“Women in Relationships with Bisexual Men”

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WOMEN IN RELATIONSHIPS WITH BISEXUAL MEN
Bi Men By Women
Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli

(2016, Lexington Books)
**Other texts on MORE relationships**

“**These Are Our Children**: polyamorous parenting” written with Peter Haydon and Anne Hunter, in Katherine Allen & Abbie Goldberg (eds) *LGBT-Parent Families: Possibilities for New Research and Implications for Practice*, London: Springer, 2012


"The limits of the sayable" (Butler, 2004): the perpetuation of dichotomous logics

Unquestioned and unquestionable affirmation and support to Heteronormativity

- Heterosexual identities and sexualities
- Straight monogamous couple families

Increasing but questioned affirmation and support to “Homonormativity”

- Gay and lesbian identities and sexualities
- Gay and lesbian monogamous couple families
In excess of, on the borders, ‘falling into the gaps’, between within and beyond the gay/straight couple divide/duality/dichotomy are:

- Bisexual/ mixed-orientation/
multipartnered/polyamorous parents and families
Bi Men By Women: the project

- Semi-structured interviews (feminist queer decolonizing standpoint epistemology)
- 78 culturally, geographically and sexually diverse women in Australia aged 19-65,
- Recruited via health services, support groups, queer networks, bi networks, poly networks, snowball sampling
- in monogamous and non-monogamous relationships with bisexual-identifying and/or bisexual-behaving men.
- Some women were HIV-positive or had other STIs
- From the most devastating to the most exhilarating “disclosures and discoveries”
- From “started out knowing” to “changing courses midstream”
Mapping The Landscape

1. “New Rules, No Rules or His and Her Rules”: negotiating how to “do” the relationship

2. “The Problem Is That He’s A Man, Not That He’s Bisexual”: women discussing masculinity, misogyny, privilege and power

3. “What Do We Tell The Kids?”: women’s perspectives and experiences of bisexual fathers raising children

4. “Spreading Disease With the Greatest of Ease”: negotiating sexual health issues

http://www.cartoonstock.com/directory/b/bisexual.asp
Borderdwelling as Outsiders Belonging

1. “Minute by minute maneouvring?”: navigating the heteroworlds

2. “Ewww, girl germs”: women’s experiences and perceptions of the gay community and homonormativity

3. “The Priest Told Him to Marry Me and He'd Go Straight”: religion and spirituality in women’s relationships with bisexual men

4. “It’s A Matter of Family Honor and Shame”: negotiating ethnic identity and community codes

5. “When Your Relationship Isn't Recognised by Relationship Counselling”: misrepresentations and erasures in health services
Overwhelmingly, women’s experiences with health services were negative due to:

- invisibility,
- misrepresentations,
- erasures and invalidation,
- pathologization,
- problematization,
- lack of resources.

Bisexual “exclusion by inclusion” or lack of bisexual-specific research, resources and training
There is a revolution occurring in our consulting rooms, our clients are no longer coming to us because they want to be normal, they are coming to us because they want to be whole. ... Our job is no longer to help those who seek our assistance to achieve the cultural ideal, the mythical norm of well-adjusted middle class heterosexual adulthood. (Firestein, Beth, 2007, Ed., Becoming Visible: Counseling Bisexuals Across the Lifespan, New York: Columbia University Press).

- a. educating oneself about bisexuality and nonmonogamy;
- b. identifying one's own values and beliefs related to bisexuality and nonmonogamy;
- c. working with the couple's definition of bisexuality and nonmonogamy;
- d. being aware that partners may have varying concerns about bisexuality and nonmonogamy;
- e. addressing infidelity if present;
- f. avoiding assumptions about the ways bisexuality and nonmonogamy will impact the relationship; and
- g. recognizing that opening a relationship is an ongoing process.