

## Hans-Werner Gessmann

### Homosexuality - female

A homosexual woman is generally called a lesbian. Regardless of sexual orientation, the word lesbian is also used in relation to gender identity and gender behavior, or as nouns or adjectives to characterize or describe female homosexuality. <sup>[1]</sup>

According to Laws & Schwartz and Levine, Individuals learn to be sexual just like they learn everything else in life. Women and men are born with an open-ended, diffuse and relatively fluid capacity for bodily pleasures that is molded and expressed through sexual scripts. These scripts are understood and organized during adolescence along lines previously laid down by gender-role specializations. Males are taught to see sex in active, genitally focused and goal oriented terms while females are encouraged to see sexuality in reactive, emotionally focused, and process oriented ways. <sup>[2]</sup>

Traditional psychoanalytic theorists have paid less attention to female homosexuality. <sup>[3]</sup> Since medical literature began to describe homosexuality, it has often been approached from a view that sought to find an inherent psychopathology as the root cause, influenced by the theories of Sigmund Freud. Although he considered bisexuality inherent in all people, and said that most have phases of homosexual attraction or experimentation, exclusive same-sex attraction he attributed to stunted development resulting from trauma or parental conflicts. <sup>[1]</sup> Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, saw it as an expression of unconquered penis envy, leading to intensification of the negative oedipal complex in girls further resulting in identification with the father. In his essay, *The Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman*, Freud interprets his 18-year-old patient's homosexual preference as a result of oedipal disappointment in her father and the repeat of this disappointment in puberty. As a result of this disappointment, "(she) changed into a man and took her mother in place of her father as the object of her love". Evidently, the "change of object" Freud postulates for female development did occur here initially. Then, however, under the impression of suffered disappointment, it was undone in order to make way for identification.

In contrast, later psychoanalytic authors shifted the origin of female homosexuality more and more to the pre-oedipal stage of development- a trend, similar to the ones that have already encountered in the theories about male homosexuality. What lends female homosexuality a decidedly regressive character in the eyes of many psychoanalysts, is the assumption that the triangular family pattern either has not occurred or has miscarried. In this respect, female homosexuality tends more to the pathological than does male homosexuality, where "narcissistic object choice" may at least be interpreted as being a step towards "liberation" from the relationship from the primary object. <sup>[3]</sup>

Regardless of the heteronormative societies, it is hopeful to witness the changing social conditions, which lead to the acceptance of other sexual orientations.

- [1] Wikipedia contributors. (2020, August 23). Lesbian. In Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved 06:48, August 28, 2020, from <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Lesbian&oldid=974585524>
- [2] Dr. Richard R. Troiden PhD (1989): The Formation of Homosexual Identities, *Journal of Homosexuality*, 17:1-2, 43-74
- [3] Christa Rohde-dachser (1992) Male and female homosexuality, *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, 1:2, 67-73, DOI: 10.1080/08037069208409495

ship with the primary object. <sup>[2]</sup>