Introduction

Setting the Stage

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Identities are troubling because they embody so many paradoxes about what we have in common and what separates us; about our sense of self and our recognition of others; about conflicting belongings in a changing history and a complex modern world; and about the possibility of social action in and through our collective identities. And few identities are so paradoxical as sexual identities. Sexual identities have a special place in the discourse of identity. They are like relay points for a number of interconnected differences, conflicts and opportunities.

—Jeffrey Weeks (1995, pp. 86-87)

Sexuality is simultaneously a domain of restriction, repression, and danger as well as a domain of exploration, pleasure, and agency.

—C. S. Vance (1984, p. 1)

Sexualities and Communication in Everyday Life: A Reader is an interdisciplinary collection of readings on the construction and performance of sexualities in private and public discourse, including excerpts from foundational work, recent journal articles, and original pieces solicited for this anthology. Our primary aim is to expand the study of communication to include sexualities and their intersections with gender, race and ethnicity, class, age, nationality, and ability-disability. As teachers of this subject matter, we have assembled this reader to accomplish four main goals, which are (a) to explore sexualities and communication within social and historical contexts, primarily from a queer perspective; (b) to analyze the impacts of sexism, homophobia, and heterosexism on sexualities and social interaction; (c) to enhance our capacities for self-reflection, respectful dialogue, and critical social engagement; and (d) to create a safe classroom environment for a combination of heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, and undecided or questioning students who differ in their knowledge and viewpoints on these topics.

Sexualities have been studied across several disciplines, ranging from the biological to the social sciences and humanities. In this introductory chapter, we provide a brief overview of the

historical foundation for the study of sexualities and communication, a review of research conducted in this area, a discussion of the theoretical perspectives that we consider essential to understanding and evaluating this work, and an outline of the structure of the book.

EVOLUTION OF SCHOLARSHIP

> As defined by the ancient civil and canonical codes, sodomy was a category of forbidden acts; their perpetrator was nothing more than the juridical subject of them. The nineteenth-century homosexual became a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form. . . . Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphrodism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species.
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> —Michel Foucault (1980, p. 43)

It comes as a great surprise to many people that sexuality as a social identity is a recent invention. Same-sex and cross-sex sexual behaviors were transformed into categories of identity in the late 19th century. Prior to this time, people were not generally identified by their sexual practices. Katz (chapter 1) unravels the history of how the terms *heterosexual* and *homosexual* came into being and places them in perspective as "one historically specific way of organizing the sexes and their pleasure" (see p. 24, this volume). The meaning of *heterosexual* evolved from Kiernan's 1892 definition as an "abnormal manifestation of the sexual appetite . . . desire for two different sexes" to Krafft-Ebing's 1893 use of "hetero-sexual" to signify desire between different sexes that is implicitly procreative and,

thus, "normal," as opposed to "homo-sexual" or same-sex desire, which is "pathological" because it is nonreproductive.

Along with sexology, fields such as religion, medicine, and psychiatry came to play a large part in defining what was considered "normal" and "natural" versus "deviant" and "sinful." Western societies have experienced waves of tolerance and repression regarding sexuality from ancient to modern times, sometimes crystallizing into "moral panics" regarding fears about perceived threats to society, such as "white slavery"[1] in the mid-19th century and AIDS in the 1980s. Moral panics are not driven primarily by emerging factual information about a particular situation but by political forces seeking to reform society (see chapter 2; also Rubin, 1993). Alternative ways of categorizing sexual identities and gender found in other cultures, such as in some Native American tribes (see, e.g., Roscoe, 1991), were not only suppressed but often led to persecution of the offending individuals and the societies that supported them (chapter 9; see also Gunn Allen, 1986; Williams, 1986).

Once homosexuality became a category of people, as opposed to the view that some people engage in same-sex sexual practices, much more research was initially done on male than on female homosexuals. This was, in part, due to the dominance of male researchers and their lack of access to what is usually the more private female sphere. It also reflects the power relationships that characterize patriarchal societies: Men's lives are deemed more important; therefore, more research was done on them. Thus our laws were written to prohibit sodomy, and the word *homosexual* tends to conjure up thoughts about gay men, not lesbians. However, as Adrienne Rich (1980) points out in her classic article on "compulsory heterosexuality," the eroticization of women's oppression in heterosexual relationships and the corresponding condemnation or erasure of lesbian relationships has had a profound effect on the lives of all women and our struggles for freedom and independence (see also

Faderman, 1984; Sahli, 1979; Smith-Rosenberg, 1975).

Kinsey and his team of researchers (Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948; Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin, & Gebhard, 1953) were the first to demonstrate that a significant portion of the population has had same-sex experiences. There is no simple relationship, however, between how people identify themselves in terms of their sexuality and what they actually do in terms of sexual practices. In other words, what people do sexually and what sexual labels they are willing to claim can be very different. For example, I may identify as straight, although I have had numerous same-sex partners, or I may consider myself a lesbian, although I have had many cross-sex partners. The stigma attached to any sexuality other than heterosexual may affect the labels we choose, but our own self-concepts and the fluidity of our experiences also defy easy, static categorization.

The nature of sexuality as essential or socially constructed has been an ongoing debate with significant social and political implications (Kirsch & Weinrich, 1991; Udis-Kessler, 1990). Critiques of the current biological argument include Fausto-Sterling's (2000) compelling analysis of how the construction of sexuality relates to gender politics (see also, e.g., Birke, 1999; Hubbard, 1990). Sexual identities may be more productively regarded, we believe, as "necessary fictions" we live by (chapter 2), made up of sets of ritualized behaviors we are compelled to repeat, that is, a kind of performativity[2] that inscribes who we are on our bodies (chapter 3).

Many current scholars take a critical approach to the disciplining, criminalizing, punishing, and treating or curing of sexual deviance. No longer are studies of drug addicts, prostitutes, and homosexuals lumped together in deviant psychology and sociology courses. Due to the efforts of gay and lesbian liberation movements in Europe and the United States and psychologists such as Evelyn Hooker, the American Psychological Association stopped including homosexuality as an abnormality in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* in 1976. We are, however, a long way from a radical theory of sexuality, as proposed by Gayle Rubin (1993), that would recognize and honor diverse sexualities rather than privileging a few and marginalizing the rest. Those who transgress the binaries of gender and sexual identities are living lives that point the way for new theoretical developments. Transgendered people contest the assumed biological determinates of gender, as well as exposing some of the ways gender is performed in our society (Barnes, 1992; Bornstein, 1994, 1998; Feinberg, 1996; Hutchins & Kaahumani, 1991; Knight, 1992; Namaste, 2000; Stryker, 2004; Wilchins, 1997). Bisexuals resist the necessity of identifying people by their sexual partners and explore the implications of this resistance for the negotiation of their interpersonal relationships (chapter 16; see also Beemyn & Eliason, 1996; Garber, 1995). Intersexed individuals challenge the medical establishment's right to surgically enforce gender conformity and are fighting for the right of self-determination (Chase, 2003). Finally, those who love gender outlaws resist easy categorization by their choice of partners as they explore new ways of being sexual (Hale, 2003).

SEXUALITIES AND COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

Scholarship and teaching related to sexualities and communication have evolved substantially over the last 25 years from a few scattered articles and books to a substantial body of interdisciplinary theory and research. We identify six major strands of research that have developed as scholarship and social issues have changed: (a) the rhetoric of liberation politics (i.e., lesbian feminism, gay liberation, AIDS activism, and the conservative backlash); (b) innovations in language structure and use; (c) analyses of mainstream and alternative media representations; (d) identity

formation and interpersonal relationships, including family, friends, and lovers; (e) classroom communication and queer pedagogy; and (f) critical and performative approaches to understanding identity politics in relation to power. (See Henderson, 2000, and Yep, 2003, for other summaries of communication research related to sexual identities.) Woven through these strands is a liberatory impulse that supports individuals, groups, and communities taking matters into their own hands to create social change, whether by inventing new vocabulary (chapter 6; see also Chesebro, 1981; Ringer, 1994), recognizing unconventional relationships (chapter 7), or presenting subversive performances (chapters 3 and 18) that challenge the dichotomous status quo.

Communication research related to sexualities in the 1970s and early 1980s focused on the rhetoric of lesbian feminism and gay liberation and the politics of language reform, mirroring the early days of women's studies and gender and communication research. *GaySpeak: Gay Male and Lesbian Communication,* edited by Chesebro (1981), was the first anthology published dealing with these topics. A preoccupation with identity politics in theory and practice grew stronger as the AIDS epidemic became a primary concern (Chesebro, 1994; Darsey, 1991; Myrick, 1996; Patton, 1990), even as definitions of those identities and communities grew more diverse and complex (Cohen, 2003). As the stakes became higher (literally a matter of life and death), traditional forms of rhetoric gave way to transgressive performances by such groups as ACT UP and Queer Nation as necessary means to call attention to community needs (chapter 18; see also Hilferty, 1991; Kistenberg, 1995; Signorile, 1993; Slagle, 1995). Communication scholars study a broader range of rhetorics now, including the conservative backlash against gays (chapter 13; see also Smith & Windes, 2000) and public representations of transgendered people (chapter 14; see also, e.g., Boyd, 1999).

Changes in language structure and use have continued to mark struggles within and outside the academy. It is indeed a long way from "the love that dare not speak its name" to the multifaceted, often controversial uses of the word *queer*. New generations of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and trans youth are inventing their own vocabularies to define themselves (chapter 6), and scholars continue to do the same in an effort to recognize differences in the experiences of diverse queer people and to name those experiences, societal structures, and identifications; for example, homophobia, heterosexism, heteronormativity, pomosexual, ambiphillic, and "quare" (chapter 4). The extent to which queers exist as distinctive speech communities is taken up by one of our contributors in regard to the socialization and identity formation of gay males (chapter 6; see also Livia, 2001; Livia & Hall, 1997).

Studies of lesbians and gays in the media began by examining representations (or the lack of representations) of them in film, television, newspapers, and so on (Alwood, 1996; Gross & Woods, 1999; Kielwasser & Wolf, 1992; Ringer, 1994; Russo, 1987; Signorile, 1993), including the media response to the AIDS crisis (see, e.g., Albert, 1999; Netzhammer & Shamp, 1994). Currently media researchers investigate such issues as how media programming and advertising maintain and reinforce hegemonic heterosexuality and at the same time exploit a gay niche market. Communication research increasingly involves queer readings and analyses of media (chapter 15; see also, e.g., Burston & Richardson, 1995; Doty, 1993). As alternative media outlets have expanded, so has research examining the functions of those representations in sexually diverse communities (Gross & Woods, 1999).

Research on interpersonal communication initially focused on stage models of sexual identity development as a means of understanding how individuals come to identify as gay (Troiden, 1989) or lesbian (Faderman,

1984) or bisexual (Fox, 1991). Self-disclosure, in particular coming out to family, friends, and coworkers, is seen as a part of this process and has been the topic of numerous anthologies of coming-out stories, as well as scholarly research (e.g., Edgar, 1994; Strommen, 1989). A similar stage model for transsexuals was proposed by Bolin (1988), and Eliason (chapter 8) has applied Marcia's (1987) identity formation model to the development of heterosexual identity. Although the identity development models seem to imply that one arrives at a fixed identity, researchers have also explored how adults may make the transition from one sexual identity to another later in life, such as from a heterosexual to a lesbian identity (Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 1995). The majority of these studies and personal accounts describe the experiences of white middle class U.S. citizens, but increasingly scholars are exploring growing up as gay or lesbian in other cultures or in multicultural contexts (e.g., Almaguer, 1995; Carrier, 1989; Tremble, Schneider, & Appathurai, 1989; Trujillo, 1991; Yep, Lovaas, & Ho, 2001).

Many aspects of relational communication have been examined in relation to LGBT communities (see, e.g., DeCecco, 1988; Fitzpatrick, Jandt, Myrick, & Edgar, 1994; Huston & Schwartz, 1996; Peplau, 1993; Ringer, 1994). However, as Elia (2003) points out in his review of interpersonal communication textbooks, this work is often excluded or relegated to a separate section. Topics of particular interest in LGBT studies, perhaps due to the stigma attached to identifying as LGBT and the impact of the AIDS crisis (Edgar, Fitzpatrick, & Freimuth, 1992), are valuing friendship (Faderman, 1981; Nardi, 1995), creating and sustaining families we choose (Weston, 1991), and the importance of community (D'Emilio, 1983), as well as the contested nature of those communities, which is due partly to gender, class, and racial differences (Joseph, 2002). Humor, a key survival mechanism for nondominant groups that can help create community and foster group identities even when it might seem derogatory or insulting (Murray, 1983; Painter, 1980), has been most associated in LGBT communities with "camp" or "camping it up" (Newton, 1979). Camp sensibility (Sontag, 1982) plays with social constructions and exposes them as artificial through heightened performances or exaggeration of gender and sexuality stereotypes (chapter 18; see also Bergman, 1993; Robertson, 1996).

An important context for interaction in groups and public presentations of self is the classroom. Creating a queer-friendly classroom is an ongoing topic of communication research, reflecting personal and ethical concerns (DeVito, 1981; Khayatt, 1999; Lovaas, Baroudi, & Collins, 2002; Ringer, 1994). How, when, and why do we come out in the classroom? How do we bring this material to the classroom in a responsible and respectful way? How do we recognize the diversity of our students and honor their sometimes conflicting attitudes and experiences? The complex feelings and experiences of students and faculty in regard to their own and others' sexualities are addressed by three of our contributors in personal performance texts (chapters 16, 17, and 20).

Recent communication scholarship includes more thoroughgoing critiques of heteronormativity (e.g., Sears & Williams, 1997; Yep, 2003) and integrates work informed by queer theory, intersectionality, and performativity (Butler, 1990, 1993; Foucault, 1980), contributing to a more sophisticated understanding of the gender, sex, and sexuality matrix. That is, how do ideas about gender, sex, and sexuality interrelate, produce, and reproduce each other? The shift from identity politics to the politics of difference (Slagle, 1995) encourages examination of diversity and dissent within our communities about topics such as gay marriage (chapter 12). At the same time, we are taking a universalizing versus minoritizing view of sexuality (Sedgwick, 1990; Lovaas, Elia, & Yep, in press). That is, how societies

regulate sexualities is of concern not only to sexual minorities but to everyone. Scholars increasingly problematize the category of heterosexuality and examine its social construction in relationship to institutions such as marriage and pornography (chapter 11).

The rich opportunities for scholarship offered by the intersectionality of gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity, class, age, and ability-disability are partially realized in the movement toward ethnographic research and performance studies (see, e.g., Uyehara, 1998). Performances of ethnographic material, such as personal narratives of LGBT community members, bring experiences and expressions that have not been encoded in the dominant discourse to a broad audience (chapters 16 and 20). We have found, as have other authors (Henderson, 2000; Yep, 2003), that performance studies, scholarship, and practice are leading the way in conceptualizing new ways of thinking about sexuality in all its various meanings as it plays out in our lives (see, e.g., Alexander, 2004; Corey & Nakayama, 1997; Johnson, 2003; Nakayama & Corey, 2003).

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

In this section, we lay out the theoretical assumptions underlying this anthology and define key terms found in the collection. The most important theories that frame our approach to understanding sexualities and communication are *social constructionism, feminisms, performativity, intersectionality,* and *queer theory.*

Social Constructionism

We begin with social constructionism, which is a theoretical approach that argues that the best way of understanding the nature of social reality is by viewing it as the result of subjective social processes by which we attach meaning to objects and events, creating knowledge. History, location, culture, language, and circumstance are all important factors influencing these processes. A prominent work is Berger and Luckmann's 1966 book, *The Social Construction of Reality*. As they explain, "the relationship between knowledge and its social base is a dialectical one, that is, knowledge is a social product and knowledge is a factor in social change" (p. 87).

In relation to sexualities, a constructionist looks at how meanings are assigned to bodies, practices, objects, and communities associated with sexuality. Like gender and race, sexuality is a social construct that provides a way of making sense of ourselves and our interactions. This includes a consideration of the science of biology as something other than a pure description of objective fact. How we understand and express sexuality is neither fixed nor universal; it varies across time, place, and cultural group. These understandings are linked to how society is structured, which shapes the ways in which people have greater or lesser access to power and resources.

Viewing sexualities as social constructions allows us to recognize our participation in producing, reproducing, and challenging them. We are not passive recipients of past manners of "doing" sexuality, we are active—although often unconscious—agents in constructing sexuality through our practices.

A social constructionist view of sexualities is a reaction against explanations that locate sexuality as "naturally" emerging from biology, a perspective often referred to as *essentialist*. During different eras, science has tended to focus on particular sites within the body as causing differences in human characteristics and behaviors. Currently, much of this attention is on what role brain structures, genes, and hormones may have in creating one's sense of oneself as being or having a gender, being or having a sexual orientation. Social constructionists argue that the existence of some physical differentiations among people are much less significant than the social meanings and distinctions that are assigned to

those differentiations.[3] Thus our gender and sexual identities are less a direct product of anatomical differences between those born male, female, or intersexed than they are a cocreation of self and society. As Simone de Beauvoir (1949/1989) said, "One is not born a woman, but rather becomes one" (p. 267). Similarly, according to this perspective, our sexual identities are less about an innate attraction for one sex or the other than complex, largely learned productions of self in concert with society. The historical emergence of identity formations that center on one's sexuality is described in the excerpts from *The Invention of Heterosexuality* by Jonathan Katz (chapter 1).

Feminisms

In deconstructing gender and recognizing the ways in which "the personal is the political," feminist scholars have made a significant contribution to the study of sexualities and communication since its inception. Early work across many disciplines identified and challenged the patriarchal linguistic structure and language used to keep women, as well as other nondominant groups, in their place and muted or silenced (Ardener, 1975; Kramarae, 1981; Penelope, 1990; Spender, 1989). The academic canon in literature was critiqued as lacking in representations of white women and people of color. The "methodolatry" (Daly & Caputi, 1987), or worship of the logical positive scientific method, was rejected in favor of interpretive theories and research methods that relied on ethnographic techniques to involve active participation from those studied rather than the passive responses assumed of "subjects." In addition, lesbian feminists were the first to challenge the institution of heterosexuality as compulsory for women (Rich, 1980).

In spite of all these positive contributions, some forms of first- and second-wave feminism[4] assumed that all women could be seen as one group; the experiences of women of color were often overlooked or discounted. A womanist (Walker, 1984) critique of this approach emerged early on (see also, Grahn, 1984; Gunn-Allen, 1986; hooks, 1990; Lorde, 1984; Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983; Trinh, 1984; Trujillo, 1991). Garber (2001) maintains that working class lesbian feminists or womanists of color were the first to expose the complex interplay of their experienced identities through their poetry and thus form the feminist roots of queer theory and intersectionality.

Intersectionality

Gender and sexual identities are but two examples of the social categories by which we organize our social lives. Other social identities frequently discussed include race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, nationality, ability-disability, religion, and age.

Angela Davis's *Women, Race, and Class* (1981), Barbara Smith's *Home Girls* (1983), and Audre Lorde's *Sister Outsider* (1984) were three of the germinal books to examine the interlocking systems of oppression casting African American women's experience. In 1990, Patricia Hill Collins used the phrase "matrix of domination," and the following year, Kimberle Crenshaw employed "intersectionality," a term now widely adopted within and across disciplines. Rather than understanding gender, sexuality, race, class, nation, and other social locations as independent sites, intersectionality recognizes their mutual production and reproduction (see chapters 4, 10, 21, 22, and 23).

Performativity

Out of what are our sexual identities made? One powerful way of thinking about how we create gender and sexual identities, if not as a simple reflection of biological "realities," is a fairly recent concept referred to as *performativity*. Not entirely unlike performance,

performativity refers to how, through the repeated use of verbal and nonverbal symbols associated with conventional ways of recognizing and talking about identities such as gender and sexuality, we actually produce those identity categories. Like social constructionism, performativity assumes that there is not a single, objective social reality readily acknowledged by all. Rather, our social worlds are constantly being made and remade through all kinds of symbolic interactions.

The theorist most closely identified with performativity is Judith Butler (see chapter 3). Butler's performativity is linked to linguistic theories such as J. L. Austin's speech act theory. In *How to Do Things With Words* (1955), Austin contrasts the performative utterance, or words that do things, with constative words that describe things. Declarations such as "I now pronounce you husband and wife" perform an action rather than reporting on a situation in the world. Butler argues that we are continuously engaged in enacting and citing, with our words and bodies, the existing norms and conventions of our surrounding social world. In doing so, we make these behaviors appear real, natural, normal, and inevitable. This is not to suggest that we become mere replicas of each other, clones of the current ideologies about gender, sex, and sexuality. Each of us performs our gender and sexual identities but not in exactly the same ways others do.

Queer Theory

The articulation of sexual identities is not a relatively simple process of assigning labels to phenomena that have always been present but could not be openly recognized without names by which to define them. We must recognize the sociohistorical contexts in which they arise. A critical view of identities acknowledges the role of history and simultaneously reinforces the importance of human agency. According to Jeffrey Weeks (chapter 2), identities in general and sexual identities in particular

are "necessary fictions," expressing a number of paradoxes. This way of looking at sexual identities is similar to what is found in a recent body of work challenging many notions about sex and gender that are widely considered "common sense": queer theory.

First, let's briefly discuss the word *queer*. Queer has functioned as a cruel epithet but has also been claimed as a proud avowal of identity by people expressing a range of sexualities, including individuals who define themselves as simultaneously queer and straight. The term is now found in much popular and academic discourse regarding sexuality. What is queer? "Queer is by definition whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. There is nothing in particular to which it necessarily refers. It is an identity without an essence" (Halperin, 1995, p. 62).

What does a queer theoretical perspective offer scholars and activists engaged in work related to sexual identities? Queer theorists view identities as fluid, paradoxical, political, multiple. They actively push our thinking about sexuality out of the dichotomy of homosexual versus heterosexual and invite us to notice the far more complex ways in which we explore and narrate our sexualities. A primary focus of queer theory is disrupting heteronormativity. Heteronormativity, like heterosexism, refers to the beliefs and practices that privilege heterosexuals and heterosexuality. It is a useful term for expressing the ways in which heterosexuality has become more than one of a number of modes of expressing one's sexuality; it exposes heterosexuality as a social institution that sanctions heterosexuality as the only "normal," "natural" expression of sexuality. Unlike any other sexual orientation, heterosexuality is assumed to need no explanation.

Queer theory is not without its detractors. It has been accused of primarily emerging from and representing a middle class white gay male perspective (e.g., Alexander, 2003; Angelides, in press; Anzaldúa, 1991; Barnard, 2003; Hennessy, 2000; Jeffreys, 2003;

Morton, 1996; Namaste, 2000). E. Patrick Johnson's challenge to racism and classism in queer theory (chapters 4 and 21) is an important intervention in the field.

ORGANIZATION OF THE READER

The book is divided into four sections: Part I: Foundations for Thinking About Sexualities and Communication; Part II: Performing and Disciplining Sexualities in Interpersonal Contexts; Part III: Performing and Disciplining Sexualities in Public Discourses; and Part IV: Transforming Sexualities and Communication: Visions and Praxis.

Contributions of the Articles

The five pieces in Part I of the book, "Foundations for Thinking About Sexualities and Communication," provide a grounding for the remainder of the anthology by introducing a few of the most important thinkers examining sexuality from a variety of disciplines and establishing the importance of understanding sexualities within specific sociohistorical contexts.

The first two selections highlight the historicity and politics of the notion of sexualities. We begin with two excerpts from Jonathan Katz's *The Invention of Heterosexuality* (1995). Many people are stunned to learn how recently the Western system of classifying sexual practices and consolidating them into polarized sexual identities evolved. Here Katz explains how and when the terms *heterosexuality, homosexuality*, and *bisexuality* were first used and why it does not make sense to automatically apply them to previous historical eras.

The second selection is an excerpt from Jeffrey Weeks' (1995) *Invented Moralities: Sexual Values in an Age of Uncertainty*. Weeks gives a clear account of the complexities of social identities in general and sexual identities specifically. In this passage, he argues that sexual identities are best viewed as paradoxical and examines what he considers four key paradoxes of sexual identities.

The next two selections deal with two of the most exciting and influential theoretical innovations in the scholarship on sexualities in recent decades: performativity and queer theory. One of the most cited and influential authors associated with contemporary gender and queer theories is Judith Butler. Sara Salih (2002) explains gender performativity, an extremely useful concept for describing how gender identity categories are reproduced in our everyday lives and typically function to privilege heterosexuality. She discusses concerns that have been raised about performativity, first put forth in *Gender Trouble* (1990), and how Butler responded to those and further clarified her thinking on the subject in *Bodies that Matter* (1993).

The readings on Butler are followed by an extended excerpt from E. Patrick Johnson's 2001 article, "'Quare' Studies, or (Almost) Everything I Know About Queer Studies I Learned From My Grandmother." In this frequently cited article, Johnson critiques the inadequate treatment of race and class in much of queer theory. He urges us to discover new means of integrating the challenge that queer theory poses to the established view of identity categories with a recognition of the unequal varying material conditions of people's lives in relation to their race and class. Johnson proposes the term *quare* as a better way of conceptualizing sexuality as it intersects with other social identity formations and their material consequences.

The final reading in Part I is Audre Lorde's "The Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power" (1984). Poet, essayist, and activist Lorde exposes the corruption of the erotic as female inferiority and reclaims it as a source of inner knowledge and joy. Although it addresses the woman reader, Lorde's chapter speaks to us across the lines of sex, gender, sexual identity, and race in its lovely invocation of the erotic as the seat of human empowerment and transformation.

Part II of the anthology, "Performing and Disciplining Sexualities in Interpersonal Contexts," includes seven essays from recent germane research. We begin with selections addressing issues related to sexual identity development in gay male, lesbian, and heterosexual adolescents and young adults as the foundation for interpersonal relationships. The study of relational communication has focused largely on heterosexual romantic relationships and how they can be conducted or performed most effectively. Authors included in this section take a critical look at the heteronormative relational model and how all of us are disciplined to conform to its requirements. In addition, two authors consider the importance of cultural context as it shapes our definitions of who we are in terms of our relational and erotic desires.

The first three chapters examine sexual identity development as it manifests itself in interpersonal relationships and everyday interactions. We start with William Leap's chapter, "Language, Socialization, and Silence in Gay Adolescence" (first published in 1999), which demonstrates the importance of language in the self-managed socialization of gay male teenagers. Leap maintains that gay adolescents are active agents in their own identity development and manage to claim queer space in everyday heteronormative situations.

Lisa Diamond's chapter, "'Having a Girlfriend Without Knowing It': Intimate Friendships Among Adolescent Sexual-Minority Women" (first published in 2002), looks at the "passionate relationships" of 80 young women interviewed for her study. Her qualitative analysis of the interview data calls into question both prevalent ideas about the differences between friendships and common assumptions about differences between straight women and lesbians.

As Michele Eliason (1995; chapter 8) points out in "Accounts of Sexual Identity Formation in Heterosexual Students," there has not been much research to date on how people who identify as heterosexual come to perceive their sexual identity. Eliason uses Marcia's established identity model to examine how a group of undergraduate college students view their sexual identities in terms of how they have evolved and the degree to which sexual identities affect daily life.

The next two chapters deepen our understanding of the complex interplay of multiple identities including sexuality, gender, race, ethnicity, and nationality as we perform who we are in any particular situation. Terry Tafoya's "M. Dragonfly: Two-Spirit and the Tafoya Principle of Uncertainty" (originally published in 1997) puts forth the paradox that in considering sexuality constructs cross-culturally, we can have context or definition, but never both at the same time. That is, when we attempt to pin down a definition of sexuality, we lose a sense of the specific cultural context, and vice versa. This is not to say that we should give up all labels but that we should understand them "as loosely descriptive social constructs rather than as intrinsic traits that are predictive of the sum of an individual's erotic and affectional desires."

Myron Beasley presents an autoethnograhic narrative of his experiences of negotiating his identities and desires as he travels overseas in "Migrancy and Homodesire." His border-crossing stories are provocative counters to the dominant narratives of straight, white Americans.

The last two articles focus on a particular type of interpersonal relationship, marriage, which has taken center stage as a cultural institution now being contested from a variety of perspectives. Elizabeth Bell, in "Performing 'I Do': Weddings, Pornography, and Sex," takes the radical position that weddings and pornography are complementary rather than oppositional cultural performances of sex that serve to control sexual behavior in society. Bell's analysis of their similarities in structure and function imparts new insight into commonly held beliefs and attitudes about how marriage and pornography both serve the State.

Same-sex marriage is a hotly debated political issue at present. In chapter 12 in Part II, "A Critical Appraisal of Assimilationist and Radical Ideologies Underlying Same-Sex Marriage in LGBT Communities in the United States" (originally published in 2003), Gust Yep, Karen Lovaas, and John Elia look at how same-sex marriage is being discussed in queer communities. They consider the implications of the sexual ideologies underlying the debate for relationship construction.

The six articles in Part III, "Performing and Disciplining Sexualities in Public Discourses," ably demonstrate that public discourses expressing conflicting ideologies regarding gender and sexual identities have a direct impact on our everyday lives and interactions. Identities such as "gay" and "ex-gay" are created through talk, which, when broadcast in the form of "talk shows," reaches millions of people. These popularized opinions have life and death consequences for those identified as LGBT, as we struggle to live our lives faced with a hostile legal system and questionable civil rights. There is, however, a challenge to the dominant conservative rhetoric in the form of LGBT transgressive public performances, which delight in turning hegemonic discourse on its head, celebrating difference, and redefining what it means to be real.

The first three selections in Part III analyze the construction of sexual identities and gender in a range of media contexts, including talk radio, news, and situation comedies. Paul Turpin's "Performing a Rhetoric of Science: Dr. Laura's Portrayal of Homosexuality" is a case study of oppositional rhetoric. He analyzes the two sides of the Dr. Laura controversy, sparked by her statements about homosexuality broadcast on her nationally syndicated talk-radio show.

John Sloop's chapter, "Disciplining the Transgendered: Brandon Teena, Public Representation, and Normativity" (originally published in 2000) is a critical rhetorical analysis of how Brandon Teena's life, death, and identity have been portrayed in media representations. Sloop argues that the various discourses about Brandon Teena's rape and murder are rich "sites" in which to explore public perceptions of the meanings of sex and gender. The struggle over the meanings of these terms in mass media can tell us a great deal about contemporary gender and sexual politics.

Christopher Castiglia and Christopher Reed (2003) look at the connections between the evolution of television programming and sexual identities in "'Ah, Yes, I Remember It Well': Memory and Queer Culture in *Will and Grace*." They argue that TV sitcoms, and specifically the show *Will and Grace*, are an excellent arena for surveying the role of gay memory in the construction of subcultural sexual identity.

The next two chapters investigate the performance of bisexuality in educational settings, a kind of public platform that continues to be a significant topic in sexual identity and communication research. John Warren and Nicholas Zoffel's chapter, "Living in the Middle: Performances Bi-Men," is a thoughtful reflection on bisexual identity as liminal space. Their narratives are vivid portrayals of the complexities of negotiating bisexual identity in college settings.

Jennifer Tuder sets her performance of bisexual identity, "Holly Kowalski: Sex Across the Curriculum," in the contemporary high school. After beginning to give a generic-sounding speech on the importance of "being kind to people with different sexualities," Holly launches into a confessional address about her own sexuality that is more likely to resonate with her fellow students' social realities.

We move from performances in the classroom to performances in the streets in the last chapter of Part III, "Queering the (Sacred) Body Politic: Considering the Performative Cultural Politics of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence." Cathy Glenn offers an insightful analysis of one intentionally outrageous

group's efforts to use "camp" performance to promote social change. Her chapter also serves as a transition to our closing section.

Part IV: Transforming Sexualities and Communication: Visions and Praxis contains five examples of work that is pushing the field of sexualities and communication forward. Some of the authors do this by moving into new topical territory, others by connecting academic work with community activism and exhorting all of us to consider our responsibility to advance social justice. The first two selections advance the field by tackling issues and venturing into contexts rarely explored in the academic literature.

In "The Spirituality of Sex and the Sexuality of Spirit: BDSM Erotic Play as Soulwork and Social Critique," Robert G. Westerfelhaus discusses the increasingly voiced perspective that sadomasochism can be a spiritual practice in the context of the larger ongoing reevaluation of modernism. The chapter gives a short history of the evolution of the BDSM (bondage and discipline, dominance and submission, and sadism and masochism) community in the United States before examining some contemporary accounts of BDSM practices as spiritual experiences.

As "Menopause and Desire, or 452 Positions on Love" (2005), the title of Mercilee Jenkins's performance piece, suggests, middle age is not necessarily the end of desire for women, even for those who have had mastectomies. She shares her experiences as a bisexual woman who has lived through the height of the AIDS crisis in San Francisco, including the death of one of her most beloved students; survived breast cancer; and confronted the commodification of women's breasts on Bourbon Street while maintaining an optimistic view of the future as a feminist who is still trying to make the world a better place.

The spirit of social justice underlies the whole of this anthology, but the final three readings have the most explicit focus on social change. First, we return to E. Patrick Johnson's article on quare studies (2001), the beginning of which appears in Part I of this anthology. In the article's conclusion, he explains that quare studies is a call to make "theory work for its constituency" (see p. 297, this volume). The relationship between theory and everyday praxis should be bidirectional, bridging academy, home, church, and community.

Next, in "Activism and Identity Through the Word: A Mixed-Race Woman Claims Her Space" (2003), Wendy Thompson describes the relationship between her experiences crossing racial and sexual boundaries, her evolving identity, her writing, her art, and her activism. In doing so, she challenges us to consider how our identities and political commitments intersect.

We conclude the reader with an excerpt from the "Making Alliances" section of Gloria Anzaldúa's collection of interviews, *Interviews/ Entrevistas* (2000). Anzaldúa acknowledges the complexities of human identities, the challenges of bridging differences, and leaves us with a sense of her own hopefulness about queer, multicultural alliances.

SETTING THE STAGE

We hope that *Sexualities and Communication in Everyday Life* sets the stage for new ways of thinking about sexualities and communication. If sexual identities are "necessary fictions" we perform daily, what other potential individual narratives and dialogues await us? Will we ever cease to identify ourselves and each other in terms of sexuality and gender, and, if so, would that be a good thing? There are always consequences for our choices, as many authors in this volume demonstrate, but the first step is awareness of agency. We all play a part, as all of our practices work to support existing scripts or to devise new ones. What will happen if more of us acknowledge the diversity of our experiences, which defy easy categorization, and talk together about the complex dynamics of our desires? How we perform and negotiate these frequently

silenced—and, simultaneously, commercially packaged—chords of everyday life are stimulating resources for reflection and action. Places everyone. Curtain up.

NOTES

1. The term "white slavery" refers to a moral panic in Europe and the United States at the end of the 19th century premised on the belief that White European and American women were being forcibly taken to Africa, South America, or Asia to become prostitutes or sexual slaves. These unfounded fears led to a number of anti-white-slavery campaigns (Dozema, 2000).

2. Performativity is defined in the "Theoretical Foundations" section and further elaborated in the excerpt from Salih in chapter 3.

3. Although they acknowledge the constructedness of social categories, some members of marginalized groups behave "as if" the group were homogeneous as a means to a specific political goal. This temporary employment of essentialism as a political tool is called "strategic essentialism." See Spivak (1990) and Hall (1996).

4. First-wave feminism refers to the Women's Movement that developed momentum in Europe and the United States in the mid-19th century, resulting in improved legal and civil rights for women and ultimately including the right to vote in the early 20th century. Second-wave feminism refers to the reemergence of the women's movement in the 1960s and 1970s, which was sparked by the social protest movements of that era.

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