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ARTICLE: CLUSTER VII: RACE, GENDER, AND SEXUALTIY: Heterosexism and Internalized Racism Among African Americans: The Connections and Considerations for African American Lesbians and Bisexual Women: A Clinical Psychological Perspective

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SUMMARY: ... The Multidimensional Identities of African American Lesbians and Bisexual Women ... Specifically, looking at a lesbian's existence within the African American community, this discussion shows that other powerful factors affecting lesbians' and bisexual women's lives include the role of racial stereotypes about African Americans, the degree of sexism, internalized racism, and homophobia within African Americans as a group, racist and sexist barriers, and challenges from the dominant culture. These factors have contributed to the development of ethnosexual myths imposed on all people of color that contribute to the sexual identity and sexual behavior of African Americans and hence, African American lesbian and bisexual women. ... Many African Americans, like members of the dominant culture, believe strongly that lesbian or gay sexual orientation is a poorly chosen "lifestyle," and as such, the discrimination that results from it is viewed as if it were an "inconvenience" that one can avoid, rather than the protracted, involuntary hardship of being Black. ... Homophobia allows African Americans who have internalized sexual/racial stereotypes to distance themselves personally, and as a community, from the sexual stigma that the dominant culture has associated with Black identity, particularly stereotypes of Black sexuality. ...

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The Multidimensional Identities of African American Lesbians and Bisexual Women

 Clinical and counseling psychologists are charged with understanding the nature of human identities, evolution, and forms as a part of their struggle to understand behavior. How much of identity is fixed or fluid and what kinds of things influence how people come to see themselves and others are two of the many questions psychologists raise in their attempts to study human identity. In contemporary clinical practice, we are faced with the need to understand how people view the world and how the world views them as a necessary ingredient in understanding current and past behavior. Part of that understanding includes analyzing the social context that people live in, specifically where they fit within the social hierarchy and its effects on them. Whether a person is socially privileged or socially disadvantaged affects not only psyche but behavior as well. Clinicians who do not appreciate the importance of this social positioning and its effects cannot fully appreciate the nature of a patient's struggles or experience. This understanding is a necessary part of the process of the behavioral change that is often a goal in psychological treatment. Other disciplines may view the constituents of identity from different perspectives, for example, legal identities and their political implications. None of these differing views are correct or incorrect but represent views through different lenses and for distinct purposes. In a clinical psychological analysis, I am concerned with **[*932]** the individual's internal sense of who they are and where they belong, which may conflict with how they are socially defined and how their identities are socially constructed. In this discussion, my understanding of identity is focused on understanding those constituents that shape the identities of African American lesbian and bisexual women and of the attitudes of their heterosexual counterparts toward them. This article will also focus on the effects of social barriers that are a function of heterosexism as a form of social injustice.

It would seem to many people that the shared experience of culture and racial disadvantage among African Americans would create greater tolerance of inter-group differences. We know, however, that heterosexism is no less problematic within African Americans as a group than it is in any other group. Heterosexism, like other forms of social prejudice, has multiple determinants. While African Americans may be heterosexist for many of the same reasons as many other ethnic groups, I contend that there are also

determinants of heterosexism for African Americans that are connected to the internalized racism that is a prominent feature in the psyches of many African Americans. The connection between these two troubling phenomena and its relationship to the formation of identities among African American lesbian and bisexual women is the focus of my discussion.

Jewelle Gomez observes that "passing is an obscene form of salvation. Just as a black woman passing for white is required to deny everything about her past, a black lesbian who passes for heterosexual is required to deny everything about her present." n1 Gomez's writings provide us with eloquent analyses of the silence about African American lesbian and bisexual women in African American communities and the silencing of African American lesbian and bisexual women themselves. n2 It is appropriate to define this group. African American lesbian and bisexual women are a large and diverse group represented in every age group, socioeconomic class, educational level, physical ability, and geographical region. Their diversity must be considered in understanding their individual identities and the wide range of those identities. Because African American lesbian and bisexual women have multiple identities, we cannot make arbitrary assumptions about which of those identities is most salient to a given individual. Moreover, we cannot even assume that one identity is ever more important than the others. **[*933]** Furthermore, identities shift in salience depending on the social context a woman is in at any given time and during different developmental periods of her life.

The cultural origins of African American lesbians and bisexual women are rooted in the tribes of Western Africa and in their identity as descendants of slaves who were unwilling immigrants to the United States. n3 Historically, all black women in the diaspora have the horrific legacies of the slave trade in common. n4 Prior to leaving Africa and becoming slaves, African women were not a homogeneous group. n5 To the contrary, the mixed pre-slavery lineages of African women included membership in many different tribes speaking hundreds of distinct languages, with different systems of family values, relations, and tribal customs. n6 Furthermore, the wide range of differences in the kinds of slavery policies practiced in the different countries to which slaves were taken, as well as the presence of cross ethnic relationships/marriages, created even greater heterogeneity among group members. n7 All of these pre-slavery diversities and post-slavery realities gave rise to a wide range of expressions of female sexuality, and therefore, to same-sex sexual relationships among Black women in the diaspora. n8

The heterogeneity of African women notwithstanding, Black lesbians in the diaspora have been integral members of Black communities. Throughout history they have experienced varying levels of tolerance for their sexual orientation, and share the same devalued position borne of racism and sexism as their heterosexual counterparts. n9 The intolerance of African American lesbians expressed in homophobia/heterosexism within the African American community has a range of determinants. While many are similar to **[*934]** the determinants of homophobia within the dominant culture, others are connected to internalized oppression/racism within African Americans. African American communities across the United States are diverse, and the levels and quality of internalized racism is affected by the type of community in which the sexual minority exists. The factors that serve to bind these phenomena as well as their contemporary manifestations will serve as the focus of my discussion. The presence of Black women who have sex with women throughout the diaspora and their experiences are worthy of attention; however, all Black women do not share the same socializing experiences. Thus, this discussion is limited to the unique experiences of African American women who were born and raised in the United States.

Like their heterosexual counterparts, African American lesbians and bisexual women share African cultural derivatives. These derivatives include the presence of strong family ties encompassing nuclear and extended family members in complex networks of mutual obligation and support. n10 They also reflect more flexible gender roles than those of Whites and other ethnic-minority groups. This flexibility may be attributed, in part, to cultural values that stress interdependence and greater levels of gender egalitarianism observed in some pre-colonial African tribes.

Based on conservative population estimates, there are some 1.8 million African-American women who could be defined as lesbian and bisexual in the United States. n11 Yet few published empirical studies include any significant numbers of African American lesbian and bisexual respondents, raising questions about the accuracy of the assumptions made about their psychologies. n12 Thus, it is not appropriate to limit our understanding of African Americans to dominant cultural analyses that may reinforce preexisting racist, sexist, and heterosexist biases. n13 It is also imperative in analyzing the **[*935]** history of discrimination of any ethnic group, to incorporate group members' own understandings of their history, oppression, and coping strategies. In this discussion I will do so by addressing internalized racism in the African American community.

Beyond African cultural legacies, characteristics of African American lesbians and their families constitute responses and attempts to cope with American racism and the patriarchal social structure that characterize the majority culture in the United States. Slavery, institutional racism, and the resulting lack of employment opportunities made it difficult for African American men to conform to the Western ideal of the male as the sole provider. This ideal devalued women who worked as well as the men who needed their female partners to work outside the home for economic survival. This ideal was never consistent with the reality of African slaves and their descendants.

Slavery defined African women as workers, and required that they work outside the home from the very moment they arrived on these shores to a greater degree than their white counterparts. While this may have facilitated a greater level of cultural gender role flexibility among African American families, it deprived slave women of the customary perks of "femininity" accorded other American women. Despite that flexibility, sexism is still a visible phenomenon in African American communities. n14

To understand the meaning and reality of being an African-American woman who is lesbian or bisexual, this discussion explores the impact of a range of factors that include ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and socio-economic class, and their dynamic interactions within an individual. In addition, the work reviews the nature of the traditional gender-role stereotypes within African Americans; the role and importance of family and community; and the role of religion and spirituality in the lives of African Americans. Specifically, looking at a lesbian's existence within the African American community, this discussion shows that other powerful factors affecting lesbians' and bisexual women's lives include the role of racial stereotypes about African Americans, the degree of sexism, internalized racism, and homophobia within African Americans as a group, racist and sexist barriers, and challenges from the dominant culture. These factors have contributed to the development of ethnosexual myths imposed on all people of color that contribute to the sexual identity and sexual behavior of African Americans and **[*936]** hence, African American lesbian and bisexual women.

The sexual objectification and exploitation of African Americans throughout slavery was rationalized by the creation of distorted images of African-Americans. These distortions were designed to fuel negative stereotypes and myths of excessive sexual desire and propensity, promiscuity and moral looseness. Such conceptions are relevant to the development of the self-images of African American lesbian and bisexual

women, and to how a lesbian's family and the African American community views its lesbian and bisexual members. The strength of family ties among African Americans is seen as a factor in the failure to completely reject lesbian and bisexual family members. However, the African American community is perceived as extremely homophobic and many lesbian and bisexual African American women remain closeted. n15

African American communities across the United States are diverse. Urban areas may be as different from one another as they are from rural locations. Hence, African American lesbians and bisexual women often will have different experiences of what it means to be an African American, and will have developed different constellations of defenses against racism that are a function of their experiences negotiating racism, that are a function of locale. Their respective levels and quality of internalized racism will be similarly affected.

Another important issue concerning internalized racism is the individual's degree of acculturation or assimilation into a dominant cultural community. African American families and communities charge that lesbianism is an acquired "white man's disease" or "Western sickness" that comes from being in too great a proximity to White people or trying to be like them. n16 African American lesbian and bisexual women who work, live, or play in predominantly White environments may be more vulnerable to taking this challenge to the authenticity of their "Blackness" seriously. n17 Viewing lesbianism as "White" is often connected to more pernicious beliefs a woman may harbor about herself and about other African Americans. African Americans within the United States share an inherited legacy of racial discrimination and oppression by the dominant culture. African American lesbians and bisexual women have multiple stigmatized identities and are affected by the conflation of institutional racism and sexism.

Another important dimension of analysis is the interrelation of sexuality and gender with culture. In most cultures a range of sexual **[*937]** behaviors is tolerated. n18 To explore the range of sexuality tolerated by African Americans, it is important to ascertain whether, or to what extent, formally forbidden practices are tolerated as long as they are not discussed or labeled, to what degree they are tolerated, or if they are always deemed unacceptable.

It is also important to determine the relationship between the ethnosexual mythologies applied to African Americans and an African American lesbian or bisexual person's understanding of her sexuality. n19 Ethnosexual myths are created and perpetuated by the

dominant culture and often represent a complex combination of racial and sexual stereotypes. The symbolism of these stereotypes and their interaction with stereotypes held about lesbians play an important role in forming the stereotypes and myths perpetrated against and often internalized by African American lesbians and bisexual women.

Family of Origin: When Tolerance Equals Silence

Several characteristics of African American families are relevant to African American lesbian and bisexual women's lives. The African American family has functioned as an important refuge to protect group members from the racism of the dominant culture. It has also served as an important socializing tool for African Americans as an oppressed group in a hostile environment. Psychologically healthy families teach their young how to recognize and negotiate racial barriers through a range of conscious and unconscious mechanisms, and offer positive cultural mirroring to mitigate against the internalization of dominant negative images. The importance of African American family and community as a survival tool makes the coming out process for African American lesbians fraught with greater difficulty and perhaps with greater risk than White lesbians. n20

[*938] On the other hand, because of the strength of family ties, there may be a reluctance to formally "expel" a lesbian from the family despite an undisputed rejection of a lesbian sexual orientation. Because of the importance of family to African Americans, lesbians are not typically "disowned," or formally cut off from family members to the extent that their White counterparts may be. n21

The apparent tolerance of some families does not, however, constitute approval, nor does it mean that there are no African American families who "throw out" or disown a lesbian family member. Quiet tolerance is usually contingent upon a lesbian's silence about her sexual orientation; open disclosure, discussion, or self-identification may give rise to serious conflicts. Even when family members are accepting and supportive, the broader African American community or the woman's heterosexual friends may not be. This "closeted sexuality" which exists in African American communities "should be seriously interrogated" as it contributes significantly to internalized homophobia within lesbian and gay persons. n22

The extended nature of African American families facilitates the commonplace close and emotionally intense ties that exist between adult women. There is a culturally defined role within the African American community for the non-related adult girlfriend who has an often very intense but nonsexual, spiritual, and emotionally intimate relationship with an African American woman friend and her family. n23 This intimacy is reflected in the greeting "girlfriend" that acknowledges and confers "blood family" kinship-like status on a non-blood related close adult female friend. The role of the close female friend among adult women in African American culture can make it even easier for African American families to avoid acknowledging the lesbian nature of a relationship between two adult women, even when it is taking place right in their midst. African-American lesbians can sometimes collude in this denial by never actually saying anything to pierce the family's denial. Others may not keep the information a secret per se, but may still never fully come out to their family members. Still others may come out to their families, and find that the family continues to pretend the lesbian relationship does not exist, treating the lover in the culturally accepted role of "girlfriend" and treating the family member who is lesbian as if she were unmarried.

In interracial relationships, the white partner's race may become [*939] scapegoated as a more comfortable focus for the family's anger about the disclosure. n24 It is not unusual however for any partner to be scapegoated as the bad influence who seduced the family member into the lifestyle. For some family members, this can represent their way of rejecting lesbian sexual orientation while relieving their loved one of any responsibility for it and maintaining the family tie.

In some African American families, however, lesbian relationships may be accepted openly by family members. Reactions by families are as diverse as African American families themselves. The strength of family ties among African American families often mitigates against the outright rejection of lesbian and bisexual family members. However, the African American community is perceived as extremely homophobic, and many women remain closeted. n25

Ethnosexual Stereotypes and Heterosexism: The Connection

The relationship of the ethnosexual mythologies applied by African Americans to an African American lesbian or bisexual person's understanding of her sexuality is relevant to this discussion. n26 Ethnosexual stereotypes are racial stereotypes about the sexuality/sexual behavior of a disadvantaged ethnic group that devalue, degrade, exaggerate or flagrantly distort their sexual behavior. These negative stereotypes have been used to objectify African American men and women when compared to the

idealized characterizations of their White counterparts, and to both rationalize and promote their sexual exploitation and control.

Since they came to America as slaves and were legally defined as objects, African American women were deemed pieces of property with no human or civil rights. Forced sexual relationships, with African males and White slave masters, were the norm. Slave masters used African American women's bodies for the satisfaction of their sexual desires without the women's consent (what is now called rape), as well as for breeding purposes to increase their stock of slaves and profits.

Ethnosexual stereotypes about African American women have their roots in images created by a White society that struggled to reconcile the contradictions between its ideals and espoused values of freedom, liberty, and democracy, with its inhumane and debased **[*940]** treatment of African Americans generally and its use of African American women's bodies specifically. Making up distortions about the sexual behavior and proclivities of African Americans, depicting them as bestial, animal-like, and therefore less than human, was a means to rationalizing their unfair and deplorable treatment.

African American women clearly did not fit the traditional stereotypes of women as fragile, weak, and dependent, as they were never allowed to be "dependent" on anyone. The "Mammy" figure is the historical antecedent to the stereotype of African American women as assertive, domineering, and strong. Assertiveness was considered the equivalent of being anti-male and even castrating. Popular images of African American women, and any other strong assertive women, as castrating were created in the interest of maintaining the status quo arrangement of social power. In this arrangement, African American men and women are subordinates to Whites and women are subordinate to men.

Psychological theories that depicted assertive women as castrating were also used to scientifically stigmatize any woman who wanted to work outside the home or violate the gender-role stereotypes of a patriarchal culture. n27 Today's stereotypes are a product of those myths and depict African American women as not sufficiently subordinate to African American men, inherently sexually promiscuous, morally loose, assertive, matriarchal, defective and "other" when compared to White women. n28

Stereotypes of lesbians as masculinized females are conflated with stereotypes of African American women as "too strong" and "domineering." Both are depicted as defective females who want to be or act like men and are sexually promiscuous. n29 It is important to understand the history of institutional racism and its role in the development of the myths and distortions regarding the sexuality of all African Americans and its effects on African American lesbians in particular.

African American males are encouraged to view strong African American women as responsible for their oppression, rather than the practices of racist institutions. Racism, sexism and heterosexism converge to blame African American women for the failure of their men to live up to the Western ideal of the male role, and consequently for the "failure" of African American families. In this **[*941]** analysis, the prescribed remedy for liberating people of African descent is male dominance and female subordination. n30 Many African American women, including lesbians, have internalized these myths. This internalization intensifies negative psychological effects on African American lesbians and further compromises their ability to affirm themselves, protect themselves, and obtain support from the larger African American community. n31

African American men and women who have internalized the racism, sexism and heterosexism inherent in the patriarchal values of Western culture may scapegoat any "strong" women, women who defy traditional gender role norms. As women whose primary romantic and emotional attractions are to other women, lesbians and bisexual women are easy targets.

African American lesbians and bisexual women develop, work, play, and love in a climate with varying degrees of hostility toward them. The antagonism that confronts African American lesbians and bisexual women comes from personal, family and institutional sources. Normative traditional analyses are replete with racist, sexist, classist, and heterosexist biases and assumptions that reinforce rather than mitigate the multiple levels of discrimination that African American lesbians and bisexual women routinely encounter. n32

Institutional mental health has played a distinct role in supporting hegemonic heterosexist and racist beliefs and values. **[*942]** These beliefs often result in misconceptions about lesbians and appear to be as common among people of color as they are in the dominant culture. Some of these questionable beliefs are that lesbians either want to be, or naturally look like, men, are unattractive or less attractive than heterosexual women, are less extroverted, are unable to get men, or have had traumatic experiences with men that presumably "turned" them against men, or are simply defective females. In African American communities, the assumption that sexual attraction to

men is intrinsic to being a normal woman is as acceptable as it is in the dominant culture. Acceptance of this assumption often leads to a range of equally inaccurate conclusions.

One of the most significant assumptions is that reproductive sexuality is the only form of sexual expression that is both psychologically normal and morally correct; n33 that there is a direct relationship between sexual orientation and conformity to traditional gender roles and physical appearance within the culture. n34 In the latter example, women who have not voiced the desire to, or have not attempted to, conform to traditional gender-role stereotypes run the risk of being seen as lesbians, and conversely, those who do conform do not arouse as much suspicion. These assumptions are also used to threaten women with the stigma of being labeled lesbian if they do not adhere to the traditional gender-role stereotypes of the African American community in which males are dominant and females are submissive. African American gay males are, similarly, viciously verbally stigmatized and can be targets of violence if they do not emulate the stereotypical male role as dominant. This often occurs in African American communities despite the history and tradition of gender role flexibility within African American families.

Such an atmosphere can perpetuate the invisibility of African American lesbians and bisexual women. In a society where for women, attraction to men only, and male dominance and female subordination, have been viewed as normative, the fears of being labeled a lesbian and the negative consequences of such a label maintains the patriarchal status quo. The following section suggests that there is often a connection between homophobia and the internalized racism that resides in the psyches of many African Americans, both of which are psychologically destructive to individuals as well as to the African American community.

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Homophobia/Heterosexism Among African Americans

"To talk about the history of heterosexism and the history of homophobia is to talk about ways in which various institutions and persons have promoted unjustified suffering and unmerited pain." n35 An analysis of homophobia/heterosexism among African Americans should not be used to support the notion that this phenomenon is any worse among African Americans than it is in any other group. Rather, a Gallup poll in April 1993 showed that a greater number of African American respondents favored equal rights for lesbians and gay men in job

opportunities and lifting military bans against them than their White counterparts. Also, the Congressional Black Caucus has been very supportive of lesbian and gay rights. n36 Nonetheless, there is often vitriolic homophobic rhetoric and behavior in Black communities that is harmful to African American lesbians and bisexual women. Below, this discussion seeks to articulate the various underpinnings of heterosexism and homophobia in African American communities.

Erosions of Tolerance: Increasing Visibility and Overt Scapegoating

Some writers believe that there was once greater tolerance for lesbians and gay men in some poor African American communities, such as Harlem, New York, in the 1940s through the 1950s, for a variety of reasons. n37 One reason given is the relative invisibility of lesbians and gay men within the African American community and the dominant culture at the time. n38 Another explanation is that homosexuality was seen as "seizing the opportunity to spite the White man," while another explanation attributes this tolerance to the empathy African Americans may have experienced, as an oppressed people, toward members of another oppressed group. n39

The erosion of that tolerance may have resulted in part from the heightened visibility of lesbians and of the issue of sexual orientation in contemporary majority and ethnic minority communities. These factors erased the invisibility and denial on which past tolerance was presumably premised. n40 During the earlier periods, while homophobia **[*944]** was still "thick," the survival of the Black community, when it was more cohesive and under siege, was a higher priority than its homophobia. In that context a greater sense of tolerance was created that may have been reflected in less overt and vicious hostility toward lesbians and gay men in the community. But as Black communities undergo crisis and disintegration, the communities' most vulnerable members, Black women, LGBT people, and children, become scapegoats, n41 and vicious forms of rhetoric and violence against these groups increase. In some quarters such violence is viewed as not only acceptable, but necessary to protect the community. n42

Reproductive Sexuality and the Fear of Extinction

Historically oppressed groups, specifically African American and Native Americans, have accorded reproductive sexuality great importance. n43 Many group members view it as the way to guarantee their continued presence in a society that wants to be rid of

them and uses racist and genocidal practices to accomplish that goal. n44 Non-reproductive sexual practices therefore are seen by many African Americans as another way that the group's survival is threatened; they cause "fears of extinction". Lesbian and gay sexual orientation is sometimes viewed as part of a larger scheme on the part of White America to accomplish this goal of extinction. In this context, women's primary roles are to reproduce; those who reject this role may be viewed as traitors to the race. n45

Although fears of genocidal practices against African Americans as a group are warranted, this view unfairly scapegoats lesbian and gay members of the community rather than holding the proponents of racist and other discriminatory practices more accountable. Furthermore, having a lesbian or bisexual sexual orientation does not preclude having children, particularly among African American and other lesbians of color. Despite this reality, the internalization of these myths may make it harder for an African American lesbian to reconcile normal aspirations and desires with distorted perceptions of her sexual orientation. It may also be used as a barrier between members of the African American community, affecting the kind and degree of support a lesbian or bisexual member may obtain.

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Lesbian Sexuality: Choice, Outing, Passing

One form of homophobia is represented in the belief that lesbian sexual orientation represents a consciously chosen behavior. Many African Americans, like members of the dominant culture, believe strongly that lesbian or gay sexual orientation is a poorly chosen "lifestyle," and as such, the discrimination that results from it is viewed as if it were an "inconvenience" that one can avoid, rather than the protracted, involuntary hardship of being Black. n46 This reveals heteropatriarchal hegemony: the origins of heterosexuality need not even be questioned, are not chosen and are presumed to be natural. The belief that lesbian sexual orientation is chosen and that race is not chosen is a key factor in the resentment expressed by many heterosexual African Americans at comparisons between the two forms of oppression.

The relative visibility of race/ethnicity among African Americans and the invisibility of lesbian sexual orientation plays a significant role in the belief that lesbian sexual orientation is chosen and that the problem is in an individual's decision to make that identity known, rather than concealing it. If unknown, it can be denied or ignored. Hence people who do not

hide or remain silent are seen as the problem and discrimination against them is presumed to be their own fault. This line of reasoning carries the insidious implication that lesbians who are "out" are not only inviting negative treatment, but that perhaps they even deserve it. Gomez opines that this represents an example of the demand within the Black community to be invisible: "a demand for a lie I was able to tell by not telling." n47

In African American communities and families, the simple act of "telling" someone that you are a lesbian, or engaging in any other behavior that is routine among heterosexuals is often viewed as if one is "flaunting" something distasteful that unlike demonstrations of ethnic pride, should be concealed. n48 "Telling" is viewed as asking for trouble that you could have avoided, a view that gives the illusion that the social injustice that is a function of homophobia/heterosexism is more controllable than racism. It is assumed that the problem rests on being known and that there is no cost in remaining silent. This position is a stark representation of heterosexual privilege and contradicts the position African Americans maintain for group members who pass for white.

This bias by the community comes at the expense of the individual: both the lesbian and gay literature and both the cultural [*946] and psychological literature on people of color document the negative psychological effects of passing as a long term mechanism for managing discrimination. n49

When you are not dismissed from work, because you stayed in the closet ... when there is no anti-lesbian explosion from your parents, because you have de-dyked your apartment before their visit ... heterosexism [is] functioning in its most effective and most deadly way... . It is not necessary ... to murder or torture us to ensure our silence and invisibility. n50

Creating a climate of terror insures that most group members will choose to remain silent.

Finally, although to be sure, sexual orientation is not routinely visible in the way that race/ethnicity is readily apparent among most African Americans, the assumption that race is always equally visible among African Americans or that they are always identifiable has no basis in fact. This assumption ignores the presence of African Americans, now and throughout history, who can and do pass for white. Individuals who can claim African ancestry, but who pass, are usually the objects of scathing contempt from other African Americans. In fact, many people who are biracial or multiracial, who can claim any African

ancestry, are often belittled by some members of the African American community if they do not claim their African ancestry as their primary ethnic identification. This suggests that many African Americans feel it is important to claim any and every aspect of one's African ancestry with pride and view those who do not as race traitors.

Heterosexual Privilege

The importance that is accorded to racial pride is not applied to sexual orientation and as such, it is an exercise in heterosexual privilege: heterosexual African Americans exercise a kind of heterosexual dominance by defining being "out" racially and ethnically as healthy and imperative, while being "out" as a lesbian is seen as inviting deserved abuse.

Similarly, discrimination against descendants of Africans is racism and the structural bias, not the person who is harmed, is the evil force. However, when a lesbian is harmed by discrimination, heterosexism that is responsible for the discrimination is invisible; the victim is defined as the problem. This kind of behavior exemplifies heterosexual privilege and oppression: the very behavior **[*947]** that is defined as psychologically healthy and culturally loyal in a dominant or privileged group-heterosexuals, is deemed unhealthy or politically incorrect in lesbians, a disadvantaged group within the larger African American community.

The maintenance of heterosexual privilege also represents a source of homophobia for some African Americans, the function of maintaining both heterosexual privileges and status, while simultaneously denying the existence of that privileged identity. Sexism in both dominant and African American cultures and racism in the dominant culture leave heterosexual privilege (aside from middle-and upper middle-class African American women) the only way that African American women may obtain privilege. As such, they may be reluctant to jeopardize a locus of privilege that they may even deny having.

Religion

Another pernicious form of homophobia among African Americans is often based on religious and theological grounds. It is one of the sources of internalized homophobia that is frequently voiced by African American lesbians in psychotherapy. Heterosexist individuals often object to lesbianism on "religious grounds,' claiming that if they accept the lesbian family or community member they are betraying their faith; that a lesbian relationship violates the teachings in Biblical scripture, God's law or intent.

Many women experience great conflict about whether they can be of good moral character if they are lesbian, with the level of ambivalence varying with the degree of involvement (present or past) with formal religious practice. For strict adherents to Western Christian theology, selective interpretations of Biblical scripture have been broadly used to reinforce homophobic attitudes and actions. Because African Americans have strong Christian spiritual and religious orientation, n51 it is no surprise that religion is part of the conflict for sexual minorities, their families, and communities.

The Black church has served as a haven for many African Americans in their struggles with racism, and has often been a potent force in liberation theology but it has either ignored or been condemning of its sexual minority members: "the African American church sweeps eroticism under the rug, but most congregations don't even give homosexuality a foot in the door." n52 One African American **[*948]** lesbian growing up in a Black fundamentalist church has observed that a "don't ask, don't tell" policy of denial was a part of an atmosphere in which compulsory heterosexuality was strictly enforced. n53

There is a great variance among African-American mainstream denominations in their official policies on homosexuality. The Roman Catholic, Southern Baptist, and Pentecostal denominations maintain the most conservative positions on the subject, while the United Church of Christ appears most welcoming to lesbian and gay members. n54 Other denominations fit in between these extremes. n55 Certain non-Christian religious sects view homosexuality as a decadent Western practice as well. Despite an emphasis on religious determinants of their rejection, expressions of religious indignation about the person's lesbian sexual orientation can serve to mask a family's, friend's, or community's feelings about sexuality in a secular sense.

It is noteworthy, however, that interpretations of Biblical scripture concerning homosexuality are highly selective. Perhaps of even greater importance is the awareness that there is a lack of absoluteness and certainly no sense of uniformity with which Christian theologians or Biblical scholars interpret these issues. Some experts posit that no credible case against homosexuality or homosexuals can be made from the Bible unless one chooses to interpret scripture in ways that presume the preexisting prejudices against homosexuality are true. n56 One scholar argues that the subject of homosexuality is not even mentioned in the early texts of the Bible and that the word "homosexual" itself, an invention of the late nineteenth century, is never mentioned until the 1946 Revised

Standard version. n57 The use of religion to condemn homosexuality is simply pretext. n58

The African American church espouses a "profoundly" conservative theological position on sexuality that can create a repressive climate. This conservative theology regarding sexual matters is a derivative of a legacy of slavery, misogyny and racism. n59 "Theological homophobia," often expressed in the rejection of lesbians **[*949]** (and gay men) in both the Black church and the African American community, has some of its roots in internalized racism and sexism among African Americans.

The ministry of misogyny and homophobia in the Black church is one in which social action is predicated on the devaluation of women, lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgendered people. This practice of devaluation rests on the belief that Black men are the most endangered members of the Black community; that they must be protected by and at the expense of African American women, as well as other members of the community. n60 Male superiority and dominance is an active ingredient in homophobia as it supports the preservation of traditional gender roles and the hierarchies that accompany them. n61 Roles and hierarchies that maintain female subordination are not viewed appropriately as a construction of society but rather are explained as "God's will." In this analysis, African American lesbians are blamed for not upholding what are perceived to be roles given to all women by God rather than the dictates of a patriarchal society. This gives holy character to secular oppression: the rule establishing sexual pleasure as a male domain which in turn both maintains the status quo of dominance and submission between Black men and women, and eroticizes female submission to men. n62 In this paradigm, lesbians are defiant outlaws.

Westernization and African Sexualities

Finally, the hierarchy of some organized Black churches, together with many members of the African American community as well as select Black Nationalists, also blame lesbian and gay sexual orientations among African Americans on the assimilation of decadent Western practices or the White man's disease. n63 An important issue concerning internalized racism, therefore, pertains to the individual's degree of acculturation or assimilation into a dominant cultural community. Homophobic beliefs among African Americans, however, are also a function of Black Nationalists' efforts to claim an African heritage. n64 The basis of these beliefs, however, is **[*950]** the false assertion that there was no homosexuality in Africa, a myth created about an Africa and an African past to which most contemporary African Americans have no connection, the accurate historical depiction of which has been obscured, and that, depending on the period of African and American history one examines, was alternately devalued and idealized by African Americans.

Overall, the view that lesbian (and gay) sexual orientations are inauthentic in African-descended people, based on the assertion that there is no evidence of them in Africa, lacks support in African reality. n65 It is noteworthy, however, that the way a culture defines sexuality will determine whether or not the African and Western constructs of sexual orientation are conceptually equivalent. n66 The Western meaning of lesbian, gay, or bisexual is different from the conceptualization and construction of such identities in other cultures, which may render them less visible to the Western observer. n67 A range of methodological obstacles and blinders interfere with the identification of "lesbians" in Africa and their appropriate study, including the influence of Western taboos, erroneous beliefs about homosexual behavior, and the imposition of Western heteronormativity. n68 For example, anthropologists have presumed that sex between women only takes place when there are no men around. n69 Ingrained biases occlude analysis and might even foreclose methodologies that might illuminate the existence of lesbian women and their relationships. Despite such methodological obstacles, anthropological evidence reveals that there have always been forms of female homosexuality in Africa and in all other human cultures. n70 In Kenya, Nandi women marry; in Lesotho, there are Mummy-Baby relationships in which older women whose husbands are migrant mine workers take younger women as their spouses; n71 in Lovedu in the Northern Province of South Africa, Modjadji, the "Rain Queen," a female hereditary leader, keeps as many as 40 wives. n72

Black women in the diaspora express what we would consider **[*951]** lesbian relationships. In a number of West African regions from which slaves were brought to the "New World," Dahomey and Ashanti -women who had sex with other women-were not the target of negative sanctions and prohibitions. n73 A comparison of "lesbian relationships" among Black women in the United States with those among Black women in Suriname suggests that "Mati"(the Suriname Tongo name for women who have sex with women) display lesbian behavior while Black lesbians in the United States view themselves as having a lesbian identity. n74 The confluence of race and class together may shape a culture's understanding of sexual orientation differently than either of those variables defines it by itself.

In some parts of Southern Africa, lesbians are often considered traditional healers (as they were in many Native American tribes). n75 Their "difference" in some cultures is seen as something that gives them a special connection to the supernatural. n76 Their healer status also means that they are not required to marry, which allows them to live independent lives as unattached women. n77

In this regard, it is important to understand the economic structure of a society and its role in defining marriage. Non-western women who must marry men in order to attain economic viability may construct their relationships with other women differently than the way lesbians structure their relationships in the West. n78 It is also important to consider the effect of colonization on indigenous cultural practices. In Africa, the advent of Christianity and the influx of Christian missionaries that facilitated Africa's colonization stigmatized the kinds of people and relationships whom Westerners would currently regard as lesbian. If and when they were stigmatized, punishment by torture and death was often the price paid for claiming this identity. For this reason, many lesbians became hidden members of society. As more African nations turn to democracy lesbian and gay Africans have become more visible and assertive, putting them in conflict with conservative African leaders. n79 Indeed, South Africa under the leadership of Nelson Mandela is the only nation that includes protection from sexual **[*952]** orientation discrimination in its constitution. n80

Normativities and Internalized Racism

In any cross cultural examination of sexual behavior it is crucial to understand that the biological underpinnings of any sexual behavior will be experienced, mediated, and interpreted through the lens of culture. n81 Many contentions about the absence of lesbian or other forms of nontraditional sexuality in contemporary and pre-colonial Africa are more representative of myth than reality. Despite this, many African Americans believe these contentions, forgetting that they are social creations. These beliefs are significant ingredients in both the internalized racism and homophobia in the African American community, as well as the internalized homophobia among African American lesbians.

A society that objects to and negatively stigmatizes significant elements of African Americans' sexual and other identities transgresses the rights of sexual minorities within the cultural framework. Ethnosexual mythologies used to stigmatize African American sexuality have been used to justify the implementation of marginalizing social systems. Images of black

sexuality as "reckless, irresponsible, and dangerous" are used to maintain stigmatized images of African American women and support and sustain their exploited position in the social hierarchy. n82 While race plays a role in defining Black sexuality, sexuality has always played an important role in defining Blackness.

Because of such historical stigmatization, many African Americans have equated respectability and acceptance by the dominant group with distancing themselves from any image or behavior found in racist stereotypes of African Americans. n83 This of course meant distancing from and marginalizing any members of the African-American community who could not or refused to attempt to live up to the dominant culture's definition of respectable behavior: "black survival required accommodation with an acceptance from White America... . struggling black institutions made a Faustian pact with White America: avoid any substantive engagement with black sexuality and your survival on the margins of American Society **[*953]** is, at least, possible." n84

Some individuals who do not necessarily believe the essence of the stereotypes that degrade Black sexuality may feel required to give the appearance of imitating the dominant culture's values. Others, however, believe that degrading stereotypes about Black sexuality are true.

The belief in racial stereotypes of one's own inferiority represents a form of internalized oppression referred to as internalized racism: a re-enactment of an old hurt or trauma that will create a distress pattern if it is not healed or discharged. n85 The shame and distress that many African Americans experience around the mythical but negative depictions of Black sexuality and the need to negate those depictions can lead to the disparaging of African American lesbians and gay men. Hence, internalized racism and homophobia share important foundations among African Americans.

For African-Americans who have internalized the negative stereotypes of their sexuality, sexual behavior outside of dominant societal norms can be experienced as a negative reflection on all African-Americans. There may be an exaggerated desire or pressure to model the behavior that appears normal to the dominant culture. n86 Convincing White people that African Americans were just like they were was a strategy used by African Americans in an evolving political atmosphere, but was not useful as a long term survival strategy because it facilitated the development of a personal mythology among African Americans that was as narrow and misleading as many of the mythologies that Whites created about African

Americans. n87 A narrow, limited view of Black culture, of what "authentic" Black behavior is, and anger about anything that differs **[*954]** too much from the mythical ideal of the middle-class majority culture, exemplifies internalized racism. n88

Because acceptance of lesbian sexual orientations is inconsistent with the dominant culture's ideal, African American lesbians may be experienced as an embarrassment to African Americans who strongly identify with the dominant culture. n89 Indeed, the only common names for lesbians in the African American community, "funny women" or "bulldagger women" are derogatory. n90

Homophobia allows African Americans who have internalized sexual/racial stereotypes to distance themselves personally, and as a community, from the sexual stigma that the dominant culture has associated with Black identity, particularly stereotypes of Black sexuality. n91 This distancing behavior allows some segments of the African American community to maintain their hope for legitimacy and full incorporation into the dominant culture's power structure. n92

For other African Americans, homophobia and subsequent distancing from lesbian and gay members is rooted in African Nationalist arguments that distort African ancestral cultures. This distortion, intended to "normalize" Africans and their descendants, assumes that the presence of lesbian and gay members in one's ethnic group is a bad thing or a negative reflection on the group. In effect, claims of African conformity to exclusive heterosexuality deny the reality of a sexually diverse African ancestry and heritage.

Conclusion

The notion of a monolithic racial identity, that excludes lesbian sexual orientation, represents an attempt to exercise a form of social control designed to establish unilateral conformity among oppressed group members. n93 Ironically, this often results in the exercise of more social injustice as this mythical uniformity is maintained by keeping elements of the community and group silenced, invisible and denied. **[*955]** A model of the African American community that silences or denies the existence of certain members is neither authentic nor representative, nor is it psychologically healthy.

Lesbian members of the African-American community who attempt to deny healthy parts of themselves, such as their sexuality, commit a form of psychological suicide. This behavior at its core illustrates a derivative of internalized racism. Rejection of African American lesbians by other African Americans represents a kind

of pathology in the group that will neither tolerate nor accept the realistic diversity of its members.

One method for silencing nonconforming group members is the accusation of racial disloyalty, lack of authenticity, or incompatibility of lesbian sexual orientation and "Blackness." Such accusations often lead to conflicts of allegiance and to the tendency for individuals to compartmentalize and conceal different parts of themselves. n94 The concept of racial loyalty presumes that a lesbian sexual orientation is incompatible with a Black identity, or at least an authentic one. This charge shows the hegemonic control of the heteronormative members of one community over sexual minorities within that very community.

African American lesbians are members of a visible oppressed ethnic group, as well as a less visible oppressed minority, in a racially hostile society. Most members of these groups have other identities as well and those multiple identities further complicate their dilemma. Because of the racism in the predominantly White lesbian and gay community, it is no substitute for the protective refuge of the African American family and community. n95 African American lesbians thus may be silenced about their sexuality simply to retain the protection and support offered by the African American community and their families. n96

When a minority is relegated to the margins or pushed outside of her racial/ethnic/family group -one necessary to her survival- and worse yet, when she is then accused of belonging to the enemy camp or of being a confused traitor to her race, she is denied not only her individualism but also her right to participate in her culture. As one scholar notes,

Blacks across the economic and ideological spectrum are often astonishingly vulnerable to charges of in-authenticity or **[*956]** disloyalty to the race... .this vulnerability and the pain associated with it attests to the enduring strength of our feelings of guilt, and our anxiety about having been or having the potential to be false to our people, having sinned against our innermost identity... . n97

A part of our heritage is that of being descendants of stolen people, an identity to which most African Americans have no problem laying claim. We are also, however, descendants of the Africans who were collaborators in our fate, an ancestry for which there is no rush to claim. The participation of some Africans and African tribes in the selling of Africans into slavery does not relieve the dominant culture in America for its establishment and operation of institutional, chattel slavery, nor of the responsibility

for the destructive effects of hundreds of years of American apartheid and institutional racial discrimination.

African Americans share a complex history; it is not ideal. Neither descendants of Africans, nor of any other ethnic group, inherits an ideal legacy, nor is one required to demonstrate human worth. One way of "idealizing" African legacies is to deny the existence of group members or behaviors of which the majority culture disapproves, that the majority disparages or uses to rationalize the validity of our exploitation. The need of some African Americans to construct an "idealized" but incomplete version of African ancestry, devoid of sexuality that is condemned by the West is understandable. It is a logical defense against the overwhelming barrage of demeaning images, and distortions of Africa and African descendants and the inhumane treatment accorded African descendants based on those distorted depictions.

Similarly, the attempt to distance from or marginalize community members that appear to fulfill negative stereotypes of the dominant culture about Black sexuality begin, at least, as understandable attempts at accommodation to a dangerous oppressor and survival. The danger is that they lead communities to deny many of their members and leads those members to deny or experience shame about legitimate and important aspects of themselves. Furthermore, these attempts do not leave us with a realistic legacy of the African past, or understanding of contemporary African America. The denial and subsequent rejection of lesbian and gay members of the African American community does not represent an affirmation of African cultural derivatives or of Africans themselves. It simply reflects the acceptance of the Western hegemonic, majority cultural norm of heterosexism that is a function of the gender based hierarchies of a patriarchal culture. In the long run, it does not serve **[*957]** the interests of the African American community as the diverse community that it really is: "there is nothing in me that is not in everybody else, and nothing in everybody else that is not in me." n98 Distortions of what it means to be authentically "Black," that silence members (lesbians) of our contemporary communities and eradicate pieces of our history must be deconstructed and eradicated. Just as there is no ideal family, there is no ideal nation family and none is warranted. Nor is it warranted to deny certain aspects of the self/nation i.e., African American lesbians and gays.

FOOTNOTE-1:

> n1. Jewelle Gomez, Black Lesbians: Passing, Stereotypes, and Transformation, in Dangerous Liaisons: Blacks, Gays, and the Struggle for Equality 164 (Eric Brandt

ed., 1999) (internal citation and quotation marks omitted).

n2. Id.

n3. See Nancy Boyd-Franklin, Black Families in Therapy: A Multisystems Approach 9 (1989); Beverly A. Greene, Psychotherapy with African American Women: Integrating Feminist and Psychodynamic Models, 3 Smith C. Stud. in Soc. Work, 67, 299-322 (1997).

n4. See Gloria Wekker, Mati-ism and Black Lesbianism: Two Idealtypical Expressions of Female Homosexuality in Black Communities of the Diaspora, in The Greatest Taboo: Homosexuality in Black Communities 150 (Delroy Constantine-Simms ed., 2001).

n5. See id. at 152-55.

n6. Id.

n7. See id. at 151; Boyd-Franklin, supra note 3, at 33.

n8. See generally Evelyn Blackwood & Saskia E. Wieringa, Sapphic Shadows: Challenging the Silence in the Study of Sexuality, in Female Desires: Same-Sex Relations and Transgender Practices Across Cultures 39 (Evelyn Blackwood & Saskia E. Wieringa eds., 1999) (providing an overview of the study of lesbianism) [hereinafter Female Desires]; Kendall, Women in Lesotho and the (Western) Construction of Homophobia, in Female Desires, supra, at 157 (contrasting relationships between women in Lesotho and the West).

n9. See Wekker, supra note 4, at 152.

n10. See Boyd-Franklin, supra note 3, at 43.

n11. See John C. Gonsiorek & James D. Weinrich, The Definition and Scope of Sexual Orientation, in Homosexuality: Research Implications for Public Policy 1, 11-12 (John C. Gonsiorek & James D. Weinrich eds., 1991). It is estimated that between 4% and 17% of the general population is lesbian and gay, depending on how one defines sexual orientation. Id. I used 10% as an estimate to approximate the 1.8 million figure in the text.

n12. Gladys L. Croom, Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual People of Color: A Challenge to Representative Sampling in Empirical Research, in Education, Research, and Practice in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered Psychology: A Resource Manual 263, 263 (Beverly Greene & Gladys L. Croom eds., 2000).

n13. See Beverly Greene, Beyond Heterosexism and Across the Cultural Divide: Developing an Inclusive Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Psychology: A Look to the Future, in Education, Research, and Practice in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered Psychology, supra note 12, at 21-22 [hereinafter Greene, Beyond Heterosexism].

n14. See Beverly Greene, Lesbian and Gay Sexual Orientations: Implications for Clinical Training, Practice and Research, in Lesbian and Gay Psychology: Theory, Research, and Clinical Applications 1, 4-7 (Beverly Greene & Gregory M. Herek eds., 1994) [hereinafter Greene, Lesbian and Gay Sexual Orientations].

n15. Greene, Beyond Heterosexism, supra note 13, at 28.

n16. Id.

n17. See id. at 8-11, 28.

n18. See generally Saskia E. Wieringa & Evelyn Blackwood, Introduction to Female Desires, supra note 8, at 1; Cornel West, On Heterosexism and Transformation, in Dangerous Liaisons: Blacks, gays and the Struggle for Equality 290-305 (E. Brandt ed., 1999).

n19. Beverly Greene, Lesbians and Gay Men of Color: Ethnosexual Mythologies in Heterosexism, in Preventing Heterosexism and Homophobia 59-70 (E. Rothblum & L. Bond eds., 1996) [hereinafter Greene, Ethnosexual Mythologies].

n20. See Greene, Beyond Heterosexism, supra note 13, at 28; Beverly Greene, Family, Ethnic Identity and Sexual Orientation: African-American Lesbians and Gay Men, in Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Identity: Psychological Research and Social Policy 40-52 (Charlotte J. Patterson & Anthony R. D'Augelli eds., 1998) [hereinafter Greene, Family, Ethnic Identity and Sexual Orientation]; Beverly Greene & Nancy Boyd-Franklin, African American Lesbians: Issues in Couples Therapy, in Lesbians and Gays in Couples and Families: A Handbook for Therapists 251, 258-59 (Joan Laird & Robert-Jay Green eds., 1996).

n21. See Greene, Family, Ethnic Identity and Sexual Orientation, supra note 20, at 44-45, 47.

n22. West, supra note 18, at 290-305.

n23. Greene & Boyd-Franklin, supra note 20, at 265.

n24. See Greene, Family, Ethnic Identity and Sexual Orientation, supra note 20, at 46-47.

n25. See Beverly Greene, Lesbian Women of Color: Triple Jeopardy, in Women of Color: Integrating Ethnic and Gender Identities in Psychotherapy 389, 397 (Lillian Comas-Diaz & Beverly Greene eds., 1994) [hereinafter Greene, Lesbian Women of Color].

n26. See Greene, Ethnosexual Mythologies, supra note 19, at 59-70.

n27. See Beverly Greene, African American Women: Considering Diverse Identities and Societal Barriers in Psychotherapy, in Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences: Women and Mental Health 191, 198 (1996) [hereinafter Greene, African American Women].

n28. See id.; Greene, Family, Ethnic Identity and Sexual Orientation, supra note 20, at 46.

n29. Greene, Family, Ethnic Identity and Sexual Orientation, supra note 20, at 50.

n30. See generally id. at 49; Irene Monroe, Louis Farrakhan's Ministry of Misogyny and Homophobia, in The Farrakhan Factor: African-American Writers on Leadership, Nationhood, and Minister Louis Farrakhan 275, 278-79 (Amy Alexander ed., 1998) (describing the myths of the "black matriarch" and the "endangered black male").

n31. See Greene, Ethnosexual Mythologies, supra note 19, at 59-70; see generally Cathy J. Cohen, The Boundaries of Blackness: AIDS and the Breakdown of Black Politics (1999).

n32. See Psychological Perspectives on Lesbian & Gay Male Experiences 1, 16 (Linda D. Garnets & Douglas C. Kimmel eds., 1993); Beverly Greene, Addressing Racism, Sexism, and Heterosexism in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, in Lesbians and Psychoanalysis: Revolutions in Theory and Practice 145, 146-47 (Judith M. Glassgold & Suzanne Iasenza eds., 1995); Greene, Beyond Heterosexism, supra note 13, at 8; see generally Greene, Family, Ethnic Identity and Sexual Orientation, supra note 20, at 40-52; Beverly Greene, Sexual Orientation, in Comprehensive Clinical Psychology: Vol. 10 Sociocultural & Individual Differences, 207-232 (1998); Judith Glassgold, New Directions in Dynamic Theories of Lesbianism: From Psychoanalysis to Social Constructionism, in New Directions in Feminist Psychology: Practice, Theory, and Research 154-163 (J. Chrisler & D. Howard eds., 1992); Judith Glassgold, Psychoanalysis with Lesbians: Self Reflection and Agency, in Lesbians and Psychoanalysis: Revolutions in Theory and Practice, supra, at 203-228; Judith M. Glassgold & Suzanne Iasenza, Introduction, in Lesbians and Psychoanalysis: Revolutions in Theory and Practice, supra, at xxvi.

n33. Margarete Aarmo, How Homosexuality Became "Un-African": The Case of Zimbabwe, in Female Desires, supra note 8, at 274-75.

n34. Id.

n35. West, supra note 18, at 290-305.

n36. K. Boykin, Gay and Lesbian Movements in the United States, in Microsoft Encarta Africana: Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Black History and Culture [CD-ROM] (K.A. Appiah & Henry Louis Gates, Jr. eds., 1998).

n37. See, e.g., I. Jeffries, Strange Fruits at the Purple Manor: Looking Back on "The Life" in Harlem, NYQ 17, 40-45, Feb. 23, 1992.

n38. See id.

n39. See id.

n40. Gomez, supra note 1, at 164.

n41. See West, supra note 18, at 290-305.

n42. Id.

n43. See Greene, Lesbian Women of Color, supra note 25, at 392.

n44. Beverly Greene, Ethnic Minority Lesbian and Gay Men: Mental Health and Treatment Issues, 62 J. Clinical and Consulting Psychol. 243 (1994) [hereinafter Greene, Ethnic Minority Lesbian and Gay Men].

n45. See id.; Greene, Lesbian Women of Color, supra note 25, at 414 (describing how lesbians of color often feel torn between ethnic and lesbian communities).

n46. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., The Charmer, The New Yorker, Apr. 29, 1991, at 116-31.

n47. Gomez, supra note 1, at 164.

n48. Greene, Ethnic Minority Lesbian and Gay Men, supra note 44, at 243-51.

n49. See, e.g., Celia Kitzinger, Speaking of Oppression: Psychology, Politics, and the Language of Power, in Preventing Heterosexism and Homophobia, supra note 19, at 3-19.

n50. Id. at 11.

n51. See Boyd-Franklin, supra note 3, at 78-79; see generally Michael Eric Dyson, Race Rules: Navigating the Color Line 77-108 (1996); Cornel West, Race Matters 69-79 (1993).

n52. Rondald J. Weatherford & Carole B. Weatherford, Somebody's Knocking at Your Door: AIDS and the African-American Church 21 (1999).

n53. Nzinga Shaka-Zulu, Sex, Race and the Stained Glass Window, in Women & Therapy 27, 28 (1996).

n54. See Weatherford & Weatherford, supra note 52, at 25.

n55. Id. at 21-24.

n56. See id.; Peter J. Gomes, The Good Book: Reading the Bible with Mind and Heart 144-72 (1996).

n57. Gomes, supra note 56, at 144-72 .

n58. Id. at 146.

n59. See Dyson, supra note 51, at 83-86; West, supra note 18, at 290-305; Monroe,

supra note 30, at 277-79; see generally West, supra note 51, at 117-30.

n60. Monroe, supra note 30, at 277.

n61. See Dyson, supra note 51, at 81; Greene, Beyond Heterosexism, supra note 13, at 28; Monroe, supra note 30, at 279; see generally Cohen, supra note 31.

n62. Monroe, supra note 30, at 279-80; see generally Cohen, supra note 31.

n63. See Greene, Beyond Heterosexism, supra note 13, at 28.

n64. Videotape: Black Is...Black Ain't: Interview with bell hooks and Barbara Smith (M. Riggs, dir., 1995), (available from California Newsreel, 149 Ninth St., 420, San Francisco, CA 94103); Barbara Smith, Toward a Black Feminist Criticism, in All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, But Some of Us are Brave: Black Women's Studies 157-75 (Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, & Barbara Smith eds., 1982).

n65. Kendall, in Female Desires, supra note 8, at 162-70.

n66. See id. at 162-67.

n67. See id.

n68. See id.

n69. Blackwood & Wieringa, in Female Desires, supra note 8, at 41.

n70. See id. at 49-52; Wekker, supra note 4, at 152-53; see generally Mark Gevisser, Homosexuality in Africa: An Interpretation, in Microsoft Encarta Africana, supra note 34; Kendall, in Female Desires, supra note 8, at 171-72; Boy-Wives and Female Husbands (Stephen O. Murray & Will Roscoe eds., 1998); Cheryl Potgieter, From Apartheid to Mandela's Constitution: Black South African Lesbians in the Nineties, in 3 Psychological Perspectives on Lesbian and Gay Issues: Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Among Lesbians and Gay Men 88, 99 (1997).

n71. See Potgieter, supra note 70, at 101.

n72. Id. at 102.

n73. Wekker, supra note 4, at 153.

n74. See id. at 154, 160 (finding that Mati retained more African cultural derivatives and working class elements than Black lesbians in the United States, who were observed to have more Eurocentric and middle class features).

n75. Potgieter, supra note 70, at 100.

n76. Gevisser, supra note 70.

n77. Id.; see also Kendall, in Female Desires, supra note 8, at 159.

n78. See Kendall, in Female Desires, supra note 8, at 159-61, 164-67.

n79. See Potgieter, supra note 70, at 90; Aarmo, supra note 33, at 225, 264 (noting observation of Gevisser, supra note 70).

n80. Potgieter, supra note 70, at 97.

n81. Aarmo, supra note 33, at 255-80; Blackwood & Wieringa, in Female Desires, supra note 8, at 39-58; Wekker, supra note 4, at 119-38.

n82. See Monroe, supra note 30, at 280; West, supra note 51, at 117-30; see also Cohen, supra note 31.

n83. See Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920 196 (1993); Gomez, supra note 1, at 163-64; Cohen, supra note 31; West, supra note 51, at 117-30.

n84. West, supra note 51, at 86.

n85. Suzanne Lipsky, Internalized Racism 3 (1987). The distress pattern consists of varied kinds of rigid, destructive, or ineffective feelings or behaviors in the victim, which may be directed at the victim themselves or at someone else. Id.

n86. See Cheryl Clarke, The Failure to Transform: Homophobia in the Black Community, in Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology 190, 192-93 (Barbara Smith ed., 2000); Carmen de Monteflores, Notes on the Management of Difference, in Contemporary Perspectives on Psychotherapy with Lesbians and Gay Men 73, 76-78 (Terry S. Stein & Carol J. Cohen eds., 1986); Jewelle Gomez, A Cultural Legacy Denied and Discovered: Black Lesbians in Fiction by Women, in Home Girls, supra, at 110; Greene, African American Women, supra note 31, at 197-

99; Higginbotham, supra note 83, at 196; Wyatt et al., Issues in the Treatment of Sexually Dysfunctioning Couples of Africo-American Descent, in Psychotherapy 44, 44-50 (1976); Beverly A. Greene, When the Therapist is White and the Patient is Black: Considerations for Psychotherapy in the Feminist Heterosexual and Lesbian Communities, in 5 Women and Therapy 41, 41-66 (1986); Greene, Ethnosexual Mythologies, supra note 19, at 59-70; Greene, Family, Ethnic Identity and Sexual Orientation, supra note 20, at 42-43, 45-47.

n87. Gomez, supra note 1, at 163-64.

n88. Lipsky, supra note 85, at 2-3.

n89. Alvin F. Poussaint, An Honest Look at Black Gays and Lesbians, in Ebony 124, 126, 130-31 (Sept. 1990); Cohen, supra note 31; Greene, Lesbian and Gay Sexual Orientations, supra note 14, at 9; see generally West, supra note 51.

n90. Jeffries, supra note 37, at 44; K. Omosupe, Black/Lesbian/Bulldagger, in Differences: A Journal of Feminist and Cultural Studies 2 101-111 (1991).

n91. Cohen, supra note 31; Dyson, supra note 51, at 102-08; West, supra note 51, at 117-30; West, supra note 18, at 290-305.

n92. Cohen, supra note 31; Dyson, supra note 51, at 102-08; Monroe, supra note 30, at 275-95; West, supra note 51, at 117-30; West, supra note 18, at 290-305.

n93. Gates, supra note 46, at 116-31; Karina L. Walters, Negotiating Conflicts in Allegiances Among Lesbians and Gays of Color: Reconciling Divided Selves and Communities, in Foundations of Social Work Practice with Lesbian and Gay Persons 47, 52-54 (Gerald P. Mallon ed., 1996); Cohen, supra note 31; Monroe, supra note 30, at 275-95; see generally West, supra note 51, 117-30.

n94. Greene, Lesbian and Gay Sexual Orientation, supra note 14, at 4-5; Greene, Ethnosexual Mythologies, supra note 19, at 59-70; Walters, supra note 93, at 55.

n95. Walters, supra note 93, at 59.

n96. Gomez, supra note 1, at 163 ("I could be a lesbian in what they imagine is my dark secret world but when I'm in the (Black) community, the message to me is: don't bring that mess.").

n97. Gates, supra note 46, at 118.

n98. Richard Goldstein, Go the Way Your Blood Beats: An Interview with James Baldwin, in James Baldwin: The Legacy 182 (Quincy Troupe ed., 1984).