the ones below.

- Why do we usually use put-downs and labels and other forms of unkind treatment for people who are not like ourselves? (During the discussion, *develop* the understanding that people use labels and put-downs to make themselves feel better.)

- How does the way we feel about ourselves at a particular time affect the way we feel about other people and act toward them?

Brainstorm comebacks and retorts

that students may use in response to put-downs and name-calling. *Develop* the understanding that these comebacks should be "educated" retorts which provide the name-callers with valid information—*e.g.*, "I'm just as different as you are" or "I'm not ashamed."

Have students record the most effective comebacks in column four of the name-calling worksheet.

Follow-Up Activity:

Students may role-play situations involving name-calling and retorts.

FEELINGS LIST

afraid lonely mad happy embarrassed bored loved I'm the only one like this cool ashamed sad	crazy scared alone weird part of the group nobody likes me on top of the world
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Definitions of terms often misunderstood and facts to counter common myths are presented

Definitions/Fact Sheet

Definitions

Androgynous (from the Greek *andre*-man and *gyne*-woman): having both masculine and feminine traits; seen by most researchers as the mental health ideal. This is not the same as *hermaphroditism*, a physical condition in which one is born with some or most of the genitals of both sexes.

Bi-Sexual: one who has sexual and emotional responses to both sexes.

Coming Out: adopted by lesbians and gay men to describe the process of becoming aware of and expressing one's identity. "Coming out of the closet" is a metaphor for telling people about one's lesbian or gay identity.

Dyke: applied to lesbians, usually negatively, to stereotype them as "masculine," much as "fairy" has been used to stereotype "feminine" men. Recently some lesbians have begun to use the word as a term of pride to mean a strong and independent woman.

Faggot (from a Latin word meaning "a bundle of sticks"): applied to gays during the Inquisition when they were burned along with "witches." ("Only a faggot could produce a flame foul enough to burn a witch.")

Gay: one of the few terms applied to homosexuals that has been adopted by them as a sign of pride. While gay is sometimes used to refer to both men and women, it generally refers to men; lesbians usually prefer to be called lesbians.

Heterosexism: a belief in the superiority of heterosexuality; policies and practices which serve to elevate heterosexuality and subordinate homosexuality.

Heterosexual: one who has sexual and affectional responses predominantly to the opposite sex. (It is interesting to note that there are no negative or derogatory terms for a heterosexual.)

Homophobia: a fear and hatred of gay men and lesbians.

Homosexual: a clinical term for people whose sexual/affectional preference is for members of the same sex.

In the Closet: lesbians or gay men who feel unable to tell others that they are lesbian or gay. A person may, for example, be "in the closet" on their job or with their family in order to avoid discrimination or rejection.

Lesbian (from the Greek isle of Lesbos, where the lesbian poet Sappho had a school in 400 B.C.): one of the oldest and most positive terms for gay women.

Straight: used by both heterosexuals and lesbians and gay men to refer to heterosexuals.

Transsexual: a person who feels he/she really belongs to the opposite sex. For example, a man may feel he is really a female in all ways but is trapped in a male body. This is not at all the same as being gay.

Transvestite: a man who gets erotic pleasure from dressing in women's clothes.

societies until the 13th century, after which same-sex relations were increasingly proscribed by church and state.

Myth: You can tell who's lesbian or gay by how they dress or act.

Fact: The vast majority of lesbians and gays cannot be identified by appearance. The small fraction who dress or act so that people will assume they are gay usually do so because they want to be known as gay or lesbian or because they dislike the traditional sex roles. (Many straight people are mistaken for lesbian or gay for this latter reason.)

Myth: Lesbians and gay men play masculine/feminine roles.

Fact: Some lesbians and gay men do recreate established sex roles in their relationships, but others strive to form loving pairs free from the roles men and women are conditioned to play. Lesbians have been particularly active in challenging traditional sex roles.

Myth: Lesbians and gays are mentally ill.

Fact: Research done by the National Institute for Mental Health found no greater incidence of mental illness among lesbians and gays than among heterosexuals. The American Psychiatric Association eliminated homosexuality from its list of mental disorders in 1973. This myth developed in part because earlier studies often focused on lesbians and gay men involved in therapy (hardly the heterosexual sample used to discuss mental health in the general population) rather than on those not in therapy.

Myth: It's immoral to be lesbian or gay.

Fact: People debate the morality not only of homosexuality, but of divorce, birth control and capital punishment,

Continued on page 38

Fact Sheet

Myth: Lesbians and gay men are only a negligible portion of the population.

Fact: The Kinsey study showed that approximately 10 per cent of the population is lesbian or gay. And Judd Marmor, Professor of Psychiatry at USG Medical School, has calculated that one in every four families has a member (parent or child) who is lesbian or gay.

Myth: It's "unnatural" to be lesbian or gay.

Fact: It is not "unnatural" to have sexual relations with members of one's own sex; this behavior is found in practically every culture throughout history. Same-sex relations were in fact accepted and "natural" in many European

The standard cataloging classifications are insensitive at best, homophobic at worst. Suggestions for improving access to materials about gay men and lesbians are provided

Out of the Closet and into the Catalog: Access to Gay/Lesbian Library Materials

By Sanford Berman

Let's assume that (1) libraries should stock plentiful and diverse materials on the gay experience for both private and course-connected reading/listening/viewing; (2) apart from special lists and exhibits, gay materials should be easily and fully identified through the library catalog, primarily by means of subject headings; (3) catalog users should (ideally) be able to reach desired subjects on their first try and should not be offended, prejudiced, confused, misled or repelled by the very terminology used to denote specific topics; and (4) gay non-fiction should be sensibly and helpfully classified.

How does today's cataloging rate in terms of fully and fairly providing access to gay materials? Badly. For this reason: the homophobia (at worst) or insensitivity (at best) endemic to librarianship has not—until lately—been seriously challenged at either the national level (where subject and classification schemes like Sears, Dewey and Library of Congress are produced and applied) or locally, in individual school, public and college libraries (where librarians and media specialists could pressure the American Library Association and LC to improve their cataloging codes and practices and could themselves initiate at least some in-house action to reform and expand access to gay materials). Specifically:

In most catalogs there's no longer a *see also* reference to HOMOSEXUALITY from "Sexual perversion." That's good. There always have been subject headings for LESBIANISM and LESBIANS. That's good, too. And just a few years ago, after intense lobbying, GAY LIBERATION MOVEMENT became a nationally "legitimate" rubric. Which is also good. So what's the trouble? Well, it's four-fold:

1. A failure—except in the latest (1982) *Sears*—to replace the misleading, narrow and often derogatory terms HOMOSEXUALS and HOMOSEXUALS, MALE with GAYS and GAY MEN.

2. A failure to innovate and employ descriptors for topics abundantly represented in library collections but never "validated" by *Sears* or LC and thus "buried" in library catalogs; for example:

ADOPTION BY GAYS
AFRO-AMERICAN LESBIANS
AIDS [cross-referenced from "A.I.D.S." and "Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome"]
CHILDREN OF GAY PARENTS
CHRISTIAN GAYS
GAY ARTISTS
GAY ATHLETES
GAY AUTHORS
GAY BOOK AWARDS
GAY CHILDREN
GAY CLERGY [applicable, for example, with subheads, to Malcolm Boyd's *Take Off the Masks* (1978) and Troy D. Perry's *Lord Is My Shepherd and He Knows I'm Gay* (1972)]

GAY COUPLES
GAY DETECTIVES
GAY DRAMA
GAY FATHERS
GAY LITERATURE
GAY MARRIAGE
GAY OLYMPICS
GAY-OWNED BUSINESSES
GAY PERIODICALS [applicable, for example, to *The Advocate*, *Christopher Street* and *Gay Community News*]
GAY PHOTOGRAPHERS
GAY POLITICIANS
GAY PRISONERS
GAY PUBLISHERS AND PUBLISHING
GAY RADICALISM [applicable, for example, to Edmund White's *States of Desire: Travels in Gay America* (1980)]
GAY RESISTANCE AND REVOLTS
GAY RIGHTS

GAY SENIORS [applicable, for example, to Raymond M. Berger's *Gay and Gray: The Older Homosexual Man* (1982)]

GAY SOLDIERS
GAY STUDIES
GAY TEACHERS
GAY TEENAGERS [applicable, for example, to *Young, Gay & Proud!* (1981)]
GAY THEATER
HOMOPHOBIA
HOMOPHOBIA IN CHRISTIANITY [EDUCATION, LAW, LIBRARIANSHIP, PSYCHIATRY, etc.]
JEWISH GAYS
JEWISH LESBIANS [applicable, for example, to Evelyn Beck's *Nice Jewish Girls: A Lesbian Anthology* (1982)]
LESBIAN ARTISTS
LESBIAN ATHLETES
LESBIAN AUTHORS
LESBIAN COUPLES
LESBIAN FEMINISM
LESBIAN MOTHERS [applicable, for example, to Gifford Guy Gibson's *By Her Own Admission: A Lesbian Mother's Fight To Keep Her Son* (1977)]
LESBIAN POLICE
LESBIAN TEENAGERS
LESBIANS IN FILMS [LITERATURE, etc.]

3. A failure to regularly assign appropriate headings, with genre subdivisions, to Gay/Lesbian literature; for instance:

GAY MEN—DRAMA [FICTION, POETRY, etc.]
GAYS—DRAMA [FICTION, POETRY, etc.]
LESBIANS—DRAMA [FICTION, POETRY, etc.]

For specific examples, see the box on the next page.

4. A failure to create and use a heading for HETEROSEXUALITY which—as a matter of simple equity—would "balance" and complement the existing forms, BISEXUALITY and HOMOSEXUALITY.

In the Dewey Decimal Classification, "Homosexuality" no longer "enjoys" its own special slot under 616.8583 ("Sexual

CATALOGING: A COMPARISON

This is how the Library of Congress and Hennepin County Library subject-cataloged the same works:

Author	Title/date	LC tracings	HCL tracings
Bargar, Gary W.	What happened to Mr. Forster? (1981)	1. Homosexuality—Fiction.	1. Gay teachers—Fiction. 2. Homophobia—Fiction. 3. Sixth graders—Fiction. 4. The Fifties—Fiction.
Clausen, Jan	Mother, sister, daughter, lover: stories (1980)	1. Feminism—Fiction.	1. Feminist fiction. 2. Lesbians—Fiction. 3. Short stories, American.
Hansen, Joseph	Gravedigger (1982)	(no entry)	1. Mystery stories—American. 2. Brandstetter, Dave—Fiction. 3. Gay detectives—Fiction. 4. Insurance investigators—Fiction.

aberrations, manias, perversion"). And that's good. The principal DDC number allotted in the 18th edition to "Homosexuality"—301.4157—had earlier appeared under the broader caption, "Abnormal sexual relationships." That, however, was changed to "Variant relationships," which is good. But there's still—even in the latest, 19th edition—only one five-digit notation specified for nearly all material on homosexuality, gay men and lesbians! The result is a willy-nilly "dumping" and intermixing of disparate books and other media in that single overcrowded number. The remedy? Clearly to extend the notation. At Hennepin County Library, which rejected the 19th edition "sociology" schedule, we did it this way:

- 301.4157 Gay lifestyles
- 301.41571 Gay men
- 301.41572 Lesbianism and lesbians
- 301.41573 Gay Liberation Movement

As a consequence, general and comprehensive works on gays, then material exclusively on gay men, on lesbians, and on the Gay Liberation Movement are grouped together and consecutively on the shelves instead of becoming one senseless jumble. (In 1982, following a loud outcry from librarians, Forest Press issued a special "expanded version" of the DDC 19 "301-307 Sociology" schedule, finally providing not only a general notation—306.766—for Homosexuality, but also two specific numbers for "Male" and "Female [Lesbian]": 306.7662 and 306.7663. The Gay Liberation Movement, though, remains imbedded in the general number. And there remains no recognition of "homophobia" as a valid,

classifiable topic. Nor do any "Gay" entries appear in the index, even as cross-references.)

So what does all this mean? In brief, that gay materials—if they are to be found and used—must be made readily accessible through the catalog and must be intelligently classified. If Dewey, Sears, LC or card vendors won't yet do these things the way they should, individual librarians may have to do it themselves. To avoid or shun that task is to consign gay media to disuse and to keep gayness itself tightly and shamefully hidden in the cataloging closet. □

READINGS/SOURCES:

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_____. "The Gays and the Straights." *Wilson Library Bulletin*. Vol. 50, No. 9 (May 1, 1976), p. 699.

_____. "If There Were a Sex Index," in *Joy of Cataloging*. Oryx Press (Phoenix, AZ), 1981, pp. 36-59.

_____. *Prejudices and Antipathies: A Tract on the LC Subject Heads Concerning People*. Scarecrow Press (Metuchen, NJ), 1971, pp. 182-3.

Elrod, J. McRee. "Sexuality: Suggested Subject Headings." *HCL Cataloging Bulletin*, No. 30 (September/October 1977), pp. 28-30.

"Gay Men (etc.)." *HCL Cataloging Bulletin*, No. 32 (January/February 1978), pp. 4-6.

Gittings, Barbara. "Gay Access: TFGL Wants LC Action." *HCL Cataloging Bulletin*, No. 34 (March/April 1978), p. 7.

"Homophobia (etc)." *HCL Cataloging*

Bulletin, No. 20 (March 1, 1976), pp. 26-7.

Marshall, Joan K. *On Equal Terms: A Thesaurus for Nonsexist Indexing and Cataloging*. Neal-Schuman (New York, NY), 1977, pp. 60-4, 74-5.

Morgan, Marjorie. "Feedback." *HCL Cataloging Bulletin*, No. 31 (November/December 1978), p. 11.

_____. "Feedback." *HCL Cataloging Bulletin*, No. 37 (November/December 1978), p. 11.

_____. "MeSH 1975: The Gay Person as a Medical Phenomenon." *HCL Cataloging Bulletin*, No. 27 (April 1, 1977), pp. 41-4.

"SRRT Task Force Launches Offensive against 'Homosexuality.'" *HCL Cataloging Bulletin*, No. 8-10 (September 1, 1975), pp. 33-4.

White, David Allen. "Homosexuality and Gay Liberation: An Expansion of the Library of Congress Classification Schedule." *HCL Cataloging Bulletin*, No. 28 (June 1, 1977), pp. 35-8.

Wolf, Steve. "Sex and the Single Cataloger: New Thoughts on Some Unthinkable Subjects," in *Revolt of Librarians*. Booklegger Press (San Francisco, CA), 1972, pp. 39-44.

The article above is a revised and expanded version of "Gay Access," published in the author's *Joy of Cataloging* (Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press, 1981).

About the Author

SANFORD BERMAN, Head Cataloger at the Hennepin County (Minnesota) Library since 1973, recently won the American Library Association's Margaret Mann Citation for "outstanding achievement in cataloging and classification."

Getting positive books on homosexuality into school libraries can sometimes be a problem; a teacher tells how she succeeded

Getting Books on Gay Themes into the Library: An Action Plan

By Carol Bloom

I teach in a large public high school in New York City. Although many of my colleagues and a few students know that I'm gay, I've never made any public declarations of that fact and have thus managed to avoid any direct confrontation with the authorities over this issue. This position—being partially and unofficially out of the closet—has given me a certain maneuverability, allowing me to score some goals for gay liberation, when the opportunity has arisen, without exposing myself or my projects to unacceptable risks.

One such project suggested itself to me last spring. Looking through the card catalogue in our school library, I had discovered that it listed only three titles under the heading of homosexuality, one of which was "Overcoming homosexuality." Appalled, I suggested to the librarian that he order more books on the subject. This became the opening volley in a war of attrition that continues to this day. His response was a noncommittal request that I supply him with a bibliography for him to consider. I did so. Several weeks later, after repeated prodding by me, he agreed to place a few titles on order. Months later he reported to me, with evident satisfaction, that none of the books was available from the suppliers. By that time, the term was just about over, and with frustration on my part and relief on his, we tabled the discussion.

In the fall, I suggested that he give me the money he would have paid directly to the distributors so that I could buy the books. "Unfortunately," he replied, smiling, "the funds have dried up. We have nothing left in the budget for purchase this year." Undaunted, I decided to take up a collection from sympathetic colleagues for this purpose. I approached 25

people—gay and non-gay, most of whom I had previously come out to. Twenty-two of them came up with a total of \$120, which I spent on 18 books, including two in Spanish. Among the titles were Katz' *Gay American History*, Clark's *Loving Someone Gay*, and Martin and Lyons' *Lesbian/Woman*.

The librarian was less than thrilled with the gift and began to stall on making the books available to students. "These books were not written for children; I don't know if they can handle them" were a few of his frightened and foolish comments.

Unable or unwilling to deal with the questions and feelings that the books evoked in him, he passed the buck by sending the books to the chairman of the phys ed department to review. This man, in turn, gave them to a hygiene teacher who, in turn, assigned them to some students for book reports. Not surprising to me, the kids loved them, reviewed them

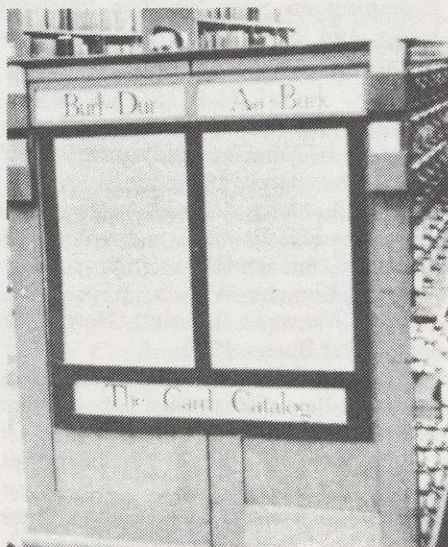
enthusiastically and returned them to the library. His delaying tactics exhausted, the librarian reluctantly processed the books and placed them on the back shelves, alongside the books on VD and abortion. Only Ginny Vida's *Our Right to Love—A Lesbian Sourcebook* failed to take its place with the others. The three-page illustrated chapter on sexuality was "more explicit than anything we have on any kind of sexuality. I don't think we should be supplying sex manuals to our students." I conceded the point and made the painful decision to delete the offending article rather than deprive potential readers of such a valuable resource.

Last week the assistant librarian told me that a boy who had borrowed *Happy Endings Are All Alike*, a novel on a lesbian theme, returned it, politely requesting one "about boys." She was pleased to be able to give him *Reflections of a Rock Lobster*, one of the gifts. Six other titles have already found their way into circulation despite their inconspicuous placement and the need to ask for them by name. In a few weeks, after it becomes apparent that no irreparable harm has befallen the school as a result of these additions to the library's collection, I plan to approach the librarian with a forceful suggestion that he place one or two of them in the glass case in the corridor where new books are displayed.

All in all, I'm pleased with the modest but significant victory. I hope it will encourage others. □

About the Author

CAROL BLOOM, a teacher in a New York City public high school, is active in the Gay Teachers Association.



Resources

ORGANIZATIONS

Listed below are but a few organizations that focus on lesbian and gay concerns. A more complete list appears in the *Gay Yellow Pages* (see book section below), which includes numerous resources.

National Organizations

Asian American Lesbian and Gay Men's Coalition, Box 2337, Philadelphia, PA 19103; (215) 849-4612.

Black and White Men Together, P.O. Box 148 Ansonia Station, New York, NY 10023; (212) 799-9432, (212) 222-9794.

Gay American Indians, Box 2194, San Francisco, CA 94080; (415) 621-4716.

Gay Rights National Lobby, Box 1892, Washington, DC 20013; (202) 546-1801.

Latin American Lesbian and Gay Men's Coalition, c/o Reyes, 562 Guerrero #1, San Francisco, CA 94110.

National Coalition of Black Gays, Box 57236, West End Station, Washington, DC 20037; (202) 387-8096.

National Gay Student Center, 2115 S St. NW, Washington, DC 20008; (202) 265-9890.

National Gay Task Force, 80 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10011; (212) 741-5800.

Salsa Soul Sisters, Box 1119, Stuyvesant Station, New York, NY 10009; (212) 384-2668.

Task Force on Gay Liberation, American Library Association (Social Responsibilities Round Table), Box 2383, Philadelphia, PA 19103; (215) 382-3222.

Religious Organizations

Affirmation: United Methodists for Gay Concerns, c/o Rev. Michael Collins, Box 775, New York, NY 10011; (212) 924-5008 or Peggy Harmon, 3014 Millmar Dr., Dallas, TX 75228; (214) 270-7221.

Dignity Inc., 1500 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Suite 11, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 861-0017 (national organization of lesbian and gay Catholics).

Integrity, Inc., President John C. Lawrence, 10 Mercier Ave., Dorchester, MA 02124; (617) 825-3368 (national organization of gay Episcopalians).

Universal Fellowship of the Metropolitan Community Churches (a gay denomination), 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90029; (213) 464-5100.

Parents' Organizations

Gay Parents Legal and Research Group, Box 1723, Lynwood, WA 98036; (206) 774-7464.

National Federation of Parents and Friends of Gays, 5715 16th St. NW, Washington, DC 20011; (202) 726-3223.

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Box 24565, Los Angeles, CA 90024; (213) 472-8952.

RESOURCE GROUPS

Legal Resources

Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, 132 W. 43 St., New York, NY 10036; (212) 944-9488.

National Lawyers Guild, Gay Caucus, 558 Capp St., San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 285-5066.

Women's Legal Defense Fund, 2000 P St. NW, #400, Washington, DC 20036.

Gay Youth Resources

Institute for the Protection of Gay and Lesbian Youth, Murray Hill, P.O. Box 1401, New York, NY 10156.

Gay Teachers Resources

"Gay Teachers Organizations in U.S." (list), free for SASE #10 size, from Gay Teachers Association, Box 435 Van Brunt Station, Brooklyn, NY 11215.

ARCHIVES

National Gay Archives: Natalie Barney/Edward Carpenter Library, 1654 N. Hudson Ave., Hollywood, CA 90028.

Lesbian Archives, 215 W. 92 St., Apt. 13-A, New York, NY 10025; (212) 874-7232.

BOOKS

A variety of books on lesbian and gay themes are recommended in various articles in this *Bulletin*; see, for example, the recommended bibliography that begins on page 16, the bibliography that accompanies the article beginning on page 7 and the article on sex education books beginning on page 20. The following books and materials are also recommended.

History

Allen, Paula Gunn. "Beloved Women: Lesbians in American Indian Cultures." *Conditions: Seven*, 1981.

Boswell, John. *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality*, The University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Cook, Blanche Wiesen. *Women and Support Networks* (booklet), New York: Out & Out Books, 1979.

D'Emilio, John. *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, University of Chicago Press, 1983.

Lauritsen, John and David Thorstadt. *The Early Homosexual Rights Movement*, New York: Times Change Press, 1974.

Marotta, Toby. *The Politics of Homosexuality*, Houghton Mifflin, 1981.

Rich, Adrienne. *Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence* (pamphlet), Colorado: Antelope Publications, 1982.

General

Gay Yellow Pages, The National Edition, USA & Canada, 1982. Renaissance House, Box 292gy, Village Station, New York, NY 10014. (Two regional editions are also available: The New York/New Jersey Edition and The Northeast.)

Bibliographies

Jenkins, C.A. and Morris, Julie. "A Look at Gayness: An Annotated Bibliography of Gay Materials for Young People," P.O. Box 7281, Liberty Station, Ann Arbor, MI 48107; \$1.50, make check payable to Julie Morris.

Paoletta, Edward C. (ed.) "An Annotated Gay/Lesbian Studies Bibliography of Resources Selected from Non-Homosexual Periodical Publications, Number 1," in *Gay Books Bulletin*, Spring, 1981, \$3 single copy, Gay Academic Union, P.O. Box 480, Lenox Hill Station, New York, NY 10021.

Task Force on Gay Liberation, American Library Association, "Gay Bibliography," \$1 prepaid, from TFGAL, American Library Association, Box 2383, Philadelphia, PA 19103.

AV MATERIALS

The Hidden Minority: Homosexuality in Our Society; sound filmstrip: 2 filmstrips, 2 cassettes or records, teacher's guide; 46 min.; \$69.50; Guidance Associates, Communications Park, Box 300, White Plains, NY 10602.

Homosexuality: Thursday's Child; sound filmstrip: 2 filmstrips, 2 cassettes; teacher's guide; \$74.50; Audio Visual Narrative Arts, Box 9, Pleasantville, NY 10570.

The Homosexuals, 16 mm film or 3/4" U-Matic videocassette, black and white, 45 min.; \$475; Carousel Film and Video, 1501 Broadway, New York, NY 10036.

Teenage Homosexuality, 16 mm film or 3/4" U-Matic videocassette; 11 min.; \$210; Carousel, 1501 Broadway, New York, NY 10036. Produced by CBS News.

Who Happen to Be Gay; 16 mm film or videocassette, 23 min.; \$390, rental \$30; Direct Cinema Ltd., P.O. Box 315, Franklin Lakes, NJ 07417.

Word Is Out: Stories of Some of Our Lives; 16 mm film, color, 45 min.; New Yorker Films, 16 West 61 St., New York, NY 10023.

Hats off to People for The American Way

People for the American Way, a group working to counteract the influence of the New Right, has opened an office in Austin, Texas, to focus attention on fundamentalist textbook censors Mel and Norma Gabler, who have long been active in that state. (See "Adopting Textbooks in Texas: Facts and Fancies," Vol. 11, No. 8, 1981.)

The Texas Textbook Project, part of the People for . . . National Schools and Libraries Project, is coordinated by attorney Michael Hudson, who has already spearheaded a successful drive to change the state Board of Education's textbook adoption procedures. In the past, only challenges to textbooks, known as "bills of particulars," were permitted at textbook hearings. On February 12, following Hudson's campaign to open up the adoption process, the Texas legislature voted to give proponents of particular textbooks an equal voice with opponents in deciding which textbooks are selected for the state's public schools.

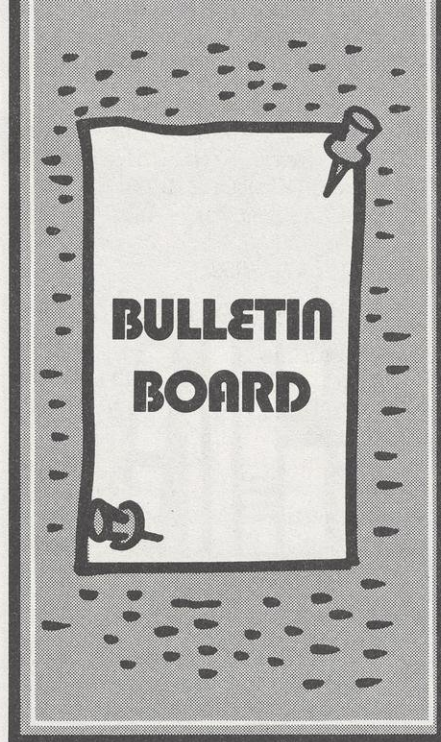
The Austin office plans to continue monitoring the adoption of textbooks in Texas and to encourage Texas citizens to actively participate in the adoption of their children's textbooks. For more information write the Texas Textbook Project, 1206 San Antonio, Austin, Texas 78701; tel: 512-472-7007.

People for the American Way is a national non-profit non-partisan education organization whose purpose is to preserve the constitutional rights to believe, worship, think and speak freely. It was founded in 1980 by a group that included Andrew Heiskell, Chairman of the New York Public Library; Father Theodore Hesburgh, President of the University of Notre Dame; and writer-producer Norman Lear. People for the American Way currently has more than 80,000 members, including more than 2,500 in Texas.

For more information on the nationwide activities of People for the American Way, write 1015 18th St. NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20036.

Ku Klux Klan Attacks ALA

The Ku Klux Klan has declared "full-scale war" on the American Library Association (ALA) after the Klan failed in its attempts to remove materials on homosexuality from libraries in two Michigan communities. The Klan had joined a



local group in Three Rivers, Michigan, to "stop corruption of the young white children here in Three Rivers and all over the United States."

The King Kleagle of the Realm of Indiana of the National Knights of the Ku Klux Klan labeled ALA a "sodomite organization dedicated to the overthrow of the U.S." and vowed that it would not stop until ALA was "destroyed."

Stay tuned. Meanwhile, for further information on the situation, see the ALA's "Newsletter on Intellectual Freedom," March, 1983.

Conference on Black Children

The National Black Child Development Institute, a membership child advocacy organization, will sponsor its thirteenth Annual Conference in Atlanta, Ga., Oct. 12-14, 1983.

Individuals in early childhood education; elementary, secondary and higher education; research; social work; parents and others interested in Black children are invited to participate in workshops and seminars to discuss issues in child development, child welfare, research and education. The conference theme is "Black Children: Connecting with the Future."

Proposals for research papers should be submitted by May 20. For more information on the conference or on submitting papers, write NBCDI, 1463 Rhode Island Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20005; tel. (202) 387-1281.

Ghanaian Children's Book Wins Noma Award

The Noma prize, designed to encourage publication in Africa of works by African writers and scholars, has been awarded for 1982 to a Ghanaian author, Meshack Asare, for his picture book, *The Brassman's Secret* (Educational Press and Manufacturers, Accra).

The jury also specially commended Aniceti Kitereza's *Bwana Myombekere na Bibi Bugonoka* (Tanzania Publishing House, Dar es Salaam), and singled out five other books from publishers in Angola, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa (the last an entry from the anti-apartheid Ravan Press). A total of 97 titles in 11 languages from 42 publishers in 16 African nations had been submitted for the 1982 award.

The Noma award is administered by the quarterly journal, *The African Book Publishing Record*. For more information, write editor Hans M. Zell, P.O. Box 56, Oxford OX1 3EL, England.

Is He/Is She?

The following questions by Nancy J. Woodhull, managing editor of the *Rochester (N.Y.) Democrat and Chronicle*, are directed to editors. We think they apply to everyone. . . .

- Do you think a male is dynamic, but a female is aggressive?
- Do you view a male editor as firm, but a female as inflexible?
- Is he good on details, but she is picky?
- Is he a go-getter, but she is pushy?
- Does he lose his temper, but she is bitchy? . . .
- Does he follow through, but she doesn't know when to quit?
- Is he confident, but she is stuck up?
- Does a male editor have the courage of his convictions, but a female editor is stubborn?
- Does he have dreams, but she has delusions of grandeur? . . .
- Is he human, but she is emotional?
- Does he diligently exercise his authority, but she is power mad?
- Is he closed-mouthed, but she is secretive?
- Does he make decisions quickly, but she is impulsive?
- Is he a stern taskmaster, but she's hard to work for?
- Is he experienced, but she has been through the mill? . . .

Reprinted from *Media Report to Women*, November 1, 1981.

In the BOOKSHELF, a regular *Bulletin* department, all books that relate to minority themes are evaluated by members of the minority group depicted.—Editors.

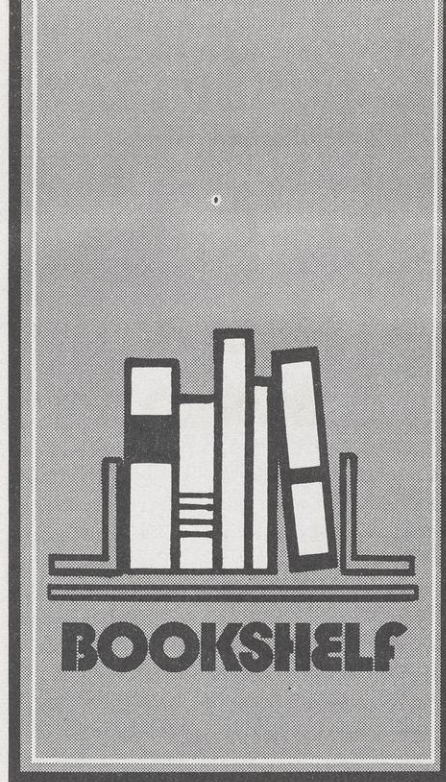
Johnny Stands

by Harry W. Paige.
Warne, 1982,
\$8.95, 138 pages, grades 5-7

Johnny Stands is sitting on the front steps ("Some might call it a prairie shack, but he called it home.") when the social worker drives up. Miss Brady tells Johnny that his grandfather is too old to "provide" for him, and he's going to have to go live with his aunt in the city. When the grandfather, *Stands Alone Against the Enemy*, gets home, he and Johnny decide to "run away." This leads them into a variety of adventures.

Their first stop is an abandoned church at a place the author calls "Broken Bow," where they become hostages in a takeover by a group of young "armed Indians" and "mixed bloods." After Johnny and grandfather escape to the city, they participate in a rather bizarre version of a yuwipe ceremony. Later, Johnny is arrested for trying to free an eagle from its cage at the local zoo, but the good white judge is very understanding and talks to them in such a fashion that *Stands Alone Against the Enemy* is convinced that it is time to go home and face the music. When they get there, he decides to send Johnny out on a vision quest, which works out just fine, even though the boy is given no preparation at all and really doesn't have much idea what he is doing: "Somehow he felt that his words weren't enough, and so he recited the lord's prayer. . . ." But Johnny has his vision, and a five-and-a-half page conversation with "a strange voice from within," and everything is going to be just swell. The end.

None of this is exactly convincing, but never mind. It certainly does give the author the opportunity to show that he knows a lot about Indians, what their goals ought to be and what behaviors are appropriate to achieve them. Since Paige has been kind enough to give us the benefit of his expertise, it might be instructive to examine the things that can be



learned from reading his book—about the Lakota in particular, and by inference, about Indians in general:

- They always refer to each other as "Indians," never as people, as in, "Indians, including women and small children, sat on the rolled rugs lining the room. . . ."

- Real Indians, as opposed to militants, "mixed bloods" and other malcontents, talk and think in a sort of Early Jawbreaker. They say "It is good," and "hau!" all the time.

- "Mixed bloods" and militant people are not real Indians. They don't "speak Sioux." They talk like this: "Don't be chicken. We're modern warriors, and this is a fight. . . . Sometimes people get hurt. . . ."

- Medicine men are charlatans: "Old Enos Two-feathers would give money to the 'yuwipi man' to tell him things that were not as true as his grandfather's words. . . ."

- Native ceremonies are strange, savage rites: "The drums grew louder, and the singing rose to an ear-splitting pitch. The younger children screamed, frightened by the darkness and the wild cries of the singers."

- Real Indians can only be happy down on the reservation: "A Lakota in the city is a Lakota lost—I can see that now. He [sic] is only half-alive. . . . you must go home again if you want to find your strength."

On the other hand,

- It is only in the white man's world that Indians can learn "the right things to do." In the end, Johnny Stands realizes that "He couldn't go home again. . . . You couldn't step in the same river twice." (Honestly. It really does say that—page 135.) Johnny had to "learn what was right and good, and he would come back and tell his people." But Native people cannot solve their own problems anyway. It has to be done for them by members of the white power structure.

The author bio states that Harry Paige, during the preparation of his doctoral thesis (one *does* wonder what it was on) "spent a considerable amount of time living among the Sioux Indians on the Rosebud and Pine Ridge reservations. . . ." It would perhaps be improper to speculate as to who were his friends, if any, or to wonder about the sources of his "information," but his politics seem obvious. (Anyone who was around Wounded Knee in 1973 and not on the government side might read things like this with some surprise: "One of the tribal policemen . . . approached his grandfather respectfully. 'Sorry, Mr. Stands. Just a routine check.'")

The book as a whole seems to have been written from a position of near-total ignorance and with a complete lack of sensitivity. It is also very *badly* written. There is no attempt at consistent characterization, only stereotypes and clichés. The text is peppered with the 38 Lakota words the author knows, some used in a fashion that must surely be unique. And there is always an immediate "translation"; some of these are unique, too. [Doris Seale]

The Girl on the Outside

by Mildred Pitts Walker.
Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1982,
\$9.50, 50 pages, grades 6-up

The September, 1957, desegregation drama in Little Rock, Arkansas, made front pages around the world. Would Central High School open to admit all its white students and the new nine "Negro" students? The National Guard was called in, but then the governor delayed the opening of school by one day. One of the nine Black students did not get the message that school was not opening.

She went to school expecting to be protected by the National Guard. She was not: the Guardsmen turned their backs on her. The crowd advanced and pushed, spit, hooted obscenities and threatened bodily harm. A Northern-born woman who taught at a local Black college came to the frightened Black girl and sat with her on a bench at the bus stop. Though the crowd continued its abuse, the group hesitated, momentarily surprised by the action of one of "their own."

The events in Little Rock leading to desegregation and that last moment are the basis of this novel, which is of interest because of the history it relates. In addition, the parallel chapters—which alternate between the poor Black teenage girl who will desegregate the school and the rich white teenage girl who already attends the school—capture your attention.

However, we do not get a sense of the struggle and preparation that went on in the Black community. We are told what happens, but we don't see or feel it. We get more of a sense of the preparation for resistance that occurred in the white community.

One major problem may well be that the author has fictionalized a central person in a real, historic drama. The white woman of history has been transformed into a rich white teenager. This obscures the truth of the story (no white teenager stepped out to assist the Black teenager); it also simplifies and romanticizes the event through the "adolescentizing" of the woman. (One other point: it seems unlikely that the white teenager had not heard her peers use the word "nigger" before the desegregation attempt; this weakens the credibility of the character.)

On the positive side, the book depicts a strong relationship between Eva—the Black girl—her father and her boyfriend. One also sees Black characters who argue against the desegregation attempt on valid grounds. (Eva's mother is ambivalent about what is happening, but her aunt comes through with strong support.) One also witnesses some of the struggles of conscience that went on as some whites tried to convince others that life in this country had to change.

In spite of its problems, this is a book that should be read. Hopefully, some of the issues that are not addressed in the book can be filled in for young readers by

an adult or researched by the curious reader. [Geraldine Wilson]

The Summerboy

by Robert Lipsyte.
Harper & Row, 1982,
\$9.95, 153 pages, grades 7–12

Predictable? Sure! But it's also funny, fast-paced and well written. As well as decidedly anti-sexist, anti-elitist and anti-classist. This book—third in the author's series about Bobby Marks' adolescence during the 1950's—can stand alone, though it follows the further adventures of the boy who first appeared in *One Fat Summer* and *Summer Rules*. Highly recommended. [Lyla Hoffman]

Summer Switch

by Mary Rodgers.
Harper & Row, 1982,
\$9.50, 185 pages, grades 6-12

Like author Lipsyte (above), Mary Rodgers has feminist credentials. And like Lipsyte's latest work, this book is the third about a particular family. But unlike Lipsyte, Rodgers' humor stems from fantasy situations like parents and children switching bodies, so that only the two who have switched know who they really are. A twelve-year-old boy enters his father's body and goes off to California for a super-important movie business deal. Meanwhile Father, in his son's body, is carried kicking and screaming onto a bus headed for dreadful Camp Soonawissakit in Maine. It's a great idea, and much of the book is successfully hilarious. But not enough. Both plot and style hit real snags and require too much concentration to follow. Sorry. [Lyla Hoffman]

What Happened to Mr. Forster?

by Gary W. Bargar.
Clarion Books, 1981,
\$8.95, 169 pages, grades 6-up

Although this book presents a positive portrayal of a gay teacher, it does little to combat homophobic attitudes.

Written from the viewpoint of sixth grader Louis Lamb, the book is set in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1958. Louis, like his teacher Mr. Forster, feels very different from most of his peer group. Mr. Forster helps Louis gain self-confidence by cultivating his writing talents and teaching him how to play softball. In all, he is a fine teacher.

However, parents, led by a Mrs. Siegel (the book's only character with a Jewish name), suspect that Mr. Forster is a homosexual and they eventually unite, with a minimum of opposition, to have him fired. Louis is deeply hurt and disturbed by the injustice, but he is alone and receives little support from his classmates or his guardian, Aunt Zona.

The book is weak in many respects. Characterization is superficial and in the case of females, derogatory. We learn very little about Mr. Forster, except that his handwriting is flowery, he's gentle and competent, he previously worked in an all-boys school and he lives with his lover, a newswriter. There is no depth to his relationship with his lover nor an adequate explanation of what it means to be gay. There is not one positive female character in this book. Aunt Zona is concerned, yet overbearingly protective. The girls in the class are superficial and often absurdly silly. The principal, Miss Cobb, is "a marshmallow on two toothpicks"; fifth grade teacher Mrs. DeLawter "looked like a cannibal princess." Mrs. Siegel is loud and pushy and stifles her daughter's self-identity; her character perpetuates the derogatory stereotype of "Jewish mothers." When Mrs. Siegel leads the ouster of Mr. Forster, the author in essence pits members of oppressed groups against each other (Jews vs. gays).

The book is a period piece, and it is realistic in its presentation of homophobic attitudes of the time. Mr. Forster's complacent acceptance of his dismissal is also a reasonable reaction for that era. However, as Louis is Mr. Forster's only advocate, the reader could be left with the impression that the firing of Mr. Forster is indeed justified, and that gay and lesbian teachers should be removed from classrooms. This book is not useful today, when gay teachers remain largely unprotected, and the threat of losing our jobs is an everpresent reality. [Jan M. Goodman]

Continued from page 24

Lesbians and gay men are presented as pathologically sick "patients" who think and care only about sexual contacts. Love—and other human dimensions—are almost entirely ignored.

Blatant sexism pervades the articles. There is very little or no differentiation made between lesbianism and homosexuality, and all of the articles treat lesbianism as an "off-shoot" of male homosexuality. *Worldbook*, for example, has no entries or cross references under the terms lesbian or lesbianism; the only reference to lesbianism is found in the article on homosexuality: "Female homosexuals are sometimes called lesbians" (Vol. 9, p. 275).

Americana suggests that feminism "causes" homosexuality:

The feminine revolution and the increased importance of the mother in the home, together with the diminishing importance of the father, are other significant sociocultural factors that hinder the development of healthy masculine and feminine identification. (Vol. 14, p. 334)

All articles, except for *Academic American's* "Gay Activism" entry, perpetuate negative stereotypes instead of providing accurate information. *Encyclopedia Britannica* is the worst offender, as these passages illustrate:

At times in a "butch-femme" relationship the "butch" is the man, but she may also perform as a powerful, punishing, and threatening mother: her partner may behave as a daughter. Thus affectionate mother-daughter roles can combine with threatening sadomasochistic ones. (Vol. 16, p. 604)

Excessive penis envy may predispose her to this retreat [lesbianism]. Wanting to be male makes her reject her vagina and femininity and overemphasize her clitoris as a phallus. (Vol. 16, p. 605)

Other studies have shown that male

Special Thanks

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homosexuals tend to be born to older mothers: but, although genetic abnormality could be involved (as it is in mongolism), the reason may be simpler: older mothers may find their last son more precious and so rear him differently from their other children. (Vol. 16, p. 605)

Judgmental terms such as "immoral," "unnatural," "deviation," "sin," "perversion" and "sexual inversion" clutter these articles. They clearly show heterosexuality to be the only acceptable means of human sexual expression:

It may be the most prevalent deviation because it is closest to heterosexuality in offering the pleasures of being sexual with a willing object recognized as quite human. (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. 16, p. 603)

In any society, there are factors and combinations of factors that can block a person's ability to achieve satisfactory heterosexual adaptation. (*Collier's*, Vol. 12, p. 217)

Collier's goes on to offer a theory on the "cause" of homosexuality:

Typically, the disturbed family and peer relationship partially or totally block or destroy the ability to achieve an appropriate erotic identity. (*Collier's*, Vol. 12, p. 217)

Biographies Evaluated

In order to determine how the encyclopedias handle the biographies of well known lesbians and gay men, the project checked the biographies of André Gide, Oscar Wilde, Gertrude Stein and Sappho. It was interesting to note that whereas the term "homosexuality" was used factually in the men's biographies, neither "lesbian" nor "lesbians" is used in the articles on the women, which refer to "friendships," "lifelong companions" or "constant companions." In any case, the brief biographies preclude full discussion of lesbian or gay issues.

More factual treatment of homosexuality is needed. Adolescents, or anyone who turns to encyclopedias for information, have a right to unbiased and objective information on homosexuality and healthy lesbian or gay sensibilities. The Encyclopedia Project needs the support of individuals and groups if we are to pressure the publishers enough to make the necessary improvements. If you are interested in working with us, please write to me: Dale C. Burke, c/o Barbara Gittings, Gay Task Force/ALA, P.O. Box 2383, Philadelphia, PA 19103. □

About the Author

DALE C. BURKE, a librarian for the University of Washington in Seattle, is an active member of the Gay Task Force of the American Library Association.

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just as they used to debate the morality of interracial marriage and interdenominational marriages.

Myth: Gays molest children.

Fact: The sexual molestation of children is much more common than we have believed, but most incidents are heterosexual—committed by adult males on minor females. The myth that child molesters are usually gay men or strangers serves to cover up how common heterosexual child-molestation—particularly incest—is. (Studies show that 90 per cent of the reported incidents involve men that the child knows—often fathers, step-fathers, uncles and family friends.)

Myth: Lesbian and gay teachers will be harmful role models for children.

Fact: Dr. John P. Spiegel, the President of the American Psychiatric Association, said, "Some have feared that homosexual teachers might affect the sexual orientation of their students. There is no evidence to support this thesis." Many outstanding educators (Plato, Paul Goodman and Edith Hamilton among others) have been lesbian or gay. Lesbians pioneered in founding and teaching in women's colleges.

Myth: Lesbians and gays do not contribute to society.

Fact: Lesbians and gay men make major contributions in all fields: social services, education, politics, arts and humanities. A few famous lesbians and gays include Sappho, Leonardo da Vinci, Alexander the Great, Tchaikovsky, Dag Hammarskjöld and Jane Addams.

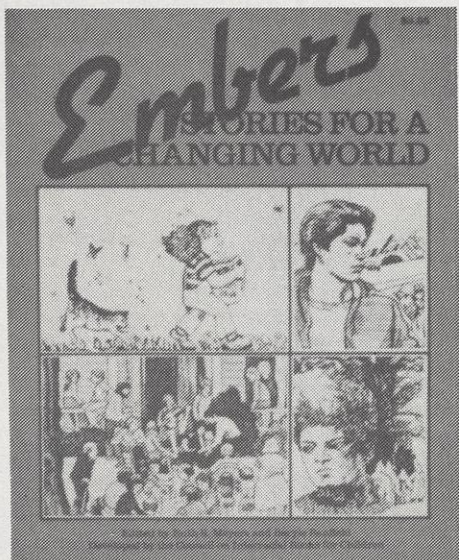
Myth: Only lesbians and gays are attracted to members of their own sex.

Fact: Most adults have deep feelings, attractions, fantasies and/or sexual experiences with both sexes. Kinsey described our sexual feelings and behavior on a continuum to indicate the spectrum of an individual's sexual identity. Kinsey's research shocked the nation by concluding that 37 per cent of all adult men had had sexual experiences with other men. (Most pre-adolescent sex play is same-sex.) *The Hite Report* showed that 8 per cent of women prefer other women and an additional 9 per cent are bi-sexually active.

For more information see "Twenty Questions About Homosexuality," available from the National Gay Task Force, 80 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10011 for 75¢.

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