

Women-identified women: history of lesbian identities critical thinking sample

[Sociology](#), [Women](#)



In the 20th century, lesbians created their own identities over time. Just like in other societies, lesbians formed rules and acceptable and unacceptable behaviors in their groups or communities. Lesbians needed a community just like the other people in the society. Although lesbianism occurred even in the olden days, most women did not think of themselves as particular types of people based on their behaviors. This is because; sexual identity only appeared in the 20th century after the coming of the sexologists (Art#1). Lesbians have created identities for themselves and their communities because when they came out as lesbians, they were likely to lose their families and therefore in order to have family connections, they had to create their subculture. However, not all lesbians took part in creating their own identities because some of them decided to go on with their lives privately (Wallace clip). With the emergence of capitalism where people needed to work as groups, many women started to identify themselves as lesbians. This shows that lesbians created their identities because of capitalism, the coming sexologists and changes in the family (Art#1). There were family changes, which occurred when families moved to the cities making women to increasingly find themselves separated with men. This made many women to become lesbians because they could not get erotic satisfaction from men. Moreover, capitalism had caused the ideology of freedom, which made the single wage-earning women to seek satisfaction from other women, and this made them to identify themselves as lesbians. There were issues of passing women who considered themselves masculine and this made them to marry other women hence contributing to lesbian (Art#1). Lesbians also developed political ideologies to address their needs.

In such ideologies, lesbians argued that only women could give each other a sense of new self (Article #4). This made the lesbians to defend their new identity in the society.

The law, medicine, religion and the media have created notions about lesbians that have formed social opinions and structures about lesbians. They influenced the attitudes of the members of the society towards lesbians. Medical and psychiatric theories have labeled lesbians as sexual deviants. They also said that lesbians were sick and had mental problems (Wallace clip). This made the whole society to have negative opinions towards the people who identified themselves as lesbians. Religion also created notions, which were used by people to form social opinions and structures about lesbians. Those who considered themselves truly religious saw lesbianism as an act that was unreligious (Wallace clip). According to the religious people, lesbianism was wrong even in the bible. In addition, it was also a kind of sexual relationship, which interfered with the institution of marriage.

People were supposed to marry and procreate but with lesbianism, people could not intermarry and have children and this meant that lesbians practiced ungodly sexual life. Therefore, religion considered lesbians as people who were promiscuous and who could not hold a long lasting heterosexual marriage. The media also created notions about lesbians that were used in forming social opinions and structures about lesbians. The media made it public that lesbians were not good people in the society because they were practicing sexual crimes. In addition, the media did not

air the views of the lesbians and this means that it did not allow them to defend themselves. As a result, the society considered lesbians as displaced people in the society who could not conform to the ways of life of the other people. Moreover, the law also created notions about lesbians (Wallace clip). This is because, the law considered lesbians as criminals who had to be shunned by employers for their homosexual behaviors. As a result, most lesbians could not join the movements meant to fight for their rights because they feared losing their jobs (Art #3). This shows that the social opinions and structures about lesbians were created by the law, medicine, religion and the media. ë

Though lesbianism was greatly discouraged in the olden days, there are different ways in which ideas about lesbians identity changed over time. One of the ways in which lesbian identity changed over time is through women activism, which made lesbians to stop being considered as insane and Butch (Slideshow, Stonewall clip). The lesbian activists organized various movements where they made demonstrations in the streets carrying written demonstration materials, which showed that they needed equality in the society. They wanted to be treated equally with the other people in the society. In addition, lesbians also claimed that they needed to be judged as individuals and not as groups. One of the groups organized by the lesbians to protect their rights was the Daughters of Bilitis. The group was aimed at educating the people in the society about lesbianism. By educating the public, the Daughters of Bilitis group had the feeling that the lives of the lesbians in the society would be changed (Art #3). Lesbian activists claimed

that heterosexuality and homosexuality were terms created by a male dominant society and there was need to empower women in the society (Art #4). This is because through education, the public would have a changed view about the lesbians.

The other way in which the ideas about lesbian identity changed over time is that the women who were lesbians taught their heterosexual counterparts about the oppression brought about by male masculinity. Lesbian feminists remained distanced from the sexual aspect of lesbianism assuring feminists that lesbianism involved sensuality and not sexuality (Art #4). Lesbians made great efforts to untie lesbianism from sex hence making many heterosexual women comfortable with the issue of lesbians. This changed the perceptions of many people who were against lesbians. It was necessary to change the idea of sexuality in relation to lesbianism because most feminists were not ready to support lesbianism due to the issue of sex. Instead, the lesbian feminists explained that lesbianism was a way of showing romance and nurturing fellow women. Heterosexual feminists were considered inferior because they held a continued association with men (Art #4). This contributed to a change on the idea of lesbianism identity.

The other way through which ideas about lesbian identity have changed over time is through the consultation of the scientists. Different people within the department of social sciences started challenging the notion that lesbians were sick and mentally ill (Art #3). In the previous time, the study of homosexuals was dominated by psychiatrists and psychologists who viewed homosexuality as pathology. However, the subsequent studies showed that

homosexuality was not listed as a mental disorder. Lesbians studied did not show that there was a connection between lesbianism and mental disorder. It was important to study the connection between lesbianism and mental disorder in order to determine whether lesbians had a mental disorder. However, studies showed that lesbians did not have a mental disorder (Art #3). This contributed to the changes on the ideas about lesbian identity.

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