This is to certify that the

thesis entitled

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE MIDWESTERN GAY AND LESBIAN ACADEMIC COMMUNITY: STONEWALL AND THE IVORY TOWER

presented by

Albin Michael Rose

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

M.A. degree in American studies

Major professor

Date 8/1/95

DATE DUE	DATE DUE	DATE DUE
DEC 07 2000 1228 00		
MAR 1 0 2004 08 03 09		
MAR 2 0 2007 03 26 07		

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE MIDWESTERN GAY AND LESBIAN ACADEMIC COMMUNITY: STONEWALL AND THE IVORY TOWER

By

Albin Michael Rose

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTERS OF ARTS

College of Arts and Letters

1995

ABSTRACT

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE MIDWESTERN
GAY AND LESBIAN ACADEMIC COMMUNITY:
STONEWALL AND THE IVORY TOWER

By

Albin Michael Rose

This thesis presents the historical position of the gay and lesbian academic community in the era surrounding the Stonewall riots of 1969, focusing on the influence this watershed moment in gay history may have had in a Midwestern academic setting. After a discussion of the evolving societal perspectives towards both homosexuality and American education, further insights will be made using oral histories collected from six subjects involved in Michigan academia during this time. The findings show that, despite the psychological and geographic distance of the riots, Stonewall's influence has gradually reached the Midwest, its impact diluted but nonetheless providing a key historical moment even for a community of gays and lesbians as removed from activism as those in the academe. Their strategies for accommodation and survival illustrate the continuing struggle of a minority bound by the values of a professional class and the fears of a homophobic society.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank some very important individuals: Firstly, I extend my thanks and appreciation to my advisor, Lisa Fine, who not only was beneficial in my understanding and application of oral history but has also been extremely helpful in acquainting me with the nuances of writing a thesis. I must commend Anne Tracy of the Special Collections department at the Michigan State University Main Library, whose assistance at the outset of this project proved invaluable. My gratitude goes out to Annette McGarey, office manager of the American Studies department, who remained stationary as chairs came and went. I am also indebted to Susan Happel, organist and trumpeter, whose support for my project and dedication to her music proved more than inspiring. You have all been extremely helpful in my time of need.

Lastly, I would also like to thank Rosebush, Inc., and their kindly executors. This benefactor has welcomed their presence and encouragement more than they suspect.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The gay and lesbian community in the nineteen-sixties was barely acknowledged by anyone outside of its immediate circles. Though the sexual revolution and the Vietnam war protests were causing a great deal of social upheaval, most lesbians and gay men had little connection with each other save for the occasional solace of a well-hidden gay bar. Much of this changed in the aftermath of the Stonewall riots in New York City in the summer of 1969, where radical young members of the gay community found the inspiration to organize and politicize their numbers. However, the newfound sense of strength and security that came with the gay liberation movement did not reach all aspects of the gay experience with the same speed. In fact, there are some corners it has yet to fully penetrate even today. While the movement brought new levels of self-acceptance and pride to those in the larger cities along both coasts, it did not reach the many smaller gay communities in the Midwest so quickly.

Due to the recent steady stream of coverage, the military seems the most obvious example of a profession where gays and lesbians have yet to be fully accepted. Some recent examples of literature on this subject are works by Randy Shilts, Kate Dyer, Allan Bérubé, Jose Zuniga, and Margarethe Cammermeyer.[1] However, there are less obviously heroic professions that

[1]See Randy Shilts, Conduct Unbecoming: Gays and Lesbians in the United States Military (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993); Kate Dyer, Gays in Uniform: The Pentagon's Secret Reports (Boston: Alyson Publications, 1990); Allan Bérubé, Coming Out Under Fire: The

are home to as much irrationality and homophobia, if not more, than the military. It is the often overlooked field of education that serves as the focal point of this thesis. In comparison to the issue of gays and lesbians in the military, the few texts that do focus on this community make mention of the scarcity of research in the field.[1]

The Midwestern gay academic community of the nineteen-sixties and nineteen-seventies was not a community in today's sense of the word. Certain professors maintained contact with each other, but there was not much of a network beyond that. By studying the historical factors at work in shaping the academic profession in the United States, I intend to show how an atmosphere of social conservatism and intellectual repression became entrenched in institutions of higher education in the American Midwest by the early nineteen-sixties. In studying the history of social responses to homosexuality, I hope to illustrate how a once-unspoken climate of oppression in American society and higher education was made a subject of public discourse and institutionalized by the middle of the century. With these two historical overviews in mind, a brief history of the lesbian or gay academic will be presented, showing how the behavioral restraints of both backgrounds made their activity in gay liberation a greater challenge. I intend to establish that the interrelation of the lower Michigan academic community and the still-hidden gay and lesbian circles came later to the Midwest despite the advances on both coasts. This will be further demonstrated by an oral history study of a selection of faculty and staff who served at schools in the

---

History of Gay Men and Women in World War II (New York: Free Press, 1990); Jose Zuniga, Soldier of the Year (New York: Pocket Books, 1994); and Margarethe Cammermeyer, Serving in Silence (New York: Viking Press, 1994).

[1]See David Smith, An Ethnographic Interview Study of Homosexual Teachers' Perspectives (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1985) and Karen Harbeck, Personal Freedoms/ Public Constraints: An Analysis of the Controversy over the Employment of Homosexuals as School Teachers (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1987).

mid-Michigan area roughly between 1965 and 1979.

There is a marked contrast between the lesbian and gay community and other minorities. Whereas most minorities are defined by an external characteristic, such as gender or skin tone, the gay and lesbian community is distinguished by sexual orientation, which is much more a behavioral characteristic. Contrary to popular myth, one cannot recognize a lesbian or gay male at a glance--certainly not in the same way one recognizes a woman as a woman or an Asian as an Asian. Characteristically, the problem for the lesbian or gay professional has not been difficulty getting into a well-paying job or a position of prestige, but rather how to stay in one once established. Quite often, and certainly more often in the past, the main requirement for attaining such a position was (and is) to hide one's sexual identity. Once hired, the challenge is either to maintain the facade or to retain one's position after making one's sexual orientation known. However, the latter has never been an easy option for members of the educational profession. The temptation to remain closeted is great when the perceived risks involve not only the loss of a job, but the loss of a recommendation, and thus any chances at future educational employment. The basis of these fears will be elaborated upon in the following historical overview.

The invisibility required to maintain a teaching position--either at the grade school or the college level--has rendered the topic of homosexuality almost non-existent in the world of publication for several decades running. Until as recently as the nineteen-seventies, the academic community was mute on the subject. By historian John D'Emilio's estimation, the phrase 'Gay History' in 1970 was "an oxymoron. Homosexuality had no history. It was a medical condition, a psychopathological state embodied in aberrant individuals. It had been and remained hidden, isolated, and marginal, a set

of disconnected and fragmentary life stories."[1] Before established scholars felt comfortable writing anything other than condemnatory texts discussing homosexuals and potential "cures," authors unconnected to the academic world began publishing books on the gay and lesbian experience in the sixties and early seventies through small independent presses.[2] Not until the seventies were well underway did members of the academe begin publishing papers on the topic, having been spurred on by their non-academic predecessors.[3]

In my attempts to write a thesis paper on the gay and lesbian academic community, I encountered a number of problems. My earliest attempts at research involved a search for books specifically about lesbian and gay faculty. Such books are few and far between, despite the historically recent swell of books by such academics. As recently as 1982, studies have shown a resistance to researching and publishing in the educational field, with responses ranging from "this study would not directly benefit the overall teaching profession" to a curt "the study described in the proposal could not be endorsed."[4] The books that dealt with the gay liberation movements on campuses are most often concerned with the direct activism of groups such as the Gay Liberation Front, rather than the pursuit of equality in what is referred to as "the ivory tower." Further, these books primarily deal with the two epicenters of activism, San Francisco and New York. As is to be expected, there is scant mention in these books of activity in the Midwest--though this is hardly the fault of the authors, as most other urban centers trailed after these two cities

---

[1]John D'Emilio, Making Trouble: Essays on Gay History, Politics, and the University (New York: Routledge Press, 1992), 96.

[2]John D'Emilio, Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 139.

[3]D'Emilio, Making Trouble, 98.

[4]Smith, Interview, 22.

in gay activity and visibility. As has been noted elsewhere, most of the material on gays and lesbians in the educational profession discusses the legal battles of either entrapped or simply "known" homosexuals in the educational system.[1] The majority of this material is available in magazine articles, rather than in book form. Works which did not deal with case law history were concerned with those who taught at the grade school or high school level. There was very little in print on the specific topic of lesbian and gay college-level faculty, and much of this was concerned with more recent issues than Stonewall or pre-Stonewall life. The bulk of the material published by lesbian and gay faculty was on issues other than being a member of the gay and lesbian academic community--most books published discussed gay themes, but rarely dealt with the academic's personal background in the field discussed.

It is still worth discussing what was found, however on the general topic of gays and lesbians in the field of education. The Gay Academic, edited by Louie Crew, serves as a fine overview of the output immediately following the first conference of the Gay Academic Union in New York City. Crew's collection, divided by discipline, contains both new approaches of academic topics from a gay perspective as well as treatises that more directly concerned the gay or lesbian academic and gay liberation in general. Examples of the former included the analysis of homosexual love in four poems by Rilke, the religious quest in the works of Christopher Isherwood, and a re-evaluation of Sir Richard Burton's studies of homosexuality. Examples of the latter vary broadly, expressing the variety of application gay and lesbian studies could have in the academe. Barbara Gittings, editor of the pioneering lesbian publication *The Ladder*, contributed a chapter on expanding the resources of

---

[1]Smith, Interview, 26.

the nations libraries. Julia Stanley presented a treatise on the linguistic and social sources of lesbian separatist politics originally written for a lesbian workshop. Ara Dostourian submitted a chapter on a radical Christian approach that suggested strategies for making Christianity relevant to a society suffering from unnecessary sexual repression. Stephen J. Risch made an observation in his article on a gay analysis of science and education that could have been made by any of the contributors on any of their fields: "The gay movement must not be merely a movement of resistance. It must be a movement of liberation and social revolution... many scientists still labor under the myth that science is somehow neutral and value free. I will argue that it is much more realistic to admit in general our work reflects our political ideology and that one should struggle toward bringing the two into harmony--in this case harmony between our work and our philosophy of sexual liberation."[1]

Beyond Crew's collection, it seems difficult to track down texts from the nineteen-seventies. In the nineteen-eighties, in the political wake of both Anita Bryant's Save the Children campaign and California's Briggs amendment, a handful of texts and dissertations came out on the topic of the lesbian or gay teacher. Among them are David Smith's An Ethnographic Interview Study of Homosexual Teachers' Perspectives. Smith presents a highly informative view of four teachers and their strategies for coping with the often contradictory roles of teacher and homosexual. Smith uses a theory of symbolic interactionism, a sociological line of reasoning derived from the works of Sheldon Stryker and George Herbert Mead. The line of reasoning Smith takes from this school of thought involves the collecting of a set of

---

[1]Stephen J. Risch, "Towards a Gay Analysis of Science and Education," in The Gay Academic, ed. Louie Crew (Palm Springs: ETC Publications, 1978), 369-70.

assumptions about the empirical world and a set of concepts with which to describe the empirical world. Following observations of this empirical world, these concepts and assumptions are questioned by a set of propositions that arise from the assumptions previously made. A more fundamental tenet of symbolic interactionism is that the self reflects the society, and that to focus on one and not the other is inherently partial and incomplete.[1] With this theoretical framework, Smith surveyed the beliefs and observations four instructors at the high school level in an attempt to get as broad a variety of responses on the issues in their lives. Texts such as Smith's and Sherry Woods' 1990 dissertation The Contextual realities of Being a Lesbian Physical Educator: Living in Two Worlds illustrate how valuable personal narratives and the collecting of oral history can be in a field such as this. Responses given in these works were quite informal and quite personal, insightful in a way that broad-based surveys such as Kinsey's cannot be.

Another immensely informative text is Karen Marie Harbeck's Personal Freedoms/ Public Constraints: An Analysis of the Controversy over the Employment of Homosexuals as School Teachers, published in 1987. This dissertation provides an exhaustive overview of the case law on gay and lesbian teachers, primarily at the grade school and high school level. The text includes a legal and sociological framework of interpretation which discusses the law as a malleable thing which shapes itself to the morals of the times rather than innate human conditions, a social tool which serves as "means to an end."[2] Extensive research on five distinct eras of legal battles and social change illustrate this view of the law though simultaneously expose its intransigence in the face of swift social change. The case law history, covering

---

[1]Smith, Interview, 9, 11, 12.
[2]Harbeck, Personal Freedoms, 21.

the years from 1950 to 1987, offers a near-complete overview of legal battles of the lesbian or gay instructor. Due to the taboo against the topic of homosexuality in education, Harbeck has had no choice to focus on the legal trail, but has found it rewarding nonetheless. Harbeck's tome would be a valuable contribution to the literature in this field even if it were only known for its extensive bibliography. The thoroughness of her research only helps to point up how few full books are actually written by or on the gay or lesbian academic; the majority of the texts referenced are magazine articles, newspaper articles, or case law publications.

This list of books presented in this thesis, of course, is by no means exhaustive. Smith indicated in his summary of his literature review that "there is very little research on homosexual teachers that helps us describe and explain their perspectives."[1] Books published by small presses that never found a home in a Midwestern library remain unlisted here. Publications such as Crew's The Faggot in the Woodpile: Teaching Gay Students and Barbara Grier and Coletta Reid's Lesbian Lives: Biographies of Women from the Ladder were unavailable in the immediate vicinity. This in itself says much about the local climate that Midwestern gays and lesbians in education live in--a narrow spectrum of books is made narrower by the wait for interlibrary loan and the distance from the coasts.[2]

---

[1]Smith, Interview, 26.

[2]However, more than books were written at the dawn of the gay liberation movement. The vertical files in the Special Collections department are the home to fliers, leaflets, lecture programs, activist group statements of purpose, newspaper clippings, long-abandoned journals, and mimeographs of difficult-to-find pertinent articles, all the texts a movement produces as transient or disposable literature. In among the leaflets and handouts were the names of the individuals at the forefront of the campus gay liberation movements in Michigan. Here was the list of speakers from the first Midwestern Gay Academic Union conference. Here were the sources for what would be my first series of personal contacts with lesbian and gay faculty.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEWS: HOMOSEXUALITY AND EDUCATION

Throughout the history of civilization, there have been a variety of different approaches to expressing love for a member of the same biological sex, and not all of these have been construed as "homosexuality." In ancient Greece homosexual conduct was institutionalized in ritual initiation encounters, though the issues were of class and generational dominance rather than simply homosexual contact.[1] Even so, it was the sexual act that was the concern of the culture, and though there were those who may have enjoyed it more, the concept of a person as "a homosexual" did not exist at that time.[2] As has been indicated elsewhere, it is difficult to apply the modern concept of "the homosexual" or even "homosexuality" to premodern societies; the concept itself is historically specific.[3] Between the fall of the Roman empire and the seventeenth century, sexual acts that were not directly procreative, long disdained in Hebrew law, came under more specific attack from the Christian church--not any class of homosexuals per sé. Because the concept of "the homosexual" has its origins in the phallocentric concept of sodomy, lesbian activity is scarcely mentioned in either historical

---

[1]Harbeck, Personal Freedoms, 89; David F. Greenberg, The Construction of Homosexuality (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 106; David M. Halperin, "Sex Before Sexuality: Pederasty, Politics, and Power in Classical Athens," in Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past, ed. Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey, Jr. (New York: Penguin Books, 1989), 46.

[2]Greenberg, Construction, 3, 93.

[3]Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 43.

texts or in legal documents. The historical and social invisibility of women fostered an even greater invisibility of anything resembling lesbian activity. Sexuality and sexual desire would remain phallocentric in Western culture for centuries.[1]

With the rise in seventeenth-century European capitalist society came the new social role of the exclusively homosexual male--now that the family was no longer required as an economic unit, those never interested in heterosexual marriage were free to avoid it.[2] Women, still considered sexually passive, were able to move in with each other and form life-long bonds of friendship "surpassing the love of men." Because women were not socialized to participate in public life, these private relationships were considered normal, and because these relationships were not believed to violate the "platonist ideal" of passionate love without actual genital sex, they were condoned by society throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries.[3] This was not the case for men. Now not only the homosexual act but a whole class of unmarried, homosocial men was condemned by the dominant culture. It is here we see the origins of Western society's gay male underground.

This pattern was paralleled in the New World. Heterosexuality was so much the norm that the concept indicating its opposite did not exist among the settlers--it was lumped amongst the other sexual activities forbidden by the church.[4] Little would change in America until the dawn of the industrial

---

[1]Judith C. Brown, "Lesbian Sexuality in Medieval and Early Modern Europe," in Hidden From History, ed. Duberman, Vicinus, and Chauncey, 67, 68.

[2]Randolph Trumbach, "The Birth of the Queen: Sodomy and the Emergence of Gender Equality in Modern Culture, 1660-1750," in Hidden From History, ed. Duberman, Vicinus, and Chauncey, 140; D'Emilio, Sexual Politics, 11.

[3]Lillian Faderman, Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love Between Women from the Renaissance to the Present (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1981), 74.

[4]D'Emilio, Sexual Politics, 10.

revolution, which brought about two new modern developments. The first was the birth of bourgeois Victorianism, which idealized romantic love as it obsessively pathologized sex. The other was the evolution of the city as industrial center. Despite (or perhaps in response to) Victorian mores, with the growth of major urban centers in the United States came more homosexual activity because of the newfound security and anonymity of the big city.[1] Because of the number of exclusive long-term relationships between unmarried women in late nineteenth-century Boston, the term "Boston marriage" came to describe the union.[2] New York in the 1920's, especially Harlem, was home to many clubs and social centers for the adventurous.[3]

By no means does this indicate that homosexuality was accepted in the city. Though an unmarried life in the city may have emerged as an alternative to compulsory marriage, there were still heavy injunctures against practicing acts of homosexuality. Laws defining sodomy as a felony instated soon after American independence remained on the books in all but two states up to 1950--only kidnapping, rape, and murder brought stiffer penalties.[4] The punishments for "crimes against nature" remained consistent for the greater portion of U. S. history. If the legal and religious judgments against them were not enough, gays and lesbians were viewed pathologically by the fledgling medical establishment. As early as the eighteen-eighties, doctors debated amongst themselves whether homosexuality was a disease, a birth defect, or a form of insanity[5] The medical model did not become part of the general public's vocabulary on

---

[1]Foucault, History, 103-105.

[2]Faderman, Surpassing, 190.

[3]Eric Garber, "A Spectacle in Color: The Lesbian and Gay Subculture of Jazz Age Harlem," in Hidden From History, ed. Duberman, Vicinus, and Chauncey, 318.

[4]D'Emilio, Sexual Politics, 14.

[5]Ibid., 15.

homosexuality until the early nineteen-forties, when vast numbers of men found themselves being quizzed on an unexpected topic.

During World War II, a large number of men were suddenly drafted into the U. S. Army. Because of an observed increase in homosexual activity in the ranks during the previous world war, military health officials were concerned about the new draftees. Although there were questions for all recruits regarding homosexual behavior, the interrogation was not in-depth. Ironically, this made the issue of homosexuality much more visible than it had been in previous American history.[1] Many lied in their patriotic fervor and, to their surprise, discovered a small but significant subculture of gays in the military. Individuals who had perhaps known a circle of two or three in their hometowns found themselves immersed in a culture where tension was high, comradeship was valued, and all the familiar faces and ways of home were far away.

Simultaneously, large numbers of women were called upon to serve in the army and to take the place of the men who had gone off to war. Suddenly, the traditional roles of wife/ teacher/ nurse had been set aside in the name of patriotism. The all-volunteer Women's Army Corps took in a number of women yearning to escape traditional women's roles. The image of "Rosie the Riveter" trumpeted a new creature--a successful, productive woman, able to hold her own in the outside world. In the civilian world and in the military, women learned new professions and skills in fields they had never been allowed access to before. Vast numbers of farm daughters left the isolation of their small town communities to find industrial work--and a thriving new gay nightlife--in the city[2] New networks of communication

---

[1]Allan Bérubé, "Marching to a Different Drummer: Lesbian and Gay GIs in World War II," in Hidden From History, ed. Duberman, Vicinus, and Chauncey, 387.

[2]Ibid., 385.

between women sprang up, and vast numbers of lesbians suddenly discovered that they were not alone. Much like the African American soldiers who had gotten a taste of something close to equality in Europe during the First World War, these women had gotten their first taste of community and were not going to let it be peacefully taken back.

Unfortunately, with the end of World War II came a vicious homophobic crackdown. Women were summarily fired to make room for the returning men, but this was not the worst of the lesbian's problems--for both them and the gay male population, the end of a long weary war meant "witch hunts, bar raids, arrests, and a retreat to the closet."[1] Not only were male and female branches of the army subject to purges, but both national and state legislatures orchestrated antihomosexual hearings which easily dovetailed with Senator McCarthy's anti-communist witch-hunts. The link between homosexuality, national security and communism was easily made in an era that believed gays and lesbians to be inherently psychologically weak and unable to perform their duties without being susceptible to the lure of sex or the threat of blackmail. Likewise, as Communists were sure to "poison the minds" of America's impressionable youth, so would the homosexual corrupt their bodies[2] It was a time of being thought "guilty until proven innocent," and since Communists and homosexuals bore no obvious physical characteristics, everyone was suspect and therefore pressured to conform. Ironically, the threat of being accused of homosexuality was used as much to keep heterosexuals, male and female, from straying from their expected roles as much as it was to keep gays and lesbians from the public eye.[3] With the

---

[1]Ibid., 391.

[2]D'Emilio, Making Trouble, 59, 48.

[3]Suzanne Pharr, "Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism," in Feminist Frameworks: Alternative Theoretical Accounts of the Relations between Women and Men, 3d ed., ed. Alison M. Jaggar and Paula S. Rothenberg (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1993), 312.

fighting at an end, the majority of Americans (and certainly the majority of white males in power) wanted to return to the life of stability they had known before the Great Depression and the war--a life long since rendered unattainable with the changes in technology, politics, and social life. This did not stop those in power from attempting a return to what was for many a life of undue privilege. The American Dream that the U. S. A. had ostensibly been fighting for was white male patriarchy at its purest--Dad at the head of the table, his smiling wife serving him dinner while the kids play outside. The gay men and lesbians who either could not or would not return to their previous existences stayed in the cities to live as well as they could in the cold war climate of repression. And so it was in the fifties that the issue of homosexuality first became a truly public one in America--sparking the most aggressive stance towards gays and lesbians in U. S. history.[1]

There were far-reaching repercussions from the U. S. government wholesale firing of lesbians and gays. State and municipal government began screening employees on issues of "morality," and harassment of gay and lesbian citizens stepped up. Where once the condemnation had been private, because of well-publicized federal statements branding gay men and lesbians as "moral perverts and national security risks," local police forces were suddenly given "free reign" harassing them. New life was breathed into old sodomy laws. Dress code laws were passed and enforced. Raids on gay bars occurred with impunity, names of the arrested were often printed in the papers, and many of these people lost their jobs.[2]

There were glimmers of light in these dark times. Many cities had

---

[1]D'Emilio, Sexual Politics, 52.

[2]Gerard Sullivan, A Study of Political Campaigns of Discrimination Against Gay People in the United States, 1950-1978 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1987), 79.

their first gay bars open up in the nineteen-forties.[1] Social circles established in the larger cities during the war did not vanish in the fifties, but merely went underground. If nobody else did, then the law certainly viewed gays and lesbians as a social group, albeit a group that (like African Americans in the South) needed occasional "reminders" of its inferiority. In the police's efforts to root out the "homosexual menace," more lesbians and gays were made aware of each other's existence. Though arrests escalated to their peak in this era, the groundwork had been laid for a solid gay subculture.

Political activism in the gay and lesbian world was not impossible in the fifties--merely stressful and arduous. Nobody considered gays or lesbians to be a minority group--it was viewed as an individual problem, a psychological (if not criminal) defect in a person's character. Harry Hay, a member of the Communist party since 1933, was the first person inspired to organize the gay and lesbian community politically at a 1948 presidential campaign meeting. After two years of searching for like-minded individuals, he, Bob Hull, Chuck Rowland, Dale Jennings and "R." met at Hay's home to discuss the formation of the Mattachine Society. Three of these men had been members of the Communist party, one had defended Japanese Americans unfairly interned during World War II, and R. had fled Austria to escape the Nazis. They were all prepared to analyze the position of the homosexual explicitly in terms of group oppression.

The Mattachine Society began building a large following through the gay bars and underground networks, spurred on by the entrapment arrest of Jennings. However, after the trial (which ended with a hung jury--a victory in 1952), holding the party together became a challenge. The goals the leadership had may have asked too much of the membership in general, who

[1]D'Emilio, Making Trouble, 66.

were not prepared to make the leap to believing they were a genuine persecuted minority. Furthermore, it was not common knowledge that there were Communists in charge, and it was uncertain whether the members could accept this. As the membership pushed for public respectability above the socialist goals of the original leaders, several of the founders (including Hay) resigned. Jennings turned to the editing of ONE, the first nationwide publication devoted to the lesbian and gay population, which he helped establish in early 1953.[1] The sales of ONE exceeded 2,000 copies a month--with readership much higher, due to copies passing hands--providing the community with a publication that would publicize their concerns and grievances with compassion and honesty, presenting them as more than their stereotype to both the homosexual and the heterosexual community.

Unfortunately, the Mattachine society did not fare so well. By 1954 newcomers would be told nothing of the founders' political origins or their "oppressed minority" model, and would come to see Mattachine as an accommodationist organization, devoted to educating the homosexual about proper citizenship and the American public about how to tolerate homosexuals in their midst.[2]

Coinciding with Mattachine's fade from its assertive stance, the lesbian population--never strong to begin with--faded and all but disappeared from its ranks. The Society--founded by men--had attracted members primarily through social contacts and by word of mouth which made it almost exclusively male to begin with, and their fights rarely concerned lesbian issues. This is not to say that pre-Stonewall lesbian activity was nonexistent. Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon founded the Daughters of Bilitis (DOB) in 1955.

---

[1] D'Emilio, Sexual Politics, 73.
[2] Ibid., 90.

Initially founded as a social alternative to the (negligible) lesbian bar scene, DOB quickly evolved into an educational movement committed to changing the public's attitudes towards lesbianism. Martin articulated the stance of the lesbian as distinct from the gay male:

> The Lesbian is first of all a *woman*.... It is time that the Daughters of Bilitis and the Lesbian find and establish a much broader identification than that of the homosexual community or the homophile movement. The "battle of the sexes" which predominates in American society prevails in the homosexual community as well and the Lesbian finds herself relegated to an even more inferior status.[1]

The first edition of DOB's newsletter, *The Ladder*, was mailed to a network of lesbians and to a list of professionals who had power over the public's attitudes towards homosexuality, such as lawyers and psychologists.[2] However, the white upper-middle class leadership failed to draw in large numbers of lesbians. By eschewing bar culture (and the role of butch they felt was linked to it) they kept a potentially powerful contingency of women from their membership. Ultimately, DOB evolved into a group designed to help introduce lesbians into society as inconspicuous and productive citizens, and it was hard to keep members active once they had been "reintroduced." Much like the gay male populace, the bulk of the lesbians found a more solid and comfortable life in the gay bars than amongst the accommodationist homophile organization established to improve their lives. The 'improvement' these homophile organizations offered was not of the bar patron's design, and until any organization--lesbian or gay--took the broadest homosexual subculture in existence seriously, the closet doors would have to remain closed until somebody else smashed them open.

---

[1]Del Martin, "The Lesbian's Majority Status," The Ladder (June 1967): 24-26.
[2]D'Emilio, Sexual Politics, 103.

By the late nineteen-sixties, many social institutions were being smashed open. The decade had seen an explosion of articles on the world of the homosexual--though many were sensationalistic, a number of them were increasingly sympathetic, observing (and having pity) rather than condemning. Two important shifts in popular thought are observable from this literature--not only did they approached gay and lesbian life as an undeniable subculture unto itself, but they were willing to present three-dimensional portraits of real human beings.[1] This makes sense, coinciding as it does with the African American populace's efforts to be seen as fully human in the United States. For over a decade, the Civil Rights movement had been rearranging the structure of race relations, with the more militant branches of it advocating freedom "by any means necessary." Protests of the Vietnam War (and the government's hierarchical approach to authority) had been escalating on college campuses and in most major cities. The "sexual revolution" had given (male heterosexual) America much freer reign in its sexual expression. A generation of young Americans were taking all this and channeling it into a kind of "cultural radicalism," a form of living breathing revolution that advocated the positive remaking of the self that would be consistent with the socio-political criticism of the New Left.[2] As the sixties drew to a close, women of this generation took this criticism one step further and began to examine the social construction of sexual roles, and in the process began to dismantle long-held assumptions of what "men" and "women" were destined to be or do. The lesbian branches of the docile homophile movement were unwilling to take this step, much as the male contingency (long split from its Communist origins) was unable to advocate

---

[1]Ibid., 139.
[2]Ibid., 225.

the active alteration of the dominant society's system of values.

In all fairness, the homophile organizations had been able to exert some influence before their waning. In the mid-sixties, they were able to pressure New York City into reigning in police raids of gay bars. This helped set the scene for the events in Greenwich Village. By the late sixties, the bar scene in New York flourished, and most bar patrons had come to think of their favorite watering hole as a reliable community center, a space they could rightfully call theirs.

Thus, when the police arrived on June 27, 1969, to cart away the patrons of the Stonewall Inn, they did not encounter the usual compliance. The patrons had spent the morning at the wake of Judy Garland, "*the* cultural icon for gay men of the nineteen-fifties and nineteen-sixties."[1] Gay men across the nation were mourning for this woman whose songs and life had meant so much to them, but those in New York who had been at the wake were especially sorrowful. The typical crowd at the Stonewall was a "non-vanilla" mix of people, both ethnically and sexually. There were drag queens, "flame" (partial drag) queens, African Americans, Puerto Ricans, and even a small contingent of butch lesbians present. The patrons of color surely would have heard the oppression and liberation theories of the Black Panther and other militant groups, and the drag and flame queens, "long habituated to defiance, and with no privileges left to lose," were the first to fight back as the police began filling the paddywagon.[2] As the police tried to round up the last of the patrons (some say it was a drag queen, others say it was a lesbian just visiting an employee), a shower of coins, bottles and cobblestones rained down on the bar's assailants. An uprooted parking meter was sent through a

---

[1]D'Emilio, Making Trouble, 240.

[2]Martin Duberman, Cures: A Gay Man's Odyssey (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 161; D'Emilio, Making Trouble, 240-41.

police car's windshield. The crowd in front of Stonewall blockaded the Police inside and torched it in their attempts to evade police brutality. The police were rescued, but not before the crowd response erupted into a riot that reached all the way down Sheridan Square[1].

The riot begun that evening lasted for the next four days, and at the end of it 400 police had squared off against a crowd of approximately 2,000. By the third day of fighting, Allen Ginsberg was already able to notice a change in the crowd, noting to a reporter, "You know, the guys there were so beautiful. They've lost that wounded look that fags all had ten years ago."[2] In the last months of the sixties, in the wake of the first gay riot in history, students and activists previously unable to rally around their sexual orientation steered their energies into channeling the new sense of defiance spawned in the riot, and the new wave of Gay Liberation was born.

This history, for the most part, has been the history of the coasts. There were chapters of ONE (another accommodationist group, spawned from Jennings' magazine) and the Mattachine Society in Midwestern cities such as Chicago and Detroit, but their impact on their respective communities was negligible compared to the admittedly gradual fallout from Stonewall.

The cultural setting of American higher education likewise has evolved to a point where it would be considered unrecognizable when compared to the academic climates of any of the previous centuries. Where once the clergy-directed American college was the norm, state universities now preside. The state university, despite its absence of political preference, would favor the fundamentalist conservatism of its surrounding populace--unlike the institutes of the East Coast of the eighteenth century, which found

---

[1]Martin Duberman, Stonewall (New York: Penguin Books, 1993), 196-99.
[2]D'Emilio, Sexual Politics, 232.

themselves swaying towards liberalism. Likewise, conditions for the instructor have changed. Where once the college professor was also a local minister, faculty of the late twentieth century would undergo a degree of professionalization that would bring about a level of formal distance from non-academic concerns.

Since the arrival of the colonists, the goal of higher education has been more than simply the accumulation of knowledge. Because the best educated citizens of the early colonial village were often the town ministers, they were most often called upon to teach, thus establishing a link between theology and education early in American history.[1] The approach to religious and moral control of the students "which made every American college a home away from home" was modeled after such establishments as Cambridge and Harvard.[2] Like the English college or boarding school, the schoolmasters served "in loco parentis," serving as the pupils' disciplinarians as well as instructors. The moral conduct of those responsible for not just the education but the day-to-day care of young boys was of the utmost concern to both religious leaders and parents. Because of the puritan concept of salvation being dependent on the entire community, monitoring the actions of teachers--as well as other public figures--was not considered an "invasion of privacy" by any means, but more of a community's moral duty to itself.[3] This, combined with the heightened scrutiny that came with the responsibility of serving in loco parentis, put instructors at the center of community attention. In loco parentis instruction did not vanish as the nineteenth century wore on. The more pleasant term "paternalism" came

---

[1]Harbeck, Personal Freedoms, 57.

[2]Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University: A History (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 26.

[3]Harbeck, Personal Freedoms, 56, 86.

into use about mid-century to describe the close relations between students and faculty, but this particular academic institution remained more or less intact, casting faculty and administration in dual roles of intellectual and moral instructor.[1] The religious origins were obscured, but the moral order that lay beneath was fundamentally the same.

As the nineteenth century wore on, fewer and fewer instructors were connected with the clergy. Nonetheless, they were held to the same moral standards as their ecclesiastical brethren--and were as closely monitored. There was also a certain amount of concern about the background of faculty that transferred over from public schoolteaching's emphasis on public service unfortunately accompanied by a relinquishing of civil rights.[2] The home missionary movement begun on the East Coast concentrated its efforts on taming the Western frontier, and so with the push westward came a vast number of denominational colleges built in what would become the American Midwest. The vast majority of colleges built in the first half of the nineteenth century were denominational, erected whether or not the populace could support them, glutting the market but ensuring a religious influence in the territories.[3] The newly-founded state universities, established predominantly in the Midwest, had been established to provide practical, vocational training--which the schools were ill-equipped to do.[4] Many pious, industrious citizens made their fortune without ever setting foot in college, cultivating an anti-intellectual spirit in the Midwest which fit well with the American notion of economic independence. Worse, these state universities, built in the name of spiritual and academic freedom, now found

---

[1]Rudolph, American College, 103.

[2]Harbeck, Personal Freedoms, 67.

[3]Christopher J. Lucas, American Higher Education: A History (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 119.

[4]Rudolph, American College, 217.

themselves surrounded by religious academic institutions that were influencing the populace faster than they themselves could, creating an evangelical climate that would eventually inspire the region's nickname of "bible belt."[1]

The American state college was defined in the Midwest, where the frontier approach to materialism and democracy would best foster its growth.[2] After a faltering start, the goal of vocational education at the state college was reached, and the concept of "state college" eventually became an emblem of Midwestern America, established as a sensible alternative to the "fancy book larnin" of other institutes of higher education.[3] Because of the cultural factors that shaped its origins, the Midwestern college's character became distinct from the establishments of the East.

With the ascent of the university came a degree of organization and professionalization previously unheard of in the world of education. The idea of having a governing board of clergymen had long fallen by the wayside, and the ruling committees of universities were now populated by figures from the world of business administration as often as by faculty members representing their fields. Methods of education (as well as faculty qualifications) became more formalized and standardized, giving educators a solid foundation to work on but less personal leeway within it. As Rudolph writes,

> The rise of the academician, the organization of professors and learning in all the ways that have been suggested, was essential to the achievement of intellectual maturity by the United States. If there were losses in personal security and psychological certainty when the college professor underwent professionalization, there were also magnificent gains: the

---

[1]Ibid., 52, 55; Lucas, American Higher Education, 120.
[2]Rudolph, American College, 265, 277.
[3]Lucas, American Higher Education, 152-3.

> tremendous conquest of ignorance, the sheer increase in the number of Americans for whom intellectual pursuits brought pleasure, the harnessing of knowledge for the service of man (sic).[1]

These changes to the system of higher education in the earlier decades of the twentieth century set the stage for the next wave of academic scrutiny, inspired by the wholesale upturning of American society by the Great Depression. Throughout the early nineteen-thirties, enrollment dropped, and the students that were left turned to social criticism of a system that had left America financially and morally bankrupt. Issues protested ranged from the rise of fascism and the collapse of laissez-faire capitalism to compulsory campus chapel service and military training. A severe questioning of the American way began on college campuses in the shadow of the Great Depression. Meanwhile, the faculty, never well-paid to begin with, saw their wages cut, sometimes by as much as half.[2] There was discontent all across the campus which would leave many students and professors with the impression that critique of America was a sensible, noble, and necessary thing.

The right to critique America was itself questioned in the period of forced compliance with the American way that came in the wake of World War II. Issues of academic freedom that had been touted since the rise of the university were never so intensely challenged as they were during the McCarthy era. Academics especially were singled out for suspicion. The report made by the Senate's Judiciary Committee on Internal Security had no supporting evidence for its case, but nonetheless felt unhindered in charging that "[t]he Communist Party of the United States has put forth every effort to infiltrate the teaching profession of this country. In this endeavor to corrupt

---

[1]Rudolph, American College, 409.
[2]Lucas, American higher Education, 203

the teachers of youth, the agents of the Kremlin have been remarkably successful, especially among the professors in our colleges and universities." In support of such statements, Senator Joseph McCarthy himself predicted that the battle to remove not just "communists" but "communist *thinkers*" (emphasis mine) as well would be difficult because "the minute you do that all hell breaks loose. From coast to coast you hear the screaming of interference with academic freedom."[1] Attacks on "academic freedom" came from outside the institution and from within, both forces equating this freedom with Communism. Loyalty oaths and local investigating committees, begun on a few campuses during the red scare following World War I, became a political fixture of the academe.[2] Faculty were considered guilty until proven innocent in an era where, as McCarthy put it, "a witness' refusal to answer whether he is or is not communist on the ground that his answer would tend to incriminate him is the most positive proof obtainable that the witness is a communist."[3] Many academics, invoking their fifth amendment rights as a matter of principle and pride, found their reputations tarnished and their careers stunted, if not destroyed. The critique of America that seemed so vital to faculty and students alike in the thirties could now be considered grounds for dismissal, though mere public association with potentially "revolutionary" figures was dangerous enough. A generation of academics learned the lesson of suspicion by association, and learned to avoid the unusual in the name of self-preservation. This was not the only reason academics avoided political contact with undergraduates, however--few would do so until the sixties because such participation in student activities

---

[1]Ibid., 225

[2]Ellen W. Schrecker, No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 68.

[3]Lucas, American Higher Education, 227.

was also simply considered unprofessional.[1]

At the same time, a rapidly growing concern abut the Soviet Union's technological capabilities forced most institutions to shift their academic goals from the education and enlightenment of individual students to the dissemination of knowledge that could be politically and militarily useful.[2] The American institution of higher education, more obviously than ever before, was a political extension of the government, and those who worked within it had to bow to its requests and demands.

The mood on campus would not remain so docile as the veterans in college on the G. I. Bill graduated and the next generation of students arrived. A once politically apathetic student body took up a variety of causes--first racial discrimination, then the Vietnam War, then conditions at their own schools. In the span of a few short years, chaos would erupt on college campuses and in cities across the United States. Student issues ranged from curricular reform to the removal of ROTC from campus, the common theme of which was observed by Rutgers President Edward J. Bloustein in 1968, who observed that they were all aspects of a "testing of the academic decision process; they all go to challenge the legitimacy of the constitutional apparatus of the college or university."[3] The educational system in the united states was being criticized for mirroring "the hierarchical and aggressive nature of our society."[4] As a consequence, the academic setting was fast becoming a place where new ideas could be tested while old patterns of education, long trusted, were held up for reassessment and revision. In such an environment, many issues directly affecting the students became classroom

---

[1]Schrecker, No Ivory Tower, 64.
[2]Lucas, American Higher Education, 253.
[3]Ibid., 259.
[4]Risch, "Gay Analysis," 370.

subjects. African American students petitioned for Black history. Female students petitioned for women's studies. The personal had become political, and it was beginning to become academic. For the gay and lesbian community, the closet door was beginning to open.

When looking at the juncture of the above two historical overviews, it is easy to see why the early seventies was a time ripe for the emergence of the gay and lesbian academic community. Learning about the origins of this community has been relatively easy compared to discovering its past. In researching the history of lesbian and gay academics, the most obvious hurdle is the lack of printed information. As has been discussed earlier, the field is circumscribed by the silence on the topic of homosexuality throughout history and the invisibility of the instructors themselves.

Because of the historical perspective of homosexuality as a sickness, a sin, a crime, or any combination thereof, lesbians and gays have been barred from employment in a variety of positions--most notably in the field of education. The illogical connection of "homosexual" with "pedophile" had led many figures of authority to prevent lesbians and gays from entering or remaining in the teaching profession. Most gay and lesbian instructors are on their best behavior, knowing full well the repercussions if, after giving a student an affectionate pat on the back or a drive home in the rain, they were accused and exposed as homosexual. Though the image of the educator-as-child-corrupter is most often associated with primary and secondary education, it is not unheard of for the paranoia to be aimed at those who teach at a college level. Concerning his firing for being known as gay, Arnold Sciullo writes, "The fact that I was teaching college did not matter because the role model theory/ violation included an implicit belief that even college age

students can be seduced."[1] Sciullo points out that in Aumiller v. the University of Delaware, the rationale for the refusal to rehire Aumiller is that, by being gay, he was "advocating a homosexual lifestyle for the undergraduate that would be confusing to a number of our undergraduates."[2] Such attitudes have kept gays out of the classrooms for centuries, and it is only recently we have been able to trace the pattern through position statements in cases such as these.

Oppression, both overt and covert, was exhibited in the state of Michigan in the decades preceding Stonewall. The oppression was overt in that people were asked to leave their university, but covert in that, in the example of Michigan State University, "the lives of lesbians and gay men were rendered so invisible that even events such as the gay purges of the nineteen-fifties are completely omitted from the annual reports of the campus chief of police."[3] There was more of a paper trail at the University of Michigan, documenting the Ann Arbor gay purges of 1959 and 1962. In 1959, between twenty-six and thirty-four men were arrested under charges of gross indecency, as opposed to five the previous year. Of those arrested, at least fourteen were students and one was an associate professor. Most of the defendants took the package sentence of a $275 fine, ten days in jail, and five years probation. The professor was also relieved of his duties and eventually resigned.[4] It is interesting to note the tenor of the sympathetic voices of 1960. In defense of those arrested, Tom Hayden wrote in the Michigan Daily:

---

[1]Arnold Sciullo, Tolls at Closet Doors: A Gay History for Teachers (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1984), 36.

[2]Aumiller v. University of Delaware, 434 F. Supp. 1273 (1977), 1285; quoted in Sciullo, Tolls at Closet Doors, 36.

[3]University-Wide Task Force on Lesbian and Gay Issues, Moving Forward: Lesbians and Gay Men at Michigan State University, vol. 1 (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1992), 50.

[4]Daniel Tsang, "Gay Ann Arbor Purges," Midwest Gay Academic Journal, vol. 1 no. 1 (April 1977): 15, 16.

> [The police] have been paid with public funds to aggravate the psychological problem of the homosexual, first by enticement, then by arrest, arraignment, trial, and perhaps a prison sentence. This is neither a logical way to spend public funds nor a sensitive way to handle a public problem.... The situation once more illustrates the cultural lag which puts the homosexual under the heading of 'criminal' when he is most often an individual with serious psychological difficulties.... What must be questioned most basically is the state statute itself.... It is based on an absurd conception of homosexuality as the immoral behavior of stable rational individuals. It makes little attempt to understand such individuals as anything other than criminals, and most frightening of all, it sentences them to state prisons where their environment is hardly conducive for cure.[1]

In the span of a month in 1962, Ann Arbor police officers arrested sixteen people "on homosexual charges," two of whom were faculty. In the *Michigan Daily*, a detailed explanation of the police procedures was given, mentioning that "the officer need not witness such an incident, and, as in other felony cases, he may arrest an alleged violator on the basis of a complaint."[2] The article also quoted Executive Vice President Marvin L. Niehuss as saying, "What the University is concerned with is the possibility that normal boys might be pulled into homosexual behavior." With high public officials such as Niehuss going on the record about not wanting the University to be a "happy home for these people," it is understandable that the gay and lesbian faculty would be concerned about their job security.[3] These purges were not enacted simply to curb restroom activity, however. Individuals arrested were pressured to "name names" in order to expand and bolster the Ann Arbor police's list of known or suspected homosexuals, a list which included people who had never been arrested or had any contact with

---

[1]Tom Hayden, "Homosexual Crackdown of Dubious Value," Michigan Daily, 9 January 1960; quoted in Ibid., 17.

[2]Daniel Tsang, "Gay Purges: Part Two, "Midwest Gay Academic Journal, vol. 1 no. 2 (1977): 11.

[3]Ibid., 12.

the law.[1]

The lack of privacy accorded instructors, coupled with the inherent danger of a lifestyle labeled abhorrent by society and the university, left many faculty exposed and fearful for their careers. Judging from the case law histories leading up to 1969, homosexuality was still considered a perversion. This opinion was long in fading. Though while view of homosexual behavior was still considered "evil, abhorrent, immoral and criminal," concepts of privacy began to render such judgments immaterial. As the sixties drew to a close, however, "the rights of teachers were enhanced because of the growing legal doctrine of employment protection, so homosexual educators benefited as well. Eventually, it would be the homosexual school teacher employment issue that challenged the boundaries of this emergent concept of individual rights."[2] The era of community accountability, established in colonial times, would draw to a close as this doctrine found its place in the law books. The time taken for it to become the norm, however, would span the next two decades and still not reach all fifty states evenly. One legal advocate stated in 1973 that, up to the date of the study, educators have been more aware of the potential of displeasing their communities than they have of the civil rights that this community watch asks of them.[3] This is certainly the case with gay and lesbian educators, whose situation is made even more perilous by the uneven application of the law in the defense of gays and lesbians employed at state institutions:

While recognizing that absolute bars to public employment of

---

[1]Tim Retzloff, "Outcast, Miscast, Recast: A Documentary History of Lesbians and Gay Men at the University of Michigan," in From Invisibility to Inclusion: Opening the Doors for Lesbians and Gay Men at the University of Michigan, Study Committee on the Status of Lesbians and Gay Men (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1991), 115.

[2]Harbeck, Personal Freedoms, 179.

[3]Ibid., 63.

> gays no longer survive constitutional challenge, the courts have uniformly refused to impose any meaningful restrictions on arbitrary governmental employment policies. Courts have accomplished this result by embracing, or at least acquiescing in, unsubstantiated and irrational justifications and presumptions raised in support of these exclusionary practices and by failing to apply appropriate constitutional scrutiny. Consequently, no federal court has set aside the government's termination of, or refusal to hire, a homosexual on the ground that the individual sexual preference bore no relation to his or her job fitness.[1]

For the gay or lesbian educator or the nineteen-seventies, the issue was not so much the antagonism of their immediate supervisor as it was the potential hostility from the entire educational environment. In a national survey of English department chairs in 1975, Louie Crew discovered that 24 percent of all chairs were openly hostile to gay and lesbian issues and faculty, 32 percent were predominantly ambivalent, and 44 percent were predominantly accepting. Though an openly hostile 24 percent could seem low for the times, Crew cautions that it is wise to realize that 34 percent "would like to appear accepting but would capriciously use slight pretexts not even measured here to abandon a gay person under fire."[2]

All was not doomed in the aftermath of the witch-hunting that characterized the fifties and early sixties. With the coming of the sexual revolution in the late nineteen-sixties came the re-evaluation of gender roles, paving the way for the women's studies department. Many lesbians who had wanted a voice in the academic setting to voice their critique of the interrelation of sex, gender and power found themselves with a class to teach, and the door was opened for the eventual establishment of gender studies and gay and lesbian studies. Academics in New York and other metropolitan

---

[1]Rhonda R. Rivera, "Our Straight-Laced Judges: The Legal Position of Homosexuals," 869; quoted in Sciullo, Tolls at Closet Doors, 43.

[2]Louie Crew, "Before Emancipation: Gay Persons as Viewed by Chairpersons in English," in The Gay Academic, ed. Louie Crew (Palm Springs: ETC Publications, 1978), 4.

centers had been gearing up for this possibility since the legitimization of the study of homosexuality as something other than a disease in the mid-sixties, and in 1972, a crowd of approximately twenty gay and lesbian academics gathered to discuss a new organization: the group that would become the Gay Academic Union.

The gays and lesbians who taught still had a hard time conceiving of themselves as a community as such. Even as late as 1975, Louie Crew stated that "in the academy the gay community is more an idea in the making than an accomplished fact."[1] The first meeting was in 1973, a scant four years after Stonewall made it possible in the minds of hundreds of lesbians sand gays to organize publicly in a political fashion, and the academics, being professionals, were "new to the movement, new to its stance of gay pride, and new to the daunting imperative to come out."[2] Few of the individuals in the group had any experience with the world of gay politics, but they all had the analytical tools to pick apart and scrutinize every potential group statement. More importantly, it was a union of the personal and public worlds, one which made whole many members conflicting roles. "If the gay activist experiences a sense of liberation through the public avowal of gayness, imagine the heightened exhilaration felt when the espousal of one's gay identity takes place within the context of one's life work, when private self and public role come together, and the relevance and connectedness of one to the other is asserted and acted upon."[3] This is the environment in which the Gay Academic Union was conceived.

The goal of the Gay Academic Union (GAU) was to "translate the mew

---

[1]Ibid., xviii.
[2]D'Emilio, Making Trouble, xxx.
[3]Ibid., 121.

post-Stonewall zeitgeist into an agenda for higher education."[1] It was more than just a meeting of academics, however--though they had all been trained professionally, the intensely personal aspect of the topic at hand gave the conversation an emotional intensity unexpected. Martin Duberman made mention of the first day's deliberations in his autobiography, Cures:

> We then got to talking about whether as a group we had some special function to perform and after lengthy discussion came up with several: we could pressure the American Association of University Professors and other academic organizations to protect the rights of openly gay faculty; we could serve as a support network for the many isolated gay people on campus; we could pinpoint needed areas of scholarly research; and we could originate pilot programs for course work in gay studies.... By the end of the evening, I knew for certain that I have finally found a home--and an ideal way of tying into the gay movement.[2]

Despite the heady sense of purpose that came with this new organization, it was not a flawless construction. Despite the feeling that this organization would soar with the skills of the academe at its disposal, one doctoral candidate wryly observed, "It was encouraging to witness the establishment of the Gay Academic Union.... Gay faculty members have had more problems getting together and organizing than have students. For one thing, there are comparatively few faculty members compared to students. Hence there isn't a large pool of recruits. Furthermore, faculty organizations are not the established tradition that student groups are. And finally, there are additional problems with coming out as a faculty member since the university is one's employer."[3] The issue that aroused the most passionate debate and caused the most acrimonious splits, however, was the inherent

---

[1]Ibid., 248.
[2]Duberman, Cures, 275.
[3]J. Lee Lehman, "Gay Students," in Gay Academic, ed. Crew, 61-62.

sexism of the gay male contingency--not coincidentally the contingency wielding the most power.

The sexism was both subtle and frightfully blatant. "You guys may be oppressed faggots," one of the few women in the group observed, "but you show the same comfort with power and the same confidence that you'll gain access to it as any other gathering of men I've ever witnessed."[1] The unwillingness to recognize women's issues as crucial to lesbians while simultaneously requesting lesbian allegiance to gay causes that favored gay males caused a great amount of friction. When discussing their strategies for interacting with the straight world, the white, male, middle-class members were all too eager to present themselves as "just like everybody else," or rather, straight white, male, middle-class academics. "Their wish to buy into heterosexual white male privilege would increasingly come to take precedence for many gay men over an honest avowal of the actual dimensions of their differentness."[2] But it was not a matter of consciously wanting to buy into heterosexual white male privilege--for many of these men, simply growing up as men in a male-dominated culture caused them to incorporate the "sexist attitudes which perpetuate the caste-like status of women in America."[3] Women were walking out in protest, inspired to do so by men's statements such as the one expressing the hope that the passing of one of the feminists' resolutions "would ensure *no* further discussion of the woman question--we have *important* work to do."[4] Significant numbers of sympathetic males regretted their leaving, but could not blame the women for their stance.

---

[1]Duberman, Cures, 275.
[2]Ibid., 277.
[3]D'Emilio, Making Trouble, 123.
[4]Duberman, Cures, 278.

The initial revolutionary fervor wore off in the weeks and months following the conference, and it appeared as though the Union would become "one more liberal academic talkfest."[1] Though even if the GAU were looking more and more like their straight brethren, they had already made the accomplishment of serving as a networking tool for gay and lesbian academics (albeit to a lesser extent), inspiring new scholarly works and reinvigorating local academics in their causes. The stronghold of the GAU, however, would remain in New York, and though branches sprang up across the U. S., it would be the New York branch that would remain reliably intact.

[1]Ibid., 297.

GAY AND LESBIAN ACADEMICS: THE USE OF ORAL HISTORY

With the realization that written information on the topic was limited, I made the decision to use oral history as a main source for my thesis. My main premise is that there are many aspects to current life and the social patterns of the recent past that will not be written down, much less published. These personal recollections and histories can be valuable to future generations who would otherwise never get the chance to read them. In one guidebook to oral history collection, the rationale is given that "there are many classes of persons who will not set down in writing the description of their way of life although they may have a very rich oral tradition and may be able to talk with much color and accuracy about this life."[1] While it can be assumed that the author was speaking of perhaps the urban underclass or of the working poor in the hills of Kentucky, the description of a social group unlikely to publish memoirs could just as easily apply to those members of the academic profession who do not wish to publicize their homosexuality out of concern for their jobs. Further, with the Bible Belt's muscle felt in all but the biggest of Midwestern cities, research on the academics from this region should be unique from any study done on either of the coasts.

Given the relative youth of the field, oral history is still viewed as not quite the equal of formal history by some scholars. The field of oral history is

---

[1]Willa K. Baum, Oral History for the Local Historical Society (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1971), 8.

less than a decade older than the field of gay and lesbian studies; the first annual National Colloquia on Oral History was in 1966.[1] Some historians have argued that oral history is inherently flawed, that the memories of individuals cannot be trusted to bring up clear pictures of life ten or twenty years ago, that the recollections will be more idealized than any written document from the time would be. Arguments to the contrary indicate that no written document is without a political bias or a subliminal agenda--that newspaper articles often carry the biases of the editor, that letters between family members or business figures often leave certain things unsaid to more firmly entrench other messages. As Kennedy and Davis put it,

> Whether the more conventional sources for historical and sociological studies--letters, newspaper accounts, court records, or observation--provide a sounder base than rich oral narratives for the constricting of community history is in our minds a moot question. Although such sources do not introduce issues about the distortion of memory, they do raise other kinds of problems, such as the limited representation of community participants' own views, or the lack of multiple perspectives.[2]

Oral history is no more inherently flawed than any research made based on documents written with any persuasive intent, which tends to include most forms of published and unpublished writing. For those with limited access to the publishing world, oral history is a valued way to preserve the experiences of the underrepresented and unrecorded.

Oral history has its strengths. In making direct contact with individuals, an interviewer can ask questions directly pertaining to the topic, thus steering the narrator towards the creation of the ideal research text. It allows the narrator to speak in their own voice, which can often be an

---

[1]Peter D. Olch and Forrest C. Pogue, eds., Selections from the Fifth and Sixth National Colloquia on Oral History (New York: The Oral History Association, Inc., 1972), v.

[2]Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Madeline D. Davis, Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community (New York: Routledge Press, 1993), 15.

impassioned voice previously unheard. Franklin Kameny, a gay activist of the late nineteen-fifties and nineteen-sixties, argued against relying "solely on an intellectually-directed program... to change well-entrenched, emotionally based attitudes."[1] Further, the mediums of communication generally relied upon for research rarely deal with the personal to the same degree that personal communication can.

There are weaknesses to be admitted, but these are not the fault of oral history per se, but rather its application in this specific setting. As is to be expected, conducting oral history on a topic as fraught with political and personal significance as this can be problematic. Finding willing narrators can often be the most difficult step. Securing sensitive information by interview requires a certain amount of security on the part of the interviewer and trust on the part of the interviewee. I will go further into my precautions and methods later in the text. Also, with the passing of time, it must be admitted that memory lapses can and do occur, leaving many potentially illuminating interviewees unable to respond with enough clarity about past events to be helpful. Lastly, using oral history to reconstruct a picture of life from the past has been found to be "slow and painstaking."[2] Uncovering potential interviewees, making contact, supplying references, scheduling meeting times and transcribing the tape to text all take far more time than the actual interview and can leave one feeling as if little has been accomplished for the time put in.

This portion of the thesis attempts to present a sample of the experiences of gay and lesbian academics in the mid-Michigan area who

---

[1]Frank Kameny, "Speech to the New York Mattachine Society," July 1964; quoted in D'Emilio, Sexual Politics, 153.

[2]Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Madeline D. Davis, "Oral History and the Study of Sexuality in the Lesbian Community: Buffalo, New York, 1940-1960," in Hidden From History, ed. Duberman, Vicinus, and Chauncey, 429.

taught in the era preceding and following Stonewall. Each narrator was visited for one recording session apiece, each approximately an hour and a half in length, with occasional supplemental notes taken. Those oral histories deemed informative enough were then transcribed for further analysis. These interviews all took place between late March and late July of 1995.

The focus of these interviews was to bring to light the academic environment and the sentiments of the instructors themselves toward gay and lesbian faculty and related staff. The premise held was that, for a generation of academics who arrived at the university before the late nineteen-sixties, a climate of repression caused the lesbian and gay population to internalize the homophobia foisted upon them by the culture at large. Younger gay and lesbian academics, however, had more of a connection with the student movements of the day, and felt less isolated in the workplace. Though Midwestern members of this community made the most of the political fallout of the events of 1969, they were not as quick to learn of the gay liberationist cause or leap to the gay activist movement immediately following Stonewall for a number of factors, among these being their remote geographic location and the psychological distance from activism that came with being professionals.

To unearth potential narrators, I began with the few names I was able to cull from the vertical files in the Special Collections department at the MSU Library. Individuals still living in the mid-Michigan area were the easiest to contact; those still connected with their university more so. Those who could not provide me with an interview were able to suggest the names of those who might be better suited to the task. The network grew slowly. I had the good fortune of meeting a few influential academics by e-mail who

were able to post my query to an entire list of academics in the Michigan area.

In the course of my research, I have had relatively few questions about my own sexuality. It has been my assumption that those whom I have made contact with have assumed my gayness, in evidence of the scant number of heterosexuals actually interested in gay and lesbian issues. Seeing as how the underlying assumption of my work is that, in an ideal world, one's personal orientation should not make any difference as to how one approaches one's academic pursuits, I have felt no great urge to go out of my way to bring up the fact that I am heterosexual. When asked, I have responded to any questions honestly and truthfully, though there have been awkward moments when I have gotten the distinct impression that the individual I am communicating with believes me to be something I am not. The issue of internalized homophobia has weighed heavily on my mind--do I have an obligation to declare myself not gay to those who assume so? Or is bringing the issue up immediately a homophobic thing to do? As I put it in a cover letter to one prospective narrator:

> In conducting my research, I have often wondered how to approach the issue of my own sexuality. I finally decided that the issue was not directly relevant--after all, one must not be Black to be concerned with civil rights--though if asked to elaborate about myself, I would present myself as (as one contact put it) "not gay but gay friendly...." Based on my upbringing and background, I don't believe my sexual orientation makes me so distant as to not be able to grasp the issues that arise from such a thesis topic. On the contrary, I feel it sad that more nongays don't have an intrinsic sense of concern for the plight of the gay and lesbian community.

In my efforts to make the interview process as nonthreatening as possible, I made every assurance that the results would be kept confidential. The consent form detailed the exact precautions I would take. I used

pseudonyms and offered the use of a sound processor that changed the pitch and tone of the human voice, so as to render it unrecognizable to any transcribers. (The full consent form can be found in Appendix B.) This project and the consent form, including a detailed explanation of my methods, was approved by the Michigan State University Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS).

Unexpectedly, even with all the advantages of modern communication technology on my side, potential narrators' names did not pour in. The most common respondent was one who began teaching in Michigan in the late seventies or even the eighties, but who was nonetheless supportive of the project. Some prospective narrators from the right era never responded; others that I was introduced to with positive references phoned to say simply that they were "not gay" and would be of no use to me. Though disappointing, this was not entirely unexpected. Those who taught during the late sixties most likely attended college and were hired in the late fifties and sixties, and as a consequence grew up under the shadow of McCarthy. Their unwillingness to respond--even in an era of relative security--is as understandable as the incessant stockpiling of any grown child of the Depression. Their silence is truly unfortunate, because it is precisely these voices, these perspectives that would be most valuable. The observations of the closeted academic could offer a cornucopia of freely shared declarations of homophobia that would never reach the openly gay instructor's ears. The articulation of the fears of coming out in that turbulent and unpredictable era would shed light on the intractable character of the academic institution in the midst of social chaos. But the absence of the closeted academic is tragic because, unlike their more open counterparts, they are not being heard by the populace at large.

Eight subjects were interviewed, six men and two women. The disparity between these two groups has caused me some distress, and in the final months of this project I have made extra efforts to recruit more lesbian narrators, but to no avail. The number of lesbian professors, even at state universities, seem low in the first place. "I'm not sure there were any lesbian faculty," one contact informed me, adding that "the list of women faculty is still pretty short here."[1] Part of this may be attributable to the double burden of being female and gay at a bastion of male privilege--it may be enough to fight on only one front without having to address the other. Donna, one of the narrators, has direct knowledge of the difficulty of having to address issues of classroom authority on two fronts. Donna herself is quite articulate on the subject--though the irony in this is that, based on the low number of lesbian respondents and based on my knowledge of Donna's opinion of sweeping generalizations, her observations should be acknowledged as hers alone, and not those of the Michigan lesbian academic community. Knowing full well the propensity for material written on "gay experience" to be based solely on the lives of gay males, I have searched for additional lesbian contacts for my thesis. However, I have had no further success.

The men and women who responded ranged in age from the mid-seventies to the late forties. All subjects were white, most likely due to the relative scarcity of minority academics to begin with. Though I am certain there are gay and lesbian academics of different ethnicities, due to their multiple minority status in this professional field they proved nearly impossible to find. Six of the subjects were still employed by their university; two were retired. Though the focus of the paper has been on those who taught, by circumstance I have made contact with as many non-educators as I

---

[1]Martha Vicinus, electronic mail from Ann Arbor, to Albin Rose, Lansing, 30 June 1995.

have with faculty. Four of the eight did not teach, though two of these were library staff, an adjunct of the university that in many ways lies closer to education than administration does. Of the remaining two, one was employed for over twenty years as the liaison between the gay male student community and the university, and the other was his supervisor. Information culled from the non-teaching faculty and staff interviewed will be presented here as the topic warrants it. The adjunct staff of a college or university can offer observations on the gay and lesbian community at an educational institution without participating in education. Sometimes, with the distance that an administrative position offers, the staff member can present a view unavailable to personally involved members of faculty.

The questions asked over the course of the interview were designed to cover a wide range of experiences. (A full list of the guideline questions is included in Appendix C.) There were six general topics:

Personal background. This included the general questions on where the subject grew up, what degrees the subject took and where, and what first brought them to the world of education.

Questions about the job. This heading covered hiring questions, tenure, issues of harassment, and interactions with students and colleagues.

Closeted questions. For those who lived as a closeted academic, this category gave them an opportunity to speak about the rationale for staying there and the strategies necessary for survival.

Out questions. This topic dealt specifically with the reasons for and repercussions of coming out, to oneself, the classroom, and fellow faculty, and also covered the instructors' approaches to being open in an academic setting.

Lesbian and/ or gay community issues. Questions on the existence and possible intersections between faculty and student groups, both gay and

lesbian, were gathered here.

Stonewall awareness and activism in general. Here were the questions on Stonewall's impact on the Midwestern community and the activism that arose either because of it or concurrent with it.

These six rough headings served me at the time of questioning, but certain weaknesses have been made evident to me over the course of seven interviews. In the analysis of the topics below I have attempted to redress the situation and reorganize the data in a more sensible manner.

ORAL HISTORY: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The following summarizations are individual profiles of selected participants. Each individual profile gives background information, often in the narrator's own words, that has been selected to provide a sense of the individual's history and perspective.

Brad

Brad currently works as a academic advisor hired on as part time faculty at a state university. Though he grew up in Brooklyn, he has made Michigan his home since attending a prominent university in the state for his doctorate in zoology in 1969. He taught as a teacher's assistant from for five years before leaving the university to teach at a small Catholic school in the Detroit area for two years. In 1976 Brad left the school to teach for six years at a small historically Black college in the fields of biology and psychology, while also serving as a special services program director. After the school went bankrupt, Brad moved to the university where he remains today. Because the years he spent in Michigan as a doctoral student were from 1969 to 1974, he witnessed the birth of the gay liberation movement as it developed on the Michigan campus. His dual role as student and instructor gives him an interesting perspective, with his attachment to the campus student group and his concern about issues in teaching.

For the majority of the time he spent as an educator, the issue of sexual orientation did not arise. However, since coming out to himself in 1972, he

has made no active effort to hide it in class or at work, and is out at his current position. He has always been concerned about the gay community, and, while working on his Doctorate, organized the first gathering of gay and lesbian Midwestern academics at his university.

Donna

Donna is currently employed in the philosophy department in a prominent state university. She grew up in a variety of Southwestern American locales, but went to high school in an oil town in Canada, where she had her first experience as an outsider by growing up with an awareness of the Canadian opinion of the United States' economic colonization. For her undergraduate years, Donna attended a prestigious West Coast university, and attended two ivy league schools for her Doctorate degree in philosophy. At the ivy league school where she did the bulk of her work, she was one of four women in the department out of a class of no more than fifteen. Her intent was to be a philosopher, and because teaching was part and parcel with employment at a university, she accepted the role of educator. "I don't think I was inspired to teach. I considered myself a philosopher from pretty early on after I discovered the possibility.... I've always [taught], believing that it's a valuable thing to do and that I have serious obligations to myself and to students that I take seriously. And yet... I didn't grow up wanting to do it."

Her first experience in front of a classroom was as a teaching assistant in the mid-sixties at the West Coast university, and upon graduation received a post at a state university in Pennsylvania, where she stayed from 1967 to 1974. Before her arrival there, she had been becoming gradually more aware of her lesbianism, becoming fully aware of it by the time she left Pennsylvania. When she did leave for a prominent state university in

Michigan, she made the move with her partner as an open lesbian. She still teaches at the university, and had achieved a level of respect and admiration in the world of women's studies and in feminist intellectual thought that is rare for an individual who chooses to settle in the Midwest.

Also due to Donna's choice of field comes a greater awareness of gender issues, which, coupled with the analytical tools that come from the field of philosophy, have made her a highly perceptive critic of power relations in both society in general and the academic world.

Walter

Walter is a retired professor who has had a rich and varied life in the world of academia. He was born in Pennsylvania in 1916, and after graduating from high school he attended the state university in his hometown, receiving both his bachelor's and his doctorate. He did not spend his entire academic career in one city, though--two years of his graduate education were complete doing research in Europe. His first academic job was in 1951 at a state university in a state on the border of the South and the Midwest, which he recalls as "just a revolving door. People started there because it was the only job they could get and as soon as they possibly could they'd leave." After being called into an investigator's office for suspicions of homosexuality, Walter's desire to leave was intensified. After finishing the school year, he gained a post doctorate position at a well-known West Coast school for two years. Following that, Walter returned to teach zoology at a prominent state university in Michigan in 1956, where he remained until he resigned for health reasons in 1981. Following his leave of the Michigan school, he taught eight years in the Caribbean, returning to Michigan for the summers.

Walter's first ambition was to teach English. The arts were his first love, but because of the lack of jobs, he was encouraged to concentrate on zoology. This redirection separated his recreational joys from his academic concerns. Thereafter there was a certain distance between his social life and his academic life which was only exacerbated by the tenor of the nineteen-fifties. Walter remembers the level of secrecy: "I had many good friends, some of whom I suspect knew I was gay but it was never even talked about because of the fear of retaliation. Because you were never quite sure even of people you knew fairly well--it became a paranoia, really.... [E]very gay or lesbian person at that point knew perfectly well what would happen if it became known." Though he acknowledges that the situation for lesbian and gay academics is better now than it once was, he cautions that "it is still pretty slow and in some cases there is some reversion to the bad old days--whenever you have things like economic restraints, recession, some serious social problems, minorities always get it first." Having watched the rise and fall of public and academic responses to homosexuality, he remains guarded about any final sense of security. The difference between Walter's experience compared to that of Brad and Donna is illustrative of the generation gap between those who came out in the wake of Stonewall and those whose gender identity had already been formed by the mid-sixties.

Thom

Thom was born in 1945. His family relocated often, though he spent the bulk of his high school years in a suburb of Detroit. He spent his undergraduate years at a prominent state university in Michigan and headed for the East Coast for his masters and his medical degree in psychiatric

education. Thom returned to Michigan for a residency in another prominent state university in 1971, joining the faculty there in 1974.

At the time, Thom considered himself straight. Because he was straight for the bulk of the early gay rights movement, he says, "I didn't really ever do anything to hide my sexuality." Though he had experienced occasional moments of attraction towards men, he had been married for about eight years before his first gay experience in the late seventies. At the same time, Thom began focusing on gay issues in his work. His previous work in psychiatry had been in feminist issues and men's issues within feminism, so the transition to gay concerns had been relatively smooth, though the challenge of redefining himself caused more fear and soul-searching. Because the field of homosexuality is now his major concern, there is little chance of Thom not being out anywhere. This, combined with the fact that he grew up heterosexual and shifted to homosexuality so late in both his life and in the course of gay and lesbian history makes him a very unusual study. Or as Thom himself puts it: "I really don't think I'm typical--my partner says that he feels I'm an entitled white man... maybe it was because I wasn't aware of being gay when I was growing up."

Darren

Darren is a librarian at a prominent state university in Michigan who first arrived in 1952, just after the gay purges at that institution and long before Stonewall. He grew up in an isolated town on the East Coast, graduating from the local university in 1944. His desire had been to teach, but after all his applications were mysteriously sent back, he got a job at a local factory with his hopes of teaching dashed. In 1948, after going back to graduate school, he discovered that the reasons for being blocked were not

arbitrary--a warning had been written on the front of his student file.

After his time in the factory, Darren worked at the local library part-time as a page, which he enjoyed so much that he applied to work full-time. He decided to pursue it as a career, which led him to Michigan in the early fifties. His memories of the gay purges at his university later that decade were that the embryonic gay community was not touched by the crackdown as much as unconnected individuals were. "Gay people in various circles had never heard of them [the people arrested], and so it usually seemed to be people who were covering up... they were leading what you call 'regular lives'." Darren has kept to himself, not out of fear as such, but rather because of a greater commitment to the civil rights movement than that to any gay rights organization. he feels his work with the gay and lesbian community is best exhibited by his archival collections of gay and lesbian periodicals in the library itself.

Gary

Gary came to a prominent state university in Michigan in 1960 after graduating from another state institution in the Midwest. He had been playing organ in a Detroit church since 1957, where he met the woman who would become his wife a year later. What he learned in the ensuing ten years was that he was not cut out for graduate work in the field of music education, and--more importantly--that he was far more gay than either bisexual or straight. His wife filed for divorce in 1966, and in December of 1969 he saw a notice for a "gay meeting" in the activities bulletin he was typing up for his increasingly radical Detroit church. He attended what would be the first public gay meeting in the state of Michigan.

After finding himself attending Detroit meetings two or three times a

week, Gary and his friend decided it would make more sense to establish something at their own campus. The first meeting of their Gay Liberation Front in the spring of 1970 had approximately a hundred people. It was the beginning of Gary's campus activism which was furthered by his appointment in 1971 to a position with the University as their student representative for gay and lesbian issues, co-chaired over the years by a woman for gender parity. He remains connected to the University, still advising them on gay and lesbian concerns, albeit in an office several blocks away from campus and thus removed from more immediate student concerns.

Over the duration of their interviews, each narrator made observations that could point to a shared experience in the mid-Michigan academic community. Because of the low sample, there is no way to present these observations as representative of any geographic or demographic group. However, their commentary does bring up some interesting points about gay and lesbian faculty which do correlate with research findings detailed in other studies.

Campus and Classroom Environment

For the younger narrators contacted, homosexuality was not an issue addressed as a liability at their universities--if it was addressed at all. In the hiring process, none of the instructors interviewed indicated they had been questioned about homosexuality, though this could be chalked up to the assumption that all of them were straight. Brad recalls that, as a student in the field of biology, "if you had the grade point average and you had the financial need, you had a teaching assistantship.... I could have been an axe

murderer and I don't think it would have been an issue." Donna was fortunate in that she was arriving in Michigan in 1974, a few years after both the feminist and the gay liberation movements had become recognized. In discussing the ease with which she achieved tenure, Donna states that "I think that the combination of circumstances has made my being a woman and being a lesbian and being a feminist... work to my advantage. Generally. I mean, you come up when there's a women's movement and a gay movement, you know, you've got some things going for you!" Because feminism and lesbianism were just beginning to become issues in her field, open avowal of them was seen as an asset. Thom had a similar experience, in that his field--psychology--was already concerned with issues of gender definition, and he himself worked with feminist issues and men's issues within feminism for years before coming out. For Thom, the subject was not foreign, and was addressed as a matter of course in his classes.

Brad reports that most of the people on his tenure board knew his partner and he got tenure without a hitch. Donna's tenure came early in terms of years in Michigan, but late considering her years at her previous post. She does not believe that prejudice helped or hindered her tenure. Walter was never blocked from tenure for any reasons relating to his orientation, though he states that he never discussed it anywhere near the workplace, which makes it impossible to tell if it was something his tenure board was aware of.

Though Brad has been let go from two posts in his academic career, these were both due to budgetary concerns, if not outright bankruptcy. At one school, Brad had the good fortune of discovering after some time at his post that the department chair was gay, which made his academic environment much more comfortable. It could be conjectured that this extra level of

bureaucratic distance from any potential homophobia spared Brad from the sort of circumstances that Walter, Donna and Thom have recognized elsewhere. Donna postulates that uncovering actual discrimination based on sexual orientation "would be hard to track down because I think people might be eased out, got rid of, in one way or another, mainly because they're gay or lesbian--and it would not be handled by colleagues or administrators in any direct way, where they would say, 'You can't be here because you're gay.'" Some lesbians and gay men never get the chance to teach because of understated machinations such as these. Darren, who works in the library sciences, discovered that he had been blocked from his dream of teaching from the very start: "This had occurred my senior year. I'd applied to all these schools, and they returned my applications. Well, I simply knew what was happening." Darren did finally find out exactly what had happened a few years later, over Thanksgiving vacation in 1948. Darren had decided to visit his alma mater to try to look at some files in hopes of going to some teacher agencies when an office worker accidentally brought out his confidential student file. "I was going back to [the university] when they brought out the folder for me and I saw it and it said 'Do Not Recommend....' They just saw my name at the top and it said 'Do Not Recommend.'" The actual content of the folder was mostly positive letters of recommendation by his professors, unfortunately housed in a flat warning in plain magic marker. He had always suspected that his homosexuality would present him with problems in the school, since during his second year at school his advisor shared some homophobic documents from other instructors that he had only suspected of existing. "I'll always be grateful to him because he just put everything on the table... [saying] 'I'm not going to hide it from you, it's true,' [and] he showed me these different things, and said, 'You might just as well know what it's

like here and what you're fighting against.'" In the years following his graduation, Darren says, "I knew I was an absolute failure, I knew I could never get a job teaching after those [applications] were returned." Darren worked at a factory for three and a half years, and also got a part-time job in a library as a page. He enjoyed the work in the library sciences, which eventually led him to further education and eventual employment in Michigan--but never to a teaching position.

On the topic of subtle and undetectable discrimination at the university, Donna goes further by making the point that this is often more of a gender issue:

> [T]hat kind of thing happens all the time to women in this environment *as women*. What happens to men as gay men, or what happens to men and women who are racial minorities is a little different; they get set up for failure in a variety of ways.... There are many, many devices available in this academic sub-culture for arranging that certain people get more exploited than others, and for arranging that certain people get set up for failure more than others--and that others get set up for success.

Walter never allowed his homosexuality to be an issue in Michigan. His life in northern Midwestern academia was colored by a formative event in the southern Midwest in the mid-fifties: "I made the very bad choice of falling in love with a student, and I was really very naive in some ways." The affair was not as well-hidden as Walter had hoped, and in 1954 found himself in an awkward position:

> [T]he story was--and I have no reason not to believe it--[that] they were looking for a new president of the University, and... one of the candidates on the short list was tied with an evangelical sect of some kind... and he declared to the board of trustees, he wouldn't even consider this unless you got rid of all the queers on campus.... So sure enough I was called in by this almost a caricature of a private detective... and he wanted names and dates and of course I was not about to give them.

Walter had intended to leave within the year for other reasons, and he informed the detective of this, which satisfied him. Though previous to events in the southern Midwest he had been "terrified anyone would find out," his experiences there would leave him understandably scared and somewhat scarred for the rest of his academic career. "I was really, really, traumatized by that experience, so [from then on] I was just very, very careful, probably to the point of being ridiculous, but you know... it is hard to recover from something like that."

Issues of homosexuality sometimes colored these instructors' teaching styles. In some cases, the topic itself never came up, though despite its presence or absence, being gay or lesbian lent a certain urgency to the quality of the classroom setting. Walter, who taught basic reproductive development, "fertilization and eggs and sperm," rarely had the topic come up in class. Thom, who taught gender issues and feminist issues in his psychology classes, says his subject material necessitates a certain level of open-ness. Though Donna's subject matter can lend itself to personal disclosure, she considers personalizing herself in her philosophy classes as a disadvantage. "Women don't have authority in this culture in a generic kind of way--the way men do--and to have authority with the students and to maintain their respect is a difficult thing. You can slip and lose it in a way that it's not set up for men to slip and lose it.... I don't want to be seen as a mother, a counselor, a sister; I don't want that to be our interaction. Our interaction should be as a professor and student." This attention to formality and perfection is also mirrored in Brad's comment: "We have to be better than good, because good will just get us hired. We have to be *very* good at it, or we won't be kept." This is reflected in Brad's teaching style his first few years: "I think especially when I first started teaching I was home doing a lot

of preparation and I spent a lot of time at home preparing.... I lived in [a neighborhood] which in the early seventies or mid-seventies was supposedly the gay ghetto. But you couldn't have proved it by me, because I was too busy doing the lectures." Thom concurs, saying that "my partner thinks I work too hard, and I agree." Both Donna's and Brad's comments correlate with Smith's and Woods' findings concerning the intensity of the educational experience for a gay or lesbian teacher:

> These homosexual teachers spend a disproportionate amount of time being good teachers. This expenditure of time both during the school day and after school hours often detracts from the time available for personal lives.... Each of these respondents is a superior teacher in that he or she goes above and beyond contractual obligation in fulfilling his/ her professional responsibilities. There is a sense of compensation expressed by each of these respondents in that they would not or should not be fired, if their homosexuality became known, because of their excellent record as teachers.[1]

Issues of classroom authority are quite different for Donna in her women's studies, courses. "The women's studies classroom is a very different environment than other classrooms.... [Y]ou can create that classroom partly because the students want and expect something when they enter a women's studies classroom that's very different from what students what and expect [elsewhere].... It's up to me and the students, and the students vote really loud.... In women's studies, it's often not up to me whether a confrontation happens or not, because some other students will make that decision." While she feels the need to assert her academic authority in a more professional manner in her other courses, because of the collaborative and cooperative nature of the women's studies courses (and due to the fact that the majority of attendees are feminist women) she feels

---

[1]Smith, Interview, 99.

comfortable with less control in the classroom.

Some instructors have had the opportunity to make gender issues a class topic. Brad taught biology for non-majors as a teaching assistant, which included sections on reproductive biology, "which of course led into contraception, which would lead into birth control and... venereal diseases, and so it was very natural to talk about variations in sexuality too." Brad remembers inviting in fellow members of the student group Gay Liberation Front (GLF) to speak in class, which went over fine. Likewise, one of the first "semi-out" things he remembers doing was giving talks for GLF in other courses, but not in his own class and generally not at on his own campus. "I mean, I had this real mental image that... it was okay to do it for a psych course but not for a biology course." Walter, meanwhile, had no urge to make sexuality a topic in the classroom or out. In a couple of instances, he found himself the subject of advances from male and female students who were not doing too well in class, which only reinforced his opinions about mixing evidence of his sexuality with education. "My office door was never closed when a student was in. Never. It is self-protection, really," he says, adding, "I wasn't about to repeat that mistake."

In her women's studies courses, Donna often finds the class discussing issues of sexuality. "Sexuality is very much one of the central topics in women's studies and the feminist view of things. It's important to identity, as important to your political location in the world, as important to your placement in family structures." This does not imply that she is willing to discuss her own sexual experience in the classroom. "[S]ome people habitually bring more of their own life and autobiography in as examples... I don't use a lot of examples from my personal history or life or experience, it's just not my style. Never, never would have been." She believes that there

are enough valid examples from the outside world, and that it is mot necessary to bring her personal life into the class--or as she puts it, "We don't discuss my finances, we don't discuss my sexuality, we don't discuss my parents." It is enough to let the class know that she is a lesbian; this provides enough context for the discussion of issues of sexuality.

In order to avoid any possible negation of authority due to her gender, Donna gives her philosophy courses a great deal more structure. In contrast to the women's studies courses, where she trusts the subject and the students to direct the class, the structure of her Philosophy classes imply a lot more authority on the part of the instructor. "I exercise more control and I create a situation in which students will wait for my permission to engage.... They defer to my direction because of the set-up I create." This helps her avoid the level of undirected commentary that could lead to homophobic remarks. While Walter's and Brad's fields rarely lent themselves to expressions of prejudice, Donna has had to contend with them on a much more routine basis. On the occasions when a homophobic comment had been made, Donna has often chosen to ignore it rather than endorse it. "A lot of what you do in teaching is endorse things, not positively assert things. Students are... finding out about the climate here. They're finding out about what kinds of things are endorsed and approved and rewarded, and what kind of things are not." She continues by observing that "in some cases something homophobic is seriously out of sync with the project, but in other cases I don't handle that by direct confrontation. And it's not always appropriate to handle it by direct confrontation here either. What you do is set up an environment, and the students are learning values and attitudes and information through absorbing that climate." This experience is backed up in Woods' study of lesbian instructors: "All the participants spoke about distancing themselves

from students or colleagues as a way to avoid personal inquiries.... When confronted either directly or indirectly with the issue of homosexuality, the participants employed a variety of strategies to prevent disclosure of their lesbian identity. The most prevalent strategy was to ignore or dismiss homophobic comments made by students, teachers, or administrators.[1] Though Donna has more freedom to address the issue when it arises than Wood's physical education instructors, they share the same basic strategy.

For Walter and Donna, academic life and social life were two different spheres. In Walter's case, it was an "active choice" made to prevent anything like what happened at the southern Midwestern university from happening again. However, his status as a single male was sometimes an issue. On one of the few academic tours he took with a group from the university, the seating throughout the trip was male/ female, leaving him the odd man out. Walter suspects that there were those that have had their suspicions because of clues like this, but he has become less concerned about them over time. Donna has been less concerned with keeping up with any kind of social life among her academic colleagues. "Most of my long-time colleagues know my partner to see her on the street and greet her... they know she's there, but... I've never wanted and she's never wanted [to be integrated into social functions]." Donna considers a "spouse" irrelevant to her life at the university, though adds that this has not always been a consequence-free option: "I think that in the sixties when I was a graduate student, in the philosophy departments I was connected with, social life among the faculty was a very important part of their social and professional life. And I think that in that setting, to not actively participate in that social life might have

---

[1]Sherry Elaine Woods, The Contextual Realities of Being a Lesbian Physical Educator: Living In Two Worlds (Ann Arbor, University Microfilms International, 1990), 169-70.

had very different meanings than it has [today]."

Partly due to the direction his academic life took, Walter had very little problem separating his academic and personal social lives. Having intended to teach English, he found recreational pursuits in the field of zoology uninteresting, and instead followed the arts, music, and the like. Few colleagues have asked any of the respondents direct questions about their homosexuality, though Donna, Thom, and Brad have been asked academic questions of a bibliographical nature in the years after coming out.

Passing in the Straight World

The headings of "closeted questions" and "out questions" were not as analytically useful as I had hoped them to be. What I did discover is the relative ease with which an issue that fit under one heading could pertain to the other. Coming out is not a single moment; it is a lifelong process. "It doesn't all come with packages and labels," Donna emphasizes. "You respond to the world out of this situation of complexity and multiple threads." Depending on the situation and the political climate, some closets can grow back around their escapees. Donna, who has been out in her work environment for years, makes this observation: "I have passed as straight just because people assume it.... The whole world is assuming that the whole world is straight, unless you make an issue out of it." With these thoughts in mind, it is difficult to divide gay and lesbian experience with "in" on one side and "out" on the other. Instead, I will make the distinction one between passing and being open.

Brad makes a point of saying, when questioned about passing, that "I'm sure I did, but, I mean, I did for my first twenty-four years." His way of dealing with his homosexuality was repressing it, not acknowledging it

whatsoever, in essence, "passing" not just in society but also to himself. Walter never addressed the issue in his workplace, and his workplace in Michigan was such that it was never asked of him. Donna makes a point of saying that it for her it was never a closet as such. "When I started teaching as a teaching assistant, I hadn't yet consciously identified myself as a lesbian to myself.... But I had a sense from the first time I ever taught of being somebody who wasn't exactly what I was supposed to be... some sense of inappropriateness." This inappropriateness was also tied to the fact that "it was almost built into the concept of a philosopher that a woman couldn't be a philosopher, because philosophers specialize in being rational and women aren't." Making a distinction between the challenges of being a woman and being a lesbian is something lesbians grapple with all of their lives. Often it is not even an issue, due to the inseparability of the two.

In some settings, homosexuality is never an issue. For Thom, who grew into his homosexuality after years of teaching gender and feminist issues in the field of psychiatry, the fade to gay issues in the classroom was natural, despite the unexpectedness of the change in his social life. In Walter's case the topic rarely came up due to his field, but his silence on it was more because of his past. "[B]ecause of the experience at [the southern Midwestern school], I was super, super careful, you know, I was little innocence itself...." While he was never directly questioned on issues of homosexuality in his years at the Michigan university, he rarely told anyone, waiting for some time until he was comfortable before discussing such issues--"but I waited *quite* a while before I was." Sexuality in itself was an absent topic for the first few years of Brad's academic career, which made life easier in a strange way. "I remember being real, I can't say 'closety,' it was just a non-issue, it was just like, I was not gay, I was me, and, you know, asexual--it

was a Catholic school, so it was easy. And then of course I discovered that my department chair was gay, and we just sort of came out to each other one day walking across campus." The asexuality that the Catholic church asks of its employees has paradoxically made it a haven for gays and lesbians.

Brad and Donna have recollections of closeted acquaintances. Brad dated a schoolteacher who was "definitely a product of the fifties and sixties. He would not meet me by my house; because I lived with some other grad students he'd pick me up about a block from my house." Walter, Brad, and Darren all talk of a tenured professor who "was happily married but had boys on the side" who, because of his fame in his field and his marriage to the daughter of a figure of prominence in the university, was immune from harassment. Not all professors had such security, however. Donna, though admitting she can't give any 'real data' for reasons of privacy, recalls talking to "lesbians who were also professors here who have said they would lose their job if they came out." This is a common belief in the closeted world. In these situations, by Donna's assessment, her acquaintances' fears of unemployment were not realistic, but issues of leaving the closet are rarely based on practical matters alone.

However unrealistic the specific concern of joblessness, the overarching fear is real. This is perhaps what makes the closet such a hard place to leave: the un-nameability of the fear that keeps educators in. Donna considers it a great unspoken taboo, one that works "because the thing that is being tabooed is so bad, that it's even unspeakable, so you never get really specific instructions that are concrete and definite about what's wrong with this taboo thing, or what exactly is going to happen to you if you do it." She surmises that the often-given reason of job security is not the real issue. "I have thought that [naming the fear] 'losing my job' for certain kinds of

middle-class professionals [is] a way to give a certain degree of concreteness to what's really a very vague cosmic kind of fear that your life would just be ruined." For Walter, whose career began a generation ago, the fear was not inarticulate or unspoken. Because of a direct confrontation at his first teaching position, the concrete fear of being under the microscope never completely left, even while teaching through the seventies and eighties. Likewise, Darren remembers one professor who was caught at a rest stop on the highway. "[T]his woman came to me, I've forgotten her name, and she said 'he told me he was almost suicidal,' and she had me keep calling him up for a period there, not talking about this, [but] talking about other things [as a] kind of moral support." A sense of privacy was so deeply instilled in the gays and lesbians of that era that any support networks that existed had to be clandestine. As Darren recalls, the reasons for indirect support were that "I wasn't supposed to know anything about it, because she was sworn to secrecy." The professor eventually had the charges dropped, which Darren recalls as extremely rare in those days. In the cases of memorable formative experiences such as this one and Walter's, even after the fear wears off the behavior patterns remain.

Both Brad and Donna discussed their curricula vitae. Presenting oneself on paper is a very anonymous way of making yourself known, and as a consequence, one must be conscious of whose eyes will pass over it. Brad has left his involvement in both the Midwestern Gay Academic Union (MGAU) and the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) off his vitae, partially due to their distance in time. Today he includes his work with HIV and AIDS groups and his involvement with the Michigan Organization for Human Rights (MOHR), though still leaves off the older groups, out of a sense that the public service groups he is involved in now would be "a little better," a

little less threatening. For Donna, her lesbianism was more of an expression than a statement on paper: the vitae was not an issue. "I wasn't out in the sense that it was on my vitae, or in the sense that I was walking in and introducing myself as a lesbian when I came here for an interview," she states, "but I came at first on a one year contract, and in that year I came out fully to everybody." For both of these educators, the paper declaration was a much smaller issue than direct contact with others. The omission of gay affiliations seems more related to their radical/ activist characteristics than to their homosexual ones.

Coming Out and Being Open

Martin Mayer, in his comparative statistical study of seventy-five gay teachers, found that those who integrated gay identity into their lives had higher acceptance of self (AS) scores than those who did not, and that those who integrated their gay identity in their private lives but not their professional lives had a higher AS rating than those who kept their gay identity out of both their professional and personal lives.[1] The integration of gay identity with the rest of one's life, or coming out, is generally judged to be a positive step, though an immeasurably challenging one that each person approaches individually. The separate turning points of coming out to oneself and to everyone else can each take years.

For most of the narrators, coming out to themselves was, simultaneously, a relatively short process and something they'd been grappling with their entire life. Brad remarks that "I can remember as a kid taking books out of the library... and then afterwards thinking back and

---

[1]Martin P. Mayer, Gay, Lesbian, and Heterosexual Teachers: An Investigation of Acceptance of Self, Acceptance of Others, Affectional and Lifestyle Orientation: Their Rightful Place (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1993), 120, 115.

saying, 'oh, I did that, didn't I?' In hindsight, I can see now that I knew I was gay somewhere about puberty, and I'm saying [that] no, I didn't have the language, I didn't have the tools to know it, but, you know, I knew it." Brad came out to himself at the age of 24 while teaching biology at the Michigan university. He recalls that he passed as straight "for my first twenty-four years so well [that] I didn't know... I was gay until in my mid-twenties, and I sort of looked [at myself] and went, 'wait a second...'" Thom simply was straight, not feeling any urges to repress gay desire because he didn't feel that much gay desire to begin with. He recalls first coming to grips with the possibility of being gay: "I was at a conference, an intensive group training conference, and... I found myself attracted to this one man, with whom I had a relationship. And so from that time on, it sort of entered my life, and my wife and I tried to incorporate it into our marriage for about three years. We continued to try to think that we would adapt to it within our marriage, but that wasn't really possible." Walter, in contrast to Thom and Brad, was aware much earlier. "I've probably been gay since the age of seven. No question about it," he states, adding that his awareness "has to be distinguished from the almost universal sex experimentation that goes on.... But as time went on the homoerotic orientation became more and more obvious to me. I just wasn't interested in girls." Walter's definition of being "out" is more related to being public: "I wasn't out in any sense of the word. I was perfectly well aware of my sexual orientation of course, have been for a number of years... I was always very conscious of it." For Brad, the knowledge was always there--the hard part was realizing that in some way he had always been gay and accepting that. He contends that the people of his generation "dealt with it earlier but we dealt with it by repressing it and say[ing] it never existed.... Coming out obviously is a process--the hardest part was admitting it to

myself." After that, he recalls, the rest was easy: "I sort of came out to myself, came out publicly to some friends, and came out sexually all from the space of like a month. But, I mean, I was *ripe*."

For some, this awareness and realization was more gradual, and occurred while they were teaching. Donna remembers the awareness gradually coming upon her as a graduate student and in her first years at [Pittsburgh]. At the same time, there were more women in her graduating class--four--than there had ever been in the history of the school's philosophy department. As a consequence, both personal and public boundaries that had always stood seemed to be crumbling, but it would have been hard to simply separate the two. Donna's awareness of her lesbianism was not immediate or traumatic--instead it was tied to the larger picture of feminist consciousness that was gradually coming to her classmates and her university.

For Brad, coming out in public was to a large degree tied to his university, but in a different way. He began attending meetings of the GLF while there and began speaking to classes in attempts to educate and to provide a gay role model for those struggling with coming out. His first big event was a gay pride dance held in Detroit in June of '72, which he attended with a fellow graduate student who, being aware of Brad's newness to the world of gay life, took him under his wing. The student environment was very healthy for Brad's coming out. He can't really say what the faculty environment was like--there was never much interaction between the old guard and the graduate students. He thinks that they had been "burned" in the past and were unlikely to present themselves in an obvious manner to a younger generation. Walter's experience tends to back up this assumption.

Gary was continuing his graduate studies, and had been postponing completion for several years, before accepting his homosexuality. It was three

years after his divorce, and he was working as a church organist in Detroit. Gary had been typing up the church bulletin, and saw a notice for a "gay meeting" on the calendar. Gary asked the rector (in the parlance of the times), "'Daddyo, what is this gay meeting?' So [the rector] said 'I don't know what it is, but [a man] in the draft resistance group said, 'Could we have a gay meeting here?' and I said, 'If we can't have a gay meeting here, we might as well shut this place down.'" Gary remembers the turmoil surrounding his decision to attend:

> I ran right back here and said to one of my gay friends... '[T]here's something very strange going on at the God Box [the church], there's going to be a gay meeting,' and [he] said, 'What is a gay meeting?' and I said 'I don't know,' because we *did not know.* This is six months after Stonewall, this is December 1969, there had never been an open 'gay meeting' in the state of Michigan, ever. Ever. Unbeknownst to us, there was an underground organization called ONE in Detroit... but we weren't aware of that because it was underground. So we looked at each other and said, 'Should we go to this meeting?' I struggled, he struggled--it's the hardest decision I ever had to make about my coming out process. And so somehow we convinced ourselves to go... [W]e found there a dozen other people, women and men, equally as frightened as we were, because there had never been anything like this in Michigan, and it was the first time for all of us. And so out of that meeting we organized what we called the Detroit Gay Liberation Movement. Front was too radical for us.

Donna vividly remembers her fears about coming out to anyone other than her immediate circles of friends. In conjunction with her conception of unspoken taboo, she recalls that her own fears were "not concrete and specific.... I wouldn't have come out if I had had [a] realistic anticipation of dreadful, immediate consequences. I'm no idiot. I don't drive through red lights on purpose. If I can see right here and right now some dreadful

consequence that's going to come out if I'm about to do something, the likelihood is, I don't do it." In Donna's case, the taboo was worth addressing. She recalls:

> The first time I did come out in a classroom--I remember it very vividly--I said whatever I said, I don't remember the words--and the specific words were out.... I had this sensation of waiting for something like a bolt from heaven to strike me dead. And I was sort of waiting around to see if it was going to happen. And nothing happened.... It was like an idle threat, right? I *called* -- *its--bluff.* I had called the bluff of the universe.... [A]s I say, it's mythical... there's some kind of sense that some cataclysm will befall if you do this totally unacceptable thing. And if you do it and you get away with it and then you realize nobody is standing there with a lightning bolt, you know, [you think] 'they lied, they lied.'

Coming out in the classroom was a very empowering moment for Donna, one that removed a great weight from her shoulders and emboldened her to address a number of related issues and to speak out in a variety of ways. When one taboo is broken, the other unspoken laws have less power to instill fear.

Donna is quick to point out that not all classroom settings are conducive to being open in class. In her philosophy courses, as has been discussed above, it is enough of a challenge to be a woman in the field without addressing the issue of lesbianism. "In some settings coming out with a class and dealing with issues that that raises is compatible with my strategies for being a woman in the classroom, and sometimes it isn't... you just make moment-by-moment gut judgments about when to get into that stuff and when not to." This is not to say the possibility of disclosure never arises, just that it is fraught with danger. "I have had opportunities in classes where I could have come out... and in many of the settings I've steered around them, thinking that the setting and the relationship was one in which

it was courting disaster." Unfortunately, this choice is not always a luxury. Donna adds that sometimes it is necessary to "make moral judgments about when something has happened that you have to handle, face up to, confront, even at the risk of everything else going on outside." Woods finds the same moment-by-moment approach a necessity for the instructors in her study as well: "A consistent pattern with respect to how and when participants concealed or revealed their sexual orientation did not evolve; rather, each decision was made on a case by case basis, contingent upon numerous factors."[1] Fortunately, these risky situations do not occur to Donna often--she has strategies for the prevention of such incidents. "I create a little environment where people mind their P's and Q's.... As soon as I walk in, they know what the general range is."

Donna's approach to being open is to integrate all aspects of her life. From the outset, Donna's lesbian consciousness and her feminist consciousness have been too intertwined to conceive of as separate identities. When questioned on balancing lesbian 'identity' and academic 'identity,' she responds by saying "That question doesn't compute for me." When she was both advancing in the academic world and coming out to herself, both issues were new to popular thought. "The word *feminist* wasn't around. But there was consciousness in the setting I was in that there were issues." However, Donna believes that it is her radical feminist credentials that cause more friction for her in the workplace, because few of her colleagues view her lesbianism as anything more than a personal issue: "[T]hey don't perceive the lesbianism as threatening... [while] the feminism immediately and obviously asks people to change." Because of Donna's activity in the inherently political world of feminism, her lesbianism has not received as

---

[1]Woods, Contextual Realities, 176.

much focus from her peers. It is interesting to note that female homosexuality is not seen as threatening, which may be connected to the traditional belief in female passivity.

For each instructor that has come out to themselves, the challenge to maintain a level of integrity in all settings is based on each individual's personal approach. There are as many ways of being open as there are lesbian and gay instructors. Throughout her academic career Donna has striven to be true to all sides of herself at all times, to not attempt "two different repertoires of how to be.... I enter the classroom, period." One way she has of keeping herself consistent is by having only one wardrobe, and not maintaining a separate range of clothes for teaching. Similarly, Walter's approach is understated, almost understood. In describing his current friendship with a woman, he says, "I made it [my homosexuality] very clear." He continues, but never explains how he has done so, offering instead that "she is pretty bright and, adding things up, she must know I'm gay, but it just never comes up." It is telling that he first states that he has made it "very clear" but at the same time that the issue "never comes up." For Walter, the communication of his gayness is not a direct thing, but is nonetheless made clear by his actions. This level of subtlety is understandable, given Walter's personal history. Such indirectness was a means of safe communication that was required of a generation of gays and lesbians growing up in the decades previous to the gay liberation movement.

The newness of being open was cathartic for both Brad and Donna, who both had the opportunity to come out during a formative period in their lives. Not all academics felt such freedom, though. Brad recalls that "there were people who were in their thirties who were just coming out and they were acting so career-wise, and I suspect for a number of those people [the]

career and the sexuality were real push-pulls." Some older instructors were brave enough to be open about their sexuality in the early seventies, though Brad's perspective on the level of acceptance they received shows the peculiar form tolerance of gay professors took then: "People knew he was gay, and it wasn't an issue obviously, or if it was an issue it was like, 'well, yeah, he beats his wife but he's a real nice guy anyway.'"

Even after coming out to himself and his colleagues, Brad still found himself falling into old patterns. He has a coffee mug with an anti-homophobia statement printed on it in his office that he used to drink out of. Today it is on permanent display in his office, where it has resided ever since he made the realization that he was not drinking out of it if he had some students coming in. Internalized homophobia often acts without the individual being aware of it, and can be distressing to witness in oneself. "I'll be honest, and it pains me to do it," admits Brad, discussing his past actions, "because I want to say I've moved past it."

The decision to come out and the commitment to staying open are rarely undertaken alone. Brad and Donna both received significant support from more places than just the gay or lesbian community. In Brad's case, "The man who sort of gave me permission to come out, as it were... was my major professor at that time, and he and his wife were real supportive and real positive...." The following fall Brad moved into a commune with the couple and four other doctoral students. Brad concedes that the tenor of the times worked to his advantage with his academic crowd. "It tended to be sort of a radical group, so it was relatively safe to travel in this great community... it was like 'you're gay, great!'" The radical chic sometimes acted against him, and Brad suspects that there were times that he was seen as "the token. 'Oh, we have a homosexual. Isn't that neat? Isn't that cool?'" Brad had the

opportunity to address his own internalized prejudices living there, and he thinks himself fortunate that the host family were not as encultured in homophobia as he was. When discussing moving in, he remembers telling them words to the effect that "if they had problems with their son I would understand," despite the fact their son was five at the most. Though he himself is far past that stage, Brad suspects that the linking of homosexual and pedophile still occurs in many minds today.

Donna was more than encouraged to come out by her partner when moving from her previous post to her current university; she received a lot of 'moral pressure' to be out from the start. Donna recalls:

> I had been hired on the spring to come in the fall and in around August, in summer sometime my lover and I came here to find me an apartment... and I introduced her to people as my lover, and I don't remember specifically introducing her to the department chair, or other people, but everybody was getting introduced to her.... Yeah, I have to give her the credit. I don't think I would have done it on my own fortitude. But she was very committed to being very out, and I knew in my heart she was right, so I let her take the lead.... She felt very strongly that, if we walked down the hall together and I was afraid or in principle had some rule against holding her hand, that that was a lack of integrity between us that was intolerable. And I agreed with her from my head up. And I just gritted my teeth and did it, because she was right--and I wasn't about to both be wrong and lose her over an issue like this.

Donna adds that, while her work community didn't actively support her, they did not condemn her either. She found more community support among the lesbian circles outside of the university.

Thom found support, but not locally. When asked whether he received any feedback from the closeted academic communities, he replied, "Never." Thom's networks of support were national: "There weren't a lot of people locally who were out at the university when I came out, in fact there

was nobody other than [Donna]... but at the same time as I was coming out... I became very involved nationally in the Association of Gay and Lesbian Psychiatrists.... So that was one group. My family has always been supportive, some different parts of them have had trouble understanding issues around my becoming gay and dealing with the loss of my wife, and then I've had a good friendship network. But probably the people locally who were most supportive of me were not gay or lesbian." Donna has experience a similar phenomenon at the university where they both teach--she indicates that those in the closet would be less likely to support someone leaving the closet than a straight individual comfortable enough with their own sexuality to not care what people thought of them.

For Donna, being open about her sexual orientation has been less of a concern in her work environment than being recognized and approached as a feminist, because of the perception that "in this academic culture, being a feminist is far more incendiary.... I have been a far more irritating presence and a far more stimulating presence... as a feminist than as a lesbian." She chalks this up to the inherent challenge of feminism to reassess one's view of gender relations and power relations at a very all-encompassing and personal level, whether one is gay or straight. Donna's colleagues "don't share my political perception that there is an intimate and powerful relation between a lesbian, in my way of being one and in my way of living it, and being a feminist," and consequently her lesbianism is much less of an issue on campus.

Gay and Lesbian Academic Communities

The gay and lesbian population of the Midwestern campus was made most visible by the student activist groups. Faculty followed in their wake, if

they followed at all, for the first few years. This should not be considered a condemnation--considering the climate in which most instructors had lived in the years previous to the social upheaval of the late sixties, it is quite understandable that the vanguard of campus gay and lesbian activity was populated by those who had been in grade school when the previous generation was reading about Joseph McCarthy in the daily newspapers.

Brad recalls that, when he first came out in 1972, the university town he lived in had only one gay bar to act as a social center. The number of individuals brave enough to be open in their night life was small. Walter never felt himself a part of such a community. "I just assumed there was [one]. I had very little to do with it if there was any.... " Walter recalls a small circle of individuals meeting in the seventies: "There was a professor in a department somewhat related to my department... and he said, 'Do you know this group that Jack so-and-so hosts?' And I said 'No, I know who he is, of course,' [and] he said... "it is a very, very unstructured, loose group... of gay men who meet at his home.' The interesting thing about that was he had a listing in the phone book [listed with a phrase that] any gay looking for connections would know." However, for Walter the pull towards even such informal groups was not great. The issue was not formality, but one of identity. Centering his life around his sexual orientation was foreign to Walter, and such groups did not interest him.

At Brad's university, there was likewise little community activity aside from the student groups. Brad recalls, "[T]here was another biology grad student, and... we knew each other and we came out and we started talking an one of our concerns [was] we were feeling isolated.... And so we thought, 'why don't we see if there's anyone out there?' So we ran a few adds in the... student newspaper, and the ads were something like, 'Are you gay? Are you

academic?'.... We did get together ten people, maybe, and we started to meet as a group." The group was not exclusively male domain; Brad's friend and fellow co-founder of what would become the Midwestern Gay Academic Union (MGAU) was lesbian. Though he graduated and left for Detroit the following year, Brad recalls, "after I left there was a conference that met." This 1975 meeting was the first conference of the MGAU, which was attended in a large part by graduate students. This was the case for most of the campus MGAU meetings as well. "I don't think there were any full-time faculty who attended," Brad reflects. "I think the vast majority were doctoral students. There may have been one or two full-time faculty, but I don't think so.... I knew who some full-time faculty were, but I don't think any of them came." Brad believes that the faculty who were then in their fifties and sixties had been "burned" by the atmosphere of repression of the previous decades. Walter's experience backs this up, but only to a degree--he says that the climate at his first teaching post "was so extreme that [the Michigan university] looked like paradise, but actually it was probably no more, no less than the other place."

Walter's memories of the arrests of gay males in the fifties and sixties give insight to his view of gay life on campus--a beginning observation for Walter was "the thing you don't do is have sex with somebody in the men's room in the Union. I mean that was really pretty stupid.... I don't really mean that they deserve what they got but at least they should have been more careful." By his recollection, "they didn't go out actively looking for queers. The queer had to do something first...." Walter's perspective on the university president's removal of the "homosexual element" is partially colored by his understanding of the president's drives as well by the internalization of the morality of the times, saying that "you had to give him

credit, it was for the good of the university. There was never any question of his principles. His personal ambition was too tied up in the university to separate them... he didn't get anything out of it other than seeing the University grow.... But he wouldn't stand for anything that would queer the university's reputation, you know...." Walter is unique from the academics of Donna, Thom and Brad's generation in his unwillingness to condemn a president's vision of a campus based on his policies toward gays and lesbians.

Nonetheless, witnessing such policies can have an effect on one's interactions with society. Walter mentions that it was only in the last ten years that he has had much to do with the gay community, saying that "there was some reluctance about joining a gay group. Not because I was afraid of retaliation... but I think my whole concept of active social relationships with gays in that sense, other than a sexual relationship... didn't really interest me much." Walter never denied his gayness, considering himself aware of it since his early youth. However, having spent years considering his sexual orientation a private concern, gay identity and gay community have become distanced enough for Walter to maintain one without feeling the need to take part in the other.

Donna finds that she doesn't have to search for a lesbian community. "I found the community by being out as a teacher in women's studies... I have found that the lesbian community will find me. All I have to do is sort of show up and be out. I don't have to go all over the place trying to find the lesbian community." On campus, however, the situation is different.

> Whatever [academic] community there was I wasn't getting into mainly because I was an active and up-front feminist. And also I wasn't getting into it because I was out and everybody was in the closet and wouldn't have anything to do with me.... People who have regularly associated with me that have been more

> supportive of me in more obvious ways have all been straight, and quite comfortable in their straightness and knew nobody was going to think they were queer just because they were hanging with me.

Ironically, it is the very qualities that make Donna such a valuable asset to the lesbian community that render her inaccessible to the more restricted world of the ivory tower. This fits well with Thom's observations about the lack of support among closeted academics when he began coming out.

As one might expect, Donna feels her outspoken feminist positions create a certain distance between her and the gay male academic community as well, noting that "if you're very adamant about sexism you don't get along real well with academic gay men." Thom concurs, explaining that Donna, "who has been the most out person [on campus], is a lesbian separatist... she's not antagonistic, but her philosophy historically is much more so... and she has a lot of students and a lot of women who follow her and she has a lot to offer them, but the effect of that is that men and women haven't always worked well together. I think that this community is also probably less cohesive... than perhaps other places nationally." By Donna's assessment, the two communities have different concerns and different goals, and consequently don't have as great a need to rally together. Brad and Walter echo this observation in their own comments. "The lesbians felt underincluded and underrepresented," says Brad. "One thing I was very aware of though [was that] women hardly ever came to GLF.... I mean, there were women's groups but they were... much less visible, I guess." Only one-tenth of the hundred attendants of the first meeting of Brad's campus' GLF were women, which illustrates their lack of activity in what they considered a predominantly white male endeavor, and after the special interest caucuses within the GLF found their issues marginalized in the effort to make the GLF

a "single issue organization," they left rather than be ignored.[1] Brad elaborates on the topic of gender relations by noting that "especially at the beginning, my perception is [that] there was more cooperation between men and women and a lot of it was just, 'there are ten of us out here, we don't have , you know, the luxury....' I always felt in small towns like Ann Arbor men and women got along a lot better than they did in the bigger cities." Walter has never witnessed any stress between the gay male and lesbian communities, except in some instances. He has seen a support group open to both men and women campaign actively to bring in lesbians, only to see them show up sporadically. The group, led by men, racked their brains, trying to figure out "what can we do to attract them?" Walter was never certain of the reasons for this phenomenon, wondering if "we didn't have what they were looking for as lesbians or what, I don't know...." His perception of the gender relations between the gay and lesbian communities, though guarded, is that "maybe it is simply a shadow version of the standard relationship between men and women," admitting that "I think I don't know enough about it." For Walter and the men of his generation, who grew up before the rise in feminist consciousness, such an absence is bewildering. Donna makes a point that backs this up: "I think that lesbians who came out to themselves... before the second wave of the feminist movement had stronger and warmer, more affectionate relationships with gay men than lesbians who came out at the time of, and in a way mixed in with, the women's movement." Both Donna and Walter regret the breakdown between gay men and lesbians, but from two differing viewpoints. For Donna, still quite active on campus and in gender politics, the regret seems deeper and the awareness

---

[1]Tim Retzloff, "Gay Liberation: When Michigan Tore out of the Closets and into the Streets," Between The Lines, June 1994, pp. 10-11, 14, 15. Pages 4, 5 of personal reprint from Mr. Retzloff's source disc.

of its solution more sure.

Stonewall and Activism

For the gay and lesbian citizens of the Midwest, Stonewall was seen as either an almost mythological event, half a continent away, or as a distant act of protest that only tangentially related to their own lives. For all members of the community, it would become a moment in history that would be hard to ignore.

Brad was in a unique position when Stonewall occurred: He was spending the summer in New York City with his mother before starting graduate work in Michigan. However, still being in the closet, he had no idea it was going on. He says, "[M]y own personal mythology is that I read it in the New York papers that week. Because I was in New York, and or course I read the paper, but I don't know if that's what happened or [if] that's the way I remember it.... I know I was very aware of gay issues, so my hunch is I read them, but I obviously can't swear that, I don't remember." When asked what his response to the articles might have been, Brad points out that this is his personal mythology, and he is not entirely sure if he actually read the articles on Stonewall. "It was probably very threatening to me, and I don't know that, but I would imagine that in hindsight [it] was threatening. Just because of the fact that I don't remember reading them." Walter, out to himself but absent from any gay circles, was "totally unaware of Stonewall when it happened. I knew about it only through word of mouth literally, pictures, comments about it, and even then it was fairly well on." When asked why it may have taken so long for him to find out, he replies that "I wasn't reading the Advocate or anything else.... [I]n the early years it was simply a reaction to what happened to me in [the southern Midwestern state] and in later years... I

just wasn't that interested in keeping up with gay issues in the organized sense." Donna was not closeted when Stonewall occurred, but she was not traveling in political circles yet. She recalls:

> I wasn't connecting with other lesbians or gay men until '69, and anyway... what I was doing was moving into an urban old gay bar scene--and it was not very political. Then it would have been a while in there that I would've finally maybe, you know, picked up some notion that there had been a Stonewall. The other parts of me were heading off into feminism, and Stonewall was known about, but it was not the kind of formative event for the women's movement that it was for gays and lesbians.

She considers that it was most likely very significant in shaping the world she was moving in, but was not an event she was consciously aware of. "I was not attuned," she says.

This unawareness is not such a surprising thing, given that riots, protests, and social unrest were becoming so commonplace by that time. Considering the other events that occurred before Stonewall, some have wondered what made it the cornerstone event of the gay rights movement. Walter has noted that "in any gay and lesbian group, you are going to hear about Stonewall because it is the watershed, it's the center, and I don't remember why this is true...." Thinking about the Mattachine Society and their presence in the United States, Walter observes that it was "basically made up of professionals," which may provide a clue for its marginality in gay history compared to the groups formed after Stonewall. While previous groups had been composed of citizens with jobs and respectability to lose, the rioters on Christopher Street were street queens with little in the way of respect or money to worry about risking. Further, they were products of an age that devalued the concepts of social status and monetary gain. But in some respects, the one element that made Stonewall so crucial was the

violence. Even if no other city saw the rage New York did, it was no longer left unconsidered as an option. Much in the same way that Malcolm X's endorsement of violence as self defense--and even intelligence--inspired greater numbers of ruling-class whites to work with the less threatening Martin Luther King, the events at Stonewall emboldened a city of fearful gays and lesbians and made city officials, by now accustomed to responding to a riot as a political action, pay attention as they had not paid attention before.

For the academic community, precisely due to the distance from the activist scene their status as professionals provided them, Stonewall was not immediately significant. For Midwesterners, the political repercussions of Stonewall trickled down to the smaller communities over the years. When considering New York, Donna says, "New York is not the center of my world. Immense things happen in New York that I never find out about. I don't read the *New York Times*. New York is nowhere for me." When asked about her preference for the Midwest, she simply says, "that's where my roots are."

Gary says he was inspired by the first meeting of the "Gay Liberation Movement" (GLM) in Detroit, which he suspects was in turn inspired by Stonewall itself. The GLM's first meeting in was only six months after Stonewall. This Detroit group inspired Gary to form the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) in March of 1970. Activity in the state was accelerating. Before 1970 the only organization in the state was ONE, begun in 1965 and much more closely tied to the model of the Mattachine society. By 1972 there were fifteen groups in existence throughout Michigan.[1] These events initiated gay awareness on a great scale in Michigan, but none was large enough to qualify as a cornerstone moment per se. Despite Stonewall's geographic and psychic

[1]Ibid., page 2 of personal reprint from Mr. Retzloff's source disc.

distance from the Midwest, there is nothing locally to point at that surpasses its influence. Gary suspects that the man who organized the first GLM meeting was inspired by Stonewall, but has no way of proving it. That the individual was from the draft resistance movement is indicative of the sort of person inspired to start a gay rights group--one already radicalized by another political issue.

Donna agrees that there was no great, significant event that galvanized the Midwestern community the way Stonewall did the East Coast. She did, however, make the realization that "for the lesbians... the formative things are not events, but institutions. What works to inspire and maintain us [are] lesbian institutions. For instance: Naiad Press, *The Ladder, The Lesbian Connection,* Michigan Womyn's Music Festival." This observation could apply to the Midwestern gay and lesbian community as a whole, considering the relatively small number of attendees at the Detroit GLM or at the MGAU. Often the mere existence of a gay or lesbian organization is enough to sustain an individual's hopes, and with the numbers of groups available increasing from one to the multitude that exist today, the likelihood of any one event arousing the entire Michigan community are slim.

Walter suspects that there were other factors at work besides the Stonewall riots, stating that "the obvious thing is there is this so-called sexual revolution which I think has a lot of parameters [which] are a little overdone." The main point of the sexual revolution, for Walter, was the level of public discourse, rather than any change in what people had always done. "[W]e talk about things which we wouldn't have whispered thirty, thirty-five years ago." Considering that the sexual revolution was mostly carried out by the youth of the era, it makes sense that this event as well excluded the older and more staid segments of the gay and lesbian

community.

Over the first few years of the seventies, many student activist groups formed, branched off, disbanded, and reformed again. Despite their position as professionals, academics were far closer to the epicenter of gay and lesbian activity than many other citizens of similar social rank. It seems inevitable that there should be a grouping of gay and lesbian faculty somewhere, and yet many forces worked against it. Brad, who actively sought to establish a union of gay and lesbian academics, found it much less activist than the GLF. The conference held by MGAU the following year did not leave a lasting impression on Brad, who says "I can't remember if I came or not. Isn't it interesting how I can't remember." However, Brad's name is printed on the list of speakers. He concedes that he "must have" been there, but points out that it was his first year teaching and thus a very hectic time in his life, "or the other option is it was a dull conference." In Brad's experience, this was not unique. He also attended the Gay Academic Union Conference in the fall of 1973, and found them to be "more academic than gay. I mean, it tended to be a traditional academic conference. It was fairly pedantic." Brad's observations are echoed in Martin Duberman's autobiographical account of the event: "Gay academics, it became apparent, were academics first and gays second--that is, they loved to talk and argue; were cautious by inclination and training; distrusted class analysis, confrontational politics, and interracial cooperation; and were wedded to mainstream notions... of how to achieve social change."[1] Fitting with this assessment of the academic character, the MGAU disbanded in the mid-eighties. As an example of the various forms that resistance to such organizations took, we can look at the different experiences of Walter and Donna. It is unlikely that Walter would have any

[1]Duberman, Cures, 297.

interest in a group that intellectualized about something he considered an innately personal issue to begin with. For Donna, whose concern was always with the more activist lesbian circles, the non-activism and elitism of the ivory tower occasionally worked against her. "There have been, over the years, more times in the lesbian community when I've wanted to soft-pedal the fact that I was an academic, than there have been times in the academic community when I wanted to soft-pedal the fact that I was a lesbian. It's kind of a set of class issues: Academics being perceived as arrogant, superior people who beat up on people who don't have the same sets of skills and who are gate keepers to very valuable privileges, and [who] exercise their gate-keeping by whatever secret rules they have." While not all academics fit this pattern, it points out the challenges faced by activists who wish to work with academics and academics who wish to be activists.

FINAL COMMENTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Because of the paucity of data, I have found myself collecting source material on gay and lesbian academics, making new primary documents for future researchers. Research on gay and lesbian college-level instructors who taught during the Stonewall era is valuable because of the academics' unique location, straddling the generation gap. Faculty members of this era were partially immersed in the professional world and also eyewitness to the youth politics of the day. Instructors were closer to task forces and student groups raising issues to be grappled with by the whole community. By being near to all varieties of professional thinkers, both tenured professors and doctoral students found themselves in a setting where new and perhaps radical ideas could be discussed, calmly judged, and often acted upon.

In the course of teaching, elements of the above conditions combined to disturb segments of the population fearful of the "non-traditional" faculty member and their sophisticated (and supposedly more cunning) methods for molding young minds. The stress from this situation created a tension between students and faculty which was exacerbated by the fact that lesbian and gay instructors were old enough and deeply enough immersed in their careers to be concerned with the political and professional ramifications of their actions. The narratives of faculty members of the late sixties and early seventies that I've gathered illustrate that the turbulent era's still-repressive dictations forced homosexuality to restructure the lesbian or gay academic's

approach to other people and their prejudices, both in the class and out.

The narratives collected also show that generational cohorts, while crucial to showing how different segments of society responded to an event like Stonewall, cannot be based on years alone--when one was born is not nearly as significant as when and what one was learning and how one was being conditioned. Those whose mindset was "pre-Stonewall" remained there, whether they were born in the twenties or the forties. For them, even as change enveloped the university, the "bad old days" lived on in their minds. Those who came of age and came out in the wake of Stonewall were more often graduate students, still young with no tenured jobs to lose--all jobs were in a future that the turbulent sixties and seventies said they could invent as they pleased. A generation of young lesbian and gay faculty and graduate students were more than happy to oblige.

However, the variety of protesters of the nineteen-sixties and the depth of their convictions varied drastically. In the case of some causes, such as the end of the draft or the campaign to impeach Nixon, as soon as the immediate goals were accomplished, those who protested resigned from political concerns, secure in the knowledge that they themselves were no longer at risk. For many segments of America--most conspicuously those with little voting or economic power--this was not a luxury.

Much of what was thought to be accomplished in the sixties was a mirage. The sexual revolution gave men more opportunity to act irresponsibly, the expansion of minds descended into the uninspired use of recreational chemicals, and the "revolution" held beloved by so many devolved into a commodification of rebellion and hedonism. While some aspects of the "revolution" got their start with the kind of grassroots activism that came with large university campuses (such as the Students for a

Democratic Society), the smaller urban centers of the Midwest were for the most part too isolated or underpopulated to support the new trends, leaving those individuals who wanted to take part in the new spirit without a band of pioneers to join them or protect them. As a consequence, many smaller gay and lesbian liberation groups, including the Midwestern Gay Academic Union, disbanded as the activism of the seventies faded into the Reagan-era eighties.

The lesbian and gay academic community does owe a debt of gratitude to Stonewall and the riotous change it advocated, however. If it were not for Stonewall, closeted militant students would never have become out militant members of the Gay Liberation Front. If it were not for organizations like the GLF and the breaking of educational boundaries that were part of the attempted revolution, doctoral students and brave professors would never have found a community near their campus. By the same token, if it were not for the climate of social upheaval of the late sixties, violent protest would have never occurred to the Stonewall clientele. If it were not for the political channeling of the spontaneous violent protest, Stonewall would have been just another riot to add to the history books.

When looking at the history of gay and lesbian life, it becomes clearer that an event such as Stonewall was inevitable. What only becomes clear after looking at the history of protest immediately following the event is that Stonewall was significant for its gut-level response to oppression that spoke to the disenfranchised and the intellectual radicals alike. Like much of the activity of the era, Stonewall was a street-level, unconsciously radical event. Ironically, the benefactors of Stonewall who formed the GLF--mostly male, white and largely the children of the middle class--were not too many steps away from acceptance into a distinctly non-radical world. This similarity to

the backgrounds of the GLF members is partially what attracted members of the academic profession and simultaneously what caused a breakdown between the gay white men and the other ethnic and gender groups in the greater homosexual community.

Radicalism on a grand scale could not be risked often in the academe, however. Despite the changes taking place in American society at large, the work environment for the lesbian or gay academic was still one of civility and propriety. Issues of sexuality were considered private among faculty in the late sixties, and though one may approve or disapprove, the topic was dutifully ignored as long as it never intruded in the place of work. If a professor's homosexuality were to be made a public issue, however, a defense by their co-workers could not be expected. This meant for many a life in the closet. Though the onset of the feminist movement soon made gender relations a topic of public discourse, because of the fear instilled in them from the repressive fifties, many academics never took the leap to find out what would happen if they came out. What worked against them was the level of acculturation they had received during the McCarthy era and the subtle and even polite ways of academic relations. Because of the civility that came with being a denizen of the ivory tower, direct discrimination was rare, and an instructor could never prove concretely if they had suffered in their profession for being homosexual. Partially due to this, the fear of the consequences of leaving the closet could take on all-encompassing proportions. Furthermore, in the Midwest, where the radicalism was less intense and the social mores more rigid in the first place, such an act of bravery required a greater leap than it did on the coasts.

For the Midwestern gay or lesbian academic encultured in the fifties and sixties, the events of 1969 and on came too late to shift a lifetime of

conditioning. For the Midwestern instructors coming of age in the late sixties and seventies, the aftermath of Stonewall could be processed in one of two ways. For some, it proved to be another radical movement the professional could observe but felt too irrevocably life-altering and too dangerous to join. More significantly, for a smaller but more daring contingent the event was the most personal social issue of the sixties, and thus most worth absorbing and incorporating into the new conception of the human academic.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Letter of Approval

APPENDIX A

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

February 22, 1995

TO: Albin M. Rose
136 Leslie St.
Lansing, MI 48912

RE:

IRB#:	95-076
TITLE:	THE MICHIGAN/MIDWESTERN GAY ACADIMIC COMMUNITY
REVISION REQUESTED:	N/A
CATEGORY:	2-C
APPROVAL DATE:	02/22/95

The University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects'(UCRIHS) review of this project is complete. I am pleased to advise that the rights and welfare of the human subjects appear to be adequately protected and methods to obtain informed consent are appropriate. Therefore, the UCRIHS approved this project including any revision listed above.

RENEWAL: UCRIHS approval is valid for one calendar year, beginning with the approval date shown above. Investigators planning to continue a project beyond one year must use the green renewal form (enclosed with the original approval letter or when a project is renewed) to seek updated certification. There is a maximum of four such expedited renewals possible. Investigators wishing to continue a project beyond that time need to submit it again for complete review.

REVISIONS: UCRIHS must review any changes in procedures involving human subjects, prior to initiation of the change. If this is done at the time of renewal, please use the green renewal form. To revise an approved protocol at any other time during the year, send your written request to the UCRIHS Chair, requesting revised approval and referencing the project's IRB # and title. Include in your request a description of the change and any revised instruments, consent forms or advertisements that are applicable.

PROBLEMS/ CHANGES: Should either of the following arise during the course of the work, investigators must notify UCRIHS promptly: (1) problems (unexpected side effects, complaints, etc.) involving human subjects or (2) changes in the research environment or new information indicating greater risk to the human subjects than existed when the protocol was previously reviewed and approved.

If we can be of any future help, please do not hesitate to contact us at (517)355-2180 or FAX (517)336-1171.

Sincerely,

David E. Wright, Ph.D.
UCRIHS Chair

DEW:pjm

cc: Lisa M. Fine

OFFICE OF
RESEARCH
AND
GRADUATE
STUDIES

University Committee on
Research Involving
Human Subjects
(UCRIHS)

Michigan State University
225 Administration Building
East Lansing, Michigan
48824-1046

517/355-2180
FAX: 517/432-1171

APPENDIX B

Consent Form

APPENDIX B

WRITTEN CONSENT FORM:
The Michigan/ Midwestern Gay Academic Community

My name is Albin Rose, and I am a master's student in the American Studies program at Michigan State University. My thesis project concerns the gay and lesbian academic community in the Midwest immediately before and following the Stonewall uprising of 1969. I hope to collect and analyze a variety of oral histories from gay and lesbian academics. My major objectives are to learn how their experiences as educators were colored and shaped by being gay in a profession that has been traditionally very hostile towards homosexuality, to find how they were able to adapt and survive as educators in a climate of repression before the defining moment of the gay rights movement, and how--if at all--conditions changed afterwards. Further, I hope to learn of the instructors' opinions and perspectives on the conditions and experiences they have undergone.

I plan on interviewing between eight and twelve college-level educators, either still teaching in the Midwest or retired after doing so, using a relatively systematized list of topics and questions. Each specific question may or may not lead to other related topics, and the interviews will vary due to this. However, it is hoped that the overall content of each oral history will present a unique regional condition and perhaps reflect a regional perspective on endurance and survival.

I have mailed this explanatory letter/ consent form to you in hopes that you fit the criteria of my study and would be willing to participate. The recording session should take between ninety minutes and two hours. I would be willing to conduct the interview at your office, your residence, or any neutral location where you would feel the most comfortable. The interview would ideally take place within the month.

It is my intent to maintain as much confidentiality as possible in the interviewing process. The recording will be made through a sound-altering device that will change the pitch and tone of the recorded response, rendering all but the words and the inflection unrecognizable to transcribers and others. I would like to take this opportunity to inform my potential subject that there is the slim possibility your stories may be recognized due to content, and it is hoped that awareness of this will help you contour their responses if you desire further anonymity. All transcripts of the recordings will be labeled numerically or with a pseudonym. The identity of the subjects will remain confidential to myself and will either appear anonymously or under a pseudonym in the thesis paper.

If you freely choose to participate in this study, you are still free to refuse to answer certain questions, and you may choose to remove yourself

and your recorded interviews from the project at any time before completion. Any information gleaned in the interim would still be held in confidentiality. If you do choose to participate in the interview, you indicate your voluntary agreement to participate by signing and returning this consent form. In signing this form you are agreeing to the use of material from your recorded interview as indicated above. If the material, the recordings or transcripts thereof, are to be used in any other manner, you will be contacted for additional written consent. If you do not wish to give such consent the material will be left unused.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact me at the following phone number and addresses:

Albin Rose (517) 487-0592
136 Leslie Street
Lansing, MI 48912
e-mail: rosealbi@msu.edu

I Thank you for your time and cooperation.
Sincerely,

Albin Rose

* *

I, _____ , have read the this statement carefully and thoroughly and agree to participate as an interviewee under all the conditions stated above.

_____ _____
Signature of participant Date

_____ _____
Signature of interviewer Date

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions

APPENDIX C

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Where did you grow up?

Where did you go to high school?

Where did you go to college/ get your educational training?

What degrees did you get?

What inspired you to teach?

Were you out to yourself when you first considered teaching?
What were your concerns about how your homosexuality might affect your career when you first considered a teaching profession?

When did you start teaching?

Where did you teach?

Did you have a partner while teaching?

ON THE JOB

Were you questioned on issues of homosexuality when you were hired?

Were you ever threatened with or confronted with being let go for being gay?

Did you see others fired?

(if MSU) What are your memories of MSU President John Hannah's purge of lesbian and gay instructors?

(if U-M) What are your memories of the purges in the late fifties and early sixties?

Was homosexuality ever an issue in your field (literature, history, biology, etc.)?
Was homosexuality ever something you would have liked to (or did)

introduce in your teachings?

(for feminists unable to be open) Did your activities as a feminist create unwanted attention to your orientation (i.e., did it jeopardize your hidden identity as a lesbian)?

Did you achieve tenure?

Did you have a partner while teaching?

Did you integrate them in faculty social functions?

What was your teaching style--
- •did you disassociate yourself at the end of the day
- •did you "take it home with you"

Did any of your colleagues talk to you about homosexuality?

CLOSETED QUESTIONS

What compromises were necessary, either in your social life or your professional life, to maintain activity in both the gay community and the academic community?

What were your strategies for passing...
- •with staff and faculty
- •with students
- •with family and friends, if applicable

What made it risky to be a gay or lesbian in your profession?

Were you ever confronted ("accused") of being gay, and what was your response?

Did you find yourself blocked from promotion or advancement because of suspicions that you were gay?

OUT QUESTIONS

Before coming out, what did you think the risks would be?

When did you come out...
- •when in your career
- •what year (or in relation to Stonewall)

Did you choose to come out? What were the circumstances?

Were you comfortable out?

What obstacles were there...
- •among faculty? Did it work for or against you among colleagues & in academic circles?
- •among students? Did it work for or against you in class?

Did you actively present yourself as a gay role model for students?

Who supported you during and after coming out?

Did you find yourself blocked from promotions or advancement?

What balance had to be struck between gay and academic identities?

How did the outcome compare to what you had expected?

COMMUNITY

Was there a significant gay academic community at ____ University?

Was there a significant gay student community?

How did the two intersect?

Do you think your community, at the time, was better off than those at other schools in the Midwest?

How were your relationships (either social or romantic) influenced by your career?

Was there any stress between the lesbian and gay male communities at ____ University?

How did your social life intersect with your academic life?

STONEWALL/ ACTIVISM

When and how did you first hear about the Stonewall riots?

What was the gay academic community's response to Stonewall?

What was the gay student community's response to Stonewall?

Did the two responses conflict?

What was the straight academic/ student community's response to Stonewall?

How quickly/ slowly did Stonewall's impact take to hit _____ University?

Was there another event besides Stonewall that, in your opinion, galvanized the gay Midwest community?

Were you active at _____ University in the gay rights struggle?

Did you find this hampered your relations with either the straight or the gay academic communities?

(for female activists) Did you consider your roles as a feminist activist and a gay rights activist to be fairly unified, or did one have precedence over the other?

(for female activists, continued.) Which got you into more trouble with the University?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aumiller v. University of Delaware, 434 F. Supp. 1273 (1977): 1285. Quoted in Arnold Sciullo, "Tolls at Closet Doors: A Gay History for Teachers," 36. Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1984.

Baum, Willa K. Oral History for the Local Historical Society. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1971.

Bérubé, Allan. Coming Out Under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War II. New York: Free Press, 1990.

_____. "Marching to a Different Drummer: Lesbian and Gay GIs in World War II." In Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past, ed. Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey, Jr., 383-394. New York: Penguin Books, 1989.

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

Brad [pseudonym], 8 June 1995.

Brown, Judith C. "Lesbian Sexuality in Medieval and Early Modern Europe." In Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past, ed. Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey, Jr., 67-75. New York: Penguin Books, 1989.

Cammermeyer, Margarethe. Serving in Silence. New York: Viking Press, 1994.

Crew, Louie, ed. The Gay Academic. Palm Springs: ETC Publications, 1978.

D'Emilio, John. Making Trouble: Essays on Gay History, Politics, and the University. New York: Routledge Press, 1992.

_____. Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.

Darren [pseudonym], 14 June 1995.

Donna [pseudonym], 3 July 1995.

Dostourian, Ara. "Gayness: A Radical Christian Approach." In The Gay Academic, ed. Louie Crew, 335-349. Palm Springs: ETC Publications, 1978.

Duberman, Martin. Cures: A Gay Man's Odyssey. New York: Penguin Books, 1991.

_____. Stonewall. New York: Penguin Books, 1993.

Duberman, Martin, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey, Jr., eds. Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past. New York: Penguin Books, 1989.

Dyer, Kate, ed. Gays in Uniform: The Pentagon's Secret Reports. Boston: Alyson Publications, 1990.

Faderman, Lillian. Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love Between Women from the Renaissance to the Present. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1981.

Foucault, Michel. The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction. Translated by Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books, 1978.

Garber, Eric. "A Spectacle in Color: The Lesbian and Gay Subculture of Jazz Age Harlem." In Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past, ed. Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey, Jr., 318-331. New York: Penguin Books, 1989.

Gary [pseudonym], 10 May 1995.

Greenberg, David F. The Construction of Homosexuality. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.

Halperin, David M. "Sex Before Sexuality: Pederasty, Politics, and Power in Classical Athens." In Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past, ed. Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey, Jr., 37-53. New York: Penguin Books, 1989.

Harbeck, Karen Marie. Personal Freedoms/ Public Constraints: An Analysis of the Controversy over the Employment of Homosexuals as School Teachers. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1987.

Hayden, Tom. "Homosexual Crackdown of Dubious Value," Michigan Daily, 9 January 1960, quoted in Daniel Tsang. "Gay Ann Arbor Purges," Midwest Gay Academic Journal, vol. 1 no. 1, 17. April 1977: 13-19.

Jaggar, Alison M. and Paula S. Rothenberg. Feminist Frameworks: Alternative Theoretical Accounts of the Relations between Women and Men. 3d ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1993.

Kameny, Frank. Speech to the New York Mattachine Society, July 1964. In John D'Emilio, Quoted in D'Emilio, John, Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970, 152-153. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.

Kennedy, Elizabeth Lapovsky and Madeline D. Davis. Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community. New York: Routledge Press, 1993.

_____. "Oral History and the Study of Sexuality in the Lesbian Community: Buffalo, New York, 1940-1960." 1986. In Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past, ed. Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey, Jr., 426-440. New York: Penguin Books, 1989.

Lehman, J. Lee. "Gay Students." 1975. In The Gay Academic, ed. Louie Crew, 57-63. Palm Springs: ETC Publications, 1978.

Lucas, Christopher J. American Higher Education: A History. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994.

Martin, Del. "The Lesbian's Majority Status." The Ladder (June 1967): 24-26.

Mayer, Martin P. Gay, Lesbian, and Heterosexual Teachers: An Investigation of Acceptance of Self, Acceptance of Others, Affectional and Lifestyle Orientation: Their Rightful Place. Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1993.

Olch, Peter D. and Forrest C. Pogue, eds. Selections from the Fifth and Sixth National Colloquia on Oral History. New York: The Oral History Association, Inc., 1972.

Pharr, Suzanne. "Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism." 1988. In Feminist Frameworks: Alternative Theoretical Accounts of the Relations between Women and Men, ed. Alison M. Jaggar and Paula S. Rothenberg, 308-315. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1993.

Retzloff, Tim. "Gay Liberation: When Michigan Tore Out of the Closets and into the Streets." Between the Lines (June 1994): 10-11, 14, 15.

_____. "Outcast, Miscast, Recast: A Documentary History of Lesbians and Gay Men at the University of Michigan." In From Invisibility to Inclusion: Opening the Doors for Lesbians and Gay Men at the University of Michigan, Study Committee on the Status of Lesbians and Gay Men, 110-134. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1991.

Risch, Stephen J. "Towards a Gay Analysis of Science and Education." In The Gay Academic, ed. Louie Crew, 369-383. Palm Springs: ETC Publications, 1978.

Rivera, Rhonda R. "Our Straight-Laced Judges: The Legal Position of Homosexuals." The Hastings Law Journal vol. 30 (March 1979): 869. Quoted in Arnold Sciullo, "Tolls at Closet Doors: A Gay History for Teachers," 43. Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1984.

Rudolph, Frederick. The American College and University: A History. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962.

Schrecker, Ellen W. No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Sciullo, Arnold. "Tolls at Closet Doors: A Gay History for Teachers." Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1984.

Shilts, Randy. Conduct Unbecoming: Gays and Lesbians in the United States Military. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993.

Smith, David. An Ethnographic Interview Study of Homosexual Teachers' Perspectives. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1985.

Study Committee on the Status of Lesbians and Gay Men. From Invisibility to Inclusion: Opening the Doors for Lesbians and Gay Men at the University of Michigan. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1991.

Sullivan, Gerard. A Study of Political Campaigns of Discrimination Against Gay People in the United States, 1950-1978. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1987.

Thom [pseudonym], 18 July 1995.

Trumbach, Randolph. "The Birth of the Queen: Sodomy and the Emergence of Gender Equality in Modern Culture, 1660-1750." In Hidden From History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past, ed. Martin Duberman,

Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey, Jr., 129-140. New York: Penguin Books, 1989.

Tsang, Daniel. "Gay Ann Arbor Purges." Midwest Gay Academic Journal, vol. 1 no. 1 (April 1977): 13-19.

_____. "Gay Ann Arbor Purges: Part Two," Midwest Gay Academic Journal, vol. 1 no. 2 (1977): 11-13.

University-Wide Task Force on Lesbian and Gay Issues, Michigan State University. Moving Forward: Lesbians and Gay Men at Michigan State University, vol. 1. East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1992.

Vicinus, Martha. Electronic mail from Ann Arbor, to Albin Rose, Lansing, 30 June 1995.

Walter [pseudonym], 5 July 1995.

Woods, Sherry Elaine. The Contextual Realities of Being a Lesbian Physical Educator: Living In Two Worlds. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1990.