"I am more who I am here than I am anywhere" : an ethnographic study of the influences of safety and connection on the co-constructions of gender and sexual orientation identities in adolescents in small groups.

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"I AM MORE WHO I AM HERE THAN I AM ANYWHERE": AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE INFLUENCES OF SAFETY AND CONNECTION ON THE CONSTRUCTIONS OF GENDER AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION IDENTITIES IN ADOLESCENTS IN SMALL GROUPS

A Dissertation Presented
by
SALLY S. FLEISCHMANN EMBER

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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Education
"I AM MORE WHO I AM HERE THAN I AM ANYWHERE": AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE INFLUENCES OF SAFETY AND CONNECTION ON THE CONSTRUCTIONS OF GENDER AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION IDENTITIES IN ADOLESCENTS IN SMALL GROUPS

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Also, since I promised not to name them, a generalized, yet heartfelt THANKS to each of the ALWAYS ON members who allowed me to join and/or be a leader with them during this project, especially Tony. Our experiences together were totally awesome!
ABSTRACT

"I AM MORE WHO I AM HERE THAN I AM ANYWHERE": AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE INFLUENCES OF SAFETY AND CONNECTION ON THE CONSTRUCTIONS OF GENDER AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION IDENTITIES IN ADOLESCENTS IN SMALL GROUPS

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Modernists theorists propose that one's self is fragmented, invisible, or false when one shows different versions of one's self in various situations. Believing this, Modernists further suppose that with respect to one's gender or sexual orientation identity, one is either appropriately representing one's biological gender and earliest understandings of one's sexual orientation (usually presumed to be heterosexual), or else one is pathological and needs clinical treatment. Poststructuralists look instead at context, and offer a view of the self which takes contextual factors into account, avoiding the pathologizing of anyone's social identity variations. Since identities such as gender and sexual orientation are lived in contexts which include social pressures and restrictions and one's reactions to and actions towards these pressures, emphases also must be placed upon analyzing gender roles and privileges, and the impact these have on one's expectations, apparent choices, and decisions for the living of these social identities. This two-year ethnographic study investigated how gender and sexual orientation identities were continually socially negotiated in two small groups. These groups met as part of a program whose purpose is to offer theatre training, counseling, and performance opportunities for volunteer adolescents. Also investigated were the ways the members' changing perceptions of levels of group and interpersonal connection and safety affected
these social identity negotiations, and how the variations in gender and sexual orientation identities were perceived and received by members. Members described the program Norms, of confidentiality, respect, punctuality, commitment, and sobriety, as the main factors which positively guided the members' favorable interactions and created the safe atmosphere. Despite wider cultural backlashes and restrictions, variability in identities occurred frequently among these adolescents; negative attitudes about social identities, with rigidity and intolerance, characterized many of their early group interactions. Most research on social identities usually presents development as consisting of "stages," with clashes among those at different stages offered as the cause for most identity-based social problems. The participants co-created the theory that liberational, and authentic gender and sexual orientation identities may be co-constructed. Differential Authenticity describes the ways program participants flexibly lived these social identities.
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Both Gender and Sexual Orientation as Prominent Topics

As mentioned previously, the topics of sexual orientation and gender were often raised simultaneously, and the identities are inseparable. Similarly to the above two sections, this section shows some of the ways the topics of gender and sexual orientation occurred in the same speech or physical event in AO meetings or interviews, or on the survey. Just listing these co-occurrences raised many analytical issues. Because the co-occurrences seemed significant, I created a table to show these and other project category co-occurrences (see Appendix B, Table 5, Category Co-Occurrences, and the accompanying Narrative). In addition, I created a table to check single occurrences (see below and next pages).

The ways in which my coding of these "events" affected their occurrences must have happened, since anything will change (and everything does) just from being observed. There were representations of what I observed, however, which did lend themselves to tabular form. Please excuse, and/or appreciate the contradictions inherent in this type of research and analysis.

Narrative to Accompany Table 1.

Connection occurred the most frequently in every meeting, for a total of 1500 for all 20 meetings. The highest number of occurrences of connection, 170, was in one meeting on Valentine’s Day, (2/14). Increased declarations of love, friendship, affection, and/or behaviors along these lines did seem to be inspired by the cultural weight of the date. Connection's lowest, 16, was higher than any other category on that day (10/11), and still higher than many of the other categories for most meetings. The lowness of this number actually seemed to "prove" that connection increased as the group's year progressed.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION: "OPENING CIRCLE"

Tony [the leader] asks [participants] to tell a "first" for them for this year, as a member of ALWAYS ON [AO].
Daitch's first = walking out of a performance to find "kids wanted my autograph!..."
Holly: "That I actually can feel comfortable... not as nervous... performing...with an audience...."
Brigitta: "First time I really felt I will become an actress...."
I [Sally] take my turn, discuss humor I find in re-reading the notes, which I don't always feel as it happens because I'm so busy writing it all down....
Keith: "...first time doing a performance with AO outside of this state." He wants to say two. "...first time fooling around with a video camera. That was awesome!..."
Nick: "...first time I ever really acted...
Travis pauses. "I don't know." [He] passes.
Holly says her second one: "First time I've felt really connected, really a part of a group."
Tony: "...first time without an Intern for part of the time, and the first time another AO group was led by someone else besides [me]...."
Travis: "I don't know." pauses. "I don't think there was a 'first."
Tony asks if it's his "first time doing improvisational acting?"
Travis: "Yeah, that would be a first."
(FIELD NOTES, 1/31/94)

Statement of Problem

There are many ways to work with, or address, the challenges of adolescence. Sports, community service, mentoring, paid work, academic achievement, and counseling programs for adolescents seek to guide teens through this often difficult time. Understanding and coping with social identities, particularly gender and sexual orientation, are two of the more demanding tasks of adolescence. Educational and counseling programs often strive to assist teens with these tasks, and use a variety of modalities to do so.

1 For an explanation of the organization of this thesis, see a later section, "Organization of the Dissertation and ALWAYS ON Group Meetings."
Among counseling programs, however, it seems that very few outpatient group settings utilize psychodrama and sociodrama in combination with other expressive arts as the bases for the therapeutic work within an adolescent group. One program, which combines counseling with theatre skills training and performing opportunities, as well as prevention education, offers free, volunteer, ongoing, nonschool groups, two of which became the focus of this project.

This ethnographic study, which spanned two program years, included seventeen adolescents in two small groups in this program in New England, U.S.A. (see Figure 1). This sponsoring program, ALWAYS ON (pseudonym), took a proactive approach to supporting many types of experimentation with identity and behaviors, as part of the development of acting and theatre skills in its members, and as an integral part of the counseling component of the program. The expressive arts counseling component of ALWAYS ON (AO) utilized a variety of drama, graphic, and movement arts therapies to assist the members with handling their personal and social problems.

It is the hope, and often the seeming "result," of utilizing psychodrama and sociodrama to work with social and psychological issues, that the expansion of one's "roles" leads to the ability to be able to cope more effectively with one's "outside" life (Cossa, 1992b; 1995b). Furthermore, the opportunity to experiment in a safe and structured setting with alternative identities, behaviors, choices, and feelings is expected to foster healthier and more reasoned choices when presented with them in any setting (Cossa, 1995a). Since a large part of successfully negotiating the challenges of adolescence is making healthy choices, programs which provide ways to "learn" how to do this abound. AO seems to be unique, however, in its selection of these expressive modalities and in its setting.

Members learned theatre skills as part of the program's counseling component, and also in order to perform for school and community audiences, as educators as well as entertainers, using theatre as their medium, to explore social issues such as suicide, drug
and alcohol use/abuse, conflict and violence, decision-making and refusal skills, HIV/AIDS and sexually-transmitted diseases, sexual activity and abstinence, friendship, school problems, and family communication. The members used improvisational theatre in a unique, audience-interactive format for their scenework and public performances (see Cossa, Ember, Glass, & Hazelwood, 1996).

The improvisational nature of their theatre training and performances, in combination with the intensive counseling and support offered in group meetings, fostered spontaneity and flexibility in members as performers. In addition, this study showed that these qualities appeared to transfer into aspects of their personal lives as well, particularly affecting their co-constructions of gender and sexual orientation identities during group meetings.

I investigated the ways sexual orientation and gender identities were often co-constructed in these two AO groups, and the ways these identity co-constructions interrelated. I also examined which particular influences on these co-constructions' flexibility were the most significant to group members. These two influences, in the participants' language, were interpersonal and intrapsychic safety and connection, as created and co-constructed within these two small groups, and in ALWAYS ON.

From my understanding of this discourse, or the types of communications, behaviors, and negotiations which occurred within AO group meetings, I believe that it is likely that the demands and expectations of the AO discourse could have included that members learn to appreciate the flexibility of some social identities, whether they believed their own were mutable or not. Furthermore, the AO discourse could also have fostered within it behaviors and speech which became labeled as "safe" or "connected," and then have fostered the labeling of the absences or converse events as the opposites of these co-created concepts. Attitudes towards disclosure would also have been co-created within this discourse. These discourse "rules," or norms, delineated the AO experience,
The ALWAYS ON program served two towns both years of my project, and I stayed in the same town both years.
For 1993 - 94, I was a participant/observer for the Premiere group.
For 1994 - 95, I was a co-leader for the Encore group, which included two members from the previous year's Premiere group.
"Tony" was the leader, and then co-leader, in both groups I researched for this project.
The Encore group also had two ("Becky" and "Lila"), then one (Becky stayed; Lila left) graduate student intern(s) for 1994 - 95.
Each of my project groups averaged nine members for the year.
Members of all four groups participated in performances which I co-facilitated the first year, and sometimes facilitated alone the second year. All members also had several program-wide events each year.

FIGURE 1. ALWAYS ON program structure 1993 - 1995
making it unique, and also making it even less appropriate for any generalizing from this project to occur.

However, teens who are perceived to be Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual, either by their peers, adults, or themselves, are more at risk for violence. Because of homophobia and sexism, teens whose gender identities are ambiguous or nonmainstream also suffer abuse and ridicule. These attacks may be in the form of battering and assault, emotional and/or physical; however, too many Homosexual, Transgendered, or questioning-identity teens commit suicide (Bass & Kaufman, 1996).

In addition to failing to maintain a safe environment, most schools and communities do not offer group or institutional support or counseling of any kind for these students (Bass & Kaufman, 1996; Unks, 1995b). Since there are sexual minorities in every social and cultural group, the lack of support and safety for sexual minority teens in schools and communities is a problem which concerns everyone, regardless of one's beliefs about sexual identity. This being the case, successful counseling and support programs (as well as staff and administrative retraining) are increasingly important.

Although the safety and psychological health of sexual minority teens are of grave concern, this project did not attempt to resolve this societal problem. Rather, the scope of this ethnographic study was narrow, and its conclusions are specific to the AO group members who participated. However, many aspects of the findings and conclusions may be applicable to teens in other settings, and could inspire other communities to take a more proactive stance regarding the establishment of programs and attitudes that support and ensure the safety of sexual minority adolescents.

**Brief Overview of Theories Utilized**

I used theories in this project which, while separately well known, are not often used in conjunction. In this section, I briefly explain their interrelationships as
established in this project, and describe the ways this interrelationship influenced the topics studied.

There have been a few studies recently which examined the types of contexts in which adolescents may experiment or try out components of their social identities, but these focused mostly upon race/ethnicity or religion. Some studies have included gender. There have been few projects which have studied the mutability, or co-constructions of social identities and that have also focused upon sexual orientation and gender identity in adolescents.

Therefore, this project broke new ground in the academic disciplines of human development, social learning, cultural anthropology, education, sociology, and developmental psychology, by studying the flexible co-constructions of sexual orientation and gender identities, and by determining that this flexibility was most affected by the group members' senses of safety and connection with other members. The interdisciplinary nature of this project expanded to include some elements of quantum physics, microbiology and molecular chemistry, and politics, because of the ethnographic study's reliance upon a unique combination of feminist, poststructural and critical theories for its grounding and data analysis. Below, I briefly explore the relationships with each of these theories.

Some recent studies claim that homosexuality and bisexuality are not choices, but rather physical, biological imperatives (Burr, 1996b; Gooren, 1990; LeVay, 1993; LeVay & Hamer, 1994). Other analysts have claimed that these studies' research protocols were limited and flawed in significant ways, and have declared the essentialists' conclusions to be controversial and/or dubious (Bailey, 1995; Begley, 1995; Bower, 1996; Burr, 1996a; Byne, 1994; Faderman, 1996; Horgan, 1995; Shea, 1996).

Social constructionists and poststructural theorists, especially those who write for popular culture periodicals, have demonstrated, or proposed, that many aspects of social identity are somewhat or completely contingent upon circumstances, contexts, and/or
intentions (Foster, 1996; Holleran, 1995). Researchers in sociolinguistics, cultural anthropology, and many other disciplines and areas of study have examined the ways in which people in families, schools, and other social groups co-create, or co-construct social identities for one another through conversations, behaviors, and social sanctions. This is particularly true for identities in which physical appearance plays a smaller part in determining one's identity, such as for social class, religion, and some types of ethnicity, especially in people of multiple or mixed heritage. Social identities are, obviously, social entities, but are related to individuals' psychology as well, especially with respect to identity development.

Modernists theorists proposed that one's self is fragmented, invisible, or false when we show different versions of our selves in various situations (Gergen, 1991). This view pathologizes variation in one's social identities, and does not seem to represent what actually occurs in many of our lived experiences. Adolescents in particular are harmed by professionals in psychology, education, or sociology who label teens' experimentations with and explorations of their gender and/or sexual orientation identities in negative and/or restricting ways.

Postmodernists, or Poststructuralists, look instead at context, and offer a view of the self which takes the factors of each situation into account (Gergen, 1991), avoiding the pathologizing of anyone's identity variations. Critical theory would offer this: we live our identities in contexts which include social pressures and restrictions, and one's reactions to these pressures, particularly the strictures of socioeconomic class. Feminists would emphasize gender roles, male privilege, and the impact these have on one's expectations, apparent choices, and decisions regarding social identities, particularly gender and sexual orientation.
This ethnographic research project examined the ways counter-hegemonic and/or resistant stances were negotiated for gender and sexual orientation identities among the adolescents involved in two ALWAYS ON small groups, one in 1993 - 1994, and the other in 1994 - 1995 (see Figure 1 for a flow chart of my involvement). Despite wider cultural backlashes and restrictions (Fine, 1991; Ochs, 1993; Pharr, 1988; Rothenberg, 1992), variability in some social identities occurred frequently in this setting.

My concept, differential authenticity, encapsulates the ways these variations were co-constructed, the acceptance and utilization of the idea of variation and flexibility of some social identities, and the influences of interpersonal safety and connection upon this flexibility. I use the word "authenticity" deliberately, to challenge the modernist false dichotomy of these aspects of the self as either stable/unchanging or inauthentic. "Differential" refers directly to the contextual and situational nature of this flexibility. In lay terms, using some of the members' own language, differential authenticity involves having many versions of one's self, all of which are authentic, and recognizing that the choices of which version of one's self to present, or co-construct, depends upon the setting, or context; in particular, these choices depend upon one's perceptions of interpersonal safety and connection in each setting.

In the final sections of this thesis, I illustrate the development and meaning of this concept, in action, through the data and my own analysis.

Negative attitudes about individuals' social identities, with rigidity and intolerance, continue to characterize many interactions among adolescents and adults. Most research on social identities usually presents development as consisting of "stages," with clashes among those at different stages offered as the cause for most identity-based social problems (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Hardiman & Jackson, 1992; Helms, 1990). My research and interpretations, however, have shown that the living of gender and sexual

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2 For a useful distinction between these terms (although not one with which I completely agree), see Weiler (1988), p. 55.
orientation identities among adolescents in these particular contexts can include variations which are not limited to linear stage progressions.

Using Feminist Poststructuralist and Critical theories to analyze data led me to posit an alternative view of the self, one which the adolescents and leaders in the AO groups co-created: Liberational, yet authentic social identities could be lived whenever they contextually chose to present alternative versions of their selves.

This new view of the self could lead to creating more positive peer relationships, even when the adolescents claimed membership in seemingly conflicting social identity groups (Irvine, 1994a, b, & c). Teens in the AO setting had many opportunities to create positive peer relationships, and some were intentionally fostered by the program's curricula and techniques (Cossa, Ember, Grover, & Hazelwood, 1996).

In the AO groups, and the program as a whole, staff utilized many therapeutic techniques from expressive arts therapies, most frequently, psychodrama and sociodrama. As a nonformal educational setting, it is unique in its combination of expressive arts, counseling, and performing. ALWAYS ON is one of the few nonclinical settings in which adolescents may experience intensive psychodrama as well. The uniqueness of this program lent itself to the unusual nature of this project.

My research fills in major gaps, since there have been very few studies of ongoing groups with consistent membership in which the researcher focused upon adolescents' gender and sexual orientation identities, and almost no ethnographic, or "insider-perspective" studies published at this time.3 Some studies illuminated aspects of my research4 by utilizing similar theoretical and/or methodological frameworks, through examining adolescents and their social identities in small, nonschool groups, or by

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3 Since long lists of citations break up the text, I have decided to relegate these to footnote sections of this document. (Brown, 1995; D'Augelli & Garnets, 1995; D'Augelli & Patterson, 1995; Fox, 1995; Fullilove, Barksdale & Fullilove, 1994; Gonsiorek, 1995; Herek, 1995; Irvine, 1994c; Kitzinger, 1995; Raymond, 1994; Savin-Williams, 1995; Taylor, 1994; Tiefer, 1995; Tolman, 1994).

studying gender identity in relationship to sexual orientation identity, usually through interviews, surveys, or brief observations. My research stands alone, however, in its combination of methodologies and theories, and in its unique conclusions.

Support and therapeutic opportunities for marginalized youth are few and usually under financial and/or social constraints (Unks, 1995a; and many other references in Unks, 1995b), even though these are sorely needed. In such programs, participants may help themselves and other young people reduce or refrain from substance abuse, face and handle familial and school problems, make healthier choices in a variety of arenas, and become educated about safer sex and communication in relationships (Bass & Kaufman, 1996; Cossa, et al., 1996; Garnets & Kimmel, 1993a, several sections). Furthermore, specific studies such as mine illustrate the effectiveness and success of such programs.

**Research Questions**

Utilizing my chosen and customized versions of several theoretical frameworks, Critical Theory, Feminism, and Poststructuralism, I created my research questions.

1) How were hegemonic (socially prescribed) norms and constructions of gender and sexual orientation identities enacted and discussed in these AO group meetings?

2) What instances of non-traditional (or counter-hegemonic, resistant, and/or liberational) gender and sexual orientation identities enactments and ideas occurred in these groups?

3) What relationships did the members perceive between their co-constructions of their own and each others' gender and sexual orientation identities and their perceptions of particular factors within the group?

4) How did the members express and describe these relationships?

^During the second year of this project, another researcher (Frehner, 1996) conducted an outcome study, with some members of the Encore group I co-led, as well as some members from each of the three concurrent AO groups. His was an interview- and instrument-based research project, but many of his insights and conclusions about the AO program and its impact on participants matched my own.
This set of questions guided data collection and analysis. Moving between already-published works, my current and previous experiences, and discussions with project participants and with colleagues, I examined these questions using my ethnographic data. The next section describes past and current research on topics related to my project's questions.

**Conceptual Framework and Methodology**

I spent two years with ALWAYS ON, investigating the ways adolescents in two small groups \((N = 9)\), one group per year (see Figure 1), showed how they felt and thought through the ways they behaved and talked about gender and sexual orientation identities. Before entering the field, I had decided that qualitative methodologies, particularly ethnography, offered the most appropriate approach\(^6\). I used Critical, Feminist, and Poststructuralist theories to interpret and analyze my data.

This project involved prolonged, sustained engagement in the field. Data collection and analysis, using grounded theory (Patton, 1990/1980), included handwritten observation notes, transcriptions of video and audio tapes, individual and group interviews, one researcher-designed survey, analytic memos, iterative coding, and field notes. Triangulation and validity were handled through member checks, multiple data sources, peer debriefing, and participant reviews of ongoing data interpretations and category definitions.


\(^6\)(Andersen, 1993; Anderson, 1989; Anderson & Irvine, 1993; Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner & Steinmetz, 1991; Erickson, 1990/1986; Facio, 1993; Gerstel, et al., 1989; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Lather, 1992; Peacock, 1986; Peshkin, 1988; Sears, 1992a & b; Stanfield & Dennis, 1993a & b; Weiler, 1988)
promoted my having multiple viewpoints while analyzing my project data: the major
tenet of Poststructuralism is that there are always multiple viewpoints; and Feminists of
many types attempt to analyze and reanalyze in order to acquire varying perspectives on
the "same" situation. Since I was working towards transformation, as a Critical
pedagogist, I departed from traditional forms in a variety of ways.

I utilized these theories in combination in order to maintain both a micro and a
macro view of the issues involved, while investigating gender and sexual orientation with
adolescents, and I followed several researchers' paths to do so. I felt it important to be
congruent with my own beliefs about ethics, social policies, adolescents, education, and
activism. Every choice I made, therefore, was permeated with my chosen theoretical
views, and I investigated how those choices and those theories intersected in every aspect
of my research.

As a Feminist, I am committed to interrogating the ways male privilege and
power affect research choices, procedures, findings, and interpretations, on the research
participants them/ourselves. It has also been important constantly to shift perspectives, to
hold the Poststructuralist notion that I cannot be faithful to any ideas.

To minimize "tunnel vision," I continually examined these two social identities
both in relation to and as similar categories with social class (hooks, 1995), seeking
evidence of the possible presence of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic ideas about
gender and sexual orientation identities within myself and the group members. For
example, as I interpreted particular behaviors or statements of participants as being
hegemonic, I continually questioned on what basis, or according to whose hegemony, I
would be making those claims; and likewise, for counter-hegemony. Viewing particular
ideas or behaviors as "compliant" or "resistant," and sharing these insights with the
members, also helped participants to expand their views of themselves individually and to
see these social identities as cultural co-constructions rather than as "givens." In addition,
as mentioned earlier, there were also AO discourse norms which encouraged and discouraged particular behaviors and verbalized opinions.

Because of the inevitability of the co-constructions of all behaviors and definitions as occurring within the AO discourse while at AO meetings, and the multiple ways the AO norms interacted with cultural prescriptions, efforts I made to "separate" or distinguish, and then to claim origination for any particular behavior or conversation as either hegemonic, counter-hegemonic, compliant or resistant were complicated and enmeshed. Therefore, throughout this thesis, although I may not continually remind the reader of this "stickiness," it was nonetheless "there." Member checking was one method I utilized to enhance the ethnographic approach to my understanding my data.

By involving the group leaders and members in aspects of my data analyses, sharing earlier drafts of my research reports, and soliciting feedback from them on all aspects of my procedures and interpretations, I enacted many of the principles of Critical ethnography: I "took" from and then "gave back" to the participants, so that their Critical consciousness could be raised, and so that they could then and in the future have better access to the types of analyses of their lives and ideas which foster empowerment. This leadership approach co-exists in liberatory pedagogy (hooks, 1995), radical psychology (Gergen, 1991), and many subareas of other interpersonal and personal growth disciplines. In later sections of this thesis, I explore these choices and their consequences in more detail.

Many other seemingly unrelated disciplines have influenced my use of these theories and my research choices. Outer and inner space, hypnons, knots, loops: these physical science metaphors relate in some manner to the ways we seem to be living, or could someday be living, our social identities. Quantum physics and microchemistry have made discoveries about the ways subatomic and molecular particles interact which are remarkably similar to the ways humans interact in some contexts (see later section, A New Paradigm). Social science and education theories, which incorporate Critical theory,
Poststructuralism, and Feminism, have been intersecting overtly and subtly with these physical science theories. I explored those relationships and I analyzed, through some of the metaphors which arise from the new physics, theories of social identity and human development.

Field Site Information

ALWAYS ON(AO) is a nonschool, nonprofit theatre/counseling educational program which offers several small groups for adolescents each year. The small groups met weekly or twice weekly, for two hours per meeting, for counseling and theatre training activities. Some members joined for one year, and many had continued for several years of participation. The age range of members was 13 - 20 years. Although some members were referred by guidance counselors or other social service workers, the group members were all self-selected volunteers, and they came from a variety of home and personal backgrounds. Teens joined AO to get theatre training, to share their lives in a supportive atmosphere, and to perform.

Public performances consisted of issues-oriented, audience-interactive, improvisational scenework. This meant that audience members participated by supplying the issues and themes for, and sometimes acting in, the improvisations. Humor, drama, fantasy, and reality were all utilized to explore a variety of social topics.

For the initial project year, I attended one of the two weekly meetings of one group of new AO members, a "Premiere" group, as a participant/observer, which the director and founder of the program, whom I'll call "Tony," led. For the second year, Tony and I co-led a weekly group of returning AO members, an "Encore" group, which included two group members from the first year, and two, then one female graduate interns (see Figure 1).
A lengthier description of AO group meetings occurs later in this manuscript. Briefly, ALWAYS ON offered two levels of groups each year, with two groups in each level, in two different towns of one geographic region in Northern New England, U.S.A. (See Figure 1 for a diagram of the program and my roles.) One level, "Premiere," met twice each week, and all of its members were new to AO. "Encore" was comprised of anyone who had already had at least one year in Premiere and wanted to continue in AO. The groups met weekly in Encore. All meetings were approximately two hours.

The ratio of female to male members slightly favored females both years. Two members were in foster care placement; one was visually-impaired and developmentally-delayed. Most came from families who were working-class/lower middle-class, but both groups included members from the lower/welfare class as well as the upper-middle/owning class. Other social identity categories such as White, presumed heterosexual, and mixed family ethnic/religious backgrounds described both the members and the leaders the first year.

I was a participant/observer for one (and sometimes both) of the two weekly meetings for one town's Premier group for an entire academic year (1993 - 1994), which meant I was present at the group's inception through its ending meeting. For 1994 - 1995, I was a co-leader of that same town's Encore group, which met weekly, and included two of "my" Premiere group's members. Both years, but more frequently the second year, I co-facilitated public performances with AO members from all the groups, from both towns.

Because of one member's direct question to Tony early in the second year, Tony and several members and leaders (including myself) "came out" as Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual. These disclosures had significant impact on the ways some members perceived the group climate, and on their attitudes and understandings of sexual orientation identities for themselves and for others.
Research Choices and Timetable

Personal Interests

I have been an educator and recreation leader with adolescents since I was still an adolescent myself. For over twenty years, many opportunities have arisen to learn, to grow, to teach and to lead. As an educator, I chose a research site which was nonformal because I wanted to participate in and observe groups which existed within a program that I helped begin, almost ten years previous. I wanted, with a pure ethnographic intent, to see what was going on in these groups, and then to determine if anything within these groups sparked my research interests.

Because of my many years of teaching, parenting, and working with adolescents, as a multicultural educator committed to social justice and diversity training, I became interested in how these white, mixed-class teenagers perceived cultural constraints upon social identities. I became particularly interested in exploring how these teens experienced male dominance, in the forms of heterosexism, homophobia, and sexism, and other types of hegemonic, or normative, influences upon their lives.

As a life-long feminist of varying types (liberal, radical, socialist; see Jaggar and Struhl, 1978), as a gender roles rebel (Bornstein, 1994), and as a Bisexual woman, I have particular interests in sexual orientation and gender, among the many social identities which could have been researched. I have often identified as a "radical feminist," and below are some of the reasons that I have:

As Jaggar describes it, "radical feminism argues that gender is not only the way in which women are differentiated socially from men; they see it also as the way in which women are subordinated to men. The genders are not 'different but equal.' Instead, gender is an elaborate system of male domination. The theoretical task of radical feminism is to understand that system; its political task is to end it."14 ...This analysis did not attack heterosexuality as an institution, but only the 'unnecessary' divisions between men and women that made one's choice of partner and sexual
patterns socially significant.\textsuperscript{15} (Phelan, 1989, p. 43) (Footnotes refer to internal references.)

But, radical feminists were/are often too essentialist for me, and I turned to other types of analyses, those which acknowledge the ways many of our identities and circumstances affect us, even as gender may be prominent in certain contexts.

How do we learn to (dis)identify from hegemonic conceptions of "woman" as well as [sic] recognize that not all women identify in the same ways? How do we learn to take into account the simultaneity of oppressions through gender, race, class, and sexuality, come to understand and respect their collusions in the constitution of differences through sameness and sameness through difference? Don't differing and complex social locations suggest differing processes of (dis)identifying, as well as multiple and changing (dis)identifications? (Rockhill, 1993, p. 351)

Investigating the ways the teens in these two ALWAYS ON groups interacted, and listening to their own understandings of how their identities were "multiple and changing" became the focus of my research.

Realizing that all social identities intersect, interact, overlap, and cannot be separated, I nonetheless chose to focus upon my two main interests, partially because the AO group members discussed the impacts and issues of these two social identities most frequently.

Organization of this Dissertation, and of ALWAYS ON Group Meetings

Chapter 1: "Opening Circle"

Each meeting of an AO group followed a similar format. The chapters of this dissertation follow that format, with actual dialogue from AO group members used to begin each chapter.
"Opening Circle" began each meeting, and involved asking each member to share something verbally and/or nonverbally, at the leader's direction, going around in a circle until each had a turn, or "passed." Chapter One, the Introduction of this thesis, "goes around" and offers the background pieces of information and experiences which inspired and formed this research project.

Chapter 2: "What's On Top?"

"What's On Top?" (WoT?) is taken from another counseling mode, Re-Evaluation Counseling (a system of peer counseling begun by Harvey Jackins; numerous references, Rational Island Press). WoT? involved asking the members to speak about issues and concerns they currently have. Having WoT? early in a meeting provided two options. One, it allowed members to deal briefly with those issues which could have prevented the members from being fully attentive to the rest of the meeting's activities unless they had been allowed first to "vent." Two, WoT? allowed members an opportunity to signal what themes or issues each member wished to use the subsequent group counseling time to work on and ask for group help with, in order to change or grow with respect to that issue or theme.

WoT? was not always a part of group counseling, but sometimes stood alone, as a way to re-involve each member with one another, and to "catch up" with each other (such as after a vacation or other missed meetings). Usually, counseling activities followed WoT? directly, but not always. Often, especially in an Encore meeting, the members were given a choice whether to do counseling time or theatre activities before the Break or afterwards, and this decision would be made after WoT? time had ended.

WoT? is represented by The Preview to the Literature Review chapter. This section describes the issues and themes I have been working with that have affected my choices of research and theoretical Literature, my theories and protocols. Although it is
"irregular" to have a section of this type, I believe it is helpful and necessary in this thesis. This organizing schema mirrors the format of AO group meetings, emphasizing my constant movement from macro to micro to macro to micro.

Chapter 3: "Warm-Ups"

Warm-Ups, physical and mental activities which prepared the members to act in scenes, occurred early in most meetings, and always preceded theatre time activities. The leaders began, but often involved members in co-leading, physical and game-type exercises for a brief time. Often, since the graduate interns were Dance/Movement Therapy program students, this time included some creative movement and/or dance. Sometimes the activities were designed to offer new perspectives on emotional and other personal issues, such as personal space, intimacy, direct/indirect personal styles, individual pace, interpersonal relationships. Often, Warm-Ups involved experiments with physicalizing ages and emotional states. The Literature Review of this proposal, like a Warm-Up, prepares the readers mentally and academically (and perhaps physically) for the next "activities," and offers me opportunities to share my personal growth and reflections.

Chapter 4: "Scenework"

Just as actors need techniques and methods in order to perform in scenes and plays, a research project needs plans and procedures, which is the reason that the Methodology section of this dissertation is coordinated with "Scenework." The part of every AO meeting in which the members were actors, being trained in that discipline, rehearsing for plays and practicing roles, is similar to the aspects of this project in which I
practiced the techniques of ethnographic inquiry, learning about and utilizing the tools of research.

Chapters 5, 6, & 7: "Group Counseling and Sharing"

Chapters Five, Six and Seven, the Findings and Analysis sections of this dissertation, offer "thick description" and other indepth looks at the data. In AO meetings, this would be akin to the Group Counseling/Sharing time, which often included psycho- or sociodramatic scenework. This part of the meeting began with asking for volunteers to do therapeutic work within the group, which then took one of several forms. One or more members' personal issues and themes could be combined to create a sociodrama, which involved all members and leaders, (co-) directed by one or more leaders; one member's "story" could be used as the basis for a psychodrama, which the leader, who is a trained psychodramatist, directed; several members could speak, individually, about their current issues/problems, and receive feedback from the group about their situations. Scenes featuring these issues would then be role-played in order to give the members a chance to practice new behaviors and strategies, or to try verbalizing amidst confrontations. These Chapters of the dissertation, as in this section of the AO meeting, offer glimpses into the lives and thoughts of AO participants, related to my chosen themes, categories and research questions.

Following group counseling events, leaders guided the members into a Sharing time. Leaders, and other members, often asked probing questions to discover what new realizations or insights could have been gained from the previous counseling activities, and to prompt members to consider how these new ideas may be applied to "real life." The group discussed next steps for possible new constructive behaviors or goals, or requests for support to inhibit destructive behaviors; often, leaders or other members
offered insights and interpretations to support positively or to challenge supportively the members' own ideas about themselves and each other.

Following that format, these Chapters also have the Interpretations and Discussion sections. I discuss my analyses of the data and the ways I used my theoretical frameworks to address my research questions.

In addition, safety and connection, the factors that members said, and that I agreed influenced the co-constructions of these adolescents' gender and sexual orientation identities in AO group meetings are discussed fully in this Chapter. I then more fully describe the concept of social identity co-construction which evolved from this study, differential authenticity.

Chapter 8: "Closing Circle"

The last part of every AO meeting mirrored the first. "Closing Circle" was another round-robin sharing, which was brief, but often more personal and emotional, following the frequently intense sharing and group activities of the previous two hours. Members were often asked to state one thing they learned and would take with them into the next week.

This dissertation's Closing Circle, Chapter Eight, offers a "go-around" of the possible Implications and Significance of this research project, of my theory, and of the study's potential usefulness. It ends with looking at the ways leaders and educators in several disciplines may benefit from and utilize the Conclusions I have drawn from my research with the ALWAYS ON program groups.
Appendices: "Break, and ALWAYS ON Business"

Every AO meeting had a break between its two hour-long segments, during which members socialized, many smoked (despite our encouragement to quit), and most ate sugary or salty snacks and imbibed soft drinks. Following or preceding this Break, leaders conducted AO Business: performance sign-ups and schedules, calendar information, and other "nuts and bolts" of the coming weeks and months which members need to know.

This thesis also offers the readers a "break," and "business"-type information, in the section which houses the Appendices. However, to place the Appendices in the middle of this document seemed to interrupt the flow, and also to confound the more traditional readers. Therefore, the placement of the Appendices does not "follow" the AO group meeting schedule. The Appendices include some (several are within the document's text) of the tables, figures, diagrams, calendars and time lines, data sets, field note excerpts, and other information in nontextually-based forms.

References: "Homework"

Since members often developed next steps and goals during AO meetings, many were offered or volunteered to do personal "homework." This involved reading, making phone calls to find a job or make an appointment, talking to a family member about an important issue, confronting an abuser, and/or extending support to each other over a vacation period. Reflection, further growth, creative projects, and other expressions were encouraged, and often shared at the next meeting.

To follow my thematic scheme, and to follow dissertation tradition as well, the final section of this thesis is the Reference section. I hope readers will use it in the spirit of "homework."
CHAPTER 2

PREVIEW TO THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE: "WHAT'S ON TOP?"

Brigitta: "I really miss Holly." ... Marcy is now [since Dec.] on Zoloft [like Prozac]. She and Brigitta [who is also on this medication] discuss.

Nick shares that he's been arrested, but not sentenced, yet, for his community service hours.

After Nick shares, Brigitta laughs and says to him: "I love you, Nick! You make me laugh!"

Travis shares that his "dad tries to fuck with my head 'cause he's a therapist."

Keith shares being "baptized in the holy spirit" and "speaking in tongues" on Sunday. (FIELD NOTES, 1/24/94)

Social Identities in Many Discipline

In the 1990's, social identity is a major issue for people in almost every geographical area (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Sapon-Shevin & Goodman, 1992). Nationality, ethnicity, "race,"7 religion, geography continue to divide us rather than unite us, even as technology shrinks the globe. One writer put it well:

[W]e need investigations that can begin to explicate how external ordering (social inscription) is lodged in concrete ongoing social relations reproduced differently across social domains over the life span. (Rockhill, 1993, p. 342).

I found support for my research in works of this type.

Clashing ideas of "truth," "reality," and "self"8 predominate current conversations in almost every discipline, especially regarding applications of the new physics to the social sciences, or in discussions of the "paradigm shift" [Becker, 1991a, which includes

7 "race" as socially constructed and biologically false is not well-accepted nor well-known in the U.S.A. at this writing, so I put it in quotes to illustrate my understanding of its falseness as anything besides a social category (see: Horsman, 1990; de Lepervanche, 1984; Fields, 1990; McCarthy, 1988; and Zack, 1993, for further explanations of "race" as a social construction).

8 terms which are in quotes here are also socially created, and often disputed.
Becker, 1991b & c, diZerega, Heilman, Munro (first published in 1928), Overman, Rummell, and Slaton, among others; Harding, 1986; Kuhn, 1970]. I, with Becker and the authors in his edited volume, do "see a body of knowledge... that fit[s] together somehow but [is] vastly incompatible in important ways" (Becker, 1991b, p. xi). Becker continued in his preface to explain the excitement involved in these types of interdisciplinary "thought experiments":

Generating and juxtaposing innovative ideas in the human psyche to help transform an entire theoretical framework is in the best and most significant tradition of experimentation.... What is exceptional about this kind of research is that it questions quintessential assumptions of the underlying theoretical framework that guides the "normal research." (Becker, 1991b, p. xii)

Many would argue that "normal research" is, in itself, currently contested, especially among the theorists I have been reading in education and social psychology. Through this type of innovative exploration, Becker believed that we theoreticians attempt to "illuminate a paradox" of the type common to "the microworld" of the new physics, and to "produce... some new insights" applicable to the social and behavioral sciences (p. xiv). In his chapter contribution to this volume, Becker began with a helpful reminder, one which corroborated my use of these ideas:

[O]ne does not have to be a physicist to intuit and apply the general idea of relativity to cultural, social, and political matters—or to one's own interpersonal relationships. (Becker, 1991b, p. 11)

I kept in mind the applications of some of these principles of the physical world on the social.

Continuing and supporting the interdisciplinary nature of my research project, this Review examines some definitions and theories in the social/psychological areas of social identity, especially gender and sexual orientation. Although many of the works cited here were not intended to "bridge" disciplines, I believe I have been faithful to each writer's meanings, even if I have used some of their work in new ways.
A paradigm is a model, a way to conceptualize. Thomas Kuhn (1970) is often quoted as the creator of the concept of “paradigm shift.” The "new paradigm," as explored by many since Kuhn, but always harkening back to him, offers, among other changes: holism, rather than disintegration; connections, rather than separateness; and, both/and typologies instead of either/or. Paradox is accepted, rather than hidden or manipulated, allowing multiple viewpoints to co-exist without being mutually exclusive.

Central to the "old," or current paradigm are a series of social practices: placing people in immovable positions of identity; determining which aspects of human characteristics and social life will be used to create these classifications; then, discriminating against or towards people in particular categories (Sarbin & Scheibe, 1983; Wilson & Wyn, 1993). Money and family status (interpreted as social class), gender, age, race/ethnicity, religion, physical appearance and/or ability are some of the attributes and conditions used to separate, group, and privilege or exclude people. Every type of conflict imaginable has been predicated on the basis of one or more of these arbitrary separators. Although some are privileged, and one could assume that these people would therefore want to maintain the status quo, most people realize that just one change could result in their being excluded, particularly in a culture such as ours which discredits and discriminates against the elderly and infirmed. Most see that the entire social classification system must be dismantled, and that it is already changing.

There are many components of this transition into the new paradigm. Not all are "constructive"; with every enormous social shift, there are divisions and difficulties. But some are positive changes in social practices and beliefs. These would allow for the selves' natural variety, while working for social justice, so that certain differences do not result in discrimination, and so that some difference-creators (such as oppression, greed, fear) are reduced.
Multiple perspectives can create confusion as well as incongruities, but in the new paradigm, we do not have to eliminate one set of ideas from another — we depart from either/or. We instead must analyze the intersections, apparent conflicts, and overlaps. We must learn to see the parts contained within the wholes, and to live more comfortably with paradoxes — dwell in both/and (Ely, et al., 1991).

As Slaton (1991) analogized, many of us want to use the metaphors offered by quantum mechanics and the new physics as "a new kind of intellectual flashlight that lets us think into crevices heretofore inaccessible to thought" (p. 43). Thinking into previously inaccessible crevices describes the way I experienced my research project and my subsequent theorizing.

My study and many others' research have demonstrated that we move among many aspects of our identities, contextually determining which and when to present our identities in each situation. We may live into multiple aspects of our selves while we recognize social categories to be both fixed (with unequal impact on various groups in each category) and mutable (because most of these categories are socially rather than physically created) simultaneously (Stoltenberg, 1989). This is particularly fascinating regarding the intersection of gender and sexual orientation: "To see sexuality broadly, as a full range of beliefs, assumptions, representations, and social practices that regulate women through out (hetero)sexualization, is a controversial move among feminists" (Rockhill, 1993, p. 339). I would add that men are also "regulated," albeit differently.

This transition is both fascinating and confusing, especially for those psychologists and sociologists whose conceptions of self and individual must change dramatically to accommodate this paradox (Gergen, 1982). Current theorizing in the physical sciences may help social scientists to find ways to comprehend these changes and to make these transitions.

Several other "new" theories in the physical sciences, such as chemistry, inform social sciences (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984, in Sampson, 1985). Sampson presented
Prigogine and Stenger's ideas about molecules as “waking up hypnons” (p. 1209).

“Hypnons” means sleepwalkers, and refers to “their independent and monad-like quality of being isolated and self-contained” (p. 1206). Sampson quoted Prigogine & Stengers:

At equilibrium molecules behave as essentially independent entities; they ignore one another... [sic] Though each of them may be as complex as we like, they ignore one another. However, nonequilibrium wakes them up and introduces a coherence quite foreign to equilibrium. (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984, pp. 180 - 181, qtd. in Sampson, 1985, p. 1206)

Taking this theory into social science, looking at “personhood,” Sampson made some interesting leaps. In his view,

order rather than chaos emerges only when there is an expanded interconnectedness among elements that need to be hierarchically ruled once they become “aware” of their interrelationships. (Sampson, 1985, p. 1209)

Here, hierarchy is not the patriarchal conception, of power over, but rather the feminists' and communitarians' power with (Kreisberg, 1992; Starhawk, 1989), or the activists' power to. This is the type of power which is inherently neutral, which allows nature to exist in orderly anarchy much the way people might, if we could learn to distinguish between disequilibrium and nonequilibrium. Sampson used this and other theories to explain that, in order to be alive, we must be changing and interconnected: equilibrium and isolation lead to death.

[S]ystems are effectively alive and coherent only because they are like decentralized, nonequilibrium structures; that systems composed of fully-self-contained, unitary elements are said to be dead or dying, not living, growing, and evolving. (Sampson, 1985, p. 1210)

With this set of concepts to understand change, and identity, Sampson promoted “a new kind of character in the world, a decentralized identity” (p. 1210), which could be crucial...
for "achieving widely shared cultural values involving both individuality and freedom" (p. 1210). He later related this himself to a "deconstruction of the self" (Sampson, 1989).

Another physical science metaphor, from the work of Carlo Rovelli and his associates, examined inner and outer space in terms of knots, the simplest of which are loops. Skerrett (1994) described the latest discoveries and applications of knot theory, which are relevant to my current conceptualizations of social identity. Rovelli and his associates discovered that we can conceive of space as "The Weave" (Skerrett, p. 120): interwoven loops. Rovelli and his colleagues purchased hundreds of key rings, buying out every store in the small town in which they were working, and simulated these "loops" with interlocking key rings, each attached to several other, neighboring rings. Then they discussed "movement" among the "loops":

When two bodies approach each other, they may increase the number of links in space, or the loops may link up with a greater number of neighbors, says Rovelli. (Skerrett, 1994, p. 120)

This metaphor could apply to some social identities and people in interaction in certain contexts.

Metaphor is important to understanding complex phenomena, especially for qualitative researchers. Social identity has usually been described linearly, in trajectories or discrete blocks, or in overlapping but progressional stages. However, one of the major tenets of quantum physics is that of interconnection and interaction, which Slaton (1991) explained by stating: "We can no longer divide the world up into independently existing smallest units. Things can no longer be defined without considering their relations to others" (p. 51).

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Interestingly, because of another important discovery, which Heisenberg labeled the "uncertainty principle," we can also explain how everything is affected both by viewing and by being viewed. (Heisenberg discovered that light behaved as waves when scientists intended to measure its waves, and as particles when the measurers sought particles!) In fact, our experiences as social beings with social positions are truly like those of subatomic life's waves and particles: we often see what we want to, or expect to see.

These analogies are too benign, however, to describe what currently occurs when many of us meet in physical or social space. Explosions, implosions, meteor crashes, all of the unpredictability of physical life happen among many social groups. These conflicts are principally the results of unequal access to power and resources, due to social stigmas attached to certain positions or categories. This inequality creates status hierarchies (Cohen, 1994) among these social categories, belying the apparent neutrality offered by physical science metaphors. For example, because of patriarchy (defined here as the systematic privileging of males, and what is considered masculine), and its companion, male dominance, women and men (and transgendered individuals) are not able to experiment with gender identity as freely as we might be in a system which had neither of these components. Gender oppression spreads to sexual orientation discrimination against both males and females (Pharr, 1988; Stoltenberg, 1989). Similarly, racism, ethnocentrism, and classism prevent other differences from being perceived as simple variety (Kalantzis, 1986; Stanfield, 1993 a & b). My study has led me to imagine some situations in which these oppressions are lessened because some differences are not fixed, and therefore cannot be rigidly classified.
CHAPTER 3
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE: "WARM-UPS"

3:16 They all move to do warm-ups. Brigitta warbles “I love you” [to no one in particular] as chairs move. Daitch: “Shut up!” Tony asks everybody to stand, not lie down (Brigitta, Condor, Holly were lying down.). Daitch asks loudly if anyone wants gum? Tony tells him to do that later, but several say they want some. Daitch ignores Tony, responds to the requests, gives out the gum. Tony looks at me and rolls his eyes. Tony asks them to focus.

3:17 Warm ups begin. Tony explains that each should lead one, and everyone should do what the leader does. Each leads one. Most move arms; a few jump up and down, or stretch. When it’s not his turn, Condor does push -ups [almost seems to be showing off]. No one responds. Brigitta repeatedly pokes Holly. Holly, to Brigitta: “You are so annoying!” She moves away from Brigitta, saying: “I’m going to stand over here.” Moves to be between Tony and Condor.

3:20 Everyone has had a turn. Tony ends warm-ups. (FIELD NOTES, 12/6/93)

Critical Ethnography, Feminism, Poststructuralism, and Social Identities

In deciding to do an ethnography, the researcher must still determine which theories of research, observation, understanding, and analysis are already in use, and which to employ consciously (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). Many aspects of several types of Feminism (Jaggar & Struhl, 1978) guided my thinking and my work. I, and several others\(^\text{10}\) connected Critical theory with Feminist analysis to create one type of conjunction among some of these ideas. Applying these conjunctions is not without its

difficulties. Clashes between Critical theory and Feminism abound; I decided which aspects to utilize and which to disregard.

Anderson (1989) discussed using Critical theory with ethnography in education. Right from the start, Anderson addressed the need for Critical ethnographers to be socially and politically responsible in this researcher role:

Critical ethnographers seek research accounts sensitive to the dialectical relationship between the social structural constraints on human actors and the relative autonomy of human agency... the overriding goal is to free individuals from the sources of domination and oppression. (Anderson, 1989, p. 249, Abstract)

This social justice focus became the way I situated my research in Critical ethnography. I formulated my research questions not just from my data, but with the adolescent and adult members of each group. I did this mostly through my work in the second year as a co-leader, initiating role-plays and discussions of performances which interrogated the ways the members presented gender and sexual orientation, and the ways they were thinking and discussing these identities. I also created my interview questions, and wrote my first-year research report (see Ember, 1995) to encourage Critical theory analyses.

Anderson reviewed several researchers' works in this article. For example, he used Paul Willis' well-known, 1977 study of working-class adolescents to discuss how a Critical ethnographer treats informants:

[E]thnography allowed Willis (1977) to view the working-class adolescents who were his cultural informants as more than victims of "false consciousness": He viewed them as rational social actors who understood or "penetrated" the structural constraints on their social class.... (Anderson, 1989, pp. 251 - 2)

Certainly the move from seeing and labeling one's research group members as "subjects" to the understanding that all of us were "participants," "respondents," or "informants" is a positive one from Feminist viewpoints as well. Anderson mentioned Lather's concept of
"catalytic validity" to describe further the responsibilities of Critical ethnographers, both to the uses of the research and to the participants them/ourselves. He stated that catalytic validity

has been achieved... if respondents further self-understanding and, ideally, self-determination through their participation in the research. (Anderson, 1989, p. 254)

Anderson later reminded readers of the necessity of fulfilling this responsibility skillfully:

Unless critical ethnographers can provide an approach to educational social change that includes both the technical and the political, that is, both sound techniques within the school and an effective political program outside the school, even critical practitioners may succumb to either hopelessness or lowered expectations. (Anderson, 1989, p. 262)

Research conducted without this social justice purpose has usually been reported solely for academic audiences, and has been left to founder in little-read journals, or on microfilm in some dissertation collection. I tried concurrently and continuously to make the research experience itself a catalyst for the participants, both the adolescent members and the group leaders (including myself). I also wrote the analyses so that they could be concretely useful for the educational, psychological, and sociological practitioners who may hear or read them (Schöen, 1987; Stanfield & Dennis, 1993c). As mentioned earlier, I was most able to do this in the second year of this project, when I was a co-leader of the Encore group. (See Appendix G, and/or Ember, 1995, for an example of writing I shared with the adolescents and leaders. This "translated" key terms and concepts of Critical theory into lay language.)

Anderson also discussed possible ways to frame the goals of ethnography when it is conducted within a Critical framework, and what the conflicts are:

[Critical ethnography is an ] uneasy alliance between theory-driven social agendas... and phenomenological research methods. (Anderson, 1989, p. 252)
It is difficult to enter a field site with a qualitative, ethnographic stance, which involves open-ended questions, such as: "What is happening here and what does that mean to the participants?" while acknowledging the researcher's (my own) focused purposes, and his/her foundations in particular theories or beliefs. Yet, that is precisely the challenge of conducting a Critical ethnography. Furthermore, as a committed feminist, I interrogated the experience and the data with analyses of male dominance and its concomitant oppressions. In this case, conducting a Critical ethnography was still appropriate:

...ideally all critical ethnography is interested in the intersections of class, race and gender. (Anderson, 1989, NOTE 1, p. 264)

Considering how to achieve these research goals even when the participants themselves do not individually voice all of these interests is another challenge for the Feminist Critical ethnographer.

I worked with this dilemma by continually asking members and leaders of these two AO groups to examine my data, my assumptions, my definitions, and my interpretations, and to tell me how to represent their views most accurately. This created interest, and dialogue on the topics I selected from the groups' many issues, and highlighted other related issues that they had not originally raised. For example, no one in these groups ever raised the issue of social class until I did. Furthermore, race was almost never discussed, and I introduced it into several role plays and then discussions.

Members did address sexual orientation and gender concerns in scenework and discussions, and this occurred more directly after I began my interviews, in the middle of the first year. These topics were my major research interests in the second year, partly because of my leadership role and research-driven interventions, and partly due to the member-initiated "coming-out" of several leaders and members, early in the second year.
Poststructuralisms/Postmodernisms and Feminisms

I sought others who had broken this theory-combining trail for me, and who had also included Poststructuralist ideas in their thinking. I found some in various disciplines: one entire volume of recent educational and community-based research, conducted in Australia (Angus, 1993); and several others. I then focused upon the relationships among these theories and my major topic, social identities in adolescence.

I distinguished between "Postmodern" and "Poststructural," and extended the understanding of "Feminism" to its many forms, settling on the form I followed most closely. Although I recognized the discrepancies and controversies within many disciplines regarding these terms, I had to choose which to use.

Poststructuralists view all social interactions as both determined by and created by language, while noting that social interactions create language (another "both/and" new paradigm move). The view I used, of social identities as both created by and involved in creating interactions in groups, followed this. Subjectivity is one component of these conceptions.

Subjectivity is a key concept in these and Critical theory frameworks, and is not conceived in exactly the same ways in each view. For some Poststructuralists, subjectivity as a theory explores the "ways of being an individual" (Weedon, 1987, p. 3). This exploration includes choices among many competing behaviors and values. However, since people dwell among already-existing institutions and messages, Critical


12 (Gavey, 1989), Lather (1992 & 1988), Sarup (1993), Tompkins (1988), and Weedon (1987) dealt with distinctions among these terms. I use "Postmodern" to refer to the times and practices, and "Poststructuralist" to refer to theories, as Gavey did (p. 472).
theory offers analyses of contexts: we must decide how to negotiate or reject the social roles offered to us (Giroux, 1993).

It is relevant to compare ideas about social identity using some Poststructural theories with particular Feminist slants. Both Weedon and Gavey explained their reasons for their theoretical combinations, and mine were similar. Gavey stated:

What feminist poststructuralism offers us is a theoretical basis for analyzing the subjectivities of women and men in relation to language, other cultural practices, and the material conditions of our lives. It embraces complexity and contradiction, and... surpasses theories that offer single-cause deterministic explanations of patriarchy and gender relations....[I]t also offers promising ways of theorising about change.... (Gavey, 1989, p. 472)

Remembering to focus on gender while analyzing social and political events is the contribution of Feminism; recognizing the importance of language and its impact on social construction, as well as the situational nature of all reality, are contributions of Poststructuralism. Poststructuralism exists, however, without social agendas, almost defiantly claiming that the multiple perspectives which exist make "truth" impossible, and prescriptions for social change therefore impractical.

Nonetheless, I used these theories to “identify areas and strategies for change” (Gavey, from above, p. 460), and to remember Critical theory’s contributions while creating these strategies. Before I detail some of these strategies, it is necessary to examine the ways I utilized these theories to view social identities. The models, ideas and critiques of social identity research and theories as viewed through these frameworks occur in several of the next sections.

Feminists, Critical Theory, and Social Change

Weiler used Lather’s work (1984, p. 55) to look at the difference between counter-hegemony and resistance:
“Resistance is ‘usually informal, disorganized, and apolitical,’ but counter-hegemony implies a more critical theoretical understanding and is expressed in organized and active political opposition” [italics hers]. (Weiler, 1988, p. 55)

I do not agree completely with the importance of this distinction, especially when guiding adolescents or others new to this theory. I see the significance of intentionally working for social change as opposed to being satisfied with working only to increase individual understanding. Both are necessary, and can, must, co-exist.

In her first chapter (pp. 27 - 56), Weiler examined different kinds of feminism, and located her own work in socialist feminism. I locate my own views similarly, with gratitude for her explanations of the limitations of liberal and radical feminisms. Liberal feminists believe that the status quo just needs adjusting, that equality between men and women is an achievable goal which will fix all the problems of sexism. Radical feminists believe that the patriarchal structures are hopelessly corrupt and must be abandoned. Socialist feminists emphasize the ways the existing system must be changed and search for ways both to change or create new systems and to change individuals, with a focus on economic injustices. Using Feminism as Weiler did, I explored the “complexity of consciousness and the existence of ideology and culture” (Weiler, p. 28). I also “investigated the social construction of gender” (p. 28) through these lenses. A Critical theory approach required that I recognize that social identities are deeply contextual, embedded in cultural and subcultural constructs, systems, attitudes, and values.

Combining Frameworks Easily (Theoretical Harmony)

Few other social identity researchers used a Critical theory framework in combination with Feminist ideas to explore social identity. I combined them in order to notice these instances in a larger realm, moving back and forth between the macro and the
micro views. This type of analysis is common only to some combinations of theories. Weedon (1987) eloquently presented the case for connecting these frameworks:

...I would argue the appropriateness of poststructuralism to feminist concerns, not as the answer to all feminist questions but as a way of conceptualizing the relationship between language, social institutions and individual consciousness which focuses on how power is exercised and on the possibilities of change. (Weedon, 1987, p. 19)

As I used aspects of Feminist Poststructuralism with Critical theory, I focused on “the possibilities of change” for educators and theorists, hoping to increase the potential for creating and living in a just world.

My agreements with Weedon's conceptions of a (p. 167) “plurality of meaning” grounded my work in Poststructuralism, and her recognition of the “specificity of women’s experience” kept me within Feminism. Using this stance as a position from which to analyze current social structures, particularly related to social identities, I looked at many practices of the co-constructions of both gender and sexual orientation identities in context, micro [in small or local groups, such as in the small groups of adolescents I studied] and macro (in Western culture). How have these practices appeared?

Capper (1992) using Weedon, acknowledged the ability we sometimes have to choose some social identities, while recognizing that our choices may be limited according to the identities to which we have access. Access is an important aspect of both Critical theory and Feminism, so it is interesting to note the appearance of it here as well. I used several of these questions to focus my data analysis (see Methodology and Analysis sections).

A few researchers and educators have turned to the interfacing between these identities, and examined the ways that adolescents and adults cope with the often conflicting demands placed upon them by discourses of gender and sexuality. Since those interfacing studies were my interest, I focused on those, but I also looked at others which viewed gender and/or sexual orientation from one or more of my theoretical
frameworks, and/or which particularly examined adolescents and/or females. I decided to concentrate on these studies rather than reviewing what had come before in all areas of these fields.

Davies (1993) and her research assistant, Banks, conducted a study of Australian elementary children’s reading and writing practices, within a Feminist Poststructuralist framework. Davies concluded:

> The male-female dualism and all the associated binary metaphors through which it is created, solidified, made natural, must be deconstructed, opened up towards the possibility of multiplicity. Such openings up must occur in language, in individual psyches and in the material and symbolic structures in which we are all embedded. (Davies, 1993, p. 200)

Social identities as multiple, rather than binary\(^\text{13}\), is not a concept which is easy for most of us to grasp. It probably would have been easier to do if we had been exposed to it as children. If we could have been in Banks and Davies’ study, we would be thinking more broadly today, and the “material and symbolic structures” of our lives would almost definitely look different.

West and Zimmerman (1991) used the same phraseology, “Doing Gender.” They distinguished between sex and gender, using ethnomethodological studies to guide their understandings. They saw “gender as a routine, methodical, and recurring accomplishment” (West & Zimmerman, 1991, p. 13). For them, “Doing gender involves a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine ‘natures’” (p. 14). In this way, gender can be seen “as an emergent feature of social situations” which includes both conventional role enactment and role “display,” according to Goffman and other earlier sociologists, and focuses on “behavioral aspects” rather than biological differences between women and men (p. 14).

West and Zimmerman went on to distinguish among *sex, sex category, and gender* [sic]. To summarize their distinctions:

*Sex* is a determination made through the application of socially agreed upon biological criteria for classifying persons as females or males....

Placement in a *sex category* is achieved through application of sex criteria... [and also] by the socially required identificatory displays [for each sex]....

*Gender*...is the activity of managing situated conduct in light of normative conceptions of attitudes and activities appropriate for one's sex category. (West & Zimmerman, 1991, p. 14)

They concluded, similarly to the Poststructuralists/Postmodernists: “Individuals have many social identities that may be donned or shed, muted, or made more salient, depending on the situation” (West & Zimmerman, 1991, p. 25). Furthermore, “a person’s gender is not simply an aspect of what is, but... something that one *does*, and does recurrently, in interaction with others” (p. 27). Therefore, in order not to reproduce existing power imbalances between men and women under patriarchy, I pursued social change “at the institutional and cultural levels of sex category and at the interactional level of gender” (p. 33).

Davies, on the other hand, devoted an entire chapter and parts of other ones to the dilemmas facing children regarding issues of sexuality and sexual orientation, and how these related to gendering themselves. She used the French writer, Cixous’ definition of “bisexuality... as the multiplication and inclusion of possibilities in oneself, a multiplication which is possible for those not caught up in the ‘false (dualistic) theatre of phallocentrism’” (Cixous, 1981, p. 254, qtd. in Davies, 1993, p. 110). I adopted a similar view of Bisexuality, after hearing and seeing the ways the teens in these groups lived their sexual orientation identities, and seeing that same "multiplication" in my own sexual and gender identities as well. This view makes it possible to see sexual orientation itself as a dynamic way to continually co-construct each of our varied relationships to gender, sexuality, and one another.
Davies and Banks found several students, such as one boy, Mark, who “resists and disrupts the dominant discourse by engaging with and taking on as his own aspects of femininity, femaleness” (Davies, 1993, p. 110). Mark “does not negate masculinity, [but] includes signifiers of femininity. It is this inclusion that leads others to position him as one who is marginal” (p. 112). However, Mark and others who “choose” gender marginality may not have to make that choice if all children and adolescents learn to deconstruct gender, and especially if (when!) the male-dominated, female-denigrating, patriarchal paradigms are disrupted and dismantled.

Catherine Chilman (1983) discussed adolescent sexual identity development in the categories of “personal, gender and sex.” She drew upon both Gilligan and Erikson, as well as other developmental theorists (Chilman, 1983, p. 23): “Adolescent sexuality involves the total individual in interaction with her/his environment at particular periods of time” (p. 25). She noted the complexities of factors, and contexts, rather than single ones, which must be taken into account by parents and leaders/educators who work with adolescents in order to be able effectively to assist them in dealing with this difficult passage successfully. One of the factors which determines success is understanding; one of the impediments to understanding is discourse membership (Gee, 1990).

The members of the AO groups developed their own discourse for handling a variety of adolescent and community issues, and this membership allowed them to develop many of their common understandings of these issues. I focused in my study on the ways their understandings of gender and sexual orientation identities developed, and the ways in which those identities were continually co-constructed, but any of their core issues would have made an interesting research focus.
Combining Frameworks Uneasily (Theoretical Discord)

Utilizing Poststructuralist theories, even with a Feminist slant, was not without its problems; yet the insights these offered made the resolutions, or at least the descriptions of the struggles, well worth undertaking. There were several overlapping ideas which proved useful to my research projects, from framing the choices of research methodology and its activities to analyzing and interpreting the project experiences. For example, Brodkey (1992) used Stuart Hall's concept of "articulation" (think Tinker Toys™ or Constructs™) and linked it to the construction of social identities:

By articulation, Hall means both utterance and connection... Discourses may well intend to construct social identities, but a theory of articulation... is needed to distinguish between hegemonic intentions and their uneven effects in practice. (Brodkey, 1992, p. 305)

In this view, each person's participation in the many discourses of his/her life can be marked by the ways these discourses intersect, much the way the joints of one's body connect the bones to each other. Hence, the metaphor of "articulation." With this construction, one's responses to "hegemonic intentions" are not predetermined; and, with each lived experience, the "uneven effects" of those cultural prescriptions and restrictions which we internalize, resist, or attempt to disregard all together (hegemony, counter-hegemony, liberation) must be individually and socially examined, since each "practice" offers new possibilities. The ways discourses intersect (in complementarity, discord, or re-inscription) greatly affect one's responses in each context (Brodkey, 1992).

Brodkey (and Hall) used articulation in much the same way as McCarthy (1988) used Emily Hicks' 1981 concept of "nonsynchrony" (McCarthy, 1988, p. 265). McCarthy defined nonsynchrony as that which examines both the "production of difference" and "the politics of difference" (p. 275). Nonsynchrony maintains an understanding of the dynamic rather than fixed nature of interacting "patterns of social stratification by race,
class, and gender [which] emerge not as static variables but as efficacious structuring principles that shape minority/majority relations in everyday life" (p. 275). Using a dynamic model of spheres, within each of which much activity occurs as experiences overlap and conflict, and among which there are overlaps and conflicts, nonsynchrony is three-dimensional, which is an improvement over the seeming two-dimensionality, or "flatness" of other models.

These types of conceptualizations helped me both to recognize multiple and changing memberships in discourses, and to extend that to viewing recognition of social identities themselves as mutable. Other researchers seemed to be on similar paths:

A youth's sense of personhood, self and future results from the interplay of the multiple contexts in which he or she moves.
(McLaughlin & Heath, 1993, p. 213)

But, as Lather (1988) observed, merely discovering ways for subordinate adolescents or adults to try out different discourse or subject positions is not enough to effect liberatory change:

Exchanging positions... does not disrupt hierarchy... The goal is difference without opposition and a shift from a romantic view of the self as unchanging, authentic essence to self as a conjunction of diverse social practices produced and positioned socially, without an underlying essence.... Such a relational non reductionist way of making sense of the world asks us to "think constantly against [ourselves]" (Jardine, 1985, p. 19) as we struggle toward ways of knowing which engage us in the pressing need to turn critical thought into emancipatory action.
(Lather, 1988, p. 577)

This constant reflexivity is part of the ongoing struggle of Feminists in many disciplines.

Other theoretical problems resided in the conflicts among my chosen frameworks. For example, using Critical theory to analyze and interpret research data and events places emphases on recognition of cultural prescriptions and their lived experiences in the project group members' lives. Many Critical pedagogues advocate that leaders and
teachers be "transforming intellectuals" (Giroux, 1993; Kincheloe, 1993), and that we attempt to educate in order to foster critical participation in our democracy. Critical theory has a particular perspective, and a social/political agenda.

Poststructuralists, conversely, while recognizing cultural influences, do not advocate any particular perspectives. We would deliberately avoid theory-driven goals. Our only "world view" is that there are many world views, all of which are plausible. Poststructuralism does not lend itself to researcher-led data analysis, but rather to multivocal presentations of the research. It is quite compatible with naturalistic ethnography, which seeks to present each participant's perspective in his/her own language, with equal weight given to each.

Socialist feminism offers me the swaying bridge across, or the shifting riverbed to hold, these seemingly disparate theories, with its foundation in Marxism, and therefore, in class-based analysis, yet with its continuing connection to Feminism. Socialist feminists view gender as one type of class. When examining class-based differences, founded on privilege and power imbalances, I waded in Critical theory's waters. Looking at sexual orientation and gender as categories of privilege and power from each participant's perspective, recognizing differences in agency and awareness of subjectivities among participants, and how these varied from contextual moment to moment, placed me as a swimmer in the Poststructuralist stream.

The search, in my case, for ways to describe adolescents' co-construction of social identities, while remembering that any descriptions created artificially static constructions, paralleled my desire to conduct research which was emancipatory, yet included all viewpoints. By engaging in Critical ethnographic research, or promoting Feminist prescriptions for social living, in order to "free individuals from the sources of domination and oppression" (Anderson, 1989, p. 249), however, worked against Poststructuralist tenets. Those principles made any social justice goals inappropriate.
These theoretical tensions are mirrored in the previously described physical science understandings of the distinctions among equilibrium, disequilibrium and nonequilibrium, brought to our awareness by the intersections of chemistry (Prigogine & Stengers, 1984, in Sampson, 1985) and social science. In using seemingly conflicting theories, which have different worldviews and contrasting principles, I mimicked the "waking up hypnons" (Sampson, 1985, p. 1209) that foster nonequilibrium, which in turn can foster creativity and change.

Theories and "Real-Life" with Adolescents

Social Identities and "Good" Groups

As mentioned earlier, aspects of Feminist Poststructuralist and Critical theories suggest that we co-construct our gender, sexual orientation, racial/ethnic, religious, and other categorical social groupings in every setting, in a variety of contexts. These theories depart from individualistic ideas of social identities by positioning identities as social phenomena; and, the theories reject linearity, stages, and other kinds of progressional, developmental models of identity changes in favor of four-dimensional, flexible, contextual identities.

We do not need to be aware of our implicit theories in order to interact in groups, to accept or reject social norms, to lead or to teach (hooks, 1995). However, making theories explicit, by discussing and understanding behaviors and language in broader ways, can support leaders and teachers as well as students/group members to interact more consciously and intentionally:

(Capper, 1992; Davies, 1993; Dyk & Adams, 1987; Gergen, 1985; Lather, 1992; Rust, 1993; Sophie, 1985/86; Weedon, 1987; West & Zimmerman, 1991)
[W]e need to emphasize the symbolic, signifying, and language dimensions of social interactions and their integral relationship both to systems of control and to strategies for emancipation. (McCarthy, 1988, p. 276)

Raised consciousness and heightened intentionality can foster individual, social, political and cultural transformation (Giroux, 1993; hooks, 1995; Sears, 1992b). However, the privileges enjoyed by members of dominant social groups will be challenged and eventually eradicated if this type of cultural transformation occurs. Then, we can expose "tolerance" for the paradox it is.

The tolerance promoted by liberals deteriorates rapidly when those same liberals lose their own higher status, which were founded in stratifications based upon race/ethnicity, social class, gender, sexual orientation, etc. Adolescents in my research groups were often willing to discuss imbalances in power when the power rested in adults vs. young people, but white, Heterosexually-privileged, male, middle- and upper-class adolescents particularly resisted critical thinking about social identity oppression when their own positions were interrogated, in AO as well as other contexts (diBenedetto, 1991). I found very few publications describing programs which intentionally created safe spaces and training in critical thinking needed for these discussions (diBenedetto, 1991).

Some groups and/or practices which did assist students or group members to go beyond acceptance or tolerance into social action showed how that path involves personal transformation\(^{15}\). These have been developed for both school and non-school groups. Activities used in these settings added to the body of pedagogical literature which uses a variety of interdisciplinary theories and praxis to educate students by raising their liberational consciousnesses (diBenedetto; Giroux, 1993; Kalantzis & Cope, 1985; Sears, 1992b). These "good" groups, however, are few; many more are needed.

\(^{15}\) (diBenedetto, 1991; McLaren, 1995; Nieto, 1992; Singerline, 1995; Unks, 1995b; Uribe, 1995)
Before further detailing of the literature, certain terms must be clarified. Since all language is socially constructed, we must agree for the duration of this thesis to understand my use of key terms.

**Language for Lay People**

Language is crucial to these types of analyses. Ironically, Gavey (1989) and others have recognized one of the major problems with using these frameworks: lots of people won’t understand us, since the language most theorists use is filled with jargon, “insider” talk, and dense conceptual sections, with few concrete examples (p. 471). This Charles Dickens-like type of writing, with page-long paragraphs, and sentences with multiple clauses, loses even the most seasoned academic readers at times (Richardson, 1990). “Academese” is particularly a problem with writers who use Critical and Poststructuralist theories.

Because I believe that it is a contradiction, as a feminist, to write primarily for a highly-educated and otherwise privileged audience, I tried to write in accessible language, and to “translate” dense terms and quotes. (See Appendix G, Critical Theory for Lay People; and Ember, 1995)

I sought to understand how others used Critical theory concepts, and how they would fit or clash with the Feminist and Poststructuralist ideas I chose. Earlier sections of this review detailed my discoveries in those areas. In the next section, I further explore other important concepts to this research, trying to keep the writing clear and succinct.
Other Key Terms

Interdisciplinary views of self, identity\(^{16}\), gender, and sexual orientation constructions are partially grounded in sociology, social psychology, education, psychology, anthropology, philosophy, and literature. Through my project, I defined, or created working models for each of these terms, based upon the participants' use and my own understandings. In a way, I had every right to do this; in a way, I had none:

In this context of generalized deterioration of authority, no one is left to speak convincingly of the self. Even within the professions claiming specialized knowledge of individual minds, internecine struggle prevails. (Gergen, 1991, p. 126)

Even the “experts” do not agree on many fundamental definitions or conceptions, and there is no Pope of Academe to make a decree. Standpoint Feminists (Butler & Scott, 1992; Jaggar & Struhl, 1978), Buddhists, and several other theorists have also made this clear: relativity of reality is not a new idea, yet it is one which most Westerners refuse to accept. We must, however, find a way to discuss these ideas, even if the definitions are slippery. Mutability of terminology must be acknowledged before we can admit how flexible social identities are. Translation: words change, definitions change, and this changing can lead to changeability in social identities, and/or it can become the basis for us to discuss the flexibilities which are already happening.

Two researchers, who focused more on sexual orientation than just self, saw:


\(^{16}\) underlined words are used in particular contexts in this proposal, and not necessarily in any "usual" sense.
Whether identity is viewed as hegemonically-driven (guided and restricted by internalized cultural prescriptions about behavior and self), or as something which is a choice, or as something solely determined by birth and social circumstances, we must discuss how identities may be formulated. Even if social pressures influence all of our choices, and our very perceptions of what choices we have, we do have some choices.

The various behaviors associated with choosing identity conceptions were a major focus of this project. What theories offered me as explanations for these behaviors, and interpretations of their consequences, were contested and fascinating. Recent issues of major USA magazines and newspapers (which have international distribution) "revealed" the social construction of "race," and exposed its nonbiological bases, as well as introduced (or reintroduced) the Bisexuality, Homosexuality, and blurred sexual orientation identities as "chic," in 1994, 1995, and 1996\textsuperscript{17}. The USA census is considering a new category, which would allow citizens to check multiracial, multiethnic, or mixed heritage in addition to or even instead of current "racial" categories. Disputes in areas which used to be considered "basic," or inarguable, demonstrated that the shift in paradigms was occurring.

Adolescents in Various Groups

Particularly obvious with adolescents but also true of adults, a lot of “experimenting” with social identities happens at many different times (Mancuso & Sarbin, 1983; Matteson, 1975). Sometimes it was difficult to determine, especially if group members verbalized personal sharing along with theatrical improvisations and role-playing, whether a participant was performing a character in a way which was quite different from “usual,” or expanding upon his/her range of self (Mancuso & Sarbin, 1983; \textsuperscript{17}(Cosmopolitan, Harper's Bazaar, Mademoiselle, New York magazine, The New Yorker, Newsweek, Rolling Stone magazine, Time, and USA Today)
McGuire & McGuire, 1982; Moreno, 1972). The view of identities as socially-coconstructed was especially pertinent in these instances.

It is often during reality overlaps that new understandings are reached.

[Postmodern consciousness begins when the borders between the “dramatic” and “real” world grow thin, and the constructed character of both are revealed. (Gergen, 1991, p. 135)

It becomes unnecessary, as well as impossible, to make certain distinctions about the self at these “thin borders,” since the co-constructions of the self in all of its versions interested me.

Because of my awareness of "the constructed character of both," I believed concretely in the Postmodern concepts that allow us to have different, yet authentic, presentations of self which are totally contextual. It was therefore important to examine the context, the micro and macro sites, for signs of the individuals' and the group's struggles among the many discourses of identity. At the points where “postmodern consciousness begins” (Gergen, 1991, p. 135) it is likely that the self is co-constructed by the roles one performs, and the reactions one receives to the performances of those roles (Miller, 1983). Since I studied two groups in which theatre roles as well as social roles were frequently performed and enacted, I had multiple opportunities to explore these co-constructions of the selves of the participants.

Living at this philosophical cusp, we are constantly negotiating our social identities and the roles we choose to live from among these identities, all within the cultural constraints and pressures of oppression based upon social categorization and dominance by members of particular categories. These "choices" are both free and restricted, simultaneously. This struggle is observable with gender roles (Weedon, 1987).

Whether we label this experience one of negotiation, co-construction, or struggle, it is central to our lives. No one can elude this struggle by being aware, intelligent, or lucky, especially women:
In patriarchal societies we cannot escape the implications of femininity. Everything we do signifies compliance or resistance to dominant norms of what it is to be a woman....Not all resistance is conscious. (Weedon, 1987, pp. 86-7)

The “implications of femininity” affect everyone, not just those of us socially living as females (Bomstein, 1994). The ways gender and sexual orientation roles and identities intersect relate to the ways sexist and heterosexist oppressions impact us all (Bornstein, 1994; Pharr, 1988; Stoltenberg, 1989).

Weedon stated that many types of discourses, or social and language communities, could assist us to discover more about these interrelationships.

Feminist poststructuralist criticism can show how power is exercised through discourse, including fictive discourse, how oppression works and where and how resistance might be possible. (Weedon, 1987, p. 172)

She explained the importance of understanding social and institutional power and their influences on identity. But, Weedon recognized that we should not be restricting our search for understanding these dynamics to “real life,” since movies, books, and theatre offer a myriad of ways for us to learn about identity, power, and ourselves. The theatre activities in ALWAYS ON groups were examples of ways to explore these dynamics.

Just as we all learn about the ways we are socially created, we could learn to think and feel differently than the hegemonic messages would have us think about who each of us "is," and how “permanent” that self is.

We come to be aware that each truth about ourselves is a construction of the moment, true only for a given time and within certain relationships. (Gergen, 1991, p. 16)

Flexibility in social identities, and not just one's psychological identity, is not yet a common view. Perhaps this project can help develop that view further. (For a review of
the ideas common to most social identity theories, see: Abrams and Hogg, 1990, esp. Ch. 1 and 2.)

Paradigms and Practice

The ideas presented here for understanding social identity are significantly political and inherently social in their applications (Giroux, 1993; Kincheloe, 1993; Sears, 1992b). Using theory to change practice, then practice to change theory, reflexively, creates possibilities for analysis and support among practitioners and theorists (Lather, 1992).

Viewing sexual orientation identity as belonging on a continuum, or as intersecting, four-dimensional, moving spheres, rather than as existing in one of two or three distinct categories, works well with Feminist Poststructuralist thought, but not all Feminists or Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual activists would concur with nonlinear conceptualizations. Can we hold theories about aspects of people's lives which some of the people most affected do not also hold? It could easily be construed as another type of oppression, to analyze others' lives without their cooperation. I will deal with these dilemmas later in this paper, by discussing how I handled these conflicts when they arose.

If one takes a social justice stance within these theoretical frameworks (even though Poststructuralists would disavow that stance), it is necessary to acknowledge the social construction of race while fighting racism; similarly, it is crucial to combat heterosexism and homophobia while recognizing that these categories are not fixed, and, in some ways, are fictional (Bornstein, 1994).

Even though there is no such thing as biological race, there is obviously racism based upon this misconception, and racism must be combatted regardless of the nonreality of race. Sexual orientation and gender identities may be fluid, or more fluid than many suppose, or may be inherited, or may be both. Regardless of the disputes
about the origins and influences on these identities, the oppressions based upon assumptions about our identities are quite real and must be ended.

In the next section, I will briefly mention some of the well-known theories and researchers in sexual orientation and gender identities. However, since many of them were helpful as historical positions only, I will not discuss these in depth.

**Key Social Identity Research**

**Significant Sexual Orientation Identity Studies**

Stages have been a useful way for Modernists to describe identity, since development is partially or completely assumed to be linear and progressional (Cass, 1979; Chapman & Brannock, 1987; Troiden, 1984). In his most three-dimensional metaphor, Troiden (1989) changed from “steps” to “a horizontal spiral, like a spring lying on its side” (borrowing from McWhirter and Mattison, 1984), but still focused on “progress through the stages,” this time in “back-and-forth, up-and-down ways.” He did see that “the characteristics of the stages overlap and recur in somewhat different ways for different people,” but he retained the idea of progress (Troiden, 1989, pp. 47 - 48).

This and other models could connect to, or recognize, social construction of identity in a few ways. First, we would want to include discussions of context within each stage. Determining what factors, such as time, place, discourse membership, access to power, religion, etc., that influence one’s awareness of being a sexual minority, one’s ability to deal with incongruities, one’s willingness to explore or self-question, and finally one’s readiness to self-identify would be important.

We would be likely to change our positioning, our *subjectivity*, within these phases depending upon our local contexts. Looking at other research with this in mind, the following models caught my attention.
Sexual Orientation Identity Models in Several Paradigms

Many theorists used both Modernist and Poststructuralist views in their writing and thinking (Garza & Herringer, 1987; Kahn, 1991; Suppe, 1984). But the “multidimensional approach” just rearranged the already-known, rather than looking into new areas, or looking at identity in new ways. Social constructionism isn’t always Postmodern, as Ochs (1993) and Rust (1993) illustrated.

Rust stated:

Sexual identity formation must be reconceptualized as a process of describing one’s social location within a changing social context. Changes in sexual identity are, therefore, expected of mature individuals as they maintain an accurate description of their position vis-à-vis other individuals, groups and institutions. (Rust, 1993, p. 50)

Rust not only understood the ways context determines one’s “social location,” but also that one’s location, or social identities themselves, will change as interactions with others occur through one’s life.

Coleman (1987) used Kinsey’s Scale (from 1948), and then Klein’s (from 1985) to create an expanded Sexual Orientation Grid (Coleman, 1987, pp. 10 - 14) which allowed him to discuss a more comprehensive view of Homosexual identities. Coleman argued: “The labels homosexual, bisexual, and heterosexual seem meaningless when one understands the complexity of sexual orientation” (p. 23). He invited us to use “predominantly” before any label, if labels must be used, and encouraged counselors to assist their clients to “self-define” (p. 23). Since “variations and combinations of physical, gender, sex-role, and sexual orientation identity” exist in all people, if we

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recognize and validate this, we will all be better able to “further [our] overall sexual identity development and satisfaction” (Coleman, 1987, p. 23).

Like Coleman, Sophie (1985/6) critiqued some of the social identity stage theories, focusing on Lesbian identity development. But, she, too, saw development as a “process,” albeit one which was “very sensitive to the social/historical context” (Sophie, 1985/6, pp. 39 & 50), so the rest of her critique is not relevant to this review.

In the next section are a few educators, social activists and researchers who have been trying to see beyond "progress," to live outside of social norms. They, as I, attempted to study, or project alternative ways to live gender and sexual orientation identities.

Socialization, Social Construction, and "Outlaws"

Sapon-Shevin and Goodman (1992) looked at the “sexual scripting” which they believe occurs for boys and girls in this culture. They firmly believed in education for social justice, wanting to change this “oppressive society and reallocate[e] power and resources” through these programs and these changes (p. 104). They, and Simon and Gagnon (1984), who also wrote about sexual scripting, did not ever use a Poststructuralist view of identity, but the work they were doing was nonetheless important, and valuable to my research. For example, the types of dialogue analysis they have inspired some of my own data analysis of the group discussions, to investigate how aspects of sexual scripting may have been operating among members.

Fonow and Marty (1992) used Feminist analysis to examine women’s lives, and “the significance of sexuality to our understanding of [them]” (Fonow & Marty, 1992, p. 157). They used the “constructionist perspective,” also “borrowing insights from postmodern feminism” (pp. 157 - 158). They wanted Lesbians, and Lesbianism “to transcend descriptive categorization,” and to do this by “naming and defining their own
lives" (p. 164), including themselves, since they both identified as Lesbians. They wanted all “claims to exclusive normality” to be dispelled, or to begin to include people of all sexual identities, and they used several curricular moves in their classrooms to accomplish this with their students (p. 165). Yet, they remained in social constructionist territory, while still trying to “deconstruct sexual identity” (p. 167).

Sears (1992b) believed that some of the socialization theories, which see gender as constructed through social learning, are inadequate “to explain the issue of gender identity and its relationship, if any, to sexual identity” (p. 140). Sears did agree that “boys and girls have distinctive gendered, sexual scripts” (p. 141) which change as adolescence is experienced. And, he recognized the cultural specificity of these scripts, releasing gender from any essential categorization.

But, Sears, like many Critical theorists, believed that we have more agency, more ability to act, that we are not passively socialized, even if we are acted upon by social forces. Looking at the interweavings of class, ethnicity, regional and other identities with gender and sexual identities, Sears noticed:

> While the intersection of social class, race, gender and sexuality vary for each person, their existence and importance within our culture are social facts with negative social consequences for those who do not share membership in the dominant groups. (Sears, 1992b, p. 143)

For those who are marginalized, Sears recognized this: “Self-identified lesbians, bisexuals, and Gay men who challenge gender roles are the cultural bandits of the New Age” (Sears, 1992b, p. 144). We bandits steal cultural privileges by challenging stereotypes and human typing itself. He said those of us who bend gender or sexuality “rules” are the ones who “threaten the social order” (p. 144), a claim that Bornstein (1994) would share. The assumptions about who and what constitutes masculinity and maleness are the measures for all polarized positions and privileges within patriarchy (Pharr, 1988).
Sears realized, however, that individual, privatized choice for same-sex partners “does little to end heterosexist society” (Sears, 1992b, p. 145). He wanted sexuality education in public and private schools to be one of the vanguards of social change, so that adolescents may be able to “explore questions about power and ideology in society” (p. 145).

Sears inspired me in my work with groups of adolescents, and with teachers and leaders of adolescents. The conceptual frame he used to discuss social identity was Modernist, using quotes from other researchers such as one about “inner selves” (Sears, 1992b, p. 145), to show this. Yet, later he listed the questions sexuality curricula ought to be asking, and why. There, he showed his Poststructural leanings:

There is a great need for a healthy, frank, and honest depiction of the fluidity of sexual behavior and the arbitrariness of sexual identities.... The fluidity of human sexual response and the capacity of people to create and recreate their sexual identities are integral components of a critical sexuality curriculum. (Sears, 1992b, p. 146)

He wanted educators to “challenge categorical thinking” and to integrate sexuality education throughout the entire curriculum (pp. 151 - 151).

Bornstein, a transsexual author, performer, lecturer and playwright, in her recent book, Gender Outlaw: On men, women and the rest of us (1994), asked several startling questions of her readers, to critically interrogate ideas of gender. Here are a few, from her chapter, "The Other Questions":

1. Where does Gender come from? Where does it keep coming from?
2. Can there be an equality between genders?
3. Just how integral is gender to culture?
4. Is androgyny desirable or attainable?
5. What is the source of gender's power?
6. How do people become gendered?
7. How does gender relate to identity?

...  
9. How does gender relate to power?

11. What about the cultural exploitation of transgendered people?
12. Is there a role for the transgendered in this culture?
Her questions inspired some of the discussion-after-role-play questions I posed when I co-led the Encore group, and some of the members created role-plays which they believed (and we leaders agreed) were much more thoughtful and insightful after these discussions.

Sears (1992a & b) believed that more openness on the parts of faculty, staff and students about current and historical sexual lives, with all of the concomitant diversity, could only help to disrupt the stranglehold heterosexist thinking and its dominance have on our society.

Research and Activism

Despite potential and actual professional difficulties, educators and researchers such as Sears and myself continue to investigate and interrogate social identities. One sexologist wrote:

Looking for diversity rather than for laws of behavior, trying to understand how others see the world rather than slotting people into preconceived categories — these goals are better suited to open-ended, interpretive types of approaches. Anyone attracted to this work must go beyond experimental methods of psychology to aspects of phenomenology, participant observation, experiential research, and different forms of groupwork and interviews. (Tiefer, 1995, pp. 63 - 64)

As an activist, Tiefer's words supported my decision to do this research as an activist with this statement: "If you are committed to social betterment, you must take action; analysis alone is insufficient" (p. 96). And, even though sexuality alone was not my focus, Tiefer's support helped in that area as well:
A feminist vision of sexuality, recognizing the importance of social context for facilitating or limiting women's experience, would focus on sexuality as it occurs within cultures and relationships. (Tiefer, 1995, p. 114)

I would add that men's experiences would also benefit from a contextual focus, and that is what I utilized in my research with ALWAYS ON groups. Tiefer's work, in addition to supporting many of my endeavors, also utilized Postmodernism (her term) with Feminism and Critical theory to analyze many social events and sexology research. I read these essays during the second year of my field research, and they were very helpful.

Two other books of essays published in 1995 (D'Augelli & Patterson; and Unks, 1995a), as mentioned earlier, additionally gave me the boosts I needed by offering, in several articles, the information that my research was unique and necessary.

The Topics of Safety and Connection in this Project

As noted in several sections of this thesis, I decided to focus upon the topics of gender and sexual orientation after I noted that the members of the Premiere group involved themselves in these topics fairly often. This involvement was borne out during the Encore year as well, and during both years, the two major influences upon the co-constructions of these identities became apparent: safety and connection.

Safety and connection, as such, are not used in most research and theoretical literature. However, many related and similar terms and concepts do appear, and must be examined in order to demonstrate how the concepts which were operationalized in this project related to already-existing concepts.

During this part of the Review, I give the definitions I decided to use for safety and connection. I also present research and theories which discussed the influences of the presence or absence of interpersonal safety and connection upon identity
development, particularly for adolescents, and specifically for gender and sexual orientation identities co-constructions.

Later, in the Findings, I give examples of the ways these topics appeared in my data as well as the ways these topics can be grounded in previous research, further clarifying the ways I found and defined safety and connection in this project.

Definitions of Connection and Safety

Computer searches using the terms safety and connection yielded nothing related to the conceptualizations ALWAYS ON members had co-created. Therefore, I utilized synonyms and related terms, which are detailed below.

Terminology for the Concept of Connection. Connection appeared in the literature as several terms. "Intimacy"\textsuperscript{19}, "...interdependence, acceptance..., openness, and self-disclosure" (Adams & Archer, 1994, p. 197), or concepts related to these, along with "friendship" and "closeness," were the most common. Some researchers created typologies, others developed assessments; some did or used both.

Adams and Archer created ways to assess "intimacy," and labeled these five levels, from "isolate," which was a "withdrawn and marginally-involved person with few or no personal relationships," to "intimate," which was someone who had "formed deep relationships that include[d] enduring commitment" (p. 196). They determined, based on earlier research by Archer, et al., in 1989, that "...the intimate \textit{sic} class represents individuals who are seeking or maintaining a romantic relationship," and that these individuals' qualities include "maturity, interdependence, acceptance of others for who they are as individuals, openness, and self-disclosure" (p. 197). For AO members, I did not find that the pursuit or maintenance of intragroup romantic relationships was

\textsuperscript{19}(Adams & Archer, 1994; Patterson, Sochting, & Marci, 1992; Shantz & Hobart, 1989; Shulman, 1995b)
necessarily always concurrent with closeness (out of both groups, there was only one "couple"), but in many situations, in other contexts, they could be. Yet, in other aspects, many members of AO exhibited "intimate" qualities in relationships with other members, and to the group as a whole. More females than males actually discussed these connections, and I offer some explanations for that in the next Chapter.

Patterson, et al., (1992) focused their research on women and identity, and their work encouraged my understanding of the relationships between identity development, especially gender, and interpersonal connection. They found that "[several researchers] suggest that women construct identity not as an elaboration of individual autonomy, but within a context of connection to others.... The self-in-relation operates and is defined in terms of important interpersonal relationships" (p. 20). They further stated: "...issues of identity and intimacy seem to blend and merge for women. It appears that women's experiences of loving and being loved are integral to their sense of themselves" (p. 21). In this same section, they claimed: "...interpersonal relatedness is central to the process of identity formation, and therefore to the meaning of identity itself" (p. 21). I found strong support in their work for my interpretations of my data: "A logical next step in identity research is to operationalize the dimension of interpersonal connection to identity formation" (p. 22). Furthermore, support for development of new theory, and for doing participant/observation and ethnographic research as methods for accomplishing this "next step" appeared in this chapter: "The next challenge may be to write theory that is conscious of its own social origins... and to employ a methodology that illuminates the context of observations" (p. 22).

"Connectedness" was the term used by Shantz & Hobart (1989), and defined as "establishing and maintaining satisfactory relationships with other people, that is, to be and to feel loved and accepted by others, to be a competent member of the group" (p. 87). They also discussed the role of connectedness in helping participants to "develop mutual
understanding, interpersonal sensitivity, and intimacy" (p. 87). This most closely resembled what occurred among members of my research groups.

In earlier work, Shulman (1993) used Selman's typing of "intimacy" (1988), which characterized the highest level of intimacy as one in which friends could "incorporate each other's experiences and disclosures for a better mutual understanding of themselves and their relationship" (pp. 68 - 69). Shulman, in this work, stated that there were "crucial components of [adolescents'] friendships," and that these were "self-disclosure, openness, and affection," with the "sharing of intimate feelings' (p. 55). Shulman (1995b) later defined "closeness" as "intimacy and self-disclosure" (p. 112). He used Selman's 1980/1990 scale, from 0 - 3, for a hierarchy of friendship. In this, a "3" included "mutual interest, collaborative relationship," while a "2" included "cooperation for self-interest" (p. 114). Shulman then labeled two types of close friendships: "interdependent" and "disengaged"; and, three models: "avoidant," "adequate," and "secure," with respect to reciprocity (pp. 120 - 121). In later work, he expanded upon this model (1995a). A "graph" of the development of interpersonal connection in AO groups, among some members, could illustrate this sequential hierarchy and typology well.

Another term often used was "friendship."\(^{20}\) Many other researchers looked at friendship, but I focused upon those who studied adolescents, older children, or young adults whenever possible.

Berndt described a case study, of two adult women, which was "based on the disclosure of intimate information in an atmosphere of trust and understanding" (pp. 89-90). He claimed that this type of relationship was more common among girls/females than boys/males, and this type of friendship, "tend[ed] to be more stable over time" (p. 106). While I agree that in "typical" contexts unchallenged and hegemonically-enacted gender roles would illustrate this, in AO groups, members of both sexes achieved this types of closeness, or friendship.

Selman & Schultz (1990) discussed their typology of friendship as having four levels, from 0 - 4 (which seemed like five levels to me). Their highest level, "Interdependent Understanding of Friendship," included "closeness, trust and collaboration" (pp. 11 - 14). This quite nearly coincides with the ways AO members seemed to co-construct the concept of connection, as I show in later sections.

Bukowski, et al., (1993) developed a "Friendship Qualities Scale" which had five dimensions: "security" meant one could rely on and trust one's friend; "closeness" included "affection, or 'specialness." "Companionship," "help or support," and "conflict" were the other three (pp. 33 - 34). Security and closeness were the focus of this study, because Bukowski, Hoza, and Boivin and other researchers whose work they drew upon (Furman & Robbins, 1985), believed that these relationship aspects were unique to friendships. This study was one in which security, which I interpreted as akin to safety, was analyzed in conjunction with closeness, or connection, in ways similar to those I have incorporated.

"Interdependence," in some cases used interchangeably with "closeness" (Selman & Schultz, 1990), was defined by Berscheid (1986) as including four properties of the impact individuals in close relationships can have on one another: "frequent ...strong ...diverse ...[and of a long] duration [sic]" (p. 138). Members of AO groups often had all four types of impact upon one another, especially "duration" for members of the Encore group.

Parker and Gottman (1989) discussed components of adolescent friendship as "self-disclosure, openness, and affection" (p. 120), drawing upon several studies to support this claim. They linked interpersonal connections, or friendship, as critically important to the process of adolescent self-definition. They also distinguished between acceptance and friendship [sic] in this way: "acceptance" included group attitudes and feelings toward an individual; "friendship" was "dyadic," and therefore involved different social skills for each (p. 97).
I disagree with this distinction. For AO group members, both acceptance and friendship were ongoing parts of their interrelationships, and therefore the social skills they developed overlapped almost completely. Selman & Schultz (1990) seemed to agree with me, since they stated: "Closeness at any level involves a balance of intimacy and autonomy processes" (p. 258). Furthermore, either/or dichotomization is not the way I see relationships; balancing, overlapping, and simultaneous co-occurrence more closely describe my perspective on factors which affect and co-construct connection.

Many of the studies I reviewed did not discuss race/ethnicity, social class, religions, or other social identities interacting with or being relevant to their study topics. I believe the exclusion of the interrelating of social identities weakens these studies' conclusions and the usefulness of their potential applications.

Connection, developed through my reading and my research in AO groups, became a concept in which I included many of these aspects: intimacy (although not necessarily romantic), closeness, friendship (although not necessarily dyadic), interdependence, commitment, affection and/or love, acceptance, understanding, sensitivity to one another, and desire for emotional and/or physical contact. Openness and self-disclosure, or sharing of feelings and/or experiences, are also important components, and these overlapped with safety quite often.

In later sections, I discuss the importance of fostering connection among adolescents, and its varied impact upon identity development. Next, I discuss some definitions and alternate terms for safety which appeared in the Literature I reviewed.

Terminology for the Concept of Safety. As already mentioned, "security" was one term which appeared to have similar definitions as interpersonal safety in some of the Literature (Bukowski, et al., 1993). "Trust," "feeling comfortable," and "acceptance" also occurred in several contexts to be similar to safety (Berndt, 1994; Selman & Schultz, 1990; Shantz & Hobart, 1989), while "intolerance," "rejection," or "disliking" were used
in many cases as opposing concepts. Several researchers often coupled certain terms together, such as "security and closeness" (Bukowski, et al., 1993), or "intimacy and trust" (examples of this in many places), and this coupling further seemed to support my understanding of the significance of the relationship between safety and connection in AO group experiences.

Drawing upon the literature, as well as the AO members' uses of this term, I decided to define safety as a concept which included freedom from intentional harm, either physical or emotional, and trust that this freedom from harm was intentionally and continually fostered by the group leaders and members. Also, as stated above, openness and self-disclosure could be evidence of a sense of safety and connection together.

Respect was also an important component of this concept in AO groups, but I could not find direct examples of this inclusion in the literature I reviewed. More often, I found that respect was implied or related, but not named as such.

Although I did not set out to "prove" the relationships among interpersonal safety, connection, and identity development in adolescents, much of the literature I reviewed supported this claim. The next section examines some of this support.

Safety and Connection as Influences on Identity Development

Several research projects examined the ways some strong and positive types of interpersonal connection, along with conditions which I call safety, enhanced individuals' ego and/or social identity development. In this section, I briefly present some of these researchers' conclusions, as they relate to my project.

Influences on Ego and Social Identity Development. I use the word "development" because the researchers whose work I cite used it. Because I consider
these identity development phenomena to be social processes of co-construction I use those terms as well.

Regarding connection, Adams and Archer (1994) used others' work to create this conclusion: "[G]reater relationship maturity is associated with greater capacity for communion (versus agency), blends of masculinity and femininity (androgyny), and higher ego-development functioning" (p. 197), all of which they considered to be positive qualities. Definitions of "higher ego-development functioning" are contested, however, especially by Carol Gilligan's and the Stone Center's works. Nevertheless, the presence of ego-stability, the absence of psychosis, and the ability to communicate are agreed upon by most researchers in Western models to be signs of a healthy ego. But even healthy people need support.

Berndt (1994) cited previous research (including his own) to note the assistance that interpersonal connections can provide all of us: "[M]any researchers have argued that intimate friendships provide children, adolescents, and adults with social support that helps them cope effectively with life stress (Berndt, 1989; Cohen & Wills, 1985; Sarason & Sarason, 1985)" (p. 104). Furman and Gavin (1989) cited literature in many subdisciplines, particularly sociometry, to support their claim about peer connections for children and youth: "[I]nteractions or relationships with peers influence development and adjustment" (p. 319). By this they meant positively influence, but the nature of "adjustment" is also contested, again by Feminists, but also by Poststructuralists, Critical theorists, and by members of various minority groups. This is too complex an issue to delve into deeply here, so I will continue with contestations later. For this section, I and others use "normal" in quotes.

Garrod, Smulyan, Powers, and Kilkenny (1992) believed, though I do not, in the idea of a "true self," but many of their ideas about adolescent identity are relevant here. They described the range of experiences which they believed are part of "normal adolescent development," such as: "a variety of family structures, sexual experimentation
and orientation, and ethnic and racial exploration..." (p. 4). To that list, I would add
gender exploration. Regarding the effects of situations and connections upon
development, they stated:

An alternative perspective on the process of identity development in
adolescence, then, focuses on the examination of the individual in
context..... [This is] a process of renegotiating relationships, [and]
redefining oneself in relation to individuals and social groups... of which
one is a part. (Garrod, et al., 1992, p. 16)

Many other researchers would agree, as one stated, that identity is
"developmental, ...contextual,... and 'lifespan' in scope..." (Grotevant, 1992, p. 75;
Heath & McLaughlin, 1993a; Heath & McLaughlin, 1993b; Markstrom-Adams, 1992;
McKinney, 1994). Looking at the ways relationships can affect identity development,
Hartup (1986) discussed the reciprocity of change which occurs for individuals in
relationships: "Causation [of changes] thus extends simultaneously from relationships to
individuals as well as from individuals to relationships" (p. 3). This is especially accurate
in long-term relationships, or within recurring groups, such as those in AO.

One aspect of the context in which identity develops is cultural. Irvine (1994b)
stated unequivocally: "Research that ignores the salience of culture renders invisible the
experiences of most adolescents" (p. 7). I would add, "and most people" to that
statement. She particularly focused her edited volume upon sexualities, some of which I
cite in later sections of this review (Whately, 1994). Regarding culture, however, Irvine
used a poststructuralist understanding of culture. She saw culture as having:

inherent contradictions and tensions....Cultural analysis, therefore, must be
multiple and dynamic, rather than static....Cultural definitions such as
race, gender, and sexual identity must be recognized as social categories,
not biological variables. (Irvine, 1994b, p. 9)
She later stated, in support of the variability of both identity and self:

The myth of the stable, true, and unitary self ...has eroded....Cultural analysis, therefore, must always account for the tensions and anxieties inherent in the multiplicities, intersections, and ambiguities of identities. (Irvine, 1994b, p. 10)

Raymond (1994) shared this poststructuralist view of identities, again focusing upon adolescent sexuality and culture. Recognizing that all interpretations must be cultural constructs does not mean that we do not interpret. Rather, we who do this work designate our biases, personal and cultural theories, and influences as clearly as possible.

Regarding identity, Raymond stated "cultural baggage is inescapable; one is not creating anew but in reaction to [sic]" (p. 143). Some of the inspirations for some reactions are found in one's interpersonal connections.

Raymond also discussed the futility of isolating any aspect of social identity from others:

...any [sic] attempt to isolate some aspect of identity — whether it be race, gender, class, or ethnicity—is doomed to failure because it must inevitably covertly normalize some other variable. As that buried, unarticulated variable is naturalized and made normative, so is the highlighted category forever consigned to deviant status and our account of it flawed and incomplete.... (Raymond, 1994, pp. 117 - 118)

So, despite the seeming separation occurring in this and other sections of this thesis, in practice and interpretation, all identities interact, and I attempt to analyze both the identities "alone" as well as in interaction with one another.

In using these and other poststructuralist ideas about both culture and identity, I co-created, with the AO members, ideas about the ways their identities were contextually co-constructed within AO group meetings. The examinations of how this occurs, and of what major influences exist which may be seen to affect these co-constructions, were named as a research gap, but some addressed some aspects of this, such as language use (Remlinger, 1994). Parker and Gottman (1989) saw "a pressing need for research that
directly links developmental changes in [young people's friendships] to normative changes in [their]...expected roles, self-perceptions, and concerns" (p. 126). I question what "norms" would be part of these "normative" changes in later sections. However, it remains probable that, whatever the norms, friendships' links to children's developmental changes are important to examine.

Looking at relationships and how they can affect development in children, Shantz and Hobart (1989) saw the role of social conflict as positive and growth-enhancing, when occurring in the context of connected peers and/or siblings. They believed conflict, when "constructive" (which they defined as mediated, safe, and nonrepetitive), had a role in "fostering both the self's individuation and social connectedness" (p. 72). Even if individuation is not agreed upon as the sole positive goal for one's ego development, it is nonetheless one of many types of autonomy which occurs with healthy maturity.

Although it is inappropriate and impossible to separate social identities from one another, in practice we must do so in order to discuss each one in some depth. Knowing that each is inextricably intertwined with the others, I move on to look first at gender, then sexual orientation, and what safety and connection may have to do with their co-constructions in some adolescents.

Influences of Safety and Connection on Gender Identity Development. It is often difficult to extricate gender even partially from sexual orientation identities, particularly if the individual deviates from the mainstream in one or both identities (Turner & Sterk, 1994a, many sections). The influences on an individual's self-understanding, co-constructions, and enactments of identities are myriad. In this section, I review several researchers' work who concurred with my understandings of the influences of interpersonal connections and a sense of safety in those identity experiences.

Bieri and Bingham (1994) looked at gender roles in adolescents. Their claims were radical and somewhat discomfiting. In their review of research, they concluded:
Unchecked, traditional sex-role behaviors are associated with a shorter life expectancy of as much as seven years [for males] (p. 143). They also determined that “…current definitions of [the male] gender role damage individuals, relationships, and society…” (p. 145). If it is crucial for women and girls that males change their relationship to masculinity in many cultures (looking at domestic violence and violence against women by men), it now appears it is also significantly better for men’s health and well-being to be less "macho." What are the ways that young males could be encouraged to become less invested in the masculinity hegemony?

Eccles and Bryan (1994) found that the contexts in which adolescents live is quite significant regarding their gender role development. Unfortunately, not many programs such as ALWAYS ON exist. These researchers stated: "[T]he social milieu necessary to support movement into the postconventional level [of gender role social development] is not part of the life space of many people in [USA modern] culture" (p. 121). They further discussed explanations and examples of political socialization for adolescents: an atmosphere of confronting new beliefs and offering support for changes leads to shifts in attitudes, and they cited several studies to support this claim. Some of these studies demonstrated that the ability to choose to live non-traditional gender roles shows that this capacity is related to the strength of social support for the choice. The strength of social support could be a combination of two factors: the strength of the individuals' connections to others who support their choices; and, their access to a safe or secure context in which to discuss these choices, or to try out these nontraditional gender roles.

The importance of the context or atmosphere is described in Gonsiorek's research on adolescents' mental health, particularly those who identify as Gay or Lesbian (1993). He noted: "Adolescents are frequently intolerant of differentness in others and may castigate or ostracize peers, particularly if the perceived differentness is in the arena of sexuality or sex roles" (p. 473).
Groups which offer safety and strong connections, according to Heath (1995), increase the ability of members to tolerate difference. In fact, Heath stated:

Groups, ranging from professional affiliations to local youth recreational associations, offer protection of one sort or another and socialize their members into patterns of behavior, language use, and value systems that work for the benefit of individual members and, more vaguely, for the benefit of the group as a whole or for a particular cause or enterprise espoused by the group. (Heath, 1995, p. 125)

Her work with minority youth included extended ethnographic research on a variety of topics, mostly related to social identities. Investigating the factors which can coalesce or divide groups, she found the absence or presence of intragroup social support to be a major influence. Since gender is one of the most problematic identities for adolescents individually and in their relationships, the impacts of having or lacking support, or connection, are important to investigate when looking at gender identity development (Raskin & Waterman, 1994).

As mentioned earlier, the idea that there are only two choices for gender identity is not universal nor uncontested. In addition to the authors and researchers whose work I have already cited (Bornstein, Pharr, Stoltenberg), Hollos' study of adolescent sexuality in four societies, at seven field sites, across recent and current periods of time, is relevant here. He, using others' work as well, stated:

The degree of polarity between genders is also varied.... In some cultures there are more than two viable gender roles, which need not be limited to sex.... (Hollos, 1994, p. 66)

Not only can gender vary in more than two categories, but sexual orientation is viewed by many as having more than three choices.

Money (1980), a well-known anthropologist who worked with Margaret Mead, studied these issues with and after working with Mead. His conclusions and ideas were not all equally useful, nor struck me as equally valid, but some are worth noting here.
"The male/female dichotomy is not, in fact, an absolute one" (p. 133); "Sex stereotyping or sex-coding is a product of a frequently arbitrary cultural history" (p. 142); and, "Sex-coding applies to demeanor, manners, and etiquette in the everyday social interaction of males and females ...[and] is to a large extent arbitrary and capricious [in its aspects]" (pp. 142 - 143).

The sacrosanctity of polarized gender has been eroding quickly in some circles. For example, Irvine (1994b) created a sex/gender system with "nine major axes of constructed domains within a particular sex/gender system" (p. 11). These nine axes are:

- gender relations
- sexual identities
- reproductive strategies and behavior
- sexual language and public discourse
- the role of the family
- nonreproductive sexuality
- the purpose of sex and the role of pleasure
- knowledge and meaning of the body
- sexual violence. (Irvine, 1994b, p. 11)

Other researchers (Shively and De Cecco, 1993) posited four components of "sexual identity: biological sex, gender identity, social sex-role, and sexual orientation," with "social sex-role" defined as including one's "femininity and masculinity" (p. 80). They even printed the list of the seven "components/criteria" which doctors use to determine the biological sex of an infant whose genitalia are "ambiguous visually" (pp. 80 - 81), and ten "categories and characteristics" of the "social sex role" (pp. 84 - 85).

So, in addition to being constructed from visual cues which are culturally contextualized, gender is embedded in and co-constructed with "race, class, culture, caste, and consciousness" (Taylor, 1994, p. 37, using Stack, 1992). However adolescents may co-create their understandings of gender in various contexts, "gender does [sic] make a difference in how adolescents develop" (Taylor, 1994, p. 29). Gender also affects the ways children develop and relate to one another, according to many researchers.

Notably, Thorne (1986, and other work related to this study) looked at gender in elementary school children. She concluded:
Sex and gender are differently organized and defined across situations, even within the same institution. This situational variation (e.g., in the extent to which an encounter heightens or lessens gender boundaries, or is infused with sexual meaning) shapes and constrains individual behavior. Features which a developmental perspective might attribute to individuals, and understand as relatively internal attributes unfolding over time, may, in fact, be highly dependent on context. (Thorne, 1986, pp. 180 - 181)

What, then were the key elements of the AO group context upon which the co-constructions of gender depended? It was the purpose of my research to explore that question, among others.

Influences of Safety and Connection on Sexual Orientation Identity Development. Many writers and researchers have examined the influences of social factors on sexual orientation identity development. "Cultural factors" has been the catch-all term for most of these influences, and in this section, I unpack some of these.

Some people believe sexual orientation is a choice; others, that it is biological, inborn; still others, that it is evolving and changing throughout one's life. Understanding the both/and paradigm, however, I believe that sexual orientation identity is all of these, at various points in one's life and in various contexts.

Since our contexts affect our ideas about everything, "personal" views takes on an ironic meaning. Blumstein and Schwartz (1993), while understanding some of this irony, made this statement straightforwardly:

[Personal views about sexuality in the abstract reflect wider cultural understandings and affect, in turn, the concrete constructions people place on their own feelings and experiences, and thereby affect their behavior. (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1993, p. 169)

I agree that our understandings of ourselves affect our behaviors; in the realm of sexuality, this idea validates the philosophy of identity as co-constructed. This chapter is
part of a larger book in which many perspectives of Gay and Lesbian experiences appear, and the editors made several useful distinctions in their introductions to each section.

The introduction to the volume explicated what the editors believed are the three main ways to analyze sexual orientation: "essentialist," "social constructionist," and "interactionist." By their definitions, I use the "interactionist" analysis (Garnets & Kimmel, 1993b, pp. xii - xiii), defined as a combination of the first two, with the emphases on cultural contexts.

In other parts of this volume, the editors wrote of three levels of meaning. The first was presented as "macroview," which included both political and social elements; the second was "microanalysis," which focused upon the individual. Interactions between these two comprised the third level. They also wrote of three levels of the analysis of meaning: "1) sociocultural; 2) individual/psychological; and 3) interactive perspective," again seeing the third as some combination of the first two (Garnets & Kimmel, 1993c, pp. 53 - 58). Using these labels, my research interpretations dwelled mostly in the third level of meaning, and used the third level of analysis most often.

In another introduction to a section of this volume, they wrote: "...sexual orientation can be seen as a reflection of the unique characteristics of the individual interacting with the socially defined meanings of sexual orientation" (Garnets & Kimmel, 1993d, p. 113), a statement that expanded on interactionist ideas. Furthermore, they wrote of the distinctions between types of identities, using the terms "ascribed" for those which others place upon us, such as race/ethnicity, and "achieved" for those which we co-create for ourselves; they placed sexual orientation in the "achieved" category (Garnets & Kimmel, 1993e, p. 186). Another used the terms "assigned" and "chosen" (Grotevant, 1992). My research has sought to understand the influences on achieved or chosen identities, and used others' work to support my ideas.

What types of contexts may foster healthy achievement? Many educators and group leaders have been attacked for "causing" or "promoting" Homosexuality, but
research has shown that this "causing" is not possible. Gonsiorek (1993) summarized this research by explaining that fears of tolerance or acceptance by adult professionals "causing" homo- or Bisexuality are unfounded. He went on to explain that Bisexual, or abused young people usually need more time for the process of identity development because of social and cultural inhibitions, so that support from adults or groups can appear to "create" or "cause" what has actually already been developing for particular individuals (p. 480).

Another researcher examined friendships among young people, and concluded: "whether or not friendships are stepping-stones to gay and lesbian relationships is not known" (Hartup, 1993, p. 12), which means that my research fills in a major gap in understanding the co-constructions of sexual orientation identities. I believe, as Herek (1993) stated, that:

What has been [socially] constructed can be deconstructed and reconstructed, albeit with considerable effort. Gender and sexual orientation should thus be understood as changeable ideologies rather than biological facts." (Herek, 1993, p. 320)

If these are "changeable ideologies," how easily do they change? Herek believed:

As socioerotic identities, homosexuality and heterosexuality have been created within our culture, starting with the raw material of humans' inherent ambisexuality and inevitable development of erotic and affectional preferences.... [but] culturally constructed identities are not easily changed. (Herek, 1993, p. 322)

"Not easily changed" does not mean they never change, so I continued to investigate the ways these changes could occur.

Irvine (1994c), in her preface to her edited volume which dealt with adolescent sexual identities, wrote an analysis of these identities and the influences upon their co-constructions. In part, she explained:
Adolescent sexualities are not manifestations of an essential nature but are multivalent constructions shaped by a range of social influences. Adolescent sexuality is not singular and stable but plural and dynamic. Adolescent sexualities emerge out of multiple cultural identities. Sexual meanings, sexual practices, and adolescents' sexual bodies are complicated social artifacts mediated by such influences as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, class, and physical ability. (Irvine, 1994c, pp. vii - viii).

In her own chapter in this volume, she argued for continuing to utilize cultural analysis to understand the complexities of adolescent sexuality and the ways their meanings "are shaped by their cultures, communities, and identities" (Irvine, 1994b, p. 4). How do communities shape sexuality?

McConnell (1994) insightfully examined the effects of homophobia and heterosexism on adolescents' sexual identity development. In fact, he made a radical statement that I agreed with completely:

In North America, lesbians and gay males usually learn to be homophobic before they discover they are sexually attracted to members of their own sex.... Current developmental models of gay and lesbian identities are therefore models of how a person deals with homophobia and its sequelae. (McConnell, 1994, p. 106)

As Pharr and others have pointed out, dealing with homophobia is a gendered act. Discovering that one could be Homosexual or Bisexual in certain contexts is not a neutral, or even a positive, discovery for most young people in this culture. It is more negative for males than females, if suicide statistics and population figures for mental health facilities can be viewed as indicators. As seen previously, becoming a mainstream man is hazardous to males' health, both physical and emotional. It is doubly difficult when sexual identity diversity is added to the equation.

[Many studies indicate that], for many gay males and lesbians, achieving a positive identity involves integrating not only an alternative sexual orientation, but also a nontraditional social sex role. (McConnell, 1994, p. 112)
Homophobia and heterosexism work against healthy sexual identity development for all individuals, not just those who believe they may be Homosexual or Bisexual (Raymond, 1994). When and how can young people learn about themselves, living in a culture which is so repressive sexually and so restrictive regarding identity? Raymond continued:

The rigidity of heterosexism and homophobia demands that one be either heterosexual or homosexual. Even the most progressive curricula in sex education or values clarification tend to assume that sexuality is clear and dichotomous. Yet many adolescents are unsure about their sexuality and may want to "experiment" sexually. (Raymond, 1994, p. 141)

A group atmosphere of safety, trust, security, and experimentation, with strong interpersonal connections, is recommended by several researchers as conducive to this exploration of adolescents' identities.

To experiment sexually is to open up a normative space in which sexuality might be construed more expansively; indeed, it might mean that we loosen the tie between sexual practices and identity. (Raymond, 1994, p. 142)

The danger, however, in "loosening this tie" lies in how the loosening becomes interpreted. Knowing, because research "proves" it, that leadership or group work do not "cause" Homosexuality exists in the essentialist philosophy of sexual identity. Knowing, because research and/or experience show it, that context has a tremendous influence on our perceptions of our sexual identities, supports or is supported by the social constructionists. We can have it both ways, living in the paradox of both/and rather than either/or, but many will not understand, agree, or approve.

How can clinicians and educators assist young people in this difficult and often dangerous identity work? At great risks to our jobs, sometimes our lives, many of us do (Richardson, 1993).
The therapeutic goal is to create an environment that allows patients to explore safely their particular array of erotic identifications and determine for themselves how best to synthesize or abandon them. (McConnell, 1994, p. 117)

Being allowed to "determine for themselves" is not a given in our current political climate, but it may prove to be the most healthy route nonetheless. As I show later, ALWAYS ON sought to, and was successful in, creating that environment. As Troiden (1993) noted: "Individuals may feel more comfortable acting on their sexual feelings when they believe that those close to them will accept them for themselves" (p. 214). Acceptance equals safety in this interpretation.

Further support for creating opportunities for all Westerners to reconstruct gender and sexual orientation occurred in Blackwood's (1993) chapter concerning the construction of Lesbianism. He critiqued assumptions and labels/characteristics of same-sex behaviors in many cultures and of gaps in such information, particularly about women/Lesbians. He stated: "Enforced heterosexuality [for women] is tied to women's lack of economic power and the restriction of female activity to the domestic sphere" (p. 311).

So, hegemonic pressures on gender, experiences in patriarchal cultures, and homophobia all conspire to make the co-constructions of our sexual identities, whether orientation or gender, quite problematic. Examining the ways that adolescents in ALWAYS ON groups dealt with these issues was the focus of my research.

Conclusion to Literature Review

I am grateful to researchers and theorists whose work has preceded and informed mine. Even the most Poststructural of social identity theorists, however, excluded Feminist Poststructuralism too completely for my purposes. Furthermore, while Critical
theory has been used widely, in conjunction with a variety of social identity theories as well as with a Feminist influence, and has been particularly utilized in studies which discussed oppression in detail\textsuperscript{21}, no study which links this project's themes and theories exists, yet, in publication.

Within social justice and multicultural education, many have written about the need to teach effectively in diverse settings, to diverse learners, or within a diverse society. Several of these, however, made no or only passing mention of sexual orientation and/or gender (see Davidman & Davidman, 1994, or Derman-Sparks, 1989).

Several researchers have worked on important pieces of this type of research, as I have shown in this review. Several searched for "causes" and "roots" of social identities, particularly sexual (Kooden, Morin, Riddle, Rogers, Strang & Strassburger, 1979; MacDonald, 1984), or have examined gender (Condry, 1984) or sexual identity as if each existed somewhat unconnectedly to other identities (Cass, 1979 & 1984; Minton & McDonald, 1984; Levine & Evans, 1991). Some have even looked at intersections: among class and ethnicity (Devine, 1992; Ragin & Hein, 1993); gender and sexuality\textsuperscript{22}; ethnicity and sexuality\textsuperscript{23}; and sexuality and research (Sears, 1992b). A few have looked closely at gender, sexual orientation, and either class, ethnicity or all four\textsuperscript{24}.

But, when developmental ideas were mentioned at all (and they often were not), they wrote of progress through stages, steps, phases, etc., rather than continually- and contextually-varied positions among and with one's social identities. Linear, either/or development schemata have been the dominant models, dwelling in the "old" paradigm.

\textsuperscript{21}(Geismar & Nicoleau, 1993; Hardiman & Jackson, 1992, and other publications; Stout, 1992)
\textsuperscript{23}(Epstein, 1987; Gibbs & Moskowitz-Sweet, 1991; Tremble, Schneider & Appathurai, 1989)
\textsuperscript{24}(Allen, Wilder & Atkinson, 1983; Harris, 1992; Heath & McLaughlin, 1993c; Pharr, 1988; Nieto, 1992; Rothenberg, 1992; Rubin, 1994)
Although nonsynchrony and other theories, as well as lived experiences, remind me that all social identities are inextricably related, two identities, gender and sexual orientation, have been the focus of this project. Drawing on some aspects of Critical theory (Fine, 1991; Giroux, 1990; Tompkins, 1988; Weiler, 1988), I analyzed group experiences which were intended to lead to recognition of the hegemonic forms of gender and sexual orientation identities. It was my observation that continuing group experiences of certain types may support resistance, which could then foster some counter-hegemonic, and even liberational stances. As discussed, some of these experiences included the significant factors, interpersonal safety and connection.

Many Critical theory constructions of social and personal ideologies, which arose from Marxism, intersected interestingly with Poststructuralist ideas of subjectivity. The theorists and researchers who have already combined these and other views in a variety of ways assisted me in my thinking about what combinations worked best for my research and analysis.

Remembering our responsibilities as Critical Pedagogists, members of a democratized society must take personal liberation into activism for social change (Bateson, 1994; Giroux, 1993; Kincheloe, 1993; Sears, 1993). I developed this new conceptualization further as I used Feminist Poststructuralist and Critical theories to examine social identities. Although I agree with many social "realists" that we probably cannot hope to eliminate oppression, we can interrogate it. And, we can do

25 (Armariglio, Resnick & Wolff, 1988; Delphy, 1988; Giroux, 1993; MacKinnon, 1988; Mouffe, 1988; Shuman, 1986; Williams, 1977)
"emancipatory research" (Lather, 1988) rather than act as researchers who passively examine existing social structures.

In this project, I continually questioned, trying to track "lost voices," and to notice all subjectivities, as Lather suggested. At times, however, I realize that I inadvertently privileged one type of "voice" over another. For example, the words from the transcripts of the members' interviews, from which I excerpted many times in this thesis, seemed somehow to me to be more "real," or more the "actual" member's voice, than the words I attributed to a member from my field notes of group meeting conversations. Yet, interviews with a researcher could have been just as much of a "performance," and perhaps needed to be viewed with the same critical eye as the meeting interactions, since it was in the nature of the AO discourse for members to respond to me, or to the topics I raised, in particular ways. And, this project raised the question of what is (if anything) "real," or "authentic," so it is ironic (and a sign that I am still trapped in Modernist leanings) that I succumbed to this dichotomy. Although I was aware of this inner conflict, as a researcher, I believe this privileging of certain types of voices did occur in my presentation of the data despite my best efforts to eliminate it.

Nonetheless, in spite of my shortcomings, or perhaps because of them, I hope that this research, and my analyses, will inspire conversations about these topics, with these frameworks as the bases. I hope others will be able to extend my metaphors more fully, in all of their paradoxes, so that more of us may enter the multilogue.

In the next sections, I describe my research activities and choices, continue with indepth analyses of some of the data samples which demonstrate the relationships among my research topics, and explain the concept of differential authenticity as the members of the ALWAYS ON groups co-constructed it.
CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY: SCENWORK

3:21 ...today they'll take turns being directors. Tony explains activity. Tells directors they'll do set-up of scenes, do side-coaching, and give feedback.

   Brigitta volunteers. Tony validates her going first.
   Holly tells about hurting her foot, shows everyone, explains she can’t do much today. Lots of comments.

3:23 Holly volunteers to be a director, and Tony tells Holly she can be a director later today.
   Condor and Nick say “I don’t want to be a director.”
   Tony says “no one has to.”
   Brigitta chooses Travis for her scene. Then she says, “Let’s get a girl involved here.” Students all look at Holly, who is the only other girl here today, with Marcy and Amber absent. Unexpectedly, Brigitta says: “Daitch, come on down! [as in the T.V. game show hosts' invitations] Just kidding!” Lots of laughs.
   Daitch looks uncertain of how to take that, then laughs.
   Brigitta chooses Nick as other actor. Lots of laughs, again, since she never said she wanted a guy. She casts them as brothers, who are having a reunion after having been apart for over 5 years. Says both are over 17.
   Nick and Travis do scene.
   Brigitta side-coaches Nick to “show more feeling.”
   Nick doesn’t change.
   Tony ends scene. Tells Brigitta to give feedback to actors.
   Brigitta asks for “more emotion.”
   Tony agrees.
   Nick says: “My brother threw me in a trash can the last time I saw him!” [Seems angry.]
   Tony says: “Feelings could be negative.”
   Brigitta says just to “intensify.”
   Others are talking to Nick and Travis as she talks to them.
   [Brigitta seems mad.] Brigitta shouts: “Shut up, you guys!”

To Travis and Nick, she says: “I know you guys are guys, but try!” [sounds frustrated]
   Nick, [angry] asks Brigitta: “What does that mean?”
   Brigitta: “I’m just trying to promote you guys.”
   Nick, [sarcastic and disgusted] “You mean ‘provoke.’ I know you’re a girl, but...” [imitates Brigitta’s tone in previous statement.]
   He trails off.
   Tony refocuses them.
   Nick and Travis re-do scene. [They each show slightly more emotion.]
   Condor farts in audience; laughter, Keith and Holly especially.
   Condor gets up and moves away from everyone, [looks embarrassed].
   Tony [scolds] Holly.
   Daitch watches scene, eats his candy. He’s on the other side of Tony from others.
Brigitta tries to get actors to say: "I miss you" by mouthing the words at them. They see her and don't do it; they ignore her repeatedly.

Tony tells Holly and Condor to focus on scene (they're still laughing). Lots of laughs during fart explanation to Tony. Lots of laughter, continues.

Nick and Travis end scene.

Brigitta gives feedback. "More emotion... but it was good."
[sounds pleased]

Tony asks them just to re-do the opening moment, the reunion.

Daitch asks when his turn is?

Tony tells Daitch he can direct next.

Travis and Nick re-do opening. Everyone applauds. This scene ends.

(FIELD NOTES, 1/3/94)

In this section, I explore the types of choices, rationales, questions, and problems this ethnographic study engendered (pun intended). The biases, complications, limitations, and preliminary interpretations that I worked to understand comprise the bulk of this section. First, a review of my research questions.

Research Questions Revisited

As I mentioned earlier, my broad questions arose during my first months with the Premier group, and gradually narrowed, based on some of the themes and categories which were most relevant to the participants that also interested me. What I did to collect and analyze data is discussed in the sections to follow.

As an ethnographer, I looked at the language used by participants to discuss gender and sexual orientation (their own and 'others'). During their scenework (the improvisational and set role plays which were a part of each meeting), and during their group counseling times and interviews, I also examined, and asked the members, what other factors seemed to be related to the co-constructions of these identities.

Below I list each question in its final form. An audit trail (Rudestam & Newton, 1992) would show the evolution of these questions. Relating these now to my chosen
theoretical frameworks (see later subsection of this section, Theoretical Limitations), I situate each current question.

1) How were hegemonic (socially prescribed) norms and constructions of gender and sexual orientation identities enacted and discussed in these group meetings?

2) What instances of non-traditional (or counter-hegemonic, resistant, and/or liberational) gender and sexual orientation identities enactments and ideas occurred in these groups?

3) What relationships did the members perceive between their co-constructions of their own and each others' gender and sexual orientation identities and their perceptions of particular factors within the group?

4) How did the members express and describe these relationships?

Poststructuralist theory interpretations utilize language, or discourse analysis, to make claims. That is the reason that I looked closely at the language AO group members used in order to draw my conclusions. Discourse is more than language, however (Gee, 1990). Therefore, observations of participants' physical moves and facial expressions as well as vocal tones and volumes were also recorded and analyzed.

I made these analyses by examining members' expressed perceptions of their own and others' agency in each context. I also discuss the thematic relationships between the discourses of one context to another, by looking especially at members' interpretations of their own positions, or subjectivities, with respect to gender and sexual orientation. I factored in their "whiteness" and socioeconomic class statuses wherever possible (in a later subsection of this section, I discuss problems with this: see Limitations).

Analyses based in Critical theory involve the categories of socioeconomic class and other social identities to investigate participants' awarenesses and experiences of hegemony, and any resistance or counter-hegemonic moves, regarding my chosen topics of gender and sexual orientation identities. Back and forth, micro to macro to micro, I
made frequent interrogations of participants' self-reports, behaviors, talk, role-plays, discussions, and interactions with respect to gender and sexual orientation identities.

These types of analyses encouraged me to look at social negotiation as both identities-in-action and as sites for contestation. Feminist interpretations of these events fostered sets of questions about my analyses which prompted me to ask about the effects of patriarchy and male dominance on each event. Before I discuss my study's preliminary data coding scheme and analysis process in detail, I will clarify my terminology.

**Operational Definitions**

Even though these are contested terms, and their binary nature is biologically invalid, I chose to follow the participants' understandings: I use the biological, dualistic definition of sex, so that each participant was either male or female; members tended to use the terms “guy” and “girl.” I use the sociological/psychological, contextual definition of gender, so that each participant could have chosen to enact various aspects of culturally-approved and recognized traits of masculinity and femininity in each situation, or to be in opposition to these, or to enact these in some combination of versions which were considered approved or not. Participant terms related to gender were “macho,” “slut,” “stud,” “manly,” “guy,” “feminine,” and “femme.”

I use the tripartite definition, also to follow participants' use, which some of them pictured as a continuum, of sexual orientation identity, so that participants could have defined their own and each others’ sexual orientations as partially or wholly Heterosexual, Homosexual, or Bisexual. For this, members used the terms “Gay,” “Lesbian,” “Homosexual,” “Bi,” “Bisexual,” “Faggot,” “Fag,” and “Lez.” They would speak of a “boyfriend,” or “girlfriend,” and discussed “being into (guys)” or “liking (girls).”
Furthermore, to clarify other terms used later: since both years of this project involved a group of adolescents who regularly met to study, practice and participate in theatre skills, certain words could be confusing. Therefore, I will use the words “perform” and “act” mostly to refer to theatre-time behaviors, in scenes or skits; I will use the words “display,” “enactment,” and “presentation” for behaviors of participants, whether observed in scenes, structured interactions, interviews, or unstructured periods.

I created, using participants' concepts and terms as often as possible, operational definitions for the categories which emerged from the study as significant factors, those which influenced the co-constructions of these social identities. To summarize the definitions I used:

1. GENDER (roles): participant expressed his/her physical and/or emotional identity as masculine, feminine, or androgynous, or going against these traditionally-conceived types; or, participant expressed a sense of someone else’s physical and/or emotional self as displaying traits which were labeled, culturally or by the participant, as masculine, feminine, or androgynous, or as going against these types. These could be construed to be changing, according to context.

2. SEXUAL ORIENTATION: participant expressed his/her physical and/or emotional/sexual identity as Heterosexual, Homosexual, or Bisexual, or in flux; or, participant expressed a sense of someone else’s sexual orientation identity as Heterosexual, Homosexual, or Bisexual, or in flux; or, participant related someone else’s comments on his/her or someone else’s sexual orientation identity. Comments could have been negative, positive, or neutral. (Comments could have been contrasted by behaviors and/or language in various contexts.)

Many of these definitions have their roots in previous research and theory work in several disciplines. The Literature Review section examined the pieces of Feminist,
Critical and Poststructuralist theories I utilized, as well as defined several other important concepts I used in my data analysis and interpretation.

Besides using academic authors to help me to define terms relevant to this project, I asked Tony, the group’s leader, about his views of my key concepts, in our April, 1994, interview. In one example, I asked him to define self and identity. (Tony’s words are in bold type; I am in nonhighlighted type. Exact quotes are broken up by ellipses to indicate words I’ve deleted which do not alter the sense of the statement. Bracketed words are my summaries or re-workings of our words.)

Well, I see "self" more in terms of potential than actual. I agree with Moreno [1972, P. 157] that the "self" emerges from roles rather than the other way around. [Tony gave me the exact reference.]... You call those other kinds of behaviors "roles," and you call the "observing ego" the "self"? Or, is all that the "self."? Yeah, I think the "observing ego" is one aspect of the "self." But I think that the "self" is the totality....I think that the "self" is the aggregate of the experience...[Tony gives several examples from group members' experiences.] What would you say about "identity," particularly like in gender identity, or sexual orientation identity?
I would say that, particularly for adolescents, "identity" is the perception of the moment, ... "how I view myself in the context of my world in this moment." And, that that changes a lot, especially at this time of life....[Tony gives several examples from group members' experiences.]

So, "identity" is how we perceive ourselves in the context of our lives, and also in the context of the culture that we live in. [Tony nods.]

Having Tony validate my own ideas in this way gave me courage to continue along the ways I had chosen. But, one participant's agreements with me did not make me "right." In fact, early member-checking can be a researcher's downfall, especially since I picked the member! In the next section, I discuss the biases and limitations which cohabited this project with me, and what I did for "damage control."
The Researcher and the Researched

Personal Limitations

First, I must discuss how researchers' biases affect practice, even in a both/and system. While doing my own research, and even as I prepared my review of the literature, I was acutely aware of my own partialities (towards Bisexuality, towards feminism, towards anti-oppression work, towards social construction, towards multivocality), so I continue to remind myself, and any readers, that I am presenting only what I am able to and choose to present, given my biases, hidden and conscious assumptions, interests, and intentions.

(I am reminded of the punch line from a joke of my adolescence, which probably came from American Vaudeville: “Everything I say is a lie, including this.” Very Poststructuralist! But, since I have chosen this profession, and these topics to discuss, I will push on.)

Self-reflexivity is useful (Ely, et al., 1991; Peshkin, 1988), but can become extremely tedious: getting to the heart of my studies is much more interesting than continuing to write about my own dilemmas as a writer and a researcher. So, I only foreground them occasionally, secure that we all know that my ruminations and worries continued in the background throughout the project.

Another personal situation which may have limited my effectiveness is the significant friendship, of over seventeen years, that Tony (the AO program director and group leader) and I share. The overlays of our personal and professional history have evoked a variety of feelings in our new and intensive collaboration. Our relationship also deepened and grew, and became very complex, because of my increasing involvement in AO, first through this project, then as a staff member, and then as a parent of an AO member (my son became a member after my two project years had ended, and belonged...
to a group I did not lead). We negotiated, and continue to renegotiate, personal and professional boundaries, and these discussions often influenced my project work.

To further complicate matters, in the second year of this project, my female partner and I joined an on-going psychodrama group which included Tony and another AO staff member already. For those of you who have not experienced psychodrama, the group members become intensely aware of each other's psychological material. This can create closeness or distance, depending upon many factors. In our cases, we all grew much closer.

In addition, Tony is a "friend of the family." He functions as a director and mentor to my adolescent son, attends family parties, and moves with me in mutual social circles often. Our multiple roles, as I mention later (see Tony's and My Roles, later in this section) had varied impacts on my research and on my experiences during this project time.

As mentioned in an earlier section (see Conclusion to the Literature Review, Chapter 3), my having been "raised" as a Romantic, or Modernist, has interfered with my ability to unfailingly adopt Poststructuralist and/or new paradigmatic views of my data. My analyses, therefore, at times privileged the "voices" of the members' interviews or in the Survey over those represented in my Field Notes, for no "good" reason. With assistance from several advisors, I tried to mitigate this theoretical disaster with comments about my tendencies in these directions, but all mistakes are my own.

Theoretical Limitations

Moving from the paradigm we know best to a newer one is tricky, yet fascinating. Even the idea of "movement" is an old paradigmatic construct. Current developmental models and the research on which they were based were more in Modernist, or the even,
"older," Romantic frameworks rather than in Postmodernist ones. They have been useful, and were an understandable product of their times.

I live "on the cusp," since I am in my forties. I grew up as a Romantic, in the Midwest, USA; lived as a Modernist young adult, mostly in New England; and recently understood that I have become Postmodern in many ways, while having stayed in New England to raise my son, who was fifteen at the end of this project.

Current Western life, with its technologies for communication, weaponry, and travel, has altered not just the ways we live, but how we think and feel about human existence, about time, and about space or dimensionality. Gergen's recent work (1991) discussed these changes with respect to concepts of self, identity, and gender.

To contrast with the modern and romantic approaches to the self, I shall equate the saturating of self with the condition of postmodernism...[sic]. The very concept of personal essences is thrown into doubt. Selves as possessors of real and identifiable characteristics — such as rationality, emotion, inspiration, and will — are dismantled....Persons exist in a state of continuous construction and reconstruction; it is a world where anything goes that can be negotiated. Each reality of self gives way to reflexive questioning, irony, and ultimately the playful probing of yet another reality. The center fails to hold. (Gergen, 1991, p. 7)

This means that at best, humans can become flexible, understanding, creative, and open to change. At worst, which we see quite frequently these days, we become frightened, intolerant, rigid, closed, and autocratic.

To the new paradigm's way of thinking, however, we are both our best and our worst, simultaneously. This transitional time is fraught with emotion and danger, and difficult to navigate safely.

I did my best, and involved my group members with my choices and decisions as I went. At the very least, I can state unequivocally that "we were in this together."
Structural Limitations

For the first study year, I met once and sometimes twice a week with one Premiere group, which had nine members for most of the year (see Figure 1). There were several changes in group life and participation that year. One Premiere group member left, unofficially, in the Spring, and another took a five-week leave of absence, to be placed voluntarily in a residential treatment program for eating disorders, depression, and sexual abuse recovery; several members were ill for one or more weeks, and all missed some meetings for that and for other reasons.

Graduate intern leadership in the ALWAYS ON groups changed both years, which altered my role increasingly in the first study year particularly, since it left Tony and I as the only adults for that group on the days I was there (he acquired a new intern for the second meeting of each week, in January of that year). These changes in intern leadership also shifted the power and authority balances both years, since Tony and I comprised the consistent adult presence for at least two members, while the interns shifted.

Although all of the participants in the Premiere group and their parents/guardians gave written consent to be a part of my study, occasionally an individual member would opt out of a group activity, miss and then reschedule an interview appointment, or refuse to be videotaped. Several members asked me to stop taking notes and to participate more in appropriate group activities myself — to "join the circle" — especially in the last months of that year. This may have been a consequence of their getting to know me better, or may have been a function of their feeling that I paid attention to them more directly when I did not have a notebook in my hands. Since they were often discussing very "heavy" personal issues in the latter months, wanting me to be more obviously present may have also been evidence of a need to have me "formally" acknowledge the seriousness of their verbal sharing times by making more eye contact with each speaker,
something I could not do if I were writing as they spoke. These changes affected many aspects of my research experience, as I detail in later sections.

For the second study year, I was officially a co-leader of one Encore group. Tony was the other leader. We began the year with two female graduate interns, but one left unexpectedly in February.

Fortunately, this Encore group included two members from "my" Premiere group (originally there were three overlapping members, but one dropped out of the program after two weeks). I was therefore able to further triangulate this research by examining these returning members, as well as by observing the ways this "new" group co-constructed gender and sexual orientation identities during group meetings.

In addition, in my new role as a staff member, I was also a performance facilitator. This availed me of several opportunities to observe and participate in scenework with AO members in public performances, particularly the two members who spanned both years of my project, since they performed frequently. Furthermore, in many of these scenes, gender and sexual orientation identities were highlighted, which allowed further triangulation of my findings.

The Encore group's membership shifted almost monthly: seven, then eight, then nine, then eight Encore members belonged to this group. Members were coming and going for various reasons, with three leaving the program mid-year, and two returning, from living elsewhere. This amount of membership shifting was not usual, according to Tony, and veteran members (those who had been in Encore for more than one year) seemed to have found it difficult.

In the Encore group, not all consented to be in all parts of my study (some did not want to be individually interviewed). All agreed to be involved in the group interview in April, 1995, but three were absent. One of those consented to be interviewed individually. I detail the other methodological differences between the project years in later sections.
To summarize the structural limitations of my project: a) changes in group leadership occurred both years; b) changes in group membership occurred both years; c) some members were absent, or refused to participate in some meeting activities for both years; d) some members withheld consent for individual interviews during the Encore study. Even with these limitations, I collected rich and copious data.

Generalizability Issues

Ethnographies are, by nature, particular and not generalizable. But, sometimes in situations such as this, where there were several similar groups in the same program, or two in the same field site, some generalizations could possibly be made, but the usefulness of those statements would be questionable. These were not technically "limitations," especially since my use of Poststructuralism further negated any generalizability from any site to a larger or a different context. More significantly, I can see that my Findings, and my Interpretations, were limited for other reasons.

All of the participants lived as "white," even though several had ethnic backgrounds which included American Indian, and perhaps other nationalities, which created physiognomies that were not very similar to Northern, "white," European appearances. However, race/ethnicity topics were rarely introduced in group meetings by either the members or the leaders; occasionally, audience members in the interactive performances would raise these issues, and the troupe present would address them in scenework. In my year as a staff person, and in subsequent years, I raised these issues, but in the Premiere year, when I was more of an observer, I followed the leads of the members and Tony.

Although the entire range of socioeconomic classes were represented by the members, class issues were rarely addressed directly in meetings, either. Race/ethnicity and class concerns were not an overt part of my study for those reasons, and I believe that
those minimizations were the cause of severe constrictions on my ability to analyze and interpret this data fully, regarding all members' diverse social identities.

Data Collection Issues

During the Encore year, as a co-leader, I was actively discouraged from taking on-site notes, and not allowed to audio- or videotape any portions of any meetings, except for the group interview, in April, 1995. These prohibitions made it difficult for me to determine what to write in my own field notes, and my notes for the second year are not as complete as I wish they were. I did a lot of participant/observation, which generated rethinking, and had several discussions with the leaders and my peer debriefers. I continued to do further reading, but these did not replace the rich, "thick" description I wish I had from the second year, to "match" the data from the first year.

I could have made different choices about data collection, and I probably should have gathered more data which was taped in some fashion, especially the second year. But, circumstances beyond my control greatly restricted these opportunities.

Members of the Premiere group had asked me to take fewer notes, to participate more, to "put down my notebook" in the later months of that year. The Encore group members asked all of the leaders to take fewer notes. Those requests inhibited my on-site data collection tremendously for the last months of the first and for all of the second year. I regret these situations, but since these were my only "access" problems, I consider myself lucky.

As I mention later in this section (see Data Collection subsection), my experiences as a speedwriter did help enhance the extensiveness of my notetaking. Also, my experiences and training as an elementary education student teacher supervisor, using the clinical observation model, helped me to make frequent global as well as "spotlighted"
observations. I consciously spotlighted each member each week during the first project year.

So, I know I did not "get everything," but I "got a lot." As to what I "got": I used member checks and peer debriefers to validate my data and my interpretations at several junctures (see later section on this) during both years. However, what I recorded in my notes, what I remembered when I had no ongoing notes, and the ways I interpreted what I "got" were solely based upon my limitations and choices.

Weaknesses of this methodology included having to rely on my notes, and then my memories, for most of the first-year group's meetings and all of the second-year group's meetings. With the researcher as the instrument, the instrument is always biased, and usually flawed. I could never pay equal and adequate attention to every aspect of every meeting, nor note or remember every detail. As a co-leader, I was responsible in different ways than I was as a researcher, and my co-leader role almost always took precedence. I can only hope that I was cognizant of my biases, constraints, and their effects as much as anyone could be, and that my flaws were not too detrimental.

Setting

I use "Setting" to mean the social as well as physical space and schedule aspects of these research sites, since all affected the basic operation of the group meetings. The following sections briefly describe these components and related influences on the groups for these two years.

The Premier group's meetings usually followed a similar format each week (see below). Encore began the year with a similar format to Premiere's, but soon changed into a more member-driven agenda, with greater variation in the choices as to how the group meeting time would be spent.
The Premiere format, which used AO's two-hour-plus meeting time, twice each week, devoted approximately equal time to the theatre and the counseling components. Each teen member would receive some of the group's attention at least three times each meeting: twice for brief sharing, in Opening and Closing Circles, and once for What's On Top? (WoT?). Often, one or more members would receive the entire group's attention for longer periods each week, which was termed "having group time" for that individual. An attempt was made, somewhat informally, to rotate which member received group time.

For a variety of reasons, some members' issues and problems were quite compelling, or in crisis, and, more significantly, they were able to voice their need for group time more often. These members received group time at many more meetings than their less-vocal counterparts, but Tony tried to draw out, encourage, or even pressure the less-vocal members to "use the group" more. His attempts to balance group time use were somewhat successful.

Encore's format retained the Opening and Closing Circles, and often used WoT?. But, as mentioned above, Encore members decided to depart from the equal distribution of time for the two components in order to devote more of their meeting hours to personal growth work (the counseling component).

A typical Premiere meeting schedule is presented next, for reference, and to help with understanding particular data sets offered and analyzed in the later Chapters. See Figure 2 for a more graphic depiction.

Premiere Group's Format/Schedule

ALWAYS ON group meetings offered three components, which were not exactly separable, but were nonetheless usually distinct: activities which promoted group cohesion; activities for theatre skills-building; and, individually- or group-based counseling activities (see Figure 2 for these categorical delineations). Below, I describe
the usual order, format, and leadership of each meeting segment. The informal
socializing and arrival/departure busyness which preceded and succeeded each meeting
are not included in this description, since they are self-explanatory.

Tony always led the first official activity, Opening Circle. Opening Circle was
usually quick: one word or phrase, or a couple of sentences per person. Tony and I
usually participated in Circle sharing, unless the topics led to counseling.

If members seemed to need to share more indepth, or were in psychological crisis,
Tony would usually flip the Premiere meeting's format, going from this into the
Counseling segment, placing the Theatre segment after Break. If any members felt this
need, they could request that switch, as well. This "flip" in the schedule often led to
using the theatre segment for counseling as well, by incorporating sociodrama or
psychodrama into the scenework. (In Encore meetings, sociodrama and/or psychodrama
during the theatre segment became the norm.)

After Opening Circle, Tony moved the group away from sitting, to begin physical
Warm-Ups (exercises), if the next section was theatre skills. He often asked members to
lead a portion, and have others imitate the leader, as in "Follow the Leader," to move
their bodies, warm-up voices, and exercise faces.

When the group was rehearsing for a particular performance, the theatre segment
was given to preparation for that in some way. They rarely used scripted pieces, so
improvisations and role-plays based upon the upcoming performances themes, topics, or
format were practiced in general ways. When no particular performance was occurring
soon, Tony led them through several kinds of theatre exercises, allowing them to take
turns directing, altering, and acting in various kinds of scenes. Themes or problems
mentioned in Opening Circle, or general adolescent issues, often inspired these scenes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPONENT</th>
<th>GROUP COHESION</th>
<th>THEATRE</th>
<th>COUNSELING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TIME</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45 - 3:00</td>
<td>ARRIVAL: Informal socializing; checking the notices; setting up the space/chairs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00 - 3:10</td>
<td>OPENING CIRCLE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:10 - 3:20</td>
<td>WARM-UPS</td>
<td>WHAT'S ON TOP?</td>
<td>or —&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:20 - 4:00</td>
<td>if Warm-Ups, then SCENWORK and/or Theatre skills-building.</td>
<td>if WoT?, then GROUP TIME individuals' counseling time, sociodrama, graphic art, or other expressive therapy activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00 - 4:15</td>
<td>BREAK: Informal socializing, eating/drinking snacks, some cigarette smoking (outdoors).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:15 - 4:20</td>
<td>BUSINESS: Announcements, performance schedules, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:20 - 4:30</td>
<td>WARM-UPS</td>
<td>WHAT'S ON TOP?</td>
<td>or —&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:30 - 5:05</td>
<td>if Warm-Ups, then SCENWORK and/or Theatre skills-building; could include Psychodrama, if now.</td>
<td>if WoT?, then GROUP TIME Individuals' counseling time, sociodrama, graphic art, or other expressive therapy activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:05 - 5:15</td>
<td>CLOSING CIRCLE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:15 - 5:25</td>
<td>DEPARTURE: Informal socializing; leaving; short meetings between Tony and a member, or Tony and me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 2. ALWAYS ON Premiere group meeting schedule/format
For five or so minutes at the end of the first half, or at the beginning of the second half of the meeting, Tony did a wrap-up, with announcements, scheduling concerns for upcoming AO events, and to find out members’ attendance plans. At this point, punctuality and other Norms (see below) could be reinforced.

“What’s On Top?” (WoT?), opened the second half of the group meeting after the Break, and after Business. Members took turns, usually in a circle, with a volunteer going first, to share what was currently been happening in their personal lives. They discussed, talked, emoted, commented, laughed, listened, interrupted, had side-conversations, and screamed, alternately. Most members talked during their turns and commented, laughed, or listened during others’ turns. Crises and positive events were shared.

When a member was in particular need, Tony asked if he/she wanted more group time after WoT? was over. This occurred occasionally. Usually, members who needed more time just took longer turns during this portion. WoT? occasionally, especially in the Fall, went all the way until Closing Circle.

When there was time, or when Tony shortened WoT? to allow for it, other kinds of counseling/self-awareness activities filled the remainder of this half of the meeting. Tony led the group in a variety of activities: art therapy, drama therapy, self-discovery writing and discussions, etc. Often they worked individually for a while, then returned to the circle to share/discuss the activity. Tony led the group in stating their commitments to the AO group/program (in the Fall of 1993) and in giving feedback to each other (in December, 1993, and again in April/May, 1994).

Closing Circle, like Opening Circle, was a round-robin sharing led by Tony. Usually briefer, with the “I want to leave now” feeling, no in-depth sharing usually occurred.
Encore Group's Schedule

Encore meetings originally followed a similar format to Premiere's. But, after the first few weeks, leaders prepared possibilities, and members chose which to do, and when to do each activity. By January, 1995, we prepared very little structure, offering members more authority to create the way meeting times would be spent. The constants were Opening and Closing Circles, a Break, and some forms of WoT?, which led to group time for members who requested it.

In February, 1995, we offered a two-day, weekend psychodrama Retreat for Encore members, with a social overnight at one member's house for the intervening night. Most members participated in one or more of the days or the overnight; all but one active member was able and willing to use a full hour of group time, led by Tony, during the daytime Retreat segments. Tony and I co-staffed this Retreat, but did not participate in the overnight.

Meeting Rooms

The Premiere meeting room was located in the public meeting section (the basement) of a local public library. It was large (almost the size of two regular elementary classrooms) and irregularly shaped, but roughly almost square.

The Encore group met from September, 1994, through March, 1995, in the large "community room" of a local graduate school, which the interns attended and at which Tony was an adjunct faculty member (so the space was free, which was an important consideration). This room was almost twice as large as the Premiere's library room, which all members had been accustomed to from previous years. Many members said it felt "too big," and less private (it was surrounded by windows on three sides). When the
opportunity to meet in ALWAYS ON's newly-acquired program office/meeting space arose in March, 1995, Encore members leapt to do so.

Norms

Members received several hand-outs (see Appendix D) when they joined AO, and each year they returned. One of these was a Contract, in which they agreed to the attendance, commitment, safety, and transportation policies, and the program Norms. Each member, and his/her parent/guardian (if the member was under 18 years old) signed and returned this Contract in the first month of the program year.

The Norms included lists of specific agreements about: Confidentiality, Respect, Participation, Relationships between Members, and Termination. Since many of these concepts, and certainly all of these agreements, were new to first-time members, Tony returned to these often, both to explain the norms and their specifics, and to remind members of how these operated in Premiere group meetings.

Unwritten norms also evolved, and some were unique to each group, or even to a particular meeting or activity. Some of these were about participation, some were about phone calls and socializing outside of meetings, some were about voice volume, seating arrangements, or bringing personal items (knives, matches, lighters) into group meetings. Some of these are described and analyzed in later sections.

Unofficial and unwritten norms are co-constructed in every discourse community, and ALWAYS ON groups were no exception. These discourse norms included sanctions about how much and what types of personal information or opinions to disclose, how to respond when members disclosed information or opinions, and what types of behaviors and conversations created safety and connection. During my two years as a researcher/participant/leader, members also co-constructed discourse norms regarding how to speak to me and how to communicate to me and one another about my research.
activities (such as taking notes or videotaping), and also relating these norms to other AO group discourse norms.

In another project, it would have been fascinating to study how all of these norms and their co-constructions occurred and interrelated, but only some of that analysis will appear in this thesis. Overall, it was important to recognize how all types of norms were constantly being negotiated during group meetings and research activity times, and to attempt to analyze what effects these negotiations had upon the data and my analyses.

Data Collection and Informed Consent

I had decided to do participant/observer ethnography from the beginning of this project. After years of experience speedwriting (to capture student teachers' lessons and classroom activities in elementary classrooms), I was as well-prepared as anyone, I think, for the extensive field notetaking the study would require. (For timetables and other information, see Data Tables in Appendix A.)

For the Premiere year, I wrote onsite notes each week, except for the last few (which were videotaped). For the Encore year, I wrote field notes at home, but not extensively (see Limitations, above).

As I asked for and received informed consent from members and their parents (for members who were 17 years old and younger), I presented myself as a university researcher for both years. For the Encore year, I also stated my staff position status. (See Appendix F for Informed Consent forms and related information from each program year.)

I attended at least one of Premiere's two weekly, 150-minute meetings every week for almost nine months, for their entire program year. By late December, 1993, during and after the times I individually interviewed each group member, I became much more involved in the group's activities. In March, 1993, I administered my study survey (see
Data Tables, Appendix A, and the Survey, Appendix C). My handwritten field notes during the Premier year included: exact social conversations among group members; notes on body language and facial expressions while members were speaking, performing and listening during group activities; summaries and quotes from conversations between me and Tony; my summaries and quotes of the content and highlights from role-plays and performance pieces the members did; my summaries and quotes of the content and highlights from group sharing time sessions; and my own impressions and questions as they arose.

Working with the Data

I typed my field notes into a column format (See Ethnographic Microanalyses, Appendix E). Focusing on participants and on the passage of time, I organized the notes by indenting for each new activity and by the member who was most prominent, either by speech or action initiated.

I know that these formatting decisions emphasized individuals and time, privileged individual actions and talk, and highlighted authorships and agency. I believe these choices were consistent with the Critical and Poststructuralist theoretical frameworks I chose to utilize (Richardson, 1990), but I know this format influenced my interpretations. For example, "who did/said what" became my focus, rather than focusing upon some other aspect of a meeting. Later, I focused upon the "what" more than the "who," but both of these focus points undoubtedly limited my view.

After printing my typed notes, I went over them by hand with colored pens, creating and then defining, defining and then creating, several categories. I coded the data at five separate junctures during and after the field work (see Appendix E, Microanalyses sections). I searched for repetitions, emphases, threads of conversation or action presented by more than one member, at more than one meeting: these became the
potential salient categories. Usually, I used the participants' own words to label these categories.

I taped and transcribed individual interviews, using a protocol of some set questions which were the same for each person, and some follow-up questions which varied from person to person. The first interview's set questions were:

1. How do you think the group is going for you?

2. How do you act in the group compared to how you act in other places (school, home, weekends, work, etc.)?

3. If the group is already ideal for you, that's fine. But if it isn't, what would it be like if it were exactly the way you wanted?

4. Do you have any questions/concerns about my project?

The first interviews occurred with just the adolescents, in December/January, 1993.

The second interviews included Tony, and occurred in March/April, 1994, after they had completed my written Survey (see Appendix C). For the second interview, I asked each participant (including Tony) about what their responses to the survey meant, whether they would make any changes or add anything to their responses, and other topics which their survey responses elicited. I also member-checked certain category definitions and thematic relationships which I was developing.

A typical second interview's questions would sound like these:

1. What did you mean when you put [x] in this part of the Survey?

2. [read aloud one of the essay-type response questions and ask participant to explain response, to elaborate, to see if he/she still agreed with the statement made.]
3. What does your drawing mean? [Ask them to explain particular parts.]

4. What kind of male/female do you think you are, and how do you compare yourself to the ways others say you ought to be?

5. How safe is it, or would it be, if someone in the group believed him/herself to be Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual, to discuss that in this group?

I also challenged, questioned, or disagreed with a participant's responses in some cases, particularly if I had seen or heard evidence to contradict what he/she wrote in the Survey or told me at first in the second Interview, giving the evidence I thought I had and asking them to respond to the apparent contradiction. In addition, I introduced the topic of Gay-bashing, or homophobic language and/or behaviors which I had witnessed in the group, if the member did not mention it in response to question five, and then asked him/her to consider the question more deeply. In a few cases, I asked follow-up questions for number four, probing the extent of the participant's knowledge and awareness of his/her own hegemonic, counter-hegemonic, or even liberational gender identities.

Encore members' interviews occurred in April and May, 1995. I asked the participants the same questions in the individual interview which I asked in the group interview, but added a lot of follow-up questions. These questions I individually tailored to each member's responses, and/or to what those who had attended both interviews had said in the group interview.

The group and individual interviews' initial questions were:

1) What are your ideas about and experiences of gender (your own or others'), and how has being in AO influenced your ideas?

2) What are your ideas about and experiences of sexual orientation (your own or others'), and how has being in AO influenced your ideas?
Since each participant's responses varied greatly, the individual interviews and my follow-up questions also varied a lot.

In later Chapters, I present and analyze sections of these interviews. In this Chapter, I present part of the Encore group interview and analyze it, to demonstrate my interpretation choices.

"Thinner" Descriptions.

The first-year group's last eight meetings and Encore's group interview were videotaped. I reviewed these tapes and took limited notes to validate or contradict my emerging themes, analyses and interpretations. I also wrote briefer and less frequent field notes during the second year (see Limitations, above), but I continued to search for positive and negative cases to validate my interpretations of the data.

Tony's And My Roles

Since Tony and I had known each other personally and professionally for over sixteen years before I began this project, we had many social roles to negotiate. In addition to our interpersonal roles, we also had roles within these groups. In the next section, I briefly highlight aspects of both of these types of roles as they were relevant, knowing that all aspects of both roles had effects upon and responses to having been in this research project.

Tony as Data Analyzer

After members had completed the survey, I acquired permission from all Premiere members for Tony to review their surveys. I also gave Tony my composite results (see
Appendix C). He then devised a sociogrammatic analysis which I hadn’t thought of, in which we looked at reciprocity of choice among connection intensities for individual members. In our second interview, I asked Tony to discuss several interpretative statements which I had written, and I asked his definitions of several key concepts.

I invited Tony to read my reports and to make comments or suggestions, and to raise questions about my tentative findings. I also allowed him to read my raw, uncategorized data, beginning in January, 1994, and I gave him the notes and data from the start of the project. Once he "caught up" in his reading of my data, I continued to share data and notes with him approximately three weeks after each meeting's were collected, which was the time I had typed and printed copies to offer him. We then discussed some of the "moments" or events I had recorded and what they could signify, moving me towards some and away from other interpretations.

It was extremely helpful to have had Tony’s input. There were several reasons that his perspective would have differed from mine, and his alternate views became a significant enhancement to my work. One reason for his having a broader view was that he met with the Premiere group more often than I did, and knew the members, their interrelationships, and meeting events, better than I did. Other reasons for our differing perspectives included his being male, raised Catholic, older, not currently a parent (he was a foster parent years ago), and different from me in other ways. We would often “flag” the same part of a group session as significant, or notice a member’s behavior as important, but he would often become cognizant of these awarenesses at different times, or for different reasons than I did.

Tony’s views were sometimes different from mine, but since his conclusions or interpretations often corroborated my own, I felt as if I were on "the right track." I decided that if Tony agreed with my ideas, that my ideas therefore had more validity. I could have decided the opposite, I suppose, but I did not.
For the first three months of the first-year study, I didn’t tell Tony much about what I was looking closely at (my emerging categories). Yet, when I did share with him, in January of 1994, almost all of my observations and analyses were compatible with his, and he could "see" the types of categories I had identified, and agreed at which points in the data they occurred. By mid-year (about February), I considered Tony a co-researcher in certain ways.

After three months in the field (Jan., 1994, as noted above), when I began to include Tony more in the research itself, I realized that I began to write my field notes somewhat differently, knowing that he would be reading my raw data and some of my analytic notes. I felt him to be “reading” over my shoulder, which must have altered what I wrote. This seemed to have kept me from overanalyzing when I was supposed to be describing, which was a benefit. But this feeling of being watched and perhaps judged by Tony also meant that I took fewer personal risk-types of notes, made fewer comments which could be considered judgmental, and perhaps shortchanged my researcher personal process. I continued to show him the notes and the data, however, because I could see that his insights were quite helpful to my understanding the events as I notated them in the raw data, and added to the types of interpretations I could make at later times of that data. The benefits of his perspectives on my data and my notes immeasurably enriched this project, and helped me to become a participant/observer who had multiple perspectives on my data.

I alone coded the data, by defining and selecting the categories. But, through our conversations, Tony's readings of the raw data, our sharing our views of the members, and his giving his definitions for key concepts, our partnership was instrumental in shaping some of the ways I decided to create and to respond to the research questions of my project.
Tony and I as Co-Leaders

The original Premier graduate intern, "Karla," left abruptly, for personal reasons, in October, 1993. Another intern, "Rick," wasn’t found until January, 1994, but could only attend meetings on Thursdays (see Data Collection Table 3). Consequently, and also because of our historical relationship as group co-leaders, Tony and I occasionally discussed group dilemmas and issues. Tony treated me as an unofficial co-leader in ways we both agreed were acceptable. For the last two months of the Premiere group, I became a more active participant, even more acting as a co-leader, on the days I attended the group meetings.

For both the Premiere and Encore groups, Tony saw his major roles to be those of therapist and theatre instructor. From the first interactions, he strictly observed therapeutic boundaries with the group members. As the teacher/director for theatre skills, he sometimes participated in role-plays and/or performances, but rarely shared his personal material with members. When he did disclose personal information, it was done briefly, intentionally, and appropriately.

I followed Tony’s lead, observing therapeutic boundaries and occasionally participating in theatre activities. However, I mostly observed until my role changed, in April, 1994, when I became more of a co-leader in the Premiere group.

Also by the last months of that year, the group members and I had established some warm personal connections. These were verbalized in the second interviews, final meetings, and our goodbyes.

1 In most clinical situations, no personal information about the therapist or clinical group leader is disclosed unless there is a solid clinical rationale for each disclosure. These limits, or boundaries upon the therapist exist for a variety of purposes, and the boundaries themselves vary according to the theoretical or clinical orientation of the therapist. In the case of AO group leaders, information which members could readily see or discover might be discussed, but other personal information was usually withheld in favor of returning the focus of the group meeting to the members and their issues. Group leaders’ feelings, personal histories, private lives, and/or beliefs were either purposely disclosed, for clinical reasons, such as to assist a member in attaining his/her therapeutic goals; or, purposely kept private, also for clinical reasons, such as to guide a member away from attempting to shift the focus from his/her own difficulties onto the leader’s frame of mind or personal life.
Because of these strong connections, and my leadership experiences, Tony and I discussed my continuing with the group, with whomever returned for Encore, as a paid staff member. I agreed to join the AO staff for the second year of my project.

Because of scheduling conflicts and other reasons, only three, then two, of Premier's original members actually joined Encore the year I co-led the group in my field site's town (see Figure 1), which had members who had been participants in AO from previous Encore years and two from "my" Premiere group.

"Coming Out"

One topic Tony and I (the first year), and Tony, Becky, Laura and I (in the second year), along with other AO group leaders, continually returned to was the if, when, and how of "coming out" as leaders and educators. We decided to delete mentions of Tony's or my sexual orientations in our descriptions of ourselves before letting Premiere group members read their version of my first-year report. We also eliminated any references or quotes in my analytical sections from which members could identify each other, unless they were from scenework which they had all seen.

Although it became obvious (through member comments and interview statements) that some Premiere members already knew that Tony was Gay, we decided not to do any formal disclosures during the first year. In the second year, however, because an Encore member (Daitch) asked Tony a direct question, that decision changed. For the first time in the program's six-year history, a member had directly asked Tony about his sexual orientation.

Rather than make that conversation and disclosure private, Tony asked Daitch if they could recreate the conversation as a scene, and have all the group members discuss the topic and witness the disclosure. Daitch agreed to this, and we devoted part of one Encore meeting to this scene and the subsequent discussion. All leaders disclosed our
sexual orientations to the Encore group: Tony as Gay, I as Bisexual, and Becky and Laura as Heterosexual. Most members disclosed their own perceptions of their own identities as well.

These decisions had therapeutic, personal, professional, and methodological implications. In later sections I analyze what effects nondisclosure and disclosure seemed to have had on group members and leaders, and on interpretations of data related to my research questions.

Member Checking and Peer Debriefing

Realizing the ways my own identities, backgrounds and roles influenced me has been an ongoing challenge. I identify as a feminist, Bisexual, Jewish, partially disabled, middle-aged, working- and middle-class, highly-educated, female teacher, and I am a parent of a male adolescent who knew many of the AO program members, and participated in several performances as a videotaper and even a performer. During this past year (after my year leading Encore), my son joined a Premiere AO group. I faced numerous biases and inherent perspectives in handling my multiple roles, varied background, and my own social identities.

To check myself, I often asked several people to discuss my ideas with me, to look at raw data (with all identities pseudonymous), and to read my preliminary reports during the first year. My peer debriefers and other "helpers" included, for the first year: my research study group members, who were all Heterosexual females; one Gay male from my research class; two female Heterosexual professors, one male Heterosexual professor, and two Lesbian professors; Tony, a Gay male; my female, Bisexual partner; my male, Heterosexual partner; and various colleagues at conferences at which I presented some of my preliminary findings and interpretations. I asked most of these helpers to read or listen to parts of my data and analyses, and to give me feedback. Two
of my former professors, a Heterosexual married couple, and several Lesbian and Bisexual women friends also discussed my thematic categories and data analyses with me. Except when talking with Tony, pseudonyms and disguising language were always employed.

I also checked interview transcripts with each member I interviewed for the first year. I asked if they wanted to add, change, or delete anything I had typed from the tapes. Some were quite excited to "see themselves in print," but none asked for changes.

For the second year, I discussed the ways aspects of the group meetings impacted my research questions with Tony, following some of the Encore group meetings. I also checked my interpretations with each Encore group member I talked with, in the group and individual interviews, by asking questions designed to elicit their ideas. I let the members know well in advance the date (April 11, 1995) and questions for the group interview, and we set aside a particular part of the group meeting (twenty minutes, near the end) for our discussion. The questions for both interviews were very open-ended, as shown above.

I continue to read about reflexivity and self-awareness, always on the alert for hidden biases. My best hope is that my biases became conscious. (See Biases section, above, for other considerations.)

Data Analysis

As I mentioned above, I decided to organize my written data by indenting the typed lines each time the active participant/speaker changed, and by putting the time slots during the AO meetings as "headings." Since these notes were in the left column of each page, I used the blank right side of each page for my own comments, questions, and potential categorizations.
I also kept one set of printed notes as "blanks," free of my review, for use later in the project. In this way, I had one set of data from the first year which I had interacted with, and one which I had only transcribed and printed. In the last phases of this project, I used both sets. Frequently, I offered pages and sections from this annotated set of data pages to several peer debriefers, asking them to make notes or to circle areas on these data pages which stood out to them, and to analyze the data in any ways they chose with respect to ethnographic analysis and grounded theory methods (Agar, 1983; Charmaz, 1983; Frake, 1983; Patton, 1990/1980; Rudestam & Newton, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Peer debriefers and other helpers assisted me in being more descriptive and less evaluative, in using more precise language in my descriptions, in bracketing my opinions and assumptions, and in creating categories by using members' language whenever possible.

Using the constant comparative method to systematically code the data into as many themes and meaning categories as I could, I frequently "ran" through the data throughout the project years (Rudestam & Newton, 1992). The emerging relationships formed several patterns; I developed a "Category Co-Occurrences" table (see Table 5) to establish the frequencies of interrelationships among my chosen focus categories in my first-year study's data. Recognition of this patterning, often referred to as "grounded theory" (Charmaz, 1983), emerged as I collected more data from several sources.

By "triangulating" my sources (administering a survey, conducting interviews, having informal discussions with the leaders, making audio- and videotapes and transcriptions, taking field notes) (Patton, 1990/1980), I further established the significance of my interpretations of the data into categories, and these categories into patterns. The interviews, survey, discussions, and observations mutually reinforced each other, and member checks completed the cycle of validation (Patton, 1990/1980; Rudestam & Newton, 1992).
In addition to alterations in my analyses of the categories and patterns over the course of this project, my ideas about theories which could be useful continued to change. My earliest frameworks and subsequent changes reflected the metamorphoses of my values, beliefs, and assumptions. For example, at first I believed that I would analyze the language used by participants during meeting events based upon theories of adolescent subcultural language, or based upon anthropological cultural language analysis methods. But merely analyzing language to determine cultural referents did not hold my interest, and was not politicized enough to meet my personal and professional research goals.

I began to wish for a way to understand the language and interaction patterns among members which coordinated the microanalysis with more macroanalyses, and Critical theory became more useful. The further evolutions in my theory bases, including Feminism, Poststructuralism, and eventually a unique combination of all three, was traced abstractly in a previous section (see Literature Review). Concrete applications of this theory audit trail to data analysis are important to see, so I show examples of these in later sections of this Chapter.

In the next sections, I show the evolution of my analysis of one data set, describe the influences on each "run" through the data, and the impact of the collegial input I received. I also relate these analyses to my research questions.

**Analysis and Coding Examples**

In Appendix I are excerpts from one of my first analytic memos (see Patton, 1990/1980 or Strauss & Corbin, 1990, for explanations of these types of memos). These attempts to describe my thinking and to work with the data involved writing my initial ideas about themes and patterns, and creating labels for what I perceived to be categories of data. I looked at actual words and behaviors of members for clues as to meanings for them, and I discussed some of the participants' lives and meeting events with Tony.
Through working with peer debriefers over the course of the first few months, I became better able to separate "pure descriptions" from "interpreted observations." Some of these notes, therefore, place my ideas about what happened as "data," instead of just "reporting" what did happen (or, more accurately, what I could see, hear, write down, and chose to notice) as "data." As I became more experienced, I relegated my ideas about events to the analytic notes section.

I placed the excerpts in a different font for ease of distinction, and to avoid using quotation marks and single-spacing. Bold type was bold in the original memo, as were underlined words also so in the original. All participant names are pseudonyms, which I began to use the first weeks of the project in all of my notes and memos.

I used these questions as a jumping-off point for later analyses, but did not directly address these questions to either Brigitta or Holly. Therefore, I do not believe my own ideas about these questions were fully accurate. However, further analysis, especially of the second-year data, showed that two of these factors, safety and connection, were strong influences on some of the co-constructions of some of these teens' gender and sexual orientation identities. I explore these relationships in the Findings and Interpretations Chapters.

I included these data selections and this Analytic Memo from some of my earlier months in this project in order to illustrate the ways my understandings of the salient themes and categories changed while I was still in the field. In the next section, I discuss these changes in depth.
Revisiting Earlier Analyses

It is expected and required, when conducting qualitative research, to revisit one's data and one's analyses frequently. For this project, I "ran" through my data several separate times over the two years that I was "in the field." Each "run" showed me alternate ways to interpret the data. Some of these reinterpretations were shown in Memo #3 (see Appendix I).

In this section, I re-analyze the data sets from Memo #3 (see Appendix I), using the theoretical frameworks of Feminist Critical Poststructuralism, as I detailed in earlier sections of this thesis. I refer to the line numbers and sections from the Memo, as well as my categories as listed in that Memo, and describe the ways my thinking evolved.

Categories. Although earlier in this project, as shown in Memo #3 (see Appendix I), I believed I would analyze members' lives both in and outside of the group meeting times, this became impossible. Therefore, the references members' made to their "outside" lives were the only ways I accessed this information. Because of this restriction, I could not fully utilize all aspects of Critical theory to analyze the impacts of meetings on members (Fine, 1991), since that would have required home and school visits and observations, which I did not do. In particular, this affected my choices of focus categories among those the members' made salient.

Sexual orientation and gender identities, behaviors, and understandings, as expressed during meetings, interviews, and through the survey, as well as during performances and scene work, became clear early in this project as categories. The definitions of each term, however, changed as I noticed that the participants expanded their own definitions of each as they continued in AO. As their understandings changed, so did mine, following their leads.
The categories of **physical appearance, sex, personal philosophies**, and a few others seemed important in the early months (see Memo #3 category lists), but occupied secondary positions in member talk and displays as the project continued, so I dropped them from my focus category list. I did, however, continue to note co-occurrences between any one of these and the more frequently-occurring categories of **safety** and **connection**, for reference purposes, to establish and re-establish that demotion in significance (see Table 5). I may decide to pursue these two influences in future projects which utilize this data.

The category **anomalies** I established initially to gather unusual behaviors, speech events, and body language as deemed unusual by protocol or member reactions. Actions and statements which "broke the flow" of the meetings, functioned as "comic relief," and/or otherwise stood out as individual, singular events at first seemed important to me. But, I noticed that members ignored these events more than reacted to them in any obvious ways. I could no longer justify my interpretations without member responses or assessments to support my contention that these events were unusual, much less significant, so I dropped the category. In other words, it was more interesting to me than to them, and since I had chosen to adopt an "insider" perspective as much as possible, I could not maintain that focus.

The idea of **differential authenticity** evolved slowly, through many observations, from many data sources; Memo #3 was my first attempt to describe this in writing. The discussion I had with Tony, about Condor's different behaviors outside of group compared to within the group meetings, first triggered my awareness, but I didn't understand, yet, how my categories and patterns related to this awareness for the members. I also could not base such a theoretical leap on a conversation about someone else's observations and interpretations, even if they did come from Tony: it was inappropriate to privilege Tony's analysis over the members' own.
I therefore began to search for times during group meetings in which members shared that they had behaved or felt differently about themselves, particularly about their gender or sexual orientation identities, in various settings or during various times. The title of this thesis, "I am more who I am here than I am anywhere," arose from Brigitta's discussion of herself in a way that fit my developing concept of **differential authenticity** exactly.

Because I decided to examine the ways these five categories, **gender**, **sexual orientation**, **safety**, **connection**, and **differential authenticity**, interacted and were co-constructed among these teens in AO groups, there are two places in this document, Appendix B and Table 1, where I show some of the meeting discourse events that I labeled as involving more than one category during the same event (Category Co-Occurrences Table 5, Appendix B), and some of the single occurrences (Table 1). In Chapters Five, Six, and Seven, I show through many data samples and my interpretations, instances of these discourse events.

**A Negative Case.** Interestingly, Condor became my "negative case," in several ways. Even though Tony and other members frequently commented that Condor behaved differently during group meetings than he did in outside events (even AO performances) Condor insisted throughout the year that he was in the program (Premier year) that "I am the same everywhere" (Interview, April, 1994).

When I saw Condor in performances and interviews and compared those observations to meeting observations, I could see what others said they noticed. I observed that Condor's willingness to speak about sexual orientation and gender, and to display varying identities, altered significantly from context to context.

However, Condor's insistence of his sameness contrasted with those observations and comments from others. I analyze those disparities in later sections. Having one negative case early in the first year allowed me to see multiple examples later that year.
and the next year, and improved my ability to appreciate the preponderance of positive cases.

**Categorizing.** Looking at the data sets from Memo #3, at the original categorizing I did, and then the later "runs," I can see how my thinking changed. For example, in the set from 10/4, p. 16, Brigitta discussed her perceptions of personal sharing and related behaviors to gender, as I noted in lines 8 & 56. Later, I added notes about counter-hegemonic stances she was taking, in lines 9 - 12. Still later, I noted that lines 9 - 12 also showed Brigitta's understanding of the shifting nature of gender roles, and her awareness of her own changing acceptance of these shifts, contrasting with other members' willingness to accept this range of behaviors for males in particular.

I then revisited my notes of that section, and noticed that Nick's move to change the subject was not a neutral or unrelated behavior, but signaled his discomfort with Brigitta's gender philosophy, as evidenced by remarks he made that day and on subsequent days. I further noted that Nick was more uncomfortable with Brigitta herself than with what she said (then and later), as his placement of her in his survey and his discussion of that placement showed (see Survey data results, Table 1). This one data set became, both in itself and what it hinted at for future data sets, much more "thick" and representative than I had originally been able to see.

Similarly, the next set, also from 10/4, on p. 17, lines 23 - 26, first showed Holly commenting on the topics of connection and sexual orientation. My initial analysis merely claimed these lines for these categories. Later, I reviewed these comments and saw Holly's resistance to thinking of herself as a Lesbian while describing what many of her peers would characterize as Lesbian behaviors, as having arisen from more than just her personal philosophy (or religious philosophy). Critical theory helped me examine the hegemony of Heterosexual identity, its preeminence and dominance, and its effects on Holly's self-report (lines 20 - 25). Since Holly's professed religious and cultural
prescriptions (lines 26 - 37) disallowed her a positive identification as either Lesbian or Bisexual, she seemed to have chosen to decide that these behaviors were not in those categories rather than to identify herself, or her behaviors, as Lesbian or Bisexual. This choice offered her the permission, which she used throughout the year (Premier year), to touch, kiss, hug, snuggle with, and declare her love for Brigitta (and vice-versa) without expressing fears of her own or others' characterization of her as Lesbian (lines 122 - 146). Acceptance of her own labeling, while intensifying her connection with Brigitta, contributed to her acceptance of Brigitta's statement in April about herself: "I am probably Bisexual," which both she and Brigitta told me they had discussed together when they were alone (Interview transcript). Holly was able to hold the apparent paradox of the sameness of her feelings and behaviors to Brigitta's with the difference in their assessments of their sexual orientation identities.

Agency in self-identification is critical to empowerment, and Holly demonstrated an increasing capacity in this area. Contextually changing her views of herself, of others, and of what it meant to be Lesbian in order to feel safe with her feelings of affection and her physicalizing of them with Brigitta, Holly poststructurally adjusted her self and her identity definitions to suit her.

Tony's moves in this set (lines 27 - 32) were more than a challenge to Holly's original negativity to Lesbianism. He also modeled acceptance for Holly by the way he framed his questions, and this was one of several events which opened the way for Holly to become more accepting of behaviors, if not of identity, later in the year.

A final example of reinterpretation applies to the set from 11/1, p. 5. Originally, I noticed the evidence of connection (and lacks thereof) between Brigitta and Condor, Condor and Nick, Brigitta and Holly. After spending more time with the group, particularly after Brigitta was self-admitted (in March) to a residential treatment center for teens with eating disorders, sexual abuse histories, and substance abuse problems, and observing Brigitta's intense male identification and frequent references to Heterosexual
sex, sexual abuse, absent father and brothers, problems with her stepfather, and other male-female relationship-oriented topics, I reinterpreted this event, considering gender more prominently.

Even this early in the year, Brigitta had seemed to take her closeness, or connection, with Holly for granted. At the same time, Brigitta frequently asked for attention from Condor and Nick, but did not usually get it. As she often moved to sit with, choose for a partner, or otherwise establish connection with one of these males, or with Tony, Brigitta also made pronouncements and announcements of these choices, pressuring Condor and Nick especially to respond.

In a related set of behaviors, Brigitta begged for food from everyone most weeks during Breaks, but when she asked a male, she would whine, plead, coax, sit on laps, raise the pitch of her voice, talk in baby talk, and otherwise use "traditional feminine" moves. With Holly and other females, including me, Brigitta's voice was usually stronger, deeper, and more age-appropriate. She usually wouldn't beg, but rather would ask in a plain voice, or just assume she could have some and take it (with Holly).

Although this difference in Brigitta's asking behaviors was probably caused more by her closer friendship with Holly, gender roles also were involved. I made this interpretation when I saw how Brigitta used the same tactics to ask for food from Marcy as she did from Daitch, tactics which were much more similar to those she used on Condor and Nick than on me or Amber. Daitch and Marcy, as I will show later, were the least hegemonic in their own gender roles among members of this group.

On 11/1, I had noted Brigitta's voice in line 150, in a sort of sing-song shout, "I want to be with Condor!" When she was paired with Holly, she immediately used her authoritative voice, taking charge of their scene and ordering Holly about.

Taking all of these observations together, with an understanding of cultural prescriptions to favor males over females, Brigitta's announced preference for Condor as a partner appeared less of a coincidence or personal preference, and more hegemonic, just
as Holly's quiet acceptance of Brigitta's preference seemed also to have been hegemonic. Alternatively, Brigitta could have intended to call attention to herself, which she often did. She could have been "testing" to see whether Condor also preferred her as a partner. Brigitta's reverting to a "little girl" could also have represented her conflicts about her own maturity, and/or worries about how welcomed she would be to Condor as a mature young woman versus a younger girl.

Condor and Nick expressed discomfort and confusion about Brigitta and about Holly at this and other meetings, and in interviews. Therefore, I looked again at Condor's physical and preferential move toward Nick for a partner as both defensive (against being with Brigitta) and hegemonically proactive (toward another male instead of a female). I later observed that these acceptances of male dominance, and its lived experience as evidenced by personal preferences for males, changed somewhat for each of these four teens at this point in the project year. I analyze these changes, and other, related ones, in the Findings and Interpretations Chapters.

Tony's acceptance of these configurations (11/1, in lines 150 - 162, Tony did not speak or convey his opinions overtly) could be construed as neutral. When I asked him, near the date of this event, he said that he had been feeling neutral at that point. However, in subsequent conversations, Tony described his other feelings, of "trying to protect Condor" (Interview transcript). He also discussed his identifying more strongly with the males than the females in his groups, and we worked together to investigate his subtle and overt gender biases as the project continued.

Further Changes in Perspectives

Many of my original questions as expressed in Memo #3's last pages, evolved into my final research questions. What changed the most were the ways I consciously used aspects of Critical, Feminist, and Poststructural theories to analyze data in order to
address these questions. For example, I did not know how to name these perspectives clearly in Memo #3, and had not yet read the research and theoretical literatures, so I had no overt grounding for my interpretations of questions until later.

The members noticed and commented upon the contextual shifting of gender and sexual orientation identities in themselves and others; this Poststructural perspective on social identities occurred frequently in meetings, but I did not label it as such until I had seen this in the professional literature. Examples in their discussions of what was "proper" and "accepted" for these identities occurred often in scenework as well as member interactions, which I later believed could have been representations of hegemony regarding these identities.

In addition to examples from the group meetings, there were comments several Premiere members made in their second individual interviews. To illustrate, Brigitta commented about her gender identity:

...I think a lot of women are afraid to be feminine... I mean, it's like, look at the way I dress? I dress in baggy clothes, and... usually, I wear my hair up, or whatever... I wouldn't really... to wear a dress... I don't feel like it's OK... If you're 'feminine,' then, you're, like, a wimp, kind of. You know,... then, you're assertive, then you're a 'bitch.' So, I mean, [laughs] You don't ever win... It's just, like,... I don't know... I used to dress for everyone but myself. Now, I'm dressing a lot more for myself. ... (Interview, April, 1994)

Brigitta struggled more vocally than many female members with the cultural prescriptions about beauty, since she was considered very pretty, even model-material, according to her. So, it was quite interesting to watch her presentations of herself as female change over the course of the year, as evidenced in less "feminine" clothing, less make-up, etc. She also commented here, and in other settings, about the no-win dilemma of being a modern female, which seemed to offer her only two choices, "wimp" or "bitch." Her increasing ability to make different choices, more on her own terms, or, as
she said, "dressing a lot more for myself," seemed to indicate liberational gender identity moves.

Brigitta continued, later in the same interview, giving her ideas about her and Holly's senses of their sexual orientation identities, apparently unconcerned or unaware of the seeming contradictions here:

... I mean, I'm not, I'm not attracted to women, you know. But, sometimes I've felt that. And, me and Holly were talking about that, how sometimes, you know, we felt attracted to women or whatever, but that, ...generally, you know, we're attracted to men 'way more, and that, we're, like, 'men people.' [laughs] But, um, I think that, if anyone could come out in the group, ...I would be wicked supportive. I think I would look up to them. (Interview, April, 1994)

Brigitta seemed quite comfortable with stating her attractions for women, while asserting her preference for men, and while being theoretically supportive of any sexual minority AO members. The influences of cultural prescriptions, moves to resist these, and successes in becoming (somewhat) liberated from some of the prescriptions became more important after I understood the interpretations Critical theory would make on these occurrences.

Continually questioning degrees of agency, abilities to act on their own and others' behalves, participants voiced and displayed varying understandings of these issues. I became able to interpret these events more easily as I read more, revisited the data, talked to participants, and mulled it all over within myself. In later sections, I show examples of these events, and my analyses of them. Although I understood the social psychological influence of safety on individual disclosure in groups (see Memo #3), it was later in the project that I first heard, observed, and wrote of the relationships among my categories, and began to develop the concepts to describe these.

In the next sections, I evaluate my methodology and my preliminary data usage regarding the particular standards that all qualitative studies must use. I also discuss the
ways that an ethnographic methodology which incorporates Poststructuralism is different from other qualitative studies.

Trustworthiness

Rudestam and Newton (1992) discuss "planning for trustworthiness" as an integral part of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies (pp. 38 - 39). Looking at their criteria, I can state that this project attempted to fit them all adequately. In this section, I list each criterion, and the ways my methodological choices fulfilled it.

Auditability

"Auditability" is also known as "reliability" (Rudestam & Newton, 1992), and refers to the ability of another investigator to replicate this study "under similar circumstances" (p. 38). In ethnography, especially one which is interpreted through a Poststructuralist lens, replicability is irrelevant and impossible. However, checking to see if others with similar training and experience would view my raw data and "understand the themes and arrive at similar conclusions" (p. 38) was one route I took to audit my interpretations. I also often checked with Tony, and group members, to see if my transcriptions and summaries matched their recollections of certain events.

As mentioned previously (see Member Checking and Peer Debriefing section), I gave excerpts of my data to several colleagues and to Tony at various points in the first year of my project. While there were some variations in interpretation, the significant themes were completely understood and agreed upon. The places I had noted to be representative of each category were places others noted; my use of language to describe each category was completely replicated by Tony, and imitated or replicated by several
others. My peer debriefers further assisted me in understanding which aspects to bracket as my own opinions or surmises and which were descriptions.

At first, I was too interpretive. In later data sets, many peers remarked upon my descriptive language, with fewer interpretative statements unless they were in square brackets. These increasing congruences seem to fulfill the auditability component of this methodology.

Credibility

"Internal validity," or "credibility," looks at "causal inferences" (Rudestam & Newton, p. 38). Some of the ways these occur appropriately are through "prolonged engagement" in the field, "persistent observation" to explore participants' experiences in detail, using multiple sources, or "triangulation" (p. 39). This project has fulfilled this criterion.

Fittingness

"External validity" is referred to as "fittingness" by some researchers (Rudestam & Newton, 1992, pp. 38 - 39). This reviews the "generalizability" of my findings. Since ethnography emphasizes particularity rather than generalizability, and small samples rather than multiple contexts, I addressed this issue by participating/observing in the ALWAYS ON program groups for two different years, with two sets of members and leaders who overlapped by only a few participants.

Although I do not make claims about my findings and interpretations as applicable to all adolescents in all cultures, I have been making a concerted effort to investigate these issues in other cultures, other settings, and with adolescents of other backgrounds, to the extent these were available in the literature. Unfortunately, not much
has been published which investigates the issues and topics I chose; this absence is remarked upon by other researchers, and emphasized the uniqueness of my study (D'Augelli & Patterson, 1995, esp. Savin-Williams; Irvine, 1994a & b).

More importantly, informal observations and discussions with other adolescents in other parts of my life, both at home and in work settings, have reinforced the potentially useful aspects of my project. If these findings and my interpretations are made widely available, some of the problems of social identity conflicts may be decreased. Although this does not directly address the issue of generalizability, it does look ahead to other uses of my work.

**Methodology Choices Validated**

...qualitative inquiry is a state of being: a willingness to engage and to be engaged, the ability to momentarily stop internal dialogue and to engage reflectively in a search for the meanings constructed by others and ourselves. I doubt that many critical theorists as qualitative researchers exhibit such epistemological reflexivity.

The reconstruction of social relations rather than the construction of personal meanings is the primary goal of the critically based, qualitative researcher. Critical ethnography unravels and exploits the interplay between individual consciousness and the social order. (Sears, 1992a, p. 152)

In examining members' social identity co-constructions in AO groups, many "anomalies" seemed to occur. However, "[i]f one does not fit the pattern, it is the pattern that needs to be stretched to fit the individual variation" (Garnets & Kimmel, 1993g, p. 459). It became my challenge in this project to determine the new and existing patterns which were co-constructed in these groups.

Writing an ethnography requires long-term immersion, continuing involvement with community members, and some degree of comparative perspective that attempts to distinguish between what is common and what is unique across such groups. (Heath, 1995, p. 117)
I was privileged to have had so many hours, with two different groups, in two different roles. In changing roles, I became able to construct a narrative. Two researchers stated that a Narrative arises during research in which

the inferential process of selecting and classifying behaviors in ongoing interaction [had] already begun... [and] the observer... had some preconceived ideas that framed [the] perceptions. This framework derives from a uniting of research and clinical practice informed by developmental theory. (Selman & Schultz, 1989, p. 375)

I read extensively in developmental theories to discover where my interpretations entered that professional conversation. I decided, in agreement with Selman and Schultz, "the interpretive approach highlights the importance of context in understanding the meaning [sic] more than the explanation or cause of social behavior" (1989, p. 379).

Additionally, this project experience confirmed:

Knowledge is not merely discovered, but socially constructed, and theoretical biases and personal values are inherent not only in the interpretations we make but in the very questions we raise. (Selman & Schultz, 1989, p. 397)

I strove to interrogate my biases and values throughout this project. About halfway through, I began to believe that both gender and sexual orientation identities existed on continua rather than in discrete positions.

"[A]ny study which assumes the utility and necessity of polar differences between the sexes runs the great risk of blindness to the wide continuum of human behavior and to the variety of causes which may have affected any given communication behavior." (Sterk & Turner, 1994, p. 216)

I also had to "remember to analyze all social identities related to one another to fully present and understand particular social contexts" (Stevenson, Paludi, Black & Whitley, Jr., 1994b, p. xviii). These experiences changed my views, my feelings, my beliefs about myself and about others, enormously. From a positivist standpoint, this was a disaster; from a naturalistic perspective, I was having a significant success.
CHAPTER 5
FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS ABOUT GENDER AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION: GROUP COUNSELING AND SHARING

Group Counseling and Sharing Time Excerpt

4:21 [After Break, highlights of Counseling time]
Tony asks Condor to go first with sharing.

Condor: 2 girls like me [story]. Kind of upsetting...one asked me out...I like them both... hard decision... [says he thinks that this is not a real problem... ] exciting and confusing...[ calls himself] a real "stud."

[Lots comments, questions, Tony and Brigitta , mostly.]
[Brigitta and Condor tap each other, almost hitting each other, in intense discussion about how Condor ought to make a list of these two girls' good qualities in order to choose between them.]
{More discussion, with Tony, Amber, Condor, Brigitta, Travis.}
About dating more than one at a time [NOT allowed!].}

Brigitta: [asks Condor if] they both like you?
Condor: Yes.
Brigitta: [asks if he'd] kiss them?
Condor: I don't do that stuff. Never mind — just kidding.
[pauses, looks around] Brigitta's turn!

Tony: [asks Condor more questions, about another show he's in, his family.]

Condor: [shares more. Sad that] I can't spend time with Nick anymore, Nick or any of my friends [no time]. [Whines, but seems really upset, too.]
[Nick invites Condor to hang out with him.]
[Condor & Nick talk.]

Tony; [asks [like a joke] if one of the girls could} be for Nick?
[since he said he has no girlfriend when Tony asks him]
Brigitta: [ contests Nick's assertion that he] has no girlfriend.

What about us, Nick? [She seems to be joking.]

Tony: [asks Condor if] one [girl] could like Nick?
Brigitta: [ to Amber] Do you like Condor?
Amber: Definitely!
Brigitta: Cool! Me, too. That's 4!
[Condor ends his sharing. Nick, Marcy, Amber share. Several make comments about something Amber said.]

Amber: [continues. Talks to Tony] Condor is making fun of me.
Tony: [to Amber]: Tell him!
Brigitta: [hits Condor, saying it's] for Amber.
{Tony tells Brigitta not to hit! [seems to be angry.]} 
Condor: {gets up and moves away from Brigitta, out of range, over by Marcy. [To Brigitta]} I'm sick of that. [To Marcy] Hi, Marcy.

You won't hit me, will you? [Marcy doesn't respond.]
[Amber continues, ends. Daitch shares. Brigitta begins her turn.]
Brigitta: [talks lightly, but tells about the sexual harassment incident at her job, being in court. Says] The manager denied everything, but I kicked ass! They believed me!

[Condor asks a question but I can't hear it.]

[Brigitta doesn't respond to him; continues. About quitting drugs, but she couldn't do it. Story about a boyfriend, getting drunk.]

[Lots of comments, simultaneously.]

Brigitta: Shut up! [mad] I was kissing this guy when his girlfriend walks in. [Tells story. Said she was] too drunk, [almost got involved with more sex than she wanted to.] They're, like, all over me... I could barely protect myself...I said: "No, lay off!" but he wouldn't... He's a faggot! ... No more getting "messed up" for me!

Nick: [to Brigitta]: How many times do you have to learn that lesson? [Sounds disgusted with her.]

Brigitta: I've not gotten high in 5 months! [ Seems offended.]

Nick: You're always saying you're not going to do stuff, then you do it.

Tony: [asks Brigitta how/why she gets] into those kinds of situations?

Brigitta: [gets still, and quiet. Tells group she's going away, into a treatment program, may miss some AO meetings. Stresses that it's] A counseling program, not Drugs or Alcohol; for eating disorders.

Tony: [asks her to] let us know.

(FIELD NOTES, 3/21/94)

Information about the Findings and Interpretations Chapters

For these next three Chapters, which are analogized to the section of the ALWAYS ON meetings which was devoted to Group Counseling, it seemed appropriate to include longer data sets (such as 3/21/94, above) for the introductory excerpts. Group counseling in AO meetings often took this form, of turn-taking combined with individual members' or leaders' comments/questions, during which they found a lot of information to share and learn about one another and the program. These Chapters take a similar format, to show what I "found" while conducting this research, and to share what I "made" of what I found.

I "take turns" by presenting background information, data excerpts, and comparisons among data sets and other group experiences. Indepth interpretations and analyses are mostly reserved for later in each Chapter, but all data selecting is interpretative and analytical.
Data were drawn from: a) observations during meetings, as recorded in my handwritten field notes; b) some comments about members, events, or my own reactions, as recorded in my handwritten or typed analytic notes; c) interview transcripts, taken from audiotapes; d) audio- and videotape transcripts of meetings; e) Survey responses, and my summaries of the responses; and, f) summaries of my memories of conversations or feedback given to me about the data, which I discussed with Tony and other peer debriefers, as added to my typed or handwritten analytic notes.

My selection of data sets, my decisions about what to excerpt, even what to record in the first place, were interpretive acts, which I acknowledge. In fact, what I selected at this time may be different from what I would select, or would have selected, at other times. Each sample in each section is representative of, or stands in for, many other similar examples which also exist in this project's data. Through grounded theory practices, and triangulation, each data set may be thought of as the top of a "pile," underneath which are many more sets, from the same and different sources, from each of the two years of this project. Many sets could serve more than one "pile," as I explain in those sections.

Once I had selected the "top" five categories (gender, sexual orientation, safety, connection, and differential authenticity), I then usually chose the most representative, or typical example to show the theoretical point related to that section. Occasionally, however, I chose a data set for its atypicality, or its use as a negative case. If that was so, I stated that for that section.

(For purposes of brevity in an already-lengthy work, I kept examples in these three Chapters to one or two per section. However, for readers who are interested, some additional data excerpts and samples for some sections are in Appendix H.)
As I described before, members in the first-year group (Premiere) were together for the first time, although a few of them had known one or more members before the group formed for that year. Early meetings were devoted to getting to know each other and the program, learning and applying the written Norms (see Appendix D for the Norms), and improving their theatre skills with games and short scenework. Members of this group did their first public performance together (all attended, but not all performed), near the end of November.

Discussions of personal issues were somewhat shorter in earlier meetings than in later ones, and Group Time did not occur formally until later, also. In the following excerpts, dates of the meeting from which they were taken are at the beginning of each section, since I chose to include excerpts from the same date in many cases. The activity in which the group was engaged (see AO Format/Schedule, Figure 2) is also labeled for each excerpt, at the top of that data set, since excerpts from the same meeting were not necessarily taken from the same activity or portion of the meeting. Page numbers refer to my typed data pages.

The unhighlighted style is used to show my own comments, questions, or interpretations of events as they occurred, and to give background information for the reader about each date and/or data set. The bold style is used for actual conversations, summaries of events, and/or restatements of phrases or sections of conversations. I placed square brackets, "[ ]," around my restatements, summaries, or comments. If both occurred, braces, "{ }," and square brackets show the different aspects being altered or commented upon.

Since all but the written parts of the survey were oral events, all punctuation, capitalization, and spelling are my own. I tried to be true to the rhythm of each person's speech, so that even if I deleted [sometimes shown by an ellipsis (...), sometimes by a
double asterisk (**) or summarized parts of a statement or conversation/event, the sentences I created were used as sentences by the speaker.

All names used are the members’ project pseudonyms. If nonproject people were mentioned, I used first initials only.

Overview of Chapters 5, 6, and 7

Because of the complexity and the magnitude of the task I chose to undertake in this research project, juggling five major categories, three important theoretical frameworks, and two project years, dividing the Findings into three sections made the viewing of the data and my Interpretations more manageable for both the writer and for readers. So, Chapter Five focuses upon the categories of gender and sexual orientation. Chapter Six examines the influences of safety and connection on these social identities. Chapter Seven is devoted to the development of the concept of differential authenticity.

As mentioned in several sections of the Literature Review, gender and sexual orientation identities are lived interactively, and co-constructed according to many different and often contradictory discourses about each identity. These discourses and identity co-constructions overlapped and interacted with socioeconomic class, race/ethnicity, religion, physical appearance, sexuality, and many other aspects of these adolescents' lives during and outside of AO group meeting times. In this Chapter, I offer excerpts from various parts of the AO group meeting times, the taped interviews, and the written survey, over the two-year project span, to illustrate the ways AO members and leaders co-constructed gender and sexual orientation identities in these group meetings.

To interpret these co-constructions, I used feminist and critical poststructuralist theories, as explored in combination during this thesis' Literature Review, and as modeled by several researchers (Davies, 1993; Gilbert, 1993; Keenan, Solsken, & Willett, in press; Lather, 1992; Walkerdine, 1985). By examining multiple discourses, and offering several
interpretations, I showed the ways these members sometimes, and increasingly throughout their tenure in AO, flexibly lived and/or appreciated these identity co-constructions.

Then, in Chapter Six, I show two of the most significant influences on these co-constructions, safety and connection, and examples of data in which these influences were discussed and/or active. In Chapter Seven, I describe and offer examples of data which show the living of this influenced flexibility, which I named differential authenticity. Also in Chapter Seven, I "allowed" several of the members of the second project year's group, the longer-term members of AO, to "speak" through their taped interviews, to explore these co-constructions more personally.

A Sampling of Data in which Gender was a Prominent Topic

Most of these samples are from Field Notes taken at AO Premiere group meetings. As explained in earlier Chapters, I have more complete and more textual data from the first year than the second year. Other samples are from transcripts of interviews conducted both years, my survey (given the first year), or transcripts of videotapes from the first year.

Since this portion of this Chapter's function is to "take turns," showing what I "found," lengthier commentary occurs later. Themes or subtopics are grouped together whenever possible, for ease of reading; data sets are also placed sequentially when possible.

Gender Stereotypes or Roles

In some of the places that the topic of gender appeared, one or more members spoke of hegemonic gender roles or stereotypes (for Heterosexual, Christian, Whites, in the USA, of the working- or middle-classes).
In this set, Brigitta began by trying to explain her feelings about the males' lack of personal talking, or sharing, in the group meetings. The topic was revisited a few minutes later, and in both occurrences, Brigitta was careful in her attempt to appeal to the "guys" without sounding "prejudiced." She was also trying to reassure them that they could retain their traditional masculinity even while showing their feelings or physical affection.

Tony inserted a reframing of the concept of macho as "self-assured," perhaps because he did not want Brigitta's ideas to be viewed negatively or reactively by the males. Tony often took Group Counseling and Sharing time as opportunities to emphasize or refocus members on one or more of the group Norms, such as Respect, or Participation. Therefore, Tony also could have made this intervention with Brigitta in order for her and other members to talk more personally, more often. In addition, Tony also frequently used or created opportunities to challenge members who spoke of or performed within many kinds of stereotypes. One consequence of this intervention was that Nick entered the conversation in a very personal way.
Nick told the group that he doesn't claim his masculinity in those terms, and dissociated himself from the conflict between machismo and expression. Nick often disagreed with and seemed annoyed with Brigitta, regardless of her ideas, and he bickered with her or made judgmental comments about her to Condor or the group in general in almost every meeting. So his disavowal in this case could be both interpersonally motivated and inspired by wanting to dispel Brigitta's stereotypes and assumptions and males.

This set of discourse "moves" was somewhat typical in this AO group: Brigitta or another member would express culturally hegemonic views (of gender or another identity), even as the member may have been wanting those (gendered) behaviors to change. Tony would move to counter these stereotypes. Nick or another member then would respond by moving further, to liberate him or herself from hegemonic views all together, although some members may have made a seemingly liberational move which could also have been just as motivated by interpersonal power dynamics. Nonetheless, through personal discussions or scenework processed in this way, possibilities and actualities of counter-hegemony and liberation became co-constructed.

In this next set, gender ideas were specifically addressed through an activity which Tony created several months later, expressly to examine the members' concepts of "macho" related to individuals' identities and to personal sharing in the group.

(2/7/94, pp. 15 - 16, Field Notes, after WoT? time)
[After WoT? time, as a result of some of their sharing, they were discussing how the absences of the three female members affected their sharing. They discussed gender explicitly, at his instigation. Tony then created an activity in which each member rated him/herself, 1 - 10, with 10's being the highest/most, on a "macho scale."]
[These next two data sets are from that discussion and activity, but I have deleted some of the intermediate talk, if it strayed from this topic. These deletions are represented by double asterisks (**).]
[Tony asked each of them to say how the group was different at this meeting, with these members absent.]

**Travis:** Brigitta gives me a hug.

**Daitch:** Brigitta says "Pocability, people!" [He imitates Brigitta. They laugh, affectionately.]

**Daitch:** It's not a gender thing. It's the way they are.
Nick: I agree.

Tony summarizes. **

Keith: Maybe more time on check-in with Brigitta & Amber.

Tony: [asks Nick] about gender issues in the group?

Nick: Not specifically about today’s group.

Tony: [says he was noticing they’re] not sharing on anything turbulent today.

Nick: Deep. [negating, ironic tone]

Daitch: In-depth-shit. [negating, ironic tone]

Nick: Brigitta and Holly bring it in.

Daitch: They ask us if it happens to us. [imitates Brigitta again]

Tony: Is that gender, or Brigitta, Holly, Amber? [Tony pauses between saying each name, as if to ask members to picture and consider each girl separately, as an individual.]

Keith: Marcy doesn’t do it!

Travis: Amber doesn’t, either. **

Tony: [agrees with them]: Women tend to be issue-focused.

Condor: Guys are more gruff and masculine. [Jokes, uses a deeper voice.] **

Marcy: [about girls’ having] more issues to bring up.

Daitch: Girls are more open about things than guys... guys have this "macho bullshit" built into their brains.

[Travis & Nick disagree with Daitch.]

(2/7/94, pp. 16 - 18, Field Notes, after WoT? time)

[See above data set for explanation of this activity, and my formatting.]

Tony: You 5 young men aren’t particularly "macho," but you are impacted by gender expectations of the culture. [He asks Marcy how she sees these guys compared to other guys?

Marcy gives no response.]

Travis: It’s OK with me to be the only guy with a lot of women — I’m used to it.

Daitch: I sort of do have some "macho" shit.

[Tony asks how?]

Marcy asks if Daitch’s dad is macho?]

Daitch: My fuckin’ stepdad is a "puss-knocker." [angrily. laughs.] I do [have] macho in me.

Tony: [asks Keith] rate yourself on a "macho" scale, compared to other guys.

Keith: I have less of an ego compared to other guys... They blow themselves up. [He gestures with his thumb, blowing it up] I try to be sensitive.

Tony: If 10 equals a macho redneck; 1 equals very opposite [He seems to struggle with what to call that; can’t name it.]

Nick: Pacifist?

Tony: Not macho. **

Keith [responding to the question]: 5 or 6 **

Daitch [responding to the question]: 2, but I’m getting drunk because I’m feeling pain more lately,... more emotional, ...I drink to cover it up and deal with it.

Nick: [to Daitch] Drunk equals not emotional?

Daitch: Get a glow on! [smiles.]

[Tony explains depressant/stimulant caffeine vs. alcohol.]
Daitch: I drink and smoke, and drink Coke™ afterwards.
Tony: [asks scale question of Condor]
Condor: [responding to question] 3 on "macho" scale.
[Nick agrees with Condor's assessment.]
Condor: I wasn't raised "macho." I was raised by my mom.
[Tony asks Condor about that, and about his 3 points of machismo: what they are?]
Condor: When kids push me, I go "rahhh!" [Screams like a monster kids play with.]
Tony: [to Condor] Is your being reluctant to express feelings, especially positive ones, or not to talk, related to "macho" as compared to Condor stuff?
[Condor seems not to understand Tony's question. He doesn't answer, and looks at Tony with a questioning eye.]
[Tony explains. Repeats question.]
[Condor chews his hair. Doesn't answer it.]
[Tony asks Nick.]
Nick: 3
[Tony asks why?]
Nick: I fight if provoked, but I don't pretend to be tough or try to start fights. I used to be like that.
[Condor agrees with Nick about Nick.]
[Tony asks Travis.]
Travis: I don't know. 9 - 10. [jokes.] 1 - 2? {Condor & Keith joke about Travis' intense use/liking of karate [Travis takes lessons, competes in meets], disputing Travis' 1 - 2 rating.}
Travis: [explains about karate] Karate isn't "macho."
I hate that. It's not for that. It's for discipline and focus and confidence, and not to be shy. I won't fight even if provoked.
Tony: [to group] Guys are a "10" if they fight? Aggression equals "macho"?
Daitch: Some girls fight.
[Nick agrees.]
Tony: Not just men can be aggressive.
Daitch: Yeah.
Tony: "Macho" vs. male.
Daitch: ...[macho is] telling women what to do — like my chauvinist pig-asshole uncle.
Tony: [clarifies] "Macho" means to] value men above women.
[Daitch agrees.]
[Marcy agrees.]
Condor: [jokes] "Real men" drink black coffee.
[Nick and Daitch joke.]
Tony: [asks Marcy what the] counterpart is for women?
Marcy: I'm a 5 or a 4 on the "macho" scale. [decides to use scale as is]
Daitch: Girls call it "being a bitch."
Nick: It's not a gender thing.
Marcy: Not admitting when you're wrong is about a person, not gender.
Tony: [clarifies]** It's about awareness.... Men as gently sensitive... **
Nick: Some girls won't admit when they're wrong. **
In examining these exchanges, I noticed that each member strove to be honest about him/herself in ratings, and that the ratings became comparative almost immediately. Ideas about what is masculine, what is not, and how definitions of macho and machismo could be understood, were co-constructed among attending members, and with Tony.

The conversation which dominated the first part of this sharing time showed Tony’s attempts at, and some members’ support of, challenging Daitch’s claims to defining machismo through hatred or maltreatment of women (as in his characterizing his stepfather as a "puss-knocker," and his "chauvinist pig-asshole uncle"). Tony tried to reframe maleness, and machismo, in several ways, beginning with making counter-hegemonic comments (such as in his attempt to separate Condor’s personal reluctance from cultural expectations regarding males’ sharing feelings) and later making liberational moves (questioning the pairing of "aggression" with "macho"; labeling aware men as "gently sensitive").

Tony first asked Keith to rate himself on a pretend macho continuum, but did not name the poles before Keith responded. This left the ideas of the nature of the extremes of the continuum up to Keith, who then placed his ranking almost in the middle (5 - 6).

Tony seemed to have disagreed with Keith’s assessment, and immediately tried to clarify his ideas of the extremes. Tony struggled with what to name each pole, and resorted to the stereotype of the "redneck" to name extreme machismo, as a "10."

The next males to rate themselves kept their ratings low, perhaps in response to Tony’s negative characterization of the macho end of the continuum, and perhaps because they truly saw themselves as less rather than more macho. Marcy rated herself with a "5," as high as the highest self-ranking male in the group, Keith.

In my observations of these members, however, I would not have ranked Keith higher than any of the other males, nor would I have concurred with Marcy’s self-ranking. In fact, each male tried to distance himself from the macho end of the continuum, with
Travis making the most direct comments, about not wanting his beloved martial art to be considered macho.

Several agreed that fighting and scaring people were macho behaviors, but that girls could do these, also. Each member who used to engage in these spoke of less involvement currently with these behaviors, and concomitantly, with machismo.

Tony tried to engage Condor, bringing the conversation back to Condor's reluctance to share personally in the group, and relating that to machismo, but Condor wouldn't respond, and made more jokes than serious comments.

Marcy, as the only female at this meeting, was unwilling to speak at first, even when directly addressed by Tony. She was clearly participating as a listener, which was often her mode, especially when all members were present.

Later in this conversation, Marcy became involved in analyzing and distinguishing hegemonic gender behaviors from general character qualities, noting that admissions of being wrong "is about a person, not gender." Tony supported these distinctions, and other activities in this and later AO meetings assisted members to further examine these, in scenework and in their lives.

In addition to drama therapy, sociodrama, and psychodrama, Tony utilized other expressive arts therapies during AO meetings' counseling times. In this next set of excerpts, an art therapy activity became the origin of many significant discussions, of some psychodrama, and of some personal insights for members. Many gender issues arose during this segment in all meetings. Some excerpts follow.

(2/28/94, pp. 19 - 20, Group Counseling time)
[Tony created an art therapy activity in which members were each to draw his/her personal "dragon" and the "jewel" it guarded, and then bring the drawings to the group to share and discuss them. Brigitta became quite immersed in this activity. The next several data sets are from that time, on the first date in which these were done and discussed, and on a subsequent date, in which they continued to use these drawings and discuss them.] [I use double asterisks (**) to show separate events which were not in fact sequential in terms of clock time, and to mark the existence of other comments or events I deleted in order to keep Brigitta's data sections together here.]
Brigitta: [sings to herself, softly, as she draws] I'm a perfect little girl 'cause my daddy said so.
[Amber and Condor laugh and mock Brigitta, lightly.]
[Brigitta explains, easily.]
[Amber apologizes for laughing.]

(p. 24)
Brigitta: [shares about her drawing in a cute, little girl voice] The sun always smiles... the little princess, "daddy's little girl," everything's perfect... [her own voice, now] ...It's not real, ... it's not what I want... it's what I should be... the big dragon is "school, my peers, grades, my feelings, my father, words, low self-esteem" [reads from her drawing. (I later find out, when I see it, that she had also written 'Slut, but didn't read that word when she shared.)]

Tony: It sounds like your inner child is the real jewel?
Amber: Image-maker.
Brigitta: Yeah.
Tony: [to Brigitta] Who the little princess, who she really is, is your quest.
Brigitta: She's not blonde! [Burps loudly.]

(3/7/94, pp. 22 - 23: see above, 2/28)
[Brigitta's turn to share.]
Brigitta: [takes off her baseball cap] I can't wear the hat, it's "unladylike." [laughs.]
[Tony introduces each as his/her jewel, asks him/her to speak to the person. Does this for Brigitta.]

Brigitta: [talks in a baby voice.] I can offer her happiness & lady-like-ness. She should be wearing a skirt and nicer hair and no hat — hats are for boys. She'd be happier, be pleasant; then she could get a man.
[Tony asks questions to clarify dragon's origins.]
Brigitta: Brigitta's daddy developed this for Brigitta. We love him. [sarcastically, but still baby-like.]

Daitch: Go, Brigitta!
[Tony asks Brigitta to be her dragon. Asks how it was created?]
Brigitta: [still in baby voice] It was kind of simple: she's a bitch, a slut, not worth anything... lots of people created me [the dragon]. Everyone keeps feeding me — I got huge. I'm getting wicked hungry, too.
[Tony asks what the dragon gives Brigitta?]
Brigitta: [still in baby voice] I give her the dark side. Life is hell.

Brigitta began this set by mocking the idea of "perfect little girl" as established by her father when she was younger. She fought it, making counter-hegemonic statements
about her own feelings and desires, but admitted that this pull to be that type of perfect was her personal "dragon," and had led to feelings of failure and low-self-esteem.

Tony and Amber supported Brigitta to see that her own inner self was her personal "jewel," and Tony further reframed her quest so that she did not have to reject the "little princess," but could redefine her as Brigitta wanted her to be. Using the cultural stereotypes of being blonde as stupid, helpless, "ditzy," Brigitta firmly rejected that persona, "She's not blonde!" then burped loudly to emphasize her nonconformity to perfect little girlness.

Even to discuss this princess, Brigitta felt compelled to appear differently as she was speaking, removing her baseball cap because it was "unladylike." Then Brigitta, in response to Tony's questions, went on to pair Heterosexual success and femininity: "She'd be happier, be more pleasant; then she could get a man."

Continuing, Brigitta received group support from Daitch, and then entered the psychodramatic modality more fully. She became the "dragon" in order to voice its ideas and to understand its creation, and so she became aware of the relationship between her father's dominance in creating her personae up to this point, and her eating disorder. This brief psychodrama and the insights which arose from it became both the impetus and the support for Brigitta's checking herself in to an eating disorders/sexual abuse survivors' clinic for six weeks later in this season, according to Tony's conversations with Brigitta and her therapist at this clinic.

The group discussions which occurred during and after scenework often raised gender issues, as in these two excerpts, below.

(2/28/94, p. 12 & p. 15, Field Notes, Scenework and Discussion afterwards.)

[In an improvisation, Condor, Daitch, Amber, and Tony discuss Condor's character depiction. Condor entered a scene in which Brigitta and Marcy were playing characters who were arguing. Condor entered rather than tagging either of them to leave the scene.]

(p. 12)

**Brigitta:** [to Marcy] *I heard you called me a "bitch."* [Laughing, refusing to believe it.]
Marcy [protests]: I didn't!
Brigitta: Cause if you did, I'd have to kick the shit out of you!

[laughs more.]

[Condor enters, and plays his character with his falsetto. He is walking around Brigitta and Marcy, moving his arms and hands in a sweeping motion, as if he is using a broom. He is talking to himself in his falsetto voice. I can't hear exactly what he is saying.]

[Many jokes about who or what he is/doing]

Daitch: [to Amber, about Condor] He's a Lesbian maid servant!
Tony: [to Condor] You're sweeping?
Condor: [still in falsetto] Brooming.

(p. 15: see above)

[They are discussing the above scene.]

Condor: [to Tony] I was a guy when I was brooming.
Tony: [to Condor] Oh, a guy with a high voice?
[Many comments.]

During and after this improvisational scene, Condor plays against conceptions of masculinity, by doing the housecleaning ("brooming"), and by speaking in a high voice while not being female in his character. Other than to clarify his character, no one in the group makes any comments about his choices. Even Daitch's inaccurate speculation, that Condor was playing "a Lesbian maid servant," was offered more to show Daitch's engagement with the scene than to attempt to circumscribe Condor's rights as an actor to define his character in any way he chose.

Brigitta also plays against gender typing in her character, by arguing with and then threatening Marcy's character. Both are playing females, and when Brigitta's character stated a rumor that Marcy's had insulted her in a gender-specific way ("bitch"), Brigitta's response was tough and aggressive: "I'd have to kick the shit out of you!"

In both instances, the group supported, by not commenting negatively and by accepting without questioning, Brigitta's and Condor's characters' ideas about gender, including those that were counter to cultural expectations. Even though these counter-hegemonic moves did not lead directly into a more significant direction, mostly because these were very brief scenes without a lot of interaction or discussion, an atmosphere
such as depicted here was typical of the ways the group showed its support for character experiments similar to these, and there were dozens of examples of encounters like this.

Some scenework, in itself, raised gender role issues. Here is one example.

(2/28/94, p. 13, Field Notes, Scenework.)
[Condor and Daitch are playing male boxers.]
[Condor becomes a fighter, stretching before a fight.]
[Condor and Daitch fight.]
[Condor is knocked down in one round. When he's down, he squeaks]: Mom?
[Daitch continues to mime hurting Condor, pretending to kick him as he lies there.]
[Condor pretend-bites Daitch's ankle, amidst much laughter on and off stage.]

Typically, in Western culture, comedy occurs when the unexpected happens, as long as no one is seriously adversely affected by the events. When Condor began the scene, he moved from his stretching to prepare for a fight into being posed as in a tough, boxer's stance, with his arms poised to punch, his knees bent, ready to spring into action, facing his opponent, played by Daitch. In AO scenework, actors do not really hit or punch one another (usually...), but rather mime these actions and then create appropriate reactions.

Daitch's character "punched" Condor's, but Condor's reaction was very extreme compared to the intensity of Daitch's mimed punch. So, in theatre terms, Daitch played the "straight man," playing with rather than against "type," and Condor played for laughs, partly by going against "type." Condor immediately fell, crashing loudly on the carpeted floor, then huddled in a fetal curl position and squeaked "Mom?" as if asking for assistance from an offstage mother. In response, Daitch intensified his "kicks" and "punches." Condor then "swam" across the floor, partly to avoid the "kicks," and partly to position himself to "bite" Daitch's ankles. With every move Condor made, the audience members laughed more.
In this scene, Condor seemed to act against the stereotype, that of a macho boxer, by squeaking for his mom when he was knocked down, and by being an ankle-biter rather than a stand-up, serious fighter, to retaliate. Worth noting, too, was that Condor stood about five inches taller than Daitch at this time, and was almost three years older, so his willingness to be the one beaten rather than to take command during the fight further showed either his interest in playing against cultural expectations, or his keen understanding of what creates humor in a scene, or possibly both.

Whether as liberational gender moves or just as interesting comedy, Condor's acting choices sometimes opened away from the gender or sexual orientation-stereotypical and widened the playing field for him. At other times, Condor chose to play stereotyped roles, but to pretend that he was female rather than male, which still widened his repertoire of acting choices. As I will show later, these widened choices impacted not just Condor, but the group's co-constructions of gender and sexual orientation identities.

Some members, during sharing times such as What's On Top? (WoT?), would discuss the impact of cultural gender roles on their lives, as in the short excerpt, below.

(3/21/94, p. 4, Field Notes, Opening Circle.)
[Members were stating how they were doing. Amber complained about "being single," and having no date for the upcoming school Prom. She decided she could go with a friend, and explained how they would dress.]

Amber: I could wear a tux if he wears a dress. I have to get him to take a shower, first!

In this short excerpt of personal sharing, Amber's plans for the prom highlighted her willingness to live outside of gender expectations in order to have fun, make a point, and/or not be left out of a school social function. However, she was not considering stepping outside gender norms completely, by going alone, or with another female, so her gender role moves were counter-hegemonic rather than liberational. Still trapped in wanting what she was supposed to want, she could not see other choices, yet.
She exhibited being influenced further by the force of femininity hegemony, by having negative feelings about being single even though there was no one she was interested in dating at that time, and by her intention to attend in gender-reversed clothing ("I could wear a tux if he wears a dress.") in order to position that partnership as a public joke. She intended to do this seemingly because her date was not a romantic interest of hers, and because his hygiene was substandard ("I have to get him to take a shower, first!"): she did not wish to be judged associatively by appearing with him as her date, so she would keep it humorous so no one could take her choice seriously.

This is a common move in adolescence. The philosophy seems to be: "You can't make fun of me, because I'm going to take control of the situation by making the joke on myself first!" Another version of this is: "You can't fire me, or exclude me; I quit!"

More commonly, males in this group chose these tactics, since females would often play the game longer, trying to please, trying to be included. So, Amber's moves were somewhat unusual for her gender in this context.

Often, gendered roles from the media would appear in improvisations, or regular activities. In this example, Vanna White, the "Wheel of Fortune" co-host who points to the letters and the prizes and says almost nothing, was referenced.

(3/21/94, pp., 4 - 5, Field Notes, Theatre Skills time.)

[Members were going to vote on their ideas for titles for the upcoming play. Tony asked Travis to be the one to write the ideas on the board.]

Brigitta: Can I be 'Vanna'? [whines]
Travis [to Brigitta]: No, I'm being "Vanna"! [defends his turf.]
Nick [to Travis]: You look like "Vanna"! [laughs]
Travis [to Nick]: I'm "Vaughn," "Vaughn White"!
Daitch: Vaughn White! [laughs.]

Travis had several choices in this event. Since he wanted to be the person who wrote on the board, this positioned him in competition with Brigitta, who also wanted that job. With Brigitta's having made the first move, and labeling the job with Vanna White's name, Travis then had to either ignore that and claim the job free of the
association with Vanna, or deal with it as Vanna's job. Travis chose to claim both the job and Vanna, name and all, until Nick teased him. Then, still claiming the job, he divorced it from being a female's by changing the name of the character to Vaughn. It was not until Nick intervened that Travis showed unwillingness to play the part as given. Until he was teased, Travis seemed to view the part of Vanna as a female acting task which was necessary, or even desired, in order to achieve his actual goal, that of being the one to write on the board.

Travis' desire to play the part of Vanna White, even though it is usually played as female, by a female, seemed to indicate his flexibility and acceptance of expanded gender roles, but his desire was not without controversy. Nick teased Travis, "You look like 'Vanna'!" implying that Travis was feminine-looking, and using a tone of voice to show that Nick thought that this was a negative trait. Travis responded to the taunt by dropping the idea that he would play a female part by changing the part to a male's: "I'm being 'Vanna'" changed into "I'm 'Vaughn,'" which removed the opportunity for gender teasing. If Travis had wanted to play for laughs, he could have kept the part as Vanna, even "camped" it up, and showed his ability to disregard Nick's teasing in the process. But, Travis chose to focus upon the job rather than the comedy, and on the possible negative consequences intimated by Nick if he remained Vanna, and so traded Vanna for Vaughn, losing some of his original flexibility in that choosing.

Teasing about playing parts outside of one's gender, or for living and/or appearing "different" with respect to gender was sporadic, and some members never responded negatively to their own or others' forays into opposite sex behaviors or appearances, whether in scenes or in life. In some scenework, actors did play opposite sex roles. This sometimes was done "straight," as if this were "normal," and the humor would come from the scene's incongruities (e.g., a male who was pregnant). Other times, actors played parodies of the opposite sex characters, stereotyping them by age, social class, or other backgrounds as well.
(3/21/94, p. 8, Field Notes, Scenework.)
[Members were doing Chain Improvisations, in which several members are actors in sequential scenes. After a scene plays for a short while, someone from the audience "freezes" the scene, then the "freezer(s)" taps some or all of the current actors "out" (back to the audience), and the new actors begin a new scene; or, the "freezer" enters the existing scene as a new character.]

[Daitch freezes scene, taps out Nick and Amber, brings in Tony. Daitch establishes himself as a girl, Tony as his mom, Daitch as pregnant. Tony and Daitch play this scene.]

[Daitch establishes himself as a girl, Tony as his mom, Daitch as pregnant. Tony and Daitch play this scene.]

[Amber enters, as Daitch's dad, in this scene.]

Brigitta: [enters, as the boyfriend to Daitch's girl. She slaps Daitch's hands, says] Whassup? [Tells Daitch to get up, and then puts him/her on her/his lap. Brigitta then gets up and swaggers to chair. Brigitta treats Daitch's character as a parody of the ways some Black rap singers treat some females in some music videos: patronizes Daitch, orders him around, sexualizes every movement.]

[Condor freezes scene, goes in with a chair, takes out Daitch and Amber.]

In this scene, once Daitch established that he and Tony were playing females, females who entered the scene then played males. Otherwise, the scene was played with many stereotypes in force: distraught and ineffective mother; angry father who threatened violence; promiscuous daughter who became pregnant; Black gang-member as overbearing boyfriend.

Since there was no discussion of this scene, the racism and sexism were not acknowledged. These types of stereotypes often entered scenework, especially brief scenes, for the Premiere year's group. Unless discussion followed, or unless Tony interrupted to comment on or challenge an actor's choices, either in character (by entering the scene), or as the leader (in his director mode), scenes went by so fast that a lot of hegemonic and biased moves happened without being questioned.

When discussion did follow, many of these choices would be challenged, and not always by Tony. In addition, Tony often waited to gather several instances of behaviors such as these and then would create an activity, like the machismo rating scale (2/7/94, above), that explored members' ideas about social identities or roles without placing
blame or assigning responsibility to any one member for being disrespectful or stereotypical.

These discussions and activities developed members' abilities to ferret out stereotypical instances in themselves, and expanded their awareness of what made a "good" acting choice. By Encore year, members usually noticed these behaviors themselves, or dropped doing them completely. For example, if an Encore actor played in a scene in a performance or AO meeting as a gay or lesbian character, he/she often created a character and a scene in which sexual orientation was not the primary focus. Or, if it became so, the characters were created and responded to related to the content of the scene, or the emotions, and without the physical or vocal exaggerations which co-constructed the stereotypical acting choices of most Premiere members.

Talk or scenework in which gender stereotypes or roles appeared in this Premiere year included aspects of a person's appearance and the ways these related to gender, as with Nick and Travis, or Amber, above. The next section offers more examples that fit this subcategory of the gender topic.

Gendered Appearances

Some gender topic occurrences were related to a member's clothing or appearance, and either I or another member noticed these to be gender-oppositional or gender-congruent for that person. These comments often happened during arrivals.

(10/11/93, p. 1, Field Notes, arrival time)
[Daitch is wearing bright red lipstick. Amber notices and asks]: Is that lipstick, Daitch?
[Daitch nods.]
Amber: I like it! [emphatically]

1 Since I do not have written or transcribed notes from most meetings in the Encore year (see Methodology Chapter for an explanation of this), I must rely upon my memory and participation experiences to support this claim.
(1/24/94, p. 2, Field Notes, arrival time)

Brigitta: Travis, you look very "studly" today!

Tony [to Travis]: "Are you feeling "studly"?"

Travis: I don't know. [looks down, away from Brigitta. seems pleased, a bit shy.]

Brigitta: [to Travis] You got a wicked lot of great clothes for Christmas!

In these encounters, two females showed appreciation for two males' fashion choices, regardless of the gender-typicality of those choices. This type of support, particularly for experimentation with appearance, was frequent and genuine in this group. It is worth noticing that the first encounter occurred during the first month of the group's existence (October), whereas the second occurred towards the middle of the year, to illustrate the pervasiveness of these types of events right from the group's inception.

In scenework, gender roles, gendered appearances, and gender issues arose frequently. In this rehearsal, Tony and two female members decided to parody "Valley Girls" in this way:

(11/8/93, p. 3, Field Notes, Scenework/rehearsal)

[Tony’s idea, and Brigitta and Holly do it. They use potatoes as falsies; take them out to donate to Stone soup. They mime doing it. Lots of laughter at this.]

In one move, the choice of using potatoes as fake breasts, this scene intersected with several cultural and gender ideals and mocked them. "Valley Girls" were mocked as obsessed with appearances enough to pretend their breasts were larger than they naturally were. Charity work as somber, serious, somewhat formal, was challenged, by locating the food donations inside the actors' clothing, and by having the donations masquerade as breasts, which made the positioning of the potatoes a source of both physical and cultural humor. Sexuality, particularly of females, was mocked, as the "breasts" became expendable, yet still useful as food (which is, after all, breasts' original function).
This choice could also have been interpreted, however, as anti-feminist, in its negative portrayal of female vanity, and the parroting of female teens as "Valley Girls" who lack intelligence and purpose, who are usually termed "ditzy," and who used these characteristics to motivate their actions. None of the consequences of that directing/acting choice was discussed. Yet, the laughter indicated the group members' awareness of many layers of humor in this one action, and of the shifting meanings, the poststructural nature of gendered acts.

Although the next section is a subcategory of gender in which many of the above subtopics overlapped, telling stories in which gender played a prominent role seemed to deserve its own subsection, which follows.

**Gendered Anecdotes**

Some members shared stories with gender-related issues which occurred during or after school, or on weekends. Brigitta cast herself in the role of rescuer in this next situation, and highlighted the gender issues involved directly to the people on the bus. Daitech showed his support of her actions.

(11/8/93, p. 5, Group Counseling Time)

Brigitta: [shares that she was] pretty pissed off on the bus. [A group of boys was taunting a handicapped boy. She said that she told one boy]: You're a "big man"; you don't have any feelings, [sarcastically], [and she told him to] think about someone else's feelings before you hurt them.

Daitech: [suggests that Brigitta] rip his head off.

In this recounting, Brigitta positioned herself as the rescuer, willing and brave, taking on a role which was not familiar to her, and one which she was proud to have had to courage to take. She then positioned the bullies as the opposite of their macho posturing, by taunting them. She confronted one boy's obnoxious behavior with what she believed was a clever put-down, disparaging his masculinity, his emotional health, and his morality in
one move: "You're a 'big man'; you don't have any feelings." She then used her advantage to order them to reconsider their actions in the future, according to a set of culturally female ethics: "think about someone else's feelings before you hurt them," ethics which she had ironically just ignored herself. In this, Brigitta switched gender roles with these boys: she became the one in control, with little regard for their feelings; they became the ones with less control, whose self-esteem was at stake, and whose behaviors could be regulated by those with more power.

Daitch, however, identifying with Brigitta as the powerful confroner rather than the boys, who lost face, was unsatisfied with the verbal nature of the confrontation. He also seemed to have missed the subtle victories Brigitta had won through her behaviors in this encounter. He wanted Brigitta (himself in that situation) to have taken more physical action, to show more physically who was in control, still believing power to reside in the body. He then exhorted her to "rip his head off," also forgetting that she was acting alone, and that there had been several of these boys together whose heads she would have had to "rip off" simultaneously in order to remain the conqueror.

The conversation turned away from this topic at that point, so it's impossible to know where it might have gone next. The idea of "might makes right" could have been discussed, and the nature of "might" could have been dissected as well, but the moment passed.

In other gendered stories, talk about a member's comfort with or preference for one sex regarding friends or companions occurred occasionally, as in this next sample.

(3/7/94, p. 19, Group Counseling Time)

[Marcy's turn. Talks about her haircut. Then]: I saw my mom Saturday.... It went very well. She will come back for my birthday in April. [She stops. Marcy has lived in a foster care situation for many years, and rarely sees her mother.]

Brigitta: Wow! [excited for Marcy.]

Tony: Any more about the meeting with your mom?

Marcy: My sister and mom and stepfather came. [pauses. I can't hear part of it.] ... I'm more comfortable around guys than I am around girls.

Tony: Dragon [is] that you don't trust your mom?
Marcy: I still don’t trust her, but I’m still excited to see her. My mom doesn’t talk to her own brother and her parents, and ...she was in the same situation as I am. [Marcy and her mom both lived in foster homes for almost their entire childhoods.]

Marcy, who has a male twin, occasionally referred to her identification with him, and to that identification as one reason she was "more comfortable around guys." During this year, her hairstyle changed from longer and curlier (a perm) to shorter and straighter; according to her, she progressively looked more like her twin.

In one incident that she related to the group during sharing time later in this year, Marcy described how she had been asked by her foster father to play a card game in which losers remove their clothes ("strip poker"). This potentially abusive situation (Marcy had refused to play) was handled by Tony as legally reportable, and he supported Marcy to tell her foster mother about this. She became able to take charge of her life through the support of this program, and was also supported in taking control over her appearance and gender role choices, even if these were counter-hegemonic.

Slightly different from just telling stories relating one’s life to gender topics, descriptions of behaviors during meetings in which aspects of gender were prominent are sampled in the subtopic which follows.

Gendered Actions

Relationships among members were always gendered, as all relationships are. In this example, two male members shared a hug as they left the meeting, which surprised one of them.

(12/6/93, p. 17, Field Notes, departure Time)
[Travis hugs Daitch.]
Daitch: [to Travis ] I didn’t think you were that cool, man! [Seems surprised, pleased at Travis’ initiating the hug.]
During the two years of this project, there were hundreds of "little moments," or short-lived events, such as these (above and below) in which I believe gender was both manifested in one or more member's awareness, and also in which cultural and/or personal patterns and attitudes regarding gender showed strong influences on a member's behaviors, actions, and/or interactions. Daitch's surprise, and his characterization of Travis as "cool" for hugging Daitch spontaneously, related to Daitch's assumptions about Travis and his view of Travis' masculinity. Daitch's response also positioned hugging between males positively, even though it was a behavior which ran counter to standards of adolescent masculinity, in Daitch's mind.

Here, Condor tried to gain attention in a "typical" male way, with demonstrations of physical prowess. In this group, however, that behavior was not usually rewarded, certainly not as often or as consistently as counter-hegemonic or liberational gender moves were.

(12/6/93, p. 5, Field Notes, Warm-Ups)  
[Members are taking turns leading a physical activity for the others to imitate.]  
[Condor does push-ups, almost seems to be showing off, while waiting for his turn to lead, ignoring the others' activities, not following the leader. No one says anything to him or about his behavior.]

Showing support for one another took many forms. Here, in an early meeting, two members promised to help a female member with some girls at school who were harassing her, and the difference in their offers of support related to gender roles.

(10/11/93, p. 11, Field Notes, What's On Top? time)  
Keith: [interrupts Holly's story of harassment at school] Let's pound them!  
Tony: [says that that type of support is] not appropriate.  
Brigitta: I'll, like, walk with you at school and stuff!

Tony used his position as leader in this instance, and in many others, to guide members away from violent or negative interpersonal behaviors. In this case, his
guidance worked mostly in favor of gender hegemony: against Keith's male offer, to "pound" them, and towards Brigitta's female offer, to "walk with," without suggesting any other supportive behaviors for either of them.

Despite frequent support for hegemonic gender roles, cross-gendered, or transgendered behaviors occurred frequently in scenework, and sometimes during informal times of meetings. In this sample, Condor and I discussed what name he could have for his research name.

(10/4/93, p. 6, Field Notes, before Break time)
[I ask them to choose names with the same first initial as their own, or with some other notable connection to who they are, so I can remember whose pseudonym is whose very easily.]
[One male member says he wants "Auralia."]
[I say he must choose a same-gender name, or at least one which isn't female, or it would confuse me too much. And, "Auralia" didn't start with his first initial.]
[He chooses "Condor."]
[I agree to that.]

Perhaps I ought to have allowed him to choose a female's name, but since I was just becoming acquainted both with the members and with conducting an ethnography, keeping the participants' identities clear and remembering who was who seemed daunting enough without the confusions of cross-gender naming. A bird's name with this member's first initial beginning each word was acceptable to us both.

In another area, confusion about biological facts among adolescents, even those such as Brigitta, who had been sexually active, arose in interesting ways. The gaps in members' knowledge were varied, and sometimes quite humorous. Here, Brigitta played a female, concerned with typical female concerns, such as her weight, and appearance in general, but her potential "solution" was inappropriate. [Although females do undergo circumcision, Brigitta had never heard of that, and was not referring to female circumcision here (I had asked her about this later in that meeting).]
Brigitta: [preens in front of a pretend mirror, and asks her imaginary reflection]: Should I lose weight? [The character continues to talk to her image, and decides that] maybe I could get circumcised to lose weight? [seems to be some more confusion here, as with Daitch, earlier in the meeting, about what "circumcision" is.]

Holly: [screaming, to Brigitta's character, from the audience]: You're not a guy!

Assigning attributes to their own or others' characters often took gendered routes. In this improvised scene, a cross-gender application occurred, with some content related to father-daughter incest.

Brigitta, as a sexual abuse survivor, often sexualized scenework in ways which were threatening to the other actors' characters, possibly so she could experiment with being the aggressor, or the one in power. Here, however, she played the part of the adult female, the mother, who drunkenly supported her daughter's being victimized by her father. This positioned her character as complicitous, as another object, rather than a subject; as a reagent, rather than agent: hegemonic female roles. Yet, she used a counter-hegemonic praising term for Amber's character's sexuality, calling her a "stud." That an
incested daughter could be perceived as sexual in positive ways, but only male ones, gave a glimpse into Brigitta's personal sexual landscape, which had been damaged severely.

This scene appeared, clinically, to be a type of psychodramatic "bleed-through" (Cossa, 1992b) which often occurred in lengthier scenes: members in the Premiere year's group often portrayed their own psychological material by creating characters and situations during scenework that mimicked their lives, without acknowledging the connection consciously. During the Encore years, this combining of fact and fiction became more consciously done.

Part of this program's usefulness and power in affecting members' lives, with theatre as the medium, would be evidenced when Tony would refer to these acting choices, during post-scenework processing. These discussions could bring the member to greater awareness, if Tony judged that he/she was ready to deal directly with this material. Brigitta did choose, in later months, to work directly with her abuse history; in activities as well as discussions, as mentioned earlier. This scenework occurred during the group's first two months together, so was remarkable for what it revealed more than the for ways it was used on that day. The scene did illustrate some of the connections between Brigitta's ideas about gender roles and her sexual abuse.

Here, Daitch, another member whose gender ideas had been influenced by his sexual abuse history, and the member of the Premiere group who most often cross-dressed, discussed his clothing choices with the group at their first meeting.

(10/4/93, p. 18, Field Notes, Closing Circle)

Daitch: I'm sensitive about my clothes. [Says he knows that he wears weird clothes, [and that others (at school) say that] "only girls wear that." I don't care...[but] it annoys me when they say that.

Daitch seemed intent upon challenging others' ideas about him, and about gender, but was uncomfortable hearing negative comments about his challenges. Sometimes, in fact, while wearing feminine attire, Daitch would be provoked enough to physically fight with his taunters (who were always male), an interesting juxtaposition of gendered acts.
It seemed that Daitch felt compelled to "prove" his masculinity hegemonically, by fighting, or hiding his feelings, yet to resist some of what traditional masculinity was by how he chose to appear.

Handling one's emotions, in this culture, is a gendered act (Connell, 1987; Tannen, 1994). In this excerpt, Tony is assuring members that laughter, or "silly" behaviors, are acceptable ways to deal with sadness or disappointment.

(10/25/93, p. 18, Field Notes, Group Counseling time)
[Karla, the graduate intern, announced earlier in this meeting that she was leaving the program, and this group, for "personal reasons." The group spent the first half of the meeting with her, processing this departure, and this took place near the end of that time. After a lot of tears, heaviness, and sadness, which Condor did not engage in as much as other members (he did not cry or express sadness directly), members have been getting "silly," telling jokes, laughing, making things seem funny which may have seemed ordinary in other circumstances.]

Tony: It's OK to deal with feelings by getting silly.
Condor: That's the only way I deal with my feelings... I don't go to funerals.

The text of Condor's statement, "I don't go to funerals," combined with his lack of affect during this very intensely affective meeting, created an impression of his purposefully strong repression of and his extreme discomfort with strong emotions, particularly sadness or grief, which is consistent with the traditional, or hegemonic male position in Western culture.

The final subcategory in which gender subtopics are highlighted includes examples of talk, behaviors, or descriptions of life experiences in which members used negative associations with gender, or used gender roles to disparage someone or something. There were many examples of this which overlapped sexual orientation subtopics, so most of these overlapping examples appear in a later subcategory.
Gender and Negativity

Gender issues often arose when denigrating or derogatory remarks were made or related by members.

(12/13/93, p. 8, Field Notes, What's on Top? time)

_Daitch:_ I don't like being mean...[but] I could...call her [his ex-girlfriend] a "cunt"!

_Holly and Amber_ react strongly, quickly. Both say: I hate that word.

[Travis, nettling Amber and Holly, says “cunt” several times.

_Condor:_ I hate "shit"!

[Daitch says he’s sorry to Amber and Holly.]

What makes the insult "cunt" particularly unfair is that there is no equivalent insult for males. When Condor tried to divert attention from the battle among Amber, Holly, Travis, and Daitch by sharing which word he hated, his choice was gender-neutral, merely a regular "swear" word, related to excrement rather than sexuality. Ignoring Condor's contribution, Daitch recognized the girls' point, and apologized for using "cunt." Travis, however, did not.

Below is another example of a gender-specific insult, "bitch." Its original meaning long lost, males and females both used this to characterize a female who displeased them, particularly if she showed power in her stance or behaviors, and when her behaviors were associated with femininity, such as gossiping ("talking behind my back") has been. They often used "bitch" to refer to female teachers who were demanding, to female peers who "stole" someone's boyfriend (often combining "bitch" with "slut"), and to female siblings who were "hogging" parental attention or home telephone time.

(3/7/94, p. 9, Group Counseling Time)

[Here, Holly shared several aspects of her current life, and then Tony asked her to relate these to her drawing of her "dragon" and her "jewel.";]
Holly: ...[My] friend's a "bitch," anyways ... [she's been] talking behind my back.... [A lot more shared and discussed here, on other topics, which I've deleted for this sampling.]

Tony: [mentions Holly’s drawing, goes to get it. Asks about] the dragon [as ] the gateway out of the shadow self, and into the light?

Holly: I'm walking the other way, now. [into darkness]

Tony: What do you need to turn it around?

Holly: Kill "the bitch." [the girl who talks about Holly and bothers her]

[Brigitta and Holly both laugh.]

Holly: She's trying to ruin my life... interfering with my boyfriend and me.

With the cultural pairing of homophobia and sexism (as discussed in the Literature Review), one of the worst insults one could hurl onto a male, especially an adolescent, would be that he was effeminate and therefore not masculine, as well as to indicate that he was suspected of being Gay. This oppressive negativity chain then continued on to the insulting of objects, situations, and events with words akin to female body parts: "pussy" and "wimp" combined to create "wussy," used here to insult Daitch's curriculum materials at his new school.

(3/21/94, p. 11, Field Notes, WoT? Time)

[Daitch was sharing about how he hates his new school, which he says is too easy.]

Daitch: [They gave me] a wussy book.

In this example, whose context is very particular (see explanation, below), cross-dressing is depicted by one member as a humiliation related to drunkenness.

(1/3/94, p. 16, Field Notes, Group Counseling Time)

[They are sharing about their charts. Tony created a chart which they each filled in and then discussed. The chart had five categories: Sex, Drugs & Alcohol & Tobacco, Power, Secrets, and Other. Each member was allotted 10 points, which he/she had to mete out to all five categories, rating each as to how much importance or attention each category had in his/her life. Halves and thirds were OK, as long as the total did not exceed 10. They did this allocating in front of the group, taking turns, and many changed their allocations after seeing and hearing what others had done with their points. Marcy and Amber were absent. It's Condor's turn.]

Daitch: [to Condor]: Let's get you dressed up in a dress and shove you outside [when your brother] gets you drunk! [Seems not to relate to anything else said.]
It's hard to know what Daitch was trying to convey here. Since Daitch frequently cross-dressed, I'm unclear as to the reasons that he saw Condor's doing that as humorous or insulting to Condor. However, since Condor never spoke of cross-dressing, or exhibited that choice in group meetings, while Condor often did play effeminate or female parts in scenework, perhaps Daitch wanted Condor's inhibitions to be released, through drunkenness, so that Condor would cross-dress, thereby allying with Daitch.

I will return to discussions of gender and sexual orientation topics as they appeared together in the data in a later section, since this interpenetration is important to analyze further. First, some examples of sexual orientation as the dominant topic are analyzed below.

A Sampling of Data in which Sexual Orientation was a Prominent Topic

It was difficult to find examples which highlighted or demonstrated just one aspect and it is nearly impossible to view identities or their discussions as "separate" from one another. However, for simplicity, albeit artificial, this section and its subsections highlight the places in the data in which the topic of sexual orientation was most prominent.

This section is organized similarly to the one about gender, above. Sexual orientation issues or the topics related to it were varied. In relegating an event or conversation to this category over gender, or any of several nonresearch-utilized categories, I determined that members consistently used that language or behavior when referring to sexual orientation (either their own, their characters', or others'), and I used ideas from scholars whose research I referenced in the Literature Review to define and categorize any events which seemed ambiguous from members' language or behaviors.
Particularly if a member discussed him/herself, or co-constructed that self, with an emphasis upon sexual orientation identity, defining his/her subjectivity within or in relation to one identity, I placed the event in this category.

**Friendship and Sexual Orientation**

Affection and sexual intimacy are often confused by viewers of the physical contact as well as the participants. In many situations, members complained about, laughed at, or derided the homophobia inherent in concerns about physicalizing the affection within same-sex friendships.

(10/4/93, p. 16, Field Notes, *Group Counseling Time*)

**Daitch:** I'm affectionate with my friends... and I get called "Gay." I'm not.

**Holly:** That happened to me last year.

**Tony:** [interrupts, says to Daitch]: But you wouldn't kiss a guy?

**Daitch:** No. [Spoken calmly, not emphatically.]

Here, unlike in some conversations, Daitch calmly refuted the assumption that he might be Gay, and reinforced that when asked by Tony directly if he would "kiss a guy" by replying "No."

Holly, on the other hand, was very bothered at this point by anyone's assuming she might be a Lesbian. The reason she gave, about her religion, seemed to me only to be part of the source of her discomfort. Kissing and holding hands are not, in this country, considered neutral, nonsexualized behaviors any longer. By participating in these behaviors with her female friends, Holly gave a double message to herself, as well as to her peers.

(p. 17)

**Holly:** [says that her friend of last year was Nick's sister. She is her] best friend. [But they] aren't Lesbians. [They] kissed, would hold hands
Tony: “Would it be OK if you were?  
Holly: Not to me. It’s a sin in my religion.  
Tony: [asks if it would] be OK for others?  
Holly: They’re OK.  
[Tony clarifies what he heard Holly say to the group.]  
Daitch: [says he has] friends who are Gay, Bisexual...I don’t care.  

[Brigitta, Nick, Travis and Daitch all talk at once]:  
• B: I don’t care.  
• N: I don’t care.  
• T: It’s just an opinion.  
• D: Their personality is more important.  

Quick to affirm others as "OK" if they are Gay or Lesbian, Holly further displayed her ambivalence about Homosexuality. Daitch, however, continued with claiming neutrality in this conversation, even proclaiming his support of people he knew who were Gay or Bisexual: "I don't care" and "Their personality is more important."

Brigitta and Holly were physically affectionate with each other more than with others, and more than others were with one another, in group meetings. Here, they discussed this while watching themselves on a video that had just been made during the group meeting.

(1/10/94, p. 6, Field Notes, Theatre Skills Time)  
[They are watching themselves on live video, after some scenework they have just been practicing, on the topic of harassment, in preparation for a performance at a school. Tony manipulates the camera's special effects, and they take turns in front of it, and watching themselves.]  

Brigitta: [watching video, to Holly] Look at us— we’re so Gay!  
[Brigitta laughs.]  
[Tony does camera tricks with group for a long while. They play, laugh, do many, take turns.]  
[Brigitta & Holly stay hugged for a long time.]  
Holly: [While watching others' tricks on the video, abruptly says]  

Janis Joplin was a Bisexual. I just learned this.  

Brigitta: I love Bisexuals! [They are still standing up, facing each other, hugging.]  

Brigitta: [abruptly pushes Holly away from her, to yell her idea to her] I got to do this with you! [Talks about going to the Gay men’s support group at the local Unitarian Universalist church.]  

Holly: Let’s go! [They agree to go together, and] Let’s go to the "Y" tomorrow and work out, OK? [They agree, and resume close hug, watching themselves on the T.V. monitor.]  

Holly: [notices Daitch on the video] You have a hickey on your neck! [It is very large.]
Daitch: It took you long enough to figure that out!
Holly: I had one last week.
Brigitta: I get those.

Right after the comments about being Bisexual/Lesbians, Holly and Brigitta took the opportunity that noticing Daitch's hickey offered to claim their own experiences with having hickeys, perhaps to emphasize their Heterosexuality. This could have been evidence of their ambivalence about being perceived as Lesbians or Bisexuals even within this group. Holly had expressed conflicts between lesbianism/bisexuality and her religious beliefs in several meetings (see previous excerpt for one example), so Holly may have needed to rush to reassert her heterosexuality just after being involved in close hugging and touching with Brigitta, during which Brigitta announced: "I love Bisexuals!", and they had both planned to visit a Gay men's support group.

However, the girls' hickey talk with Daitch may instead have been an attempt to compete with Daitch on his terms, a sort of "I'm as sexual as you" statement which doesn't usually cut across gender lines for teens or for adults in this culture without social penalties for the females (being considered a "slut."). In AO meetings, at least, Brigitta and Holly could be assured that Daitch would not express a negative opinion of them for having been sexually active.

In addition, these frank admissions and physical displays became part of the co-construction of safe space in which they could discuss specific sexual practices and preferences in more detail than would usually occur in non-AO group settings with both teens and adults. This created opportunities for heterosexual as well as bisexual/gay/lesbian ideas, explorations, feelings, or questions to be discussed or enacted in scenes.

Sometimes a member raised the topic of Holly and Brigitta's closeness and its possible Lesbian implications, but Brigitta seemed in most cases not to mind. Here is one example of her response:
laughter has many qualities and implications. In this case, according to my memory of this event, Brigitta's laughter was delighted, easy, happy, as if being thought of as a Lesbian lover with Holly as her partner by some anonymous strangers as well as by peers in school or this group was not a cause for concern, but rather was a joke on those people that seemed to delight Brigitta. This laughter also seemed to indicate Brigitta's higher level of acceptance, or lower level of discomfort, with being considered a Lesbian or bisexual than Holly usually showed.

Here Holly continued, in her WoT? turn, to describe another aspect of her friendship with Brigitta, and Holly raised the issue of sexual orientation and friendship once again.

(11/29/93, p. 17, Field Notes, What's on Top? Time)

Holly: It was so cool today. I got to see Brigitta's pap smear. [Lots of laughs, but she is earnest.] [She explains.] It's weird, to be such good friends... with no physical attraction, and have it not be weird to be naked and no physical attraction at all. We're not Lesbians. ...people think we are, but we're not.

Tony : You're fortunate [to be such good friends].

There was something in Holly's tone of voice during this sharing which made her appear to me as uncertain. I'm not clear as to what she may have been uncertain about, and my own bias may have led me to believe that it was an indication that her words belied her emotions, when she stated and then restated: "We're not Lesbians... people think we are, but we're not." Teens often repeated themselves for emphasis, or as a conversational style choice, so Holly's repeated denial cannot be interpreted uncontestedly as false
protesting. My inference may have been inaccurate, but it was what seemed to me to have been occurring at the time.

**Dates and Sexual Orientation**

Being in middle school and high school, dates (potential or actual) were often a topic of sharing time or scenewok during AO meetings. The next subsection shows the ways this topic intertwined with sexual orientation.

Many sexual orientation topic occurrences took the form of one or more members' talking about his/her dates or partners.

(11/8/93, p. 5, Field Notes, Group Counseling Time)

Holly: [shares about her boyfriend, weekend. Talks rapidly, excitedly, says a lot in a short time.] **I know I'm talking a lot.** [Talks about] **making out** [with him, in her room. It was] **fun.**

So, early in November, Holly was demonstrating her Heterosexuality clearly and with enthusiasm. Later in that month, the excerpt about her relationship with Brigitta regarding the pap smear showed her acknowledgment of the appearance of Lesbianism in their closeness. Below, however, she reaffirmed, in that same meeting, her affiliation for males: "I want a boyfriend."

(11/29/93, p. 17)

[Holly's turn.]

Holly: **Not much... no boyfriend now** [seems a bit rueful.]
Weekend was fun, good party... I got sick again... J [ex-boyfriend] hates me... he won't talk to me... he's a "pecker head" [laughs delightedly] that's my new saying! [Says it again.]
Condor: My brother likes "penis-licker." [Laughs, from many.]
[Condor is offering this as another pejorative term, I think.]
[Tony refocuses their talk to Holly's turn.]
Holly: **I want a boyfriend.**
Condor: I'm here for you. [laughs.]
Travis: [to Condor] **I knew you'd say that!**
Tony: [to Holly] **What do you mean?**
Holly: [says she wants a] relationship.
A few months later, Holly got her wish.

(1/3/94, p. 3, Opening Circle/Theatre Skills time)
[ Holly's turn. ] Holly: I’m in love!... He loves me... New Year’s Eve was kick-ass!...[ tells about a party she went to with Brigitta] D [boyfriend] and I cuddled! [ Tells about new boyfriend, Brigitta’s ring from Brigitta’s ex-boyfriend, champagne story. ] I need a cigarette!

In another meeting’s conversation, Condor related his dilemmas with not having a girlfriend. His way of dealing with being asked questions about his dating status raised the topic of sexual orientation in several ways.

(3/7/94, pp. 7 - 8, Field Notes, What’s on Top? time.)
[ Condor had just told the group that one girl asked him why he didn’t have a girlfriend, expressing surprise that he did not, because she thought that he was "cute." Brigitta had agreed with that, and Condor had gone on to state that this girl also had said that he had "nice hair," that he "smelled good," and other compliments. Tony asked Condor how it felt to be assessed in this way, and Condor responded with another part of his story of his encounter with this girl.]

Condor: [ responded to that girl, he reports, telling her that the reason he doesn’t have a girlfriend is ] "'Cause I’m Gay!"

Daitch: [ explodes ]: Really? [ seems surprised, but somehow hopeful ]

Condor" [ about his questioner at school ] She knew I was kidding... [ but the girl asked ]: "Are you really?"... I told her: "No — I like women a lot!" She said: "You’re really a pervert!" [ he pauses ]... She’s really strange!

Tony: [ asks Condor if it ] matters a lot to [ Condor that he doesn’t ] have a girlfriend?

Condor: A girl I like has a boyfriend.

The significance of Condor's using Gayness as an excuse for being without a girlfriend implied that he didn't mind being thought of as Gay as much as he minded being considered unattractive to females, someone no female wanted to date. Daitch's surprise that Condor would tell someone that he was Gay was large, as evidenced by his loud and immediate request for confirmation: "Really?" It's unclear which part surprised Daitch most, however, as shown by my notes to myself at the time.
Condor, while relating this tale, showed that he believed that the girl who called him a "pervert" for saying he was Gay was the one who was "strange," not him. This seemed to further illustrate Condor's acceptance of Homosexuality, whether he felt himself to be Gay or not.

**Sexual Orientation and Sex**

The topic of sex, in all of its permutations, appeared quite frequently in my data. In this subsection of sexual orientation, specific references to sexual activity were shown to be related to Heterosexual or Homosexual identities by the members.

In addition to sometimes using homophobic adjectives, the group members seemed to have different levels of tolerance for discussions of sexual behaviors. Brigitta brought this up at the end of the following exchange.

I wondered, at the time and still, how much of that difference in tolerance was related to gendered expectations around sexual activity. Since females' sexual expression is supposed to be inhibited, and males' is encouraged, Heterosexual females face a "double standard" which is familiar to us all.

(1/6, p. 16, Field Notes, Group Counseling Time)

[They are discussing each of their commitment to AO, to the group, to its Norms. Still being videotaped.]

[Brigitta asks Daitch about his new school.]

**Daitch:** It's OK. But all the kids are weird, stupid, gay. I just want to say: "Shut up, you little faggots!" [Says he has] the same girlfriend. [Talks about his hickey, shows it up close to the camera.]

**Brigitta:** [in a petulant way, angry] It's OK for Daitch to talk about sex, but not me. Want to see the hickey on my boob?

Brigitta here once again raised the issue of her perception that Tony, and/or the group members were more tolerant of others' sex talk than of hers (there were several instances during meetings of Brigitta's having been asked to cut down, or curtail her sex talk because it made one or more members uncomfortable). Because she felt this to be unfair,
her offer to show everyone her hickey was made angrily and with a sort of "in-your-face" attitude, but she did not bare her breast to show the hickey. Her tone was defiant, but it was not accompanied by a resistant act.

Sex was discussed, used as an issue in scenes, and joked about often in AO meetings. Definitions of sexual, and its cousins, such as intimate, were discussed in the sample below.

(1/3/94, p. 15, Group Counseling Time)
[Sharing about their charts. See previous section, same date's data set.]
[Brigitta's turn, about the category of SEX] I think about sex a lot: Sexual activities include intimacy, getting close. {Talks about Holly, K [another friend], herself} We were hugging and hanging out: in a way, that's "sexual activity".... I'm a very physical person... "Sexual" doesn't have to be, [pauses] not sexual intercourse.
[Brigitta is in Holly’s lap, with Holly stroking her hair, the whole time she speaks, and during Holly’s and others’ turns afterwards.]
[Holly’s turn]: I think about sex a lot. I’m a huggy and horny person. [laughs.]

In this, Brigitta overtly, with her words, and both girls, with their actions, seem to accept the possibility of same-sex desire, and behaviors, if not identity, for themselves. Many women who have sex with women, and men who have sex with men, do not consider themselves Homosexual, or even Bisexual, especially if their primary sexual partnerships are with members of the opposite sex. Some are uncomfortable with being labeled at all, others dislike the idea that behaviors create identity, rather than one's sense of oneself creating identity. However, it is rare, in my experience, of either these groups or my peers and acquaintances, for someone who is perceived to be Heterosexual to argue or seem uncomfortable about sexual orientation identity labeling. This seems to me to be evidence of the effects of homophobia, an unwillingness to label oneself or be labeled with identities that carry lesser status regardless of the ways one's behaviors may place oneself within the category that the label defines.
Evidence of the effects of cultural homophobia within the group was sometimes subtle, sometimes no. Emphasis upon one's Heterosexuality in sexual activity could occur in a variety of ways, and especially if another member challenged this claim.

(1/3/94, pp. 15 - 16, Group Counseling Time)
[Condor’s turn. It seems hard for Condor to share. Seems embarrassed. Begins to say he used to be sexually active. Holly: [interrupts Condor, reacts to this news. Makes a joke] Not with Nick!
[Tony supports Condor, scolds Holly for interfering with his sharing. Tony talks about the conflict between wanting Condor to be more open, and then Holly and others acting so unsupportively when he shares.]

Because of Travis' drinking and drug-taking habits, he risked engaging in unsafe sex. His sexual orientation became another of his issues in this anecdote. This incident raised other serious issues for other members as well, but some of those issues are beyond the scope of this project.

(3/21/94, pp. 13 - 16, Field Notes, WoT? and departure time.)
[This story and the accompanying discussion, of Travis' having been at a party, spanned over several pages of my data, and was interfered with by some others' actions or comments which were not related. I use double asterisks (**) to show where I deleted the nonrelated parts for this sample.] Travis: [jokes, clowns, won’t start his turn. Seems uncomfortable. Then, tells story about weekend] It wasn't funny. A guy came on to me! [He’s laughing, somewhat serious.]
Nick: That’s not funny. [seriously.]
Brigitta: Who?
Travis: No names?... It was really scary.
Brigitta: What did you do? [seems really concerned.]
Travis: I told him I wasn’t into it: "I have no problem with it; it’s not my sexual preference."
Brigitta: [admires Travis] Awesome!
Travis: He didn’t get the message. I felt violated!
[Tony sees, discusses parallel to Brigitta’s story.]
Travis: I thought about that. He’s weird, too. He bites people, talks about being a vampire.
Nick: [knows this guy, says a bit about him]: He’s an adult, too!
Brigitta: He’s wicked nice! [now knows that she knows him, too.]
Nick: No, he’s not.
Travis: [says he did] so much [alcohol and pot.]
Tony: [asks why] so much?
Travis: I don’t know
Brigitta: [muttering to herself] ‘cause they’re there!
Travis: [tells he] had a friend there... Grateful [he was there].... Lots of weird-shit stories... A guy tried to "fuck with my head" and he told me we had sex, that he had fucked me up the ass... I thought about that happening, and I said there would have been "sperm all over the place, on the sheets" if that had happened. I told him: "I don't think so! I'd remember!"
Nick: Maybe you'd forget!
Travis: Not anal sex!
Nick: If you were unconscious?!
Travis: Not possible. Two guys were coming onto me, and I fell asleep.
Condor: I’d not hang out with those people anymore!
[seriously.]
Travis: I won’t! [vehemently.]
[Tony agrees.]
Daitch: [tells how his sister was] messed up with those guys, those vampires.
[I ask if I heard right, that one was an adult?]
[Several tell he is 20 - 21.]
Travis: [continues]...very messed up... I didn’t think it was cool.
Daitch [sarcastic]: Nice people!
[Travis defends his friends among them.]
**
(departure time)
[Travis and Tony talk, Travis tells more of story. Tony seems very concerned.]
Travis: I wouldn’t let it happen. I’m straight, Heterosexual.
[calmly, clearly, not defensively.]
Tony: Regardless of your sexual orientation, it’s not OK for anyone to pressure you, especially an adult.
Travis: He told me it was another guy.
[They continue to clarify story.]
Tony: You would’ve known [if someone had had anal intercourse with you] [said somewhat wryly.]
Travis: Yeah, my ass would be sore. ... I wouldn’t have sucked his dick if I was conscious, and I don’t think he sucked mine.
Tony: [asks Travis if he] wants to report?
Travis: I’m not sure exactly what happened.
Tony: I’m not sure what to do if nothing happened sexually.... It's complicated by your being "high." You'd not be a "reliable witness."
Travis: [says it was] confusing... [There were] two different stories told to me... J said he’s Bisexual and D is his boyfriend, and he was jealous of me.
Tony: It’s a good idea to stay away from that particular crowd.
[Travis nods, and leaves.]

Here, Travis, and later Tony, emphasized that the problem with the behavior was not that it was Homosexual, but that it was exploitative, illegal, and unwanted. This helped to
defuse the potential homophobic aspects of this story, and guided the members to focus upon issues of safety rather sexuality or sexual identity.

Sexual Orientation and Negativity

Other evidence of homophobia and heterosexism was prevalent in AO meetings, in comments made by several members, as well as in some acting choices in scenework. This subcategory shows examples of this derogatory association with sexual orientation.

Put-downs which related to sexual orientation occurred frequently. Sometimes events or conversations blended the negativity with stories about dates, and/or sex, as in this example.

(3/21/94, p. 13, Field Notes, WoT? time.)
[Brigitta was sharing about a party she had attended over the weekend and some trouble she got into.]

Brigitta: ...I was kissing this guy when his girlfriend walks in.
[Tells story. Said she was] too drunk [almost got into more sex than she wanted to.] They’re, like, all over me... I could barely protect myself....I said: "No, lay off!" but he wouldn’t... He’s a faggot! ... No more getting "messed up" for me!

Nick: [to Brigitta] How many times do you have to learn that lesson? disgusted with her.

Brigitta: [says she’s] not gotten "high" in 5 months! [Seems offended.]

Nick: You’re always saying you’re not going to do stuff, then you do it.

Tony: [asks Brigitta] how/why [she gets] into those kinds of situations?

Brigitta: [gets quiet. Tells them she’s going way, into a treatment program, may miss some AO. Stresses that it’s] A counseling program, not Drugs or Alcohol; for eating disorders.

Tony: [asks her to] let us know.

Many sexual orientation references, especially in the Premiere year, were negative or pejorative comments made "in general, " which showed the speaker’s reflection of the homophobia in modern slang. Sometimes these went unchallenged; sometimes Tony or another member challenged these comments.
(1/3/94, p. 3, Field Notes, Opening Circle/Theatre Skills time)
[They are learning how to use a microphone, taking turns talking into it for Opening Circle. They are sharing what they received for Christmas gifts.]

**Brigitta:** You all seem to have new clothes, and you all suck!

**Daitch:** I did suck something, and it wasn’t a dick! [No comments.]

In another example, during scenework, Daitch's character spoke disparagingly of Tony's character in a juxtapositioning of Homosexuality and pedophilia, public masturbation, and perversion: "you faggot! You weird, masturbating, weirdo!" The association itself was homophobic in its creation, since Tony's character was not even human, but a monster.

(1/6/94, p. 3, Field Notes, Theatre Skills Time)
[Tony has created an activity in which each member is part of a three-person team whose members rotate through each of three roles, so the teams are fluid. At one point, one member was #1, which meant to "act oddly"; another was #2, which meant "to have no response at all"; the third was #3, which meant he/she was the voice of the person who wasn't responding to #1's behaviors. Then, they rotated, so each member played each part at least once, and watched some of the time. In this section, Daitch, Tony, and Travis were a team (many members were absent, so Tony participated).]

**Daitch:** [as the voice of Travis, yells] Get away from me, you faggot! You weird, masturbating, weirdo! [Daitch shouts at Tony.] [Tony is not doing anything I perceive to be sexual towards Travis or Daitch. Daitch often introduces sexual topics or material when no one else has/is.]

Daitch, despite speaking respectfully of Gays or Bisexuals who were his friends or acquaintances, often used anti-Gay slurs when he was angry during this Premiere year, as shown below.

(2/14/94, p. 8, Field Notes, WoT? Time)
[Daitch had been in trouble with the police on several occasions, and had expressed intense dislike for them as a group in other meetings. Here, he related a story of being stopped by a police cruiser while walking around his neighborhood (after Daitch had made suicidal threats and abruptly left his house, his mother had called the police).]
Daitch: This fuckin’ queer-faggot-guy-cop pulls up [and asks Daitch about the suicide threat]...

Self-deprecation often took homophobic turns as well, even with Brigitta, who seemed more accepting of her own possible Bisexuality than others may have been.

(2/28/94, p. 5, Field Notes, arrival time)
[Tony passed around photos of the group he had taken before their show last week.]
Brigitta: I look like a queer!

(3/7/94, p. 20, Field Notes, Group Counseling time.)
[Tony has just handed back the members' dragon/jewel drawings, to prepare for more discussion about them.]
Brigitta: Mine is wicked Gay!
Condor: Yours? [implying his is worse.]

In this next excerpt, Tony confronted Daitch's verbal homophobia for the first time. Although it did not occur during formal group meeting time, this event remained significant for both of them even a year later, as evidenced by Daitch's and Tony's both referring to it during Encore group meetings.

The exchange took on more significance after Tony came out to the group, at Daitch's instigation, early in the Encore year. This link between them forged a new alliance which seemed to have made Daitch regret remarks such as these that he had made earlier, when he had not known that Tony was Gay.

(3/21/94, p. 2, Field Notes, arrival time.)
[Daitch, Tony, and I were talking about a new group for GLB teens and their allies which was going to begin meetings. Tony was posting the notice on the board. Daitch expressed a lot of homophobia, myths, and fears in this talk, such as what follows.]
Daitch: I don't care if someone's Gay, as long as they don't come into my room and fuck me up the ass when I'm asleep.
Tony: [to Daitch] That's a very homophobic remark. [Likens it to being afraid of Jews, uses an example. Tony is tense, somewhat angry.]
[I can't keep silent. I ask Daitch if he] can tell if someone's Gay or not?
Daitch: Sometimes. [Daitch tells of] the 3 ways Gay men on T.V. talk. [Imitates each way, which are all stereotypes often found on T.V.]

[We are interrupted by arrivals of Amber and Condor, who enter screaming at one another.]

Daitch's anger at his father, as seen in this example and which occurred overtly and subtly in other examples, was often conflated with homophobia.

(1/6/94, p. 7, Field Notes, Group Counseling Time)
[Tony created a sociodramatic/psychodramatic activity in which each member chooses someone to put "on trial" for "crimes against you" or "you really feel has done you an injustice at some time in your life." They are to say why the person is "guilty." Then, some members play the "jury," and they always say: "Guilty as charged," after the member presents the "evidence" of the person's guilt. An empty chair stands for the person on trial for each member. Then, that member plays the "prosecutor," who chooses the punishment for the person's crimes. These roles rotate, until everyone has a turn in each. In this section, Daitch has placed his biological father on trial.]

Daitch: [yells about his father, at his father (the empty chair) a lot.] He's a child-molesting asshole... wife-cheater...drinker...

[Tony asks how his dad treated him?]

Daitch: I don't know how he treated me 'cause I was a little kid

[Daitch's father had molested his older brother and older sister, and probably him, but he only knows about his older siblings. His father is in jail for murder, and has been for over seven years. Daitch almost never sees him or has contact with him.]

[Daitch's punishment for his father]: Circumcise and make him Gay. [laughs.] Cut off his dick.

[Tony clarifies the difference between circumcision and castration.]

Daitch: Rip off both those fuckin' things... his dick and his balls... together with pliers.

Whatever Daitch's father may have done to earn such rage from Daitch, the joining of his father's punishment with his father's masculinity and his capacity to be sexual seemed harshly significant, implying a connection to sexual abuse which Daitch never confirmed during group meetings.

Like Brigitta, though, Daitch's sexual identity and gender identity seemed connected to his known and possible abuse history in very specific ways. Exploring that in depth would be more appropriate to a clinical study, which this project was not.
Both Gender and Sexual Orientation as Prominent Topics

As mentioned previously, the topics of sexual orientation and gender were often raised simultaneously, and the identities are inseparable. Similarly to the above two sections, this section shows some of the ways the topics of gender and sexual orientation occurred in the same speech or physical event in AO meetings or interviews, or on the survey. Just listing these co-occurrences raised many analytical issues. Because the co-occurrences seemed significant, I created a table to show these and other project category co-occurrences (see Appendix B, Table 5, Category Co-Occurrences, and the accompanying Narrative). In addition, I created a table to check single occurrences (see below and next pages).

The ways in which my coding of these "events" affected their occurrences must have happened, since anything will change (and everything does) just from being observed. There were representations of what I observed, however, which did lend themselves to tabular form. Please excuse, and/or appreciate the contradictions inherent in this type of research and analysis.

Narrative to Accompany Table 1

**Connection** occurred the most frequently in every meeting, for a total of 1500 for all 20 meetings. The highest number of occurrences of **connection**, 170, was in one meeting on Valentine's Day, (2/14). Increased declarations of love, friendship, affection, and/or behaviors along these lines did seem to be inspired by the cultural weight of the date. **Connection's** lowest, 16, was higher than any other category on that day (10/11), and still higher than many of the other categories for most meetings. The lowness of this number actually seemed to "prove" that **connection** increased as the group's year progressed.
Safety totaled 385. Although this was quite a bit lower than connection, safety still occurred with regularity: at every meeting at least 4 times; in 9 of the meetings, safety occurred over 20 times in each.

Gender occurred the next-most frequently, totaling almost the same as safety, at 388, for all 20 meetings. Again, although this was only about a third as frequently as connection, gender occurred at least 5 times at every meeting, and over 20 times at each of 7 meetings.

Sexual Orientation occurred almost as often as Gender in many meetings, but its overall total was significantly less, at 283. The irregularity of the occurrences of sexual orientation was partly due to the ways it arose: usually, when one or more member would play a homosexual or bisexual character in a scene, this would "up the numbers," because following those scenes there would be discussions of sexual orientation. Otherwise, when members played heterosexual characters, or discussed their lives during group sharing times, fewer direct or indirect references to sexual orientation would arise.

Differential Authenticity occurred the least frequently in all but 8 meetings (it was the only category which occurred only once, in one meeting (10/25), for a total for the 20 meetings of 205. Beginning in January, however, there were more frequent occurrences: only 3 of these 9 meetings had numbers of occurrences lower than 10. These higher numbers of differential authenticity events often occurred simultaneously or concurrently with higher numbers of occurrences of connection and/or safety (see Category Co-Occurrences Table 5).

The other four categories occurred at least twice at every meeting (see Categories section of Chapter 4, Methodology, for an explanation of each category and the ways I coded the data for each). Partly because of these sharply lower numbers, these "lesser" categories did not become the subjects of this research project.
Table 1. Category single occurrence table

10/93 - 3/94, Meeting Notes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category &amp; Meeting</th>
<th>Connection</th>
<th>Safety</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Sexual Orientation</th>
<th>Differential Authenticity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>10/11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/25</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>44</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/8</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>43</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>24</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>1500</strong></td>
<td><strong>385</strong></td>
<td><strong>388</strong></td>
<td><strong>283</strong></td>
<td><strong>205</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
While it is not my intention to prove anything by these calculations, I thought it was important to view the frequencies of single category occurrences, since the frequencies of co-occurrences is another view of the data I am utilizing as significant. Also, just seeing the totals for each meeting and for each category allowed me to see the significance of each.

For comparison, I used the category of “appearance” as another potential category early in my project, and when I counted its frequency, it fell somewhere between Sexual Orientation and Differential Authenticity in its total for these 20 meetings (235). This further validated my choices of these five categories to focus upon for my project, if frequency of occurrence can be counted as evidence of each category’s significance to the participants in the Premiere group.

Sexual Orientation and Gender in Scenes

Sometimes in scenework, one or more member would play a role which involved acting like some version of the opposite sex. In this scene, Daitch’s character’s having an accent somehow made other actors behave and speak to Daitch as if his character were not just foreign, but also Gay, and effeminate.

(10/11/93, p. 7, Field Notes, Scenework)  
[Daitch enters with a Hindi accent.]  
Condor: [tells him to] talk to Tony: he’s the one who likes to hear your pansy stories.  
Daitch: You’re a pansy, yes?  
Keith: Look who’s talking, Mr. Clown suit.  
[The scene continues, and after Auralia, played by Condor, is referred to by name.]  
Daitch: Isn’t that a girl’s name, yes?  
Keith: Don’t let him hear you say that, man!
The negative reactions and language in this scene, "pansy stories," "Don't let him hear you say that," indicated the pairing of minority gender and sexual orientation identities as sexist and homophobic. It was also probably racist or ethnist as well that Daitch chose to portray a character with an Indian continent-type accent (although more along the lines of a Hollywood version of someone from that region) while constructing this character's sexuality and gender attributes in negative ways.

In addition, Keith continued with these racist overtones by denigrating Daitch's colorful clothing as if it belonged to Daitch's character, and therefore was suspect ("Mr. Clown suit"). Perhaps these Northern New England natives, all white males, had no personal experience with males from India other than in movies or on television. I wondered, therefore, if the media portrayals of fictionalized Indian males came across to these AO members as effeminate and/or Gay, or if all "foreigners" would be played in this way.

In other scenes in which members played roles outside of their native ethnic background, usually they chose to play stereotypes of inner city Blacks, similar to what the media offered at that time on MTV. Therefore, if teens will utilize the media and therefore stereotypes to develop their understandings of those different from themselves, it would be up to caring adults or knowledgeable teens to contradict these images.

There were no examples of positive pairings during scenework on the days I attended. Tony reported to me, however, that in public performances, Daitch in particular offered characterization of Gay males which were affirming and nonstereotypical. When these positive pairings occurred, Tony told me, he gave the actors involved a lot of support and encouragement for their efforts.
On numerous occasions, members discussed their dates, which often related to sexual orientation as well as gender topics. Here, Daitch made the connection between Amber's boyfriend's ability to assist her with her fake fingernails to his presumed experience with gluing models, a "boy's" hobby. It was probably too much of a leap for Daitch to have accepted that this boyfriend, Heterosexually active with Amber, might have affiliations with "feminine" hobbies, even though Daitch considered himself Heterosexual and painted his own fingernails.

(10/25/93, p. 3, Field Notes, arrival time)
- Amber: [is wearing fake, bright pink nails. Shows them to Daitch.] My boyfriend put them on. He's really good at that.
- Daitch: I wonder why? He probably put together a lot of models.

Expressions of one's personal dilemmas or choices regarding sexual orientation, behaviors related to sex, and/or gender roles occurred in many ways, both during sharing and scenework activities in AO meetings. The next section offers some examples of these expressions of concern.

Members' Concerns about Sexual Orientation, Gender Roles, and Identities

Particularly for females in this culture, sexual behavior (presumed or actual) is equated with how appropriately one corresponds to one's gender roles. Here Brigitta complained about being mislabeled.

(11/8/93, p. 5, Field Notes, Group Counseling Time)
- Brigitta: [continues her turn. About her boyfriend. He played a losing football game. She said she was] hysterical [and] really upset. [Brigitta turns to Holly and asks her whether to tell? Decides to tell when Holly nods.]
Brigitta: [says that] a lot of people at our school think I'm a slut. I don't know why. I haven't had sex with anyone here... [this] upsets me... C [her boyfriend] won't talk to me when his friends are around.

As mentioned in earlier places in this thesis, particularly in the Literature Review, homophobia and sexism are inextricably linked. Examples of this overlap occurred in the data, as the next section demonstrates.

Negativity Regarding Both Sexual Orientation and Gender

In the meeting in which members placed people in their lives "on trial," many issues of gender and sexual orientation arose, particularly with respect to punishment.

(1/6/94, p. 7, Field Notes, Group Counseling Time)
[In this section, Condor has placed his older brother on trial.]
Condor: [talking about his brother] He acts like a "big man,..." his friends hurt my room... he used to beat me up and stuff 'cause he was queer.

[Daitch laughs at that.]
Condor: [continues] He hurts me. [He gives as punishment to his brother, said in an angry voice] Take a shower in his own chew [tobacco] spit. Dress up as a girl and go to school.

[Tony laughs at that.]

Here, contrary to other times, Condor succumbed to cultural homophobia and used Homosexuality as an insult, an excuse or an explanation for his brother's meanness to him: "He used to beat me up and stuff 'cause he was queer." He then continued by offering cross-dressing in public as a suitable punishment for his brother's misdeeds. Rather than challenging these conceptions, Tony laughed, seemingly encouraging the ideas Condor expressed, even if his laughter occurred for other reasons.

It was very difficult, as a leader, as I found during the second year of this project, to walk the fine line between challenging the negative or despicable behaviors and language exhibited by a member, especially during personal sharing times, while
supporting the member as a person. Perhaps with Condor, a member who did not often share personally, Tony believed it was best to seem uncompromisingly supportive, to encourage him to share.

While this may have been a sound clinical decision, the other consequence of Tony's complicity was a reinforcement of homophobia and sexism. Leaders and teachers show this subtle reinforcement, often for similarly "good reasons"; I'm not certain what the solution is.

Ideas about machismo and Heterosexuality were discussed in the next sample. The ideas Daitch expressed, "fighters are immature," that immaturity is "not 'macho,'" that Daitch has matured to a state which is beyond fighting, and ending with Daitch's declaration that fighting is "fuckin' gay" as an epithet, intermixed gender and sexual orientation inextricably.

(2/7/94, p. 18, Field Notes, Group Counseling time)
[This discussion followed/included members' rated themselves from 1 - 10 on the 'macho' scale.]

Daitch: Fighters are immature, not "macho." ... That ended with me in 6th grade [last year]. That's [fighting] fuckin' "gay."

Although there were many other examples in the data of each category and subcategory already presented, in the interest of brevity, I move on to the next areas of my research. As mentioned earlier, safety and connection became salient to the co-constructions of members' social identities. The next Chapter describes how I operationalized those terms, and offers examples of their occurrences in the data.
[Tony has asked members to discuss a role-play which just occurred, in which Brigitta played Daitch's mother, and it was very intense for the group.]

[Double asterisks indicate some dialogue I deleted here which was somewhat repetitious of what I already excerpted, or events which were unrelated which interrupted this conversation that I deleted here. Ellipses indicate pauses.]

Tony [to Condor]: What would happen, what would it mean, if you shared [with the group]?
Condor: I'd be a lot more depressed.
Tony: People would think less of you for it. [Tony restates his perception of Condor's idea back to Condor.]
Condor: Yes.
Daitch: Yes. [agrees with Condor.]
Brigitta: You guys are so loving; but you try and hide it.... I want one of you to break down.... You're safe here...
Daitch: I'm very emotional and affectionate... [he takes off his hat]. I cried about my mom and stuff.

**
Travis [says that it is a] 'macho thing'... I don't think it's stupid [to share]... it's his fear. [talking about Condor.] **

Tony: Being uneasy is OK.
Condor: I cried once when my brother hit me [and I got stitches....]

**
Brigitta [to Daitch]: Do you trust me?
Daitch: I trust you guys in certain ways.
Brigitta: Do you think we'd ever tell anyone outside of Group anything?
Daitch: No... I don't know.
Brigitta: We should work on it if anyone thinks we aren't safe here.

**
Daitch: I don't tell anybody anything I don't understand until I figure them out myself.
Brigitta: You won't share?
Daitch: I won't... I want to do it alone.
Condor: Teenaged life is the hardest.
Brigitta: How do you do it alone? [seems angry, curious, disbeliefing.] You have to need someone! No one works out major stuff, issues, by themselves! Can't do it! [yells this last line.]
Tony [to Marcy]: Your life has been intense. How is this for you?
Marcy: I just can't talk about my problems... I hold them [my feelings] in.
Tony [to Marcy]: You relate to Daitch?
Marcy [nods]: I don't tell anyone anything.
Tony: Are you afraid people will blame you, or think you're bad?
Marcy: Yeah.... They'll think it's my fault... The child always gets blamed for abuse.
Tony: Do you believe that [that the abuse was your fault]?
Marcy: Some of it.
Holly [to Marcy]: I would not think it was your fault. I would trust you. [said sincerely, earnestly, seriously, slowly, reassuringly]
Marcy: People don't care about teenagers these days... only if we're going to commit suicide...
[Tony continues, supports everyone's feelings that abuse was not the child's fault, and reinforces members' right to share when they're ready.]

**

[In Closing Circle, when expressing their wishes for the New Year, Condor and others referred to this conversation, and Condor to his earlier discomfort with my taking notes.]

Holly: I hope everybody opens up more... we'd grow and grow!
Brigitta: I hope we all can share 'our brightest dreams and our greatest fears' [a quote from Tony, earlier]... This is what the group's about... I'm always here to help.
Daitch [seems confused]: I don't know. [passes his turn] You guys got me thinking.
[Brigitta hugs Daitch; he hugs her back.]
Condor: I hope I get used to people — Sally — people....
Tony: Feel more comfortable?
Condor: Yeah.
Marcy: Try to open up more.
Travis: Build up more trust... feel closer and more comfortable.
[Ends Closing Circle.]
(12/6/93, pp. 13 - 17, Field Notes, Group Counseling time and Closing Circle)

In this longer excerpt, many issues of safety, gender, and connection were raised, regarding each member's feelings about sharing personal material with the group. These were somewhat typical of the ways the categories overlapped and interrelated. However, in this next section, I will highlight first safety and then connection, to illustrate the ways these arose during group meetings and to show how members defined them.
The Topics of Safety and Connection in the Data

Many members, particularly in the Encore group year, mentioned safety and connection frequently in personal sharing. Beyond direct verbal occurrences, there were hundreds of instances during both years' meetings in which members exhibited their conformity to the Norms (see Methodology Chapter, and previous Findings Chapter) and related that to their senses of interpersonal and intrapsychic safety. These next subsections offer examples of those events, with my interpretations and analyses.

How Safety Occurred in the Data

As mentioned in the Literature Review on this topic, safety can be represented by members' willingness to disclose, their feelings of and/or actual freedom from physical or emotional harm, and/or perceptions of security within the group and its leaders. Each of these types of safety did occur in this project, as I show in this section. Negative cases also occurred, and will be labeled as such.

Willingness to Disclose. In this section, the progression of Premiere group individual and collective group willingness to reveal personal, private, or previously undisclosed information is notable. Sometimes during one meeting, members changed their minds about disclosure.

Tony led the group in a discussion in their first meeting about what conditions could make a member feel more or less willing to share personal information with other members, and how members could make these choices. Determination of one's personal boundaries, confidentiality, and disclosure choices were all implicit or explicit parts of the AO Norms.
Tony: [asks them to] think of a private fact that you are not comfortable sharing today (or ever). Why are some things not ready to be shared?

Holly: [says that it’s too] personal, [and] embarrassing.
Amber: [says that she’s] uncomfortable [since they] don’t know each other well enough.
Brigitta: [says that she doesn’t] know how they’re going to react.
Nick: [says that he worries they] might have a lower opinion of you because of it.

Tony: [explains that it] takes time. [Each member is different about when they feel comfortable, and all timing is] OK. [There is] no pressure to share, but you are always invited. [He emphasizes being] respectful.

In some ways, this first excerpt illustrates the conditions for negative cases of safety within the group. However, these members' being willing to disclose the reasons a member would not be willing to disclose indicated that a certain level of safety had already been established.

Tony further emphasized the individual nature of these choices, and continued to create safety with his comments and explanations: "no pressure to share, but you are always invited" characterized the atmosphere in almost every sharing session. This clinical stance is in opposition to that of many clinical groups, and is client-centered. The client-centered policies of ALWAYS ON were unique in the clinical milieu, particularly with adolescent groups. The longer members attended AO, and the more other groups they experienced, the more the uniqueness of this centering became obvious, which further increased safety.

Reminders and clarifications to explain and foster adherence to the AO Norms were one of the ways Tony and members co-created safety throughout the AO year.

[1/3/94, p. 8, Field Notes, Scenework] [Brigitta and Travis have just done a scene in which Travis plays a young, college-aged, man, harassing Brigitta's character, who is also college-age, and female. In part of the scene, he almost touches Brigitta sexually, but she pulls away, seemingly in character. Tony is leading a discussion in which they process the scene, but also AO Norms.]

Tony: [talks about scene, and issues it raised. Peer harassment within AO could occur if actors aren’t] careful to get consent about
moves [in scenes. Talks about] a continuum of compliments to harassment, [gives/role plays examples.]

Condor: [laughs, repeatedly.]
Brigitta: [seems upset]: It’s not funny!
Condor: [explains, defensive]: I’m laughing ‘cause no one’s really like that!
Brigitta: Yes, they are, and it’s not funny when it happens to you!
Tony: [talks about] making choices to be physical in their roles,... to be conscious,... to check out ahead of time [what each wants to do. He wants to make sure they have] theatre and safety combined. [Tells them to] make agreements [with one another, as actors.]

This type of conversation actually trained the members to be more aware of their decisions, their behaviors, and their words, to see them as choices, and to take more control of these choices. Each member’s being under his/her own control as much as possible (and for some members, like Daitch, this was quite a challenge) further endowed the group with the capacity to co-create and maintain conditions conducive to a positive presence of interpersonal safety.

Freedom from Harm. Following the AO Norm of Respect, making verbal promises to be kind, or at least not to be mean, to one another was one of the ways AO members co-created safety within the group.

(10/4/93, p. 14, Field Notes, Business time)
[Group is deciding to share phone numbers, and discussing who might call whom.]

Brigitta: Anybody can call me anytime.... I’m a really good listener.... I won’t laugh or be rude.

Brigitta's promise reminded members of the common responses adolescents gave one another, and the ways hers would be consciously different from those: "I won't laugh or be rude." In many other examples, some with males as the agents, this availability for one another and their pledges to be kind further co-created an atmosphere that was part of AO's unique subculture of safety.
Perceptions of Security. There were many influences upon members' perceptions of security. Sometimes my presence affected members, and some of them mentioned this.

(12/6/93, p. 12, Field Notes, Group Counseling Time)

[Daitch and Brigitta have been doing a psychodramatic vignette, in which Brigitta plays Daitch's mother, and it has gotten very personal and intense. During a tense silence, Condor talks to me, breaking the quiet.]

Condor: Got all that, Sally? ... If I said all that, I wouldn't want that recorded.

[I smile, but don't respond, not wanting to focus attention on me.]

Tony [to Condor]: Why not?

[Condor doesn't answer right away. Daitch speaks in the interim, and Condor doesn't answer Tony's question.]

Reminders and reinforcement of the AO Norms often occurred as evidence of a need for safety, or were made in order to create or recreate safety.

(3/14/94, p. 11, Field Notes, Group Counseling Time)

Daitch: [Jokes about confidentiality when Holly threatens to tell his girlfriend that he wants to break up with her.] Tony would have you all arrested!

Although Tony's reinforcement of the AO Norms was not usually authoritative, and Tony was not the only person in group meetings who would reinforce, or remind members of these Norms during violations, Daitch perhaps felt more secure knowing that he could rely on Tony to "protect" him from Holly's threatened harm. Maybe Daitch believed that his own reminding Holly of her commitment to the group Norms would not be sufficient to keep her quiet, so he invoked Tony's authority humorously, noting Tony's actual presence in this meeting. Certainly threats of court involvement ("arrested") for Norm violations were known to be absurd by all members. However, Daitch must have felt uncertain of his safety and wanted to reassure himself here.
Question "C," of my March, 1993, survey of Premiere members (see Break for complete Survey and the response summaries), directly asked members: "How safe do you feel to share about yourself in this group: Why?" Responses to this question were varied, and quite revealing. (All spellings and language use are kept in their original forms.)

I feel safe to share some things. [Condor]
I tend not to share my deep feelings, fears & secrets with anyone, including my parents, friends, etc. [Keith]
I’ve never been one to share but, when I do. You better listen. [Amber]
I feel safe with the group, but not with myself to share my thoughts, feelings, etc. [Brigitta]
I trust the group and I think I’m good at sharing myself w/them. [Holly]
The people in the group are nice and some are more caring then others, but I don’t know any of them quite well. [Travis]
because I don’t belive anyone in the group would betray group confidentiality; and if they did it wouldn’t matter much to me [Nick]
Because I Don’t like talking about everything [Daitch]
Sometimes when I had a Bad weekend I go to a group and Lean on there shoulders If they want to. But If I feel Great I help other as they helped me. [Marcy]
not a matter of safety but of boundaries [Tony]

As can be seen by these responses, there were varying degrees of perceptions of safety among members. Some, in fact, seemed to feel unsafe in some ways at this point in the group's life. The next section offers other examples of the absence of safety, negative cases, taken from meetings and other data sources.

Negative Cases. The absence of safety, or the presence of secrecy, actual harmful behaviors, and/or insecurity, occurred in AO meetings. Below are some examples of Norms violations with one another, which I labeled in these cases as lacks of safety. The first occurred at the end of the group's first month together.
Tony: [calls all to circle. All go. Music tape off, Brigitta stops singing.]

[When they sit, Brigitta, Condor, Daitch and Travis mock insult and abuse each other verbally, threatening each other. Pretend to hit, call each other names.]

Tony: It bothers me when people are abusive to each other, even when they’re joking. [Reminds them of the AO Norms.]

[They joke, then stop.]

[Feels awkward. This seems to flatten the high energy.]

At this point in the group’s existence, Tony believed they needed to be reminded of the Norms, and specifically to be stopped when they violated the Respect Norm. However, he did not do this in an authoritative way, but by making a personal, “I” statement-type of remark: “It bothers me when...” This was typical of the ways he would intervene when members were disrespectful to one another, or to him.

It was difficult, especially in early months, to create an atmosphere which ran so counter to the "normal" adolescent subculture, and Tony was well aware of that difficulty. He would often merely comment that a member just needed to "remember where you are" to reinforce the AO subculture and its differences from other places/situations. Usually members seemed grateful to be reminded, and appreciated Tony's maintenance of this atmosphere while they were learning how to maintain it themselves.

These next events occurred a month after the one above, during Scenework. It was clear that Tony was needed to assist the members to retain their characters and motivations, and to mime rather than perform actual bodily harm to other actors: "No punching."

(12/6/93, p. 7, Field Notes, Scenework)

Brigitta: [pretends she is in a] Miss Weightlifting America [contest.] I’m so buff. [Tells Travis he’s a] Dumb bell boy. [Says]: I need a new outfit.

Travis: Lose 50 pounds on those thighs of yours. [Brigitta is very thin.]

Brigitta: At least mine are all muscle. [She hits Travis.]
Tony: [to Brigitta] No punching. [said mildly, as a stage direction]
Brigitta: [protesting] I didn't hurt him. [But she doesn't hit him again.]

He also decided to draw a line, a boundary, about how abusive actors could be to one another during scenework: "No name-calling."

(p. 7)
[Holly, Daitch, Marcy are playing elementary-aged children.]
Holly: [hits Daitch, and yells] You punk!
Daitch: Marcy stinks.
Holly: I'll beat you up!
Daitch: Ugly ones!
Marcy: I ain't ugly! [said rather loudly, for Marcy.]
Holly: [echoes Marcy] I ain't, either.
[Holly chases and fights Daitch.]
Tony: [sidecoaches Holly and Marcy for the teeter-totter. Asks them to refrain from doing so much insulting each other in scenes, even if there is a conflict.]
[Next scene. Still lots of insulting.]
Tony : No name-calling.

When violations occurred later in the year, as this next one did, especially if they occurred among members rather than characters, Tony was much more authoritative in his reminders.

(3/21/94, p. 3, Field Notes, arrival time)
Amber: [to Condor] Go to hell!
Condor: [to Amber] I'm going to have to kick the shit out of you!
Tony: [talks about Norms, especially the Respect Norm, very forcefully.]

However, he didn't always use his authority himself, but would lend it to another member ("Tell him"), hoping they would work these conflicts out among themselves, and reestablish the Norms, with his guidance. When they could/would not, he would return to directness ("Don't hit!"), sometimes showing his anger at the member who was continually violating another.
Members were taking turns sharing about their weeks, their lives. Amber had just shared, when Condor make a comment, amongst others' comments, which Amber didn't seem to like.

Amber: [to Tony] Condor is making fun of me. [plaintively, like a tattle-tale.]
Tony: [to Amber] Tell him!
Brigitta: [hits Condor, saying it's] for Amber.
Tony: [tells Brigitta] Don't hit! [angrily.]
Condor: [gets up and moves away from Brigitta, out of range, over by Marcy. Then, to Brigitta] I'm sick of that. [to Marcy] Hi, Marcy. You won't hit me, will you?
Marcy: [doesn't answer aloud, but seems to agree that she won't hit him.]
Amber: [continues her turn with no other interruptions.]

Although safety and connection were often concurrent (see Appendix B), the next section highlights those parts of the data in which connection was most prominent.

How Connection Occurred in the Data

The concepts and terms which represented connection were: friendship; intimacy; closeness; interdependence; commitment; affection and/or love; acceptance; understanding; sensitivity to one another; desire for emotional and/or physical contact. These were not as easily separable as the components of safety. Some data lent itself more to illustrating certain concepts, however, and this section is organized along those lines.

Friendship and Interdependence. Making gestures of physical affection which were somewhat less intimate, making comments about being friends, giving compliments, expressing or showing concern, or sharing food/drinks with one another were some of the ways these two aspects of connection appeared in my data.
After members validated one another, Tony complimented the group in this next excerpt, at the end of their first full meeting together.

(10/4/93, p. 19, Closing Circle)
[They are each to make a statement of his/her goals for the group.]
Condor: [passes, and is returned to later, saying] You guys are all coolness.
Tony: [says that he is] amazed and delighted at how quickly this group made genuine connections.

In addition to whole-group, and multiple-member connections, some pairs became significant. The Holly-Brigitta pair was one of those, and there were hundreds of examples of their connection. Some, as in this next excerpt, showed the ways their pairing was somewhat exclusive of others.

(2/14/94, p. 1, arrival time)
[Brigitta, Holly, and Marcy were talking and eating before group began. Brigitta and Holly passed a bottle back and forth, sharing drinks from it, while Marcy drank from her own bottle. Marcy pointed to this sharing and looked at them, then at me.]
Brigitta: We share everything, she and I, 'cause we’re, like...
[She gestures to Holly, shares her soda, looks at me, smiles.]

I included this next excerpt because it showed a connection between two members, Marcy and Daitch, who were usually not very connected evidenced by their own ratings of one another on the Survey (see below), and by their behaviors.

(3/7/94, p. 3, Field Notes, arrival time.)
[Tony and Daitch are arranging the performance schedule, and deciding who will perform together.]
Daitch: [to Tony] I love everyone in AO... I love working with everyone in AO! [about who he may perform with from other groups]
Tony: That’s great! [greets Marcy.]
Daitch: [to Marcy]: You get your hair cut?
Marcy: [shows it] Yes. [It’s really short, no longer curly at all.] Daitch: [asks Marcy about her glasses. She’s never worn them here before.] I always notice when anyone looks different. [Tells stories.]
Even though many of these synonyms for connection are hard to distinguish among, I continue to show variations of the presence of types of connection in the data in the next sections. First, I present more of the results from the March, 1994, Survey (see Break for complete results), those which related to connection.

Members and Tony were given a sheet with each member's, each leader's, and my names on it, and a possible ranking, from "1" to "3," for them to mark how connected they felt to each other member, with "1" as the weakest, "3" as the strongest.

In addition, to triangulate these ratings, I asked each member to depict, either in graph, symbolic, or stick-figure form, some type of sociogram showing their intragroup relationships and the relative intensities of their bonds. My narratives of these drawings, derived from my literal description as well as from my April interview questions about the drawing, appear in the Break section that includes the completed Surveys. A few samples of these drawings are included in Appendix C.)

My summary of the numerical ratings follows. (I have reformatted here for easier reading.) Also, I present the findings in table form (see Table 2).

COMMENTS:

Marcy was rated the lowest overall, with 3 “1” and only one “3.”

Daitch was next-lowest, with two “1” and 2 “3.”

Condor, Keith, Amber, Holly, Nick, & Tony received no “1” from anyone.

Condor, Amber, Nick, & Tony received nothing below a “2” from anyone.

Marcy & Amber each received only 1 “3” each, which put Amber in the interesting position of being the person about whom others felt the most neutrally or least-consistently connected: Amber had the most ratings near or at "2."

Nick and Tony received the most “3” ratings, but Tony was able to obtain one more than Nick, since all the members rated Tony and only eight could rate Nick (no members rated themselves).

I received the next-most, with four “3” ratings. I also received two “1” ratings.
<table>
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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>TOTAL POINTS</th>
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<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRIGITTA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEITH</td>
<td>.5</td>
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<td>16.5</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>15.5</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>RICK</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>SALLY</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Condor received 3 “3” ratings.

Everyone except Nick, Tony, and I received mostly “2” ratings.

Nick had the highest total points, but he, Condor, and Amber shared the honor of having no one rank them as "1."

In addition to summarizing the members’ ratings, I also summarized Tony’s, as reprinted here, below. With Tony’s, I made more commentary along with the summary, beginning to question the gender-related preferences he seemed to show with his ratings, and in his sociogrammatic drawing. Some of the comments were written after he and I discussed his ratings and his drawing, and those are incorporated at the end of this excerpt.

**COMMENTS: (About Tony’s ratings)**

The lowest rating Tony gave most members was marked in about the “2.3” position (he used open circles, not numerical distinctions, when he marked between ratings).

He seemed reluctant to show extreme favoritism.

Seeing that desire, it was still four of the five males he rated as “3,” and no females (except me) received higher than a “2.7.”

The female members he rated the highest were Brigitta & Amber; Marcy received the lowest rating of anyone in the group, a “2.”

The lowest male rankings were given to Keith (and to Rick), both a “2.3.”

It would seem, then, that Tony does “prefer” males, except for Keith (and Rick).

It would also appear that the “sameness” of the “3” ratings was not upheld in the sociogram. Tony actually seemed to feel closer to Keith than to Travis, when discussing that drawing. Tony also expressed stronger connections to Amber, Rick & Holly through the drawings than the ratings.

**Below,** I continue with summaries and descriptions of Survey results which related to connection.

In Tony’s sociogrammatic representation of his connections and their relative intensities, the four highest-ranked people were four of the eleven who remained involved with AO in some way after this Premiere year had ended, but Tony had no way to know
that these people would stay involved at the time he ranked them. How much did his
high ranking influence our decisions (I was one of those) to remain involved beyond this
Premiere year? The order of Tony's ranking for those four was: Daitch, me, Condor,
Amber. All but Condor joined Encore, I as a leader. Condor participated in the summer
AO program which occurred between the Premiere and Encore years of this project.

Although many had expressed desire and interest at the end of their Premier year,
Daitch and Amber were the only Premiere members who joined the next year's Encore
group. (Condor couldn't join the Encore group because of work responsibilities.)

Tony had invited me to co-lead the Encore group which Daitch and Amber had
joined; in the next years, I continued to work for AO in other capacities, leading other
groups as well, and at the time of this writing, I still work for AO.

I discuss possible implications of Tony's and others' perceived connections in the
final Chapter. Here I want to point out that these variations in his connections were self-
reported. That these "preferences" coincided with actions taken by those he was "closest"
to also seemed important to note.

The following subsections further subdivide and then show the ways connection
appeared in the meetings.

Commitment and Desire for Closeness. Verbal expressions of how much each of
them wanted to be friends, or become/stay close, or their showing this in physical ways,
were the aspects of connection I placed in this next section.

The first excerpt, from the first activity in the first meeting, showed two members'
interests in making close connections.

(10/4/93, p. 10, Opening Circle)
[They are to make a statement about one thing which is very important to
them in their lives. Then, the person to their right is to make a gesture,
and perhaps a sound to go with it.]

**Daitch:** [says he wants] to be friends with the whole group.
**Brigitta:** [waves her arms in a large, embracing gesture. Says
that] love and trust [are] really important [to her.]
This next excerpt, from the middle of the year, during some informal time, showed some of the ways members physicalized their connections. Notice that it was the males who play-fought, except for Brigitta, who wrestled and hit. Marcy remained uninvolved throughout these boisterous events, but she was physically very close to the action.

(1/24/94, p. 6, Field Notes, during and after Break)
[Taking pictures for publicity for a public performance, and relaxing in between.)

[Brigitta plays with Nick, then Nick & Brigitta fight.]
[Tony intercedes, asks them not to hit each other.]
Condor: [to Brigitta, defends Nick] He’s my friend: don’t pick on him! [Condor goes over and tackles Brigitta.]
[Brigitta sits on Condor after he falls.]
[Brigitta and Nick tickle Condor.]
[Brigitta & Condor wrestle.]
[Condor falls on Brigitta.]
[Daitch leaves.]
[Condor helps Brigitta up.]
[Condor & Nick play fight.]
[Keith & Brigitta ask Nick what he’s doing for Break?] [Brigitta, Travis, Keith leave, with Condor & Nick.]
Marcy: [sits alone on floor, stretching.]
[After returning, they lay on the floor, and Brigitta blows bubbles on Condor’s belly.]
Condor: [to Brigitta] Silly goose!
Condor: [helps Brigitta stand up.]
Daitch: [asks Tony for copies of photos] ‘Cause I love everybody here, and I want some pictures.

My interpretations of members' physical acts allow me to place some behaviors and postures in the data as evidence of connection. However, I realize these choices are contested, culturally constructed, and demonstrative of my bias, just as my decisions of which verbal interactions to label connection or safety have been. I looked at what appeared to be a member's intention for, or response to a physical gesture, the atmosphere or tone which surrounded the actions, and my ideas about what those meant. In the final Chapter, I will examine these choices and my interpretations in more depth. The next
subsections offer data sets with descriptions of physical acts which I have decided were examples of **connection** among members.

**Intimacy and Closeness.** Physical affection which went beyond just friendly pats or slaps, sitting or laying together during meetings, massaging or touching one another with loving gestures, expressions of bonds which involved closer contact with one another: these were the elements of **connection** I relegated to this section.

(10/25/93, p. 13, Field Notes, Group Counseling Time)

[Daitch and Karla have both left, Daitch angrily. The group is still processing Karla's leaving, and Daitch's abrupt departure.]

[Holly strokes Brigitta's hair. Brigitta closes her eyes.]

(pp. 20 - 21, Break time)

[Karla has left.]

[Tony, Condor, Holly are in chairs. Amber is on Condor's lap. Brigitta & Marcy are on the floor. Brigitta leans against Holly's legs. Amber moves to floor, in between Condor's outstretched legs. All listen to Brigitta's tape; some sing. Marcy eats. Holly strokes Brigitta's hair.]

(2/28/94, p. 12, Warm-Ups)

[Members were often physical with one another before, during, and after Warm-Ups. In this, Tony had asked members to place their hands over their own eyes and do the movements without looking.]

Amber: [to Holly] Did you grab my butt?
Holly: [laughing] Yeah!

In each of these, and dozens more, members showed their affection, sometimes playfully (grabbing someone's butt), sometimes more seriously (stroking someone's hair), through physical touch. Seating choices also demonstrated closeness, such as leaning against one another, laying together on the floor, touching another's chair, and sitting on someone's lap.

Females usually initiated these, or participated in these serious displays more frequently than males, but Condor among the males, particularly with Brigitta, Amber, and Nick, showed a lot of his connections physically, sometimes initiating the contacts.
As the year progressed, Condor became more physical with other members, often to show connection.

The next subsection offers examples of both verbal and physical connections.

**Affection and Love.** Playful and serious expressions of love, gestures of affections which were more than friendly, but not quite as intimate as those above, declarations of love to members: these appear in the next section as examples of connection.

These are three examples (see Appendix H for more), from November and January.

(11/15/93, p. 1, Field Notes, arrival time)

Brigitta: [to Condor] I need a hug. Will you sit next to me?
Condor: [is going out of the room for a minute, leaves saying]
Yes [to Brigitta.]
[Brigitta strokes Amber’s back.]

(1/3/94, p. 14, Field Notes, Group Counseling Time)
[Marcy and Amber were absent.]
[Brigitta lay on Holly’s lap.]
[Holly strokes Brigitta’s hair.]
[Brigitta slaps Nick on the back, hard, sort of comrade-like, to alert him that it is his turn to talk.]

(1/24/94, p. 10, Closing Circle)

Keith: I love everybody here, including people who aren’t here.

Seating arrangements, or making plans for where to sit, often showed members' affections.

(3/21/94, p. 3, Field Notes, arrival time.)

Daitch: Tony, quick, we got to set up the chairs!
Tony: OK! Each one brings one chair!’
Daitch: [to Amber] I’ll sit next to you, Amber, ‘cause I love you, Amber! [sweeetly, but also laughs.]
Amber: [to Daitch] I love you, too! [takes her chair and places it next to his.]
Daitch: I love everyone!
Just as the absence of a category, or the presence of its opposite, highlights its presence, examples of broken, thwarted, uneven, un reciprocated, and/or missed connections are included in the next subsection.

**Negative Cases.** In early meetings, members did not know one another.

(10/4/93, p. 2, Field Notes, Warm-Ups)

Tony: [leads another exercise. He tells them to pair up with someone they] know less well, [who they don’t know] the best [of anyone here.]

Brigitta: I don’t know anyone here!

Tony: [says that she] would have no problem, then.

When Karla, the graduate intern, decided to leave the program, and this group, in late October, issues of abandonment, with their broken connections and lack of safety, were prominent.

(10/25/93, p. 9, Field Notes, Group Counseling Time)

[Karla has just announced that she is leaving the AO group, and the intern position, for "personal reasons." The group is discussing/processing this news. Daitch has just left, abruptly, and Brigitta is crying, softly, into her knees, sitting on the floor.]

Holly: Don’t. I feel like crying, too.

[Brigitta talks more about how this is also about her weekend, missing her dad.]

[Tony reframes, how missing Karla is like missing others.]

[Condor blows loudly into his cupped hands.]

Tony: [says, sadly, that] 3 people aren’t here.

Amber: I feel really abandoned today. [sadly.]

Tony: We’ll look at it.

Condor: This group’s going to be small. [wistful.]

Brigitta: It’s going to be shitty. [angry]

Condor: [to Tony, asks why the others aren’t here today?]

[Tony repeats what he knows about each one.]

Holly [says she’s] mad [about Keith’s mom taking him.]

[When Tony mentions Daitch, and says he just went to the bathroom, Brigitta and Holly both say that that wasn’t true.]

Brigitta: Daitch needed breathing space.
Members often did not "get along," and would fight, argue, or annoy one another intentionally, similarly to the ways some siblings interact.

(12/6/93, p. 5, Field Notes, Warm-Ups)
[The group is in a sort-of circle, standing, doing physical exercises somewhat lethargically and slowly.]

[Brigitta keeps poking Holly.]
Holly: [to Brigitta] You are so annoying [and moves away from Brigitta.] I'm going to stand over here. [Moves to be between Tony and Condor.]

Preferential treatment, or favoritism for certain members by others, occurred frequently, sometimes inadvertently.

(12/6/93, pp. 8-9, Break time
[Most have left room for Break, and are beginning to return. Condor is selling candy for a school trip.]

[Brigitta returns, with Holly.]
[Condor returns, slides down railing.]
[Marcy asks Brigitta for money, so she can buy some candy.]
Brigitta: [says she has] no extra.
[Tony arranges chairs for circle.]
Brigitta: [eats her candy, says it's her] lunch and dinner.
Holly: No, we're going to get dinner.
Condor: Then, 'lunch.'
[Condor and Tony discuss candy they like.]
[Daitch returns, shares Coke™ with some in the group.]
[Brigitta buys another candy bar, shares it with Holly.]

During this exchange, Brigitta showed her preferences for Condor and Holly over Marcy, by refusing to give Marcy money, telling Marcy that she had "no extra," but then almost immediately, in front of Marcy, buying another candy bar from Condor. Brigitta also talked with Condor and Holly about her after-group social plans she had with Holly, and shared her candy with Holly. Marcy's attempts to "get in," either by borrowing money, buying candy, or being talked with, all failed.

(1/6/94, p. 3, Field Notes, Opening Circle)
[Travis came late, and complained repeatedly about the Opening Circle activity, not wanting to do it. Condor and Brigitta were absent at this point, but Condor came later.]
Members' absences, even if arranged as a formal leave of absence, often created problems with group members' interpersonal relationships. As seen above, and below, sometimes a missing member or members greatly altered the tenor of the group.

(2/14/94, p. 15, during WoT? time)  
[Here they discussed the effects of Amber's having missed so many meetings because of Driver's Education classes. There was also a reference, again, to the conflict between Brigitta and Amber.]  

[Tony asks about Amber's missing group, how it feels?]  
Amber: I missed it. I was too tired to come after Drivers' Ed. sometimes.  

[Tony comments about Amber's having sent notes when she couldn't attend meetings. He asks if anyone has called her as she had asked?]  
Amber: No one has called.  
[Many speak, with reports of calls and excuses for not calling.]  
Tony: [asks if Amber feels] disconnected?  
Amber says she saw Travis this weekend twice. Jokes about him following her.  

[Travis comments, also joking about following her.]  
[Amber continues to joke with Travis.]  
Tony: [to Amber, asks again if she feels] disconnected?  
Amber: Yes. No one calls me.  

[Brigitta explains her rules about her phone time.] [But Brigitta had talked earlier about owing her mom hundreds of dollars for her phone calls to her boyfriend in a toll call region.]  

[Nick comments about phone call times.]  
[Amber tells her own phone rules.]  
Tony: [asks what does Amber] need to do to reconnect?  
[Reminds her and group of Amber's difficulties which she has not shared. Wonders about effects of her being gone so much?]  

[Holly, then Condor, scream loudly.]  
Tony: [ignores them, continues. Asks Amber about] reconnection? What would help?  
Holly: [to Amber] What can we give you?  
Amber: [excitedly] This is the first time I heard everything Marcy said! [In earlier sharing, Marcy had spoken more clearly and loudly than ever before.]  

Brigitta: [to Tony, about Amber and Brigitta] I want to put it behind us and not talk about it.  
[Brigitta gets up to hug Amber, who meets her halfway.]  
Amber: [talks through the hug about] having amnesia [and not being able to remember what they were upset about anyway.]  
Nick: [to Condor, imitating Brigitta] You go, girl!  
[Condor and Nick whisper together.]
Sometimes one member would express interest or concern, while another would show a lack of interest or a broken connection, regarding the same member.

(3/14/94, p. 10, WoT? time)
[Members have been sharing, taking turns, about their dragon drawings, their personal lives, and their relationships to one another. As part of a discussion about Brigitta, who went out for Break and had not returned with the others, two members voiced their connection, or lack of one, to her, while she was gone.]
  Daitch: I think there’s something wrong with Brigitta.
  Holly: I don’t know — she’s not talking to me. [quietly, sadly.]
  [Amber offers me some chips. I decline.]
  [Tony asks where Brigitta is?]
  Daitch: She seems depressed. There’s something wrong with her.

Break time often showed disconnection, or preferences, among members.

(3/21/94, p. 9, Field Notes, Break time.)
[BREAK. Very high energy.]
  Amber: [asks to go to the store with] 'the guys'?
  [Travis, Condor, Nick] No. [together]
  Amber: I feel like a real loser. Add it to my pile. [whines.]

Although I tried to show separate instances of safety or connection, in many of the previous examples the topics overlapped. In the next section, this overlapping is intentionally explored.

How the Topics of Safety and Connection Occurred Together in the Data

These topics were often concurrent in the AO meetings (see Appendix B) and other data, which is one of the main reasons I decided that their mutual influence was
significant. The next sections show examples of particular ways these topics appeared together.

**Openness and Self-Disclosure**

Other researchers have shown (see Literature Review) that feelings of safety, or openness, often combined with a sense of interpersonal bonding, which led to a stronger willingness to disclose personal information. This occurred in AO meetings especially over time, and sometimes within one meeting.

Occasionally one member's issues were emotionally intense, reminding other members of similar situations. Issues of safety arose during those meeting events as well.

(12/13, pp. 6-7, Group Counseling time.)

[Holly has said she wants to leave the room, because Daitch has been talking about feeling suicidal, wanting to die, to kill himself, giving graphic examples of his latest attempts, and Holly's best friend has just been hospitalized for a serious suicide attempt.]

[Tony asks Holly to tell Daitch how she feels about his sharing.]

Holly: [tells Daitch that she's] upset and uncomfortable. I still blame myself [for her friend's suicide attempt, since she was with her when her friend tried to kill herself].

Tony: [to Holly] How can Daitch express himself, and honor your need to feel safe?

[Holly shakes her head, still says she wants to leave.]

[Tony further talks with Daitch, with Holly, asking each what he/she needs. Daitch agrees to discuss his issues rather than his reactions to them, and to ask the group for help with his issues. Holly agrees to stay.]

Suicide, whether in a member's feelings or history, usually evoked strong reactions from members who had experienced losses of friends or family members that way. As seen above, Daitch's need to disclose conflicted with Holly's need not to be provoked into remembering her fears or experiences. Holly began to feel so uncomfortable that she did not even want to remain in the room while Daitch spoke.

Tony mediated, asking each to compromise, trying to meet each member's needs and keep the group together. He was successful, if success can be measured by Holly's
choice to stay in the room, and Daitch's to focus more on the topics than the feelings while doing his sharing. This intervention occurred after the group had been together for about two months. It was somewhat mild, and supportive/protective of both members, equally.

In the next excerpt, from a meeting which occurred about a month later, Tony was again supportive and yet directive, striving to increase disclosure, while maintaining safety, for Daitch.

(1/3, pp. 18 - 19, Closing Circle)

[In the Counseling section of this meeting, Daitch brought up that he had a secret about what happened to him in the 5th grade. Tony asked him if he'd feel comfortable sharing about it at some point, and at that time, Daitch said that he would not. But, by the end of the meeting, Daitch asked if he could share, and Tony said it was all right, but warned him that, because of the time, there couldn't be much discussion. So, this was part of Closing Circle, which was unusual.]

Daitch: In the 5th grade, I was raped, sort of. It sucked. That's what it was.

[Many ask questions, like who did it? where? when?]

Daitch: By an older person, someone I didn't even know.... I never saw the person again. ... I was riding my bike home.

[Holly asks if it was a man or a woman?]

Daitch: [hesitates, then strongly] A girl did it. [Continues, angrily] My mom thinks it was a guy, and he butt-fucked me, and 'now I think I'm Gay,' and that's not even what happened. She thinks I'm all fucked up 'cause of that. I told her the truth. She doesn't believe me.

Tony [gently]: Would you feel comfortable sharing with the group if it was a guy?

Daitch: Yeah. [he makes no eye contact. He ends his turn here.]

This was the first time Daitch had shared any of his abuse history with the group. It seemed that Tony wanted to encourage this sharing, but couldn't let Daitch's hesitations go unremarked.

The issue of whether Daitch had been raped by a male or a female seemed to be a significant one for Daitch, but also for Holly. The topics of gender, sexual orientation, and safety did not often coincide, as in this example, but when they did, the situation was volatile.
Feelings of security within the group often encouraged or led to closer connections, or intimacy. Examples of this combination appear below.

Marcy, in her interview with me after filling out my survey, in April, 1994, discussed some of her experiences during some intense group activities and sharing, and how these had affected her.

Marcy: [When Daitch told a story and was] angry in the group...I had to hug everyone in the group to make sure I was OK in the group, 'cause I was scared...When they yell, I have to make sure they're not really mad at me...

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Me: So, you don't think you're going to get hurt [in AO]?
Marcy: Probably not here...[in] AO, I'm more close to having friendship, 'cause you could call me, and they're always there if you need a shoulder to lean on. In school or at home, you have more fights than I see here. And, [here] you talk about your problems.
(Interview, 4/94)

In another April interview, with Holly, the topic of sharing within the group was related to her interpersonal connections. Perceptions of similarity to other members also influenced her sense of connection.

Holly: ...It's just...because they [the AO members] all have similar feelings, sometimes, you know, so I expect them to understand, or at least be there for me... So, it's easier for me to share...
(Interview, 4/94)

In Brigitta's December interview with me, she described her assessments of each member and his/her willingness to be open and to share, and compared them to herself. When I asked her to elaborate, she responded:
Brigitta: Well, hmmm, I think I can trust people a bit more [from AO] than regular people... I don't do as much with them as I do with my really close friends, but I trust them all the same... I think that's 'cause of the confidentiality... I get along with everyone [in the group], pretty much...

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Me: You said that you were feeling a lot more trust in the group, and that it might have something to do with confidentiality....Do you think it has anything to do with anything else?

Brigitta: Probably 'cause we are pretty open with each other... even though I don't feel Condor and all them [the males] share their feelings a lot, I don't think they'd really keep anything from us that was really big... I think they're a little more honest than that... Whatever you throw out there, you know they'll throw it back to you, or you'll get feedback about what you've said... Everyone really cares about each other in the group, so that helps build trust...

(Interview, 12/93)

As the year progressed, I began to notice more ways that my data, and my research presence, could be effective for intentional, critical interventions. For example, I had noticed that the data from the meetings in which Brigitta had talked as her "dragon" and her "jewel" related directly to her eating disorder and abuse history (see previous section, on Gender). I had shown these sets to Tony, and had asked him to offer copies of these pages to Brigitta while she was in treatment. He had agreed. When Tony had offered these to Brigitta, she had accepted, and I had sent those pages to her through Tony.

In my April interview with Tony, we discussed this set of circumstances regarding Brigitta, her program, and the data pages I had sent. (This interview occurred before Brigitta had returned from the treatment program.) Here, he discussed Brigitta's situation at the treatment center, and her recent conversation with him.

Tony: Brigitta said to me she just hadn't made a connection with [her regular therapist], yet. She...[told me that] she trusted the group, she trusted me... She knew who I was from before, when I knew her mother. I met Brigitta when she was 10- or 11-years-old... I was in a play with her mom and I... came over to their house for dinner a couple of times. (Interview, 4/94)
Brigitta's second interview occurred immediately after she had attempted suicide and had been hospitalized overnight. Her mother brought her to the interview, and we all talked for a while, then Brigitta and I talked together. Brigitta said that she wanted to do the interview, but we talked first about her current situation, and her time in the residential program for eating disorders and her sexual abuse history, from which she had returned just a week ago.

This interview was the first chance I had to follow-up on the critical intervention I had instigated on Brigitta's behalf. Brigitta and I then discussed this intervention in our interview, excerpted below.

\[\text{Brigitta: [about the data pages] I didn't get to use it [with my therapist], but I read it and it did help a lot... I kept... reading it, and I was, like, 'Holy shit! I said that?!' That's why I like to read the things that happen in the group, 'cause I... don't get to sit there and hear myself. It was really helpful to me... (Interview, 4/94)}\]

Although Brigitta stated that the intervention had been "really helpful," I worried that she had not been ready for that level of involvement, or awareness, and that perhaps that overwhelmed her emotionally. Her suicide attempt had been serious, and I struggled with my own culpability. Tony, however, reassured me in several conversations which he had with me, that the intervention had been solely helpful.

In his opinion, Brigitta attempted suicide after returning home because her time in the treatment program had been cut short prematurely, and at a crucial time, by nonclinically-related insurance regulations and restrictions. He believed that she had been released when she was in the middle of some very difficult recovery work, and being home (with an abusive stepfather and lots of fighting between her parents) while working so intensely on herself, while inadequately therapeutically supported (it was school break, so there were no AO group meetings, either) and re-triggered to her historical abuse, had been too threatening for her.
He further said that our interview encounter had been clinically supportive, and although I am not a trained clinician, I was glad that Tony had validated my time with Brigitta.

I discuss some other concerns about critical interventions in the next and final Chapters. Certainly, seeing the value members and Tony placed upon safety, I always strove to co-create rather than detract from that safety as my connections to the members intensified.

The ways these concerns related, with other topics, to the development of differential authenticity, will be discussed in the next Chapter. Data examples of the ways members co-constructed this concept (although I created the terminology) also appear in the next Chapter.
CHAPTER 7
FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF THE CO-CONSTRUCTION OF
DIFFERENTIAL AUTHENTICITY: GROUP COUNSELING AND SHARING

Keith: [tells that he is] in a shell at school.  
Daitch: [condemns] all that ‘macho’ crap at school. [He says that he hates it, and that that is] why everybody hates me.... I used to be a bully, but now I’m nice [out of school].  
Travis :[says he’s] afraid to be affectionate; [he’s afraid of] what people will think.  
Daitch: Bi?  
Travis: Yeah, Bi.  
Karla: it’s important not to be labeled?  
Travis: Yeah.  
Keith: [says it’s a matter of] survival at school. [The] shell makes it [so he] won’t get hurt. [He says that if he’s] nice [he’d be] vulnerable.  
Travis: [agrees, nodding.]  
Keith: [says that] society is the problem....I appreciate this group a lot.  
Tony: [says that it’s important to be] creating safety in the group, which takes a lot of work and thought. [He gives several examples of being disrespectful, and reminds them to] pay attention, [and to show they] care....The conversation doesn’t have to always be deep....[Just] be intentional.  
(10/4/93, p. 17, Field Notes, Group Counseling time)

The Development of the Concept of Differential Authenticity

The ideas of authenticity and inauthenticity regarding social identities were discussed in the Literature Review of this document, but my concept of differential authenticity did not seem to appear anywhere as such. Poststructuralists and social constructionists would agree that identities are contextual, which came the closest to my research concept, but I did not find any Literature which described or named any of the influences on this contextual changing which were as detailed as what I discovered to have occurred in this project.

Interpretations of the reasons for the influences of safety and connection, as well as explanations of the ways I labeled the events in the data as examples of differential
authenticity, occur in later in this Chapter. In this next section, I offer some examples of differential authenticity as it related to this project: the statements or behaviors in which members showed that they were altering their own or others’ perceptions of gender and/or sexual orientation. Among these, I show some of the influences of various types of safety and connection on these identity co-constructions.

Patterns of Social Identity Co-Constructions in ALWAYS ON

"[A]dolescents form a very heterogeneous group..." partly because "[age, sex, and] factors like educational level and socioeconomic background have a profound influence on identity in adolescence" (Bosma, 1992, p. 112). Classic Western adolescent heterogeneity, while not foregrounded, was always present in AO group experiences. In many cases, these differences formed the bases for livelier and more profound discussions after scenework, and for a greater variety of roles enacted in scenework. However, identity differences can exist neither unproblematically, nor in a vacuum: social pressures and opinions regarding social identities were also always present, even if unspoken.

To provide opportunities for these pressures to be discussed and analyzed, AO group meetings included the development of and then participation in experiential activities in which “characters” were created with varied backgrounds, and members “tried on” different identities through theatre games and scenes, some from their own lives. These opportunities were critical to the members' own developments and co-constructions: "[H]ealthy identity requires the exploration of options, commitment to choices, the integration of new choices to previous decisions and vigilance to ongoing life changes..." (Bieri & Bingham, 1994, p. 145). These "real-life" scenes (Moreno, 1972) and other activities in AO program activities created opportunities for experimentation with social identities.
Members discussed the performance roles, and then would often experience changes in their identity understandings and displays. Laura, an Encore member, in her Individual interview, stated:

As I got more comfortable doing [performances]... it really made me think about who I am, and who I could be, and how I might treat another person who might be my best friend, and then I find out that they're Gay: I've had that happen before...with female friends, and... lately, a female cousin of mine... I have all these questions... 'cause, I mean, I could be. I really don't know....It was really weird... yet, it was just acting, but yet, in some really weird, déjà vu way, it was part of my life... (Laura, Individual Interview, 5/5/95)

Laura's statement: "I mean, I could be. I really don't know" was a clear indication of the mutability of her sexual orientation identity at this point in her life (she was 20 years old during this year), and her experiences in AO clearly affected her perceptions of sexual orientation identity in general, her ideas about friends' and family members' identities, and her own in particular. She mentioned her increasing comfort with performing as a dominant factor in these changes in perception.

Some similar group activities can be grouped together under the label of "Social Perspective-Taking Training," and since these are so similar, comparisons between AO activities and these trainings are useful here: "Social perspective-taking training specifically creates situations in which youths engage in comparison of the self with members of other groups in terms of both similarities and differences" (Markstrom-Adams & Spencer, 1994, p. 85). While AO only sometimes created self-comparing scenes, both sociodrama and psychodrama, as well as drama therapy, recognize that all roles taken by an actor in a clinical setting (and perhaps professionally...) are self-

1 Since Laura was one of the members who had missed the Group Interview, I didn't realize until the individual interview with her that she had also missed the October "coming out" meeting, and therefore did not know that I was Bisexual (she had already known that Tony was Gay, from previous year's acquaintanceship). Later in this interview, when I discovered this, I did tell her that I was Bisexual, but at this point in our conversation, she did not know. Therefore, her perceptions and changes in her opinions were not influenced by her awareness of my orientation, although certainly she knew of the AO Norms of respect and the ways we applied them regarding sexual orientation.
comparative (Cossa, 1992a; Cossa, 1992b; Cossa, 1995a; Cossa, 1996; Cossa, et al., 1996).

In AO, sometimes identity exploration was intentional, sometimes it was tangential. A tangential example: members would practice for a performance in which HIV/AIDS information was to be conveyed to the audience. In practicing for this, members would play the parts of and then grow to understand the identities of a variety of characters, some of whom had backgrounds and/or social identities different from their own.

As an identity intervention model, social perspective-taking training discussed "perspective taking" as "social cognition," "role taking," "person perceptivity," and "decentration" (Markstrom-Adams & Spencer, 1994, pp. 85 - 86). Perspective-taking was also described as "the process by which individuals develop the ability to see the world imaginatively from the perspective of someone other than themselves" (Markstrom-Adams & Spencer, 1994, p. 86). The data shown in the previous Chapters showed examples of this use of roles and scenework, and some of the effects these had upon members' co-constructions of the social identities I examined in this project.

Fullilove, Barksdale & Fullilove (1994) suggested that using role plays to help adolescents develop a language for their experiences, especially the nonsocially-sanctioned or potentially dangerous ones (like drug use and sex), is an excellent route to take: they can "try it out" without actually doing the behaviors, and discuss or enact possible ramifications. They could then make more informed decisions after those simulated experiences. The simulations often led, in AO meetings, to awarenesses regarding identities that did not arise during the "talking" portions of the meetings alone.

Some of these new understandings related to Weeks' (1995) of sexual orientation identities: "identities are paradoxical, and they raise paradoxes" (p. 88). He named "four key paradoxes":

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Paradox 1: Sexual identity assumes fixity and uniformity while confirming the reality of unfixity, diversity and difference. [sic] (p. 88)
Paradox 2: Identities are deeply personal but tell us about multiple social belongings. [sic] (p. 90)
Paradox 3: Sexual identities are simultaneously historical and contingent. [sic] (p. 92)
Paradox 4: Sexual identities are fictions — but necessary fictions. [italics his]. (Weeks, 1995, pp. 88 - 98)

Working with fictions was the main substance of scenework; psychodramatic or sociodramatic scenework would indicate the aspects which were personal.

There were several factors which could have influenced how willing participants would be, or were, to experiment with social identities and to become more flexible in both their understandings and their living of gender and sexual orientation. Two were prominent, and I discuss these in the next sections, in response to my third and fourth research questions.

Influences on Social Identity Co-Constructions in ALWAYS ON

In numerous places in my data, I encountered evidence such as in the data sets displayed in the previous Chapter, of the influences of perceived levels of safety and connection on members' living and co-constructing their sexual orientation and gender identities. Here, Joanne, an Encore member, discussed the ways she viewed the AO setting and its effects on connections, and then these connections' influences.

...Group settings aren't always very nice; sometimes, they're very hostile. A lot of people don't talk....AO is a lot different....It's different different years,... but it always remains basically the same....Everybody learns... that everybody's problems are equal....We don't compare them....A lot of groups do that....
[Another factor that makes AO different from other groups?]
Um, the closeness: I mean, I have never been closer to a group of people in my life as I am to this group, probably because I'm dedicated to it, to a point, too. I want to be here; I'm not forced to be here....And, the long-standing relationships...some, for four years....that's really exciting....I've grown up;
I've learned a lot, more than I would have learned anywhere else.... (Joanne, Individual Interview, 5/5/95)

Joanne mentioned here specific feelings, such as "closeness," and also general perceptions of AO's "difference" from other group settings. In this excerpt, she described the effects in vague terms: "I've grown up; I've learned a lot, more than I would have learned anywhere else." In other excerpts, which I analyze below and later in this Chapter, Joanne was more specific about the effects of AO on her perceptions of herself and on her life.

From members' self-reports, I heard from many like Joanne, of the ways AO experiences affected their lives outside of AO. As Weeks (1995) stated, many members would have agreed: "if sexual identities are made in history, and in relations of power, they can also be remade" (p. 99). Here, Joanne continued to discuss what she had begun to discuss in the previous excerpt: AO's "closeness" and its effects on her.

...[about group's affecting her]
...I've never hidden anything from this group....This group has always been there for me....A lot of the closeness of the group is built around the emotions that people feel...especially at Retreat [a weekend-long, psychodramatically focused AO Encore activity, in which everyone received at least one hour of individually-focused group time]....Everybody cried....It's incredible... to be able to express emotions, like, be angry and be sad, and not be told not to....I don't usually express anger....I don't want to lose friends over being angry, so I don't express it...
[why can people in the group express anger?]
...I think that this group is too closely connected to give up...just because we're angry...
[why so connected?]  
...A lot of our issues... we connect on....We're all teenagers....We share equally....We listen equally to each other....It's definitely a very safe place...
  (Joanne, Individual Interview, 5/5/95)

Discovering that safety and connection were so crucial to members' social identity and other experiences in AO was made easier by my prolonged and intense involvement with the two groups in my project. Archer (1992), about research
methodology, commented: "motivation and barriers become increasingly apparent as patterns of issues emerge and become meaningful through repetition..." (p. 35). The overt theory statements and explanations on which I based my conclusions evolved by examining repetitions of issues. In order to demonstrate the multiple ways members discussed and responded to my research questions, many of my data presentations may seem repetitive, but, that is one way the patterns of issues shown by these comments and events emerged and became meaningful.

To focus responses and relevant commentary and to minimize repetition, I next present some examples from Premiere members' comments and behaviors. These excerpts from my field notes show the ways members co-constructed their understandings of these issues in their lives.

How Differential Authenticity Occurred in the Premiere Group's Data

Self-descriptions, or proclamations of variations in identity, were one way differential authenticity occurred in the data. Anecdotes of a member's being “different” in other contexts, although self-reported, seemed important to include as examples of differential authenticity.

(11/1/93, Field Notes, p. 14, What's on Top? time)
Tony: [asks if Condor wants to share about his experience of performing with AO at Condor's school last week?]
Condor: It was like here, but not. [He goes on, about scene topics.]
Tony: My observation of you on Friday is that you are very different there... you were more focused....Why the difference?
Condor: These people know me [indicates people here].

Here, Condor directly attributed the AO group's connections ("These people know me") to the ways he showed different aspects of himself in alternate settings (school vs. AO meetings) even though the activity (AO performances) was the same. He recognized the
similarities ("It was like here, but not"), and also the ways the contexts influenced him to feel and perform differently. Being known less well, for Condor, was an important factor, yet also, in Tony's opinion, a factor which contributed to Condor's performing better ("you were more focused").

My interpretation of these events (I did not witness Condor's school performance) was that when Condor had felt more known, as in AO group meetings, he had felt more able to take risks, including being "silly," or "less focused"; and, that he was more likely to expand rather than contract his repertoire in the presence of better-known peers. I believe Condor was more afraid of how he would appear in school, wanting to perform "well," and therefore restricted himself in the more public setting. This could have seemed to Tony to have been "more focused," yet it may have been a concentration inspired by fear of peer ridicule. He "contained" his "self" more when he felt more vulnerable.

Fewer connections meant less perceived safety, for Condor. Lower levels of safety led to more rigidity in performing, taking fewer risks, with a more limited display of self.

For example, Condor rarely chose to play a scene seriously, even when the content of the scene (such as sexual abuse or rape) was serious. Since he almost always played for comedic effect, it was more difficult to extrapolate from his scenic material what his personal psychological material may have been. (I did not assume, for instance, that he had extreme personal pressures or prejudice regarding Italian people despite his choosing to perform frequently as characters who were seemingly Mafioso thugs.) He narrowed his range even further if he tried for laughs and received none, demonstrating this narrowing by refusing to participate as an actor, or repeating certain "stock" characters (such as the Mafioso thugs) rather than experimenting with new characters in new scenes.
This negative case lent credence to the operational definition of differential authenticity just as well as the positive cases did.

In the next excerpt, Holly described a similar set of influences on her flexibility of self.

(12/13/93, Field Notes, pp. 3 - 4, What's on Top? time)

[Holly has just revealed the suicide attempt and subsequent hospitalization of one of her best friends last night.]

Tony: [interrupts, asking Holly] How has this affected you?

What did it stir up?

Holly: Trust, friendship, death, ...everything, ...[I feel] abandoned, a lot of stuff. I just have to put my "cheery face" on and be happy....

Tony: Is that what you usually do?

Holly: Yes. It's easier. I don't have to explain anything. [Looks and sounds sad, quiet, earnest. I realize, seeing this, that Holly usually has her "cheery face" when she's at AO.]

Tony: [gently] What do you need?

Holly: [says she just has a] need to tell someone,...to talk....

I'm really really tired...I can't sleep.

[Tony asks about her feelings?]

Holly: [says that she's] worried about my mother... can't talk to my mom.... I'm afraid my friend could die.

Tony: [reflects that it's very] scary.

Holly: [talks more about her friend, says that she is] so stubborn... she won't listen to me.

Here, Holly discussed her recent trauma with a friend's attempted suicide, and her own suicidal feelings. These conditions made her feel very unsafe ("abandoned") and also seeing a place to work through some of her sadness and fear. Her usual choice, to "just have to put my 'cheery face' on and be happy," was not operating in this group meeting, for one of the first times in my observations. In this, the middle of the group's third month together, Holly finally felt safe enough to show what was behind her "cheery face."

The "cheery face" idea is a hegemonically-influenced prescription for female behavior. I remember countless injunctions from adults to me as a young girl, to "smile" so my "face wouldn't freeze," and to enter any room smiling regardless of what had just
transpired or what one was expecting. Holly's comments seemed to reflect a similar socialization, and her willingness in this context to drop the pretense showed a flexibility in her gender roles previously unseen in this group, except in performances.

Amber also described an increasing ability to show different aspects of her self through having participated in AO activities, and she was very excited in this next excerpt to tell members that this ability had shown itself in a public performance for the first time.

(12/13/93, Field Notes, p. 5, What's on Top? time)
[Ambert is telling about an AO performance she did at her own school, led by Tony, which Condor also was in (he goes to the same school as Amber), as well as Daitch.]

Amber: [tells] the best thing... I was so "there" in an AO performance at my school, with Condor!

Holly: Wow! [really appreciatively.]

[Tony and Condor nod agreement.]

Amber: I was really cool, being a drunk.

[Daitch and Condor joke. They were there, also.]

Amber: I can't do that in drama [class].... I don't feel attached to them like I do to people here... I feel so good here... Everybody here likes me for who I am, not what I am... People at school judge me... I can't be who I want to be without being really hurt... [She passes the WoT? turn to Nick.]

Amber's comments: "I don't feel attached to them like I do to people here," and "I can't be who I want to be without being really hurt" clearly delineated the ways she viewed the school context differently from AO's, and the ways those differences in connection influenced her ability to perform were described specifically in this example. Safety was also an issue for Amber, and these worked together in her favor in AO meetings. She was able to bring the AO context, of safety and connection, into this setting by being with Tony, Condor and Daitch during the performance. So, she was not discussing just an increased ability to perform, an expansion of her acting techniques, but rather an increased ability to act which was context-specific.
While this did not relate specifically to flexibility in her gender or sexual orientation identities, I included it to show the ways she perceived changes in her social identity flexibility, in herself as a performer. Since all behaviors are gendered and sexed (as well as raced, classed), there are relations here to social identities which are more subtle. Since Amber did not raise them, I will not delve into them here.

Another form of differential authenticity involved members’ noticing how different the AO meeting context was from other contexts they encountered, especially their public school contexts.

(10/4/93, Field Notes, p. 15, Group Counseling time)
[The intern, Karla, leads a discussion on the AO Norms of Confidentiality and Respect.]
Holly: [tells how she is] new [to this kind of experience, and it’s] weird. [She says she] can’t trust [her friends, and that it’s] cool here.

[Tony reframes to Holly that confidentiality is very important.]
Holly: Yes.

(10/25/93, Field Notes, p. 9, Group Counseling time)
[Karla has announced that she is leaving the AO group, and the intern position, for "personal reason," and the group is discussing/processing this news. Amber has just shared that she is not "angry," just "sad."]
Holly: Yeah. [quietly. Long pauses, then] It’s hard for me to understand that you’re leaving. ... [pauses]. In here, it doesn’t feel like "real life,"... it’s so nice here... we’re all so connected. [Pauses.] We’re not afraid to say anything....So, I can’t understand why you are leaving.
Amber: [agrees, says that this is a] Mr. Rogers, make-believe world [here].
Karla: So this feels like breaking connections?

In both of these excerpts, members discussed the ways the interpersonal connections influenced the ways they felt safe, and that this made the AO environment unusual, and preferable for them. This causal relationship, in which higher degrees of connection led to increased safety, was displayed repeatedly in both verbal and behavioral events.
The conclusion I drew from this formed the basis for my concept of differential authenticity: When members perceived both connection and safety to be high, this often led to more variability in their living and co-constructions of their gender and sexual orientation identities, and/or more acceptance of others' variability, and/or of the option for variability in everyone. Experimenting with cross-gender appearances, such as Daitch and Marcy did frequently, or with cross-gender behaviors, such as many members did, or trying out ideas or behaviors which involved not being firmly heterosexual themselves, or supporting this in others, were examples of this in action. Many data excerpts used in previous Chapters for other purposes showed these types of events.

How Premiere Group Members Co-Constructed Differential Authenticity

After observing differential authenticity in meetings, as in events such as those presented, above, and many more, and hearing about it in the first set of interviews with the Premiere group, I decided to ask members directly about this concept. My first questioning occurred in my Survey (see Survey, in its entirety, and quotes and summaries of responses, in Break section), which I administered in March, 1993.

The questions which directly addressed this concept are quoted, below, with lists of member responses to each question. (In order to understand Condor's responses, they must be read in a series, from H to J.)

H. In what ways are you different in AO than you are in other places?
   I'm not as talkative here as I am in other places. I'm not as interested in being in control here, either. [Keith]
   I share a little more of myself here than anywhere. I'm more myself because, people don't judge me. [Amber]
   I think I share more about myself and care less about my appearances and what others will think of me. [Brigitta]
   I think I'm more truthful. [Holly]
   I trust some people in the group more than other people [Travis]
   Here, I say less in jest and try to be focused on the matter at hand as much as possible. [Nick]
   I'm different at home I'm usually depressed [Daitch]
   I can talk about my feeling as well as [be Always On]. And now that
I'm safe with some of the group, without getting hurt. [Marcy]
I am less open about who I am personally and more in tune to needs of others & group. [Tony]
No difference am the same everywhere, (continued in I) [Condor]

I. In what ways are you the same in AO as you are in other places?
why act different (continued in J) [Condor]
When I listen, I'm attentive. [Keith]
I'm just the same person you just see a different side of me. [Amber]
I'm a good actress and focus. [Brigitta]
I try to have fun. [Holly]
I be myself [Travis]
In [AO] I'm still the same person, I still have the same type of thoughts. [Nick]
I' acted the same everywhere excepted at home [Daitch]
I space out were ever [wherever] I go and that can be scary because — you don't come [don't come] back. Shy — Neglect — Scared If they yell. [Marcy]
I am energetic and a take-charge guy — sensitive, creative, organized. [Tony]

J. Why do you act the same, or differently, in AO as you do in other places?
should be yourself [Condor]
I think that listening skills are very important, here and in the rest of the world. I don't talk as much because other people need time and space to speak here. [Keith]
I feel more comfortable w/ these people. We all know each other differently than other friends. [Amber]
Because I feel safer and there is confidentiality. [Brigitta]
In [AO] I feel more comfortable expressing myself so I do. [Holly]
I think some of the people in the group care about me more than others not in the groups. [Travis]
I'm more focused here because I don't want to take away from the group for other people. [Nick]
Because I just that and shit[?] [Daitch]
SoneTines I can be free and then I could be locked up in a zoo. It can come quite confusion.[Marcy]
Role & boundaries associated w/it.[Tony]

By these responses, I could determine that not every Premiere member felt the same as others about these questions, nor had equal facility with written English or survey-format writing. However, I do think that most members, for most responses, were honest and forthcoming with their written expressions.
Condor, Nick, Amber, Daitch, and Brigitta each responded to one or more of these questions that they did not see themselves as being significantly "different" in AO meetings than in other contexts in their lives. However, in discussions, interviews, and scenework, these claims were often contested or contradicted by these same members.

For example, in Condor's first and second interviews, his replies showed him to have viewed his own identity co-constructions differently in December, 1993, from April, 1994. I asked him: "How do you act in the AO group compared to how you act in other places (school, home, weekends, work, etc.)?" His considered reply was that he believed that he was "the same." I then reminded him of Tony's observations that Condor had behaved differently in a school AO performance than he usually did in AO meetings, and he replied:

Condor: No, I was always the same... he [Tony] didn't see me joking around... I was making fun of him... He didn't see me... I was serious in the scene.... (Interview, Dec., 1993)

But, in the April, 1994, interview, in discussing his Survey responses (see previous excerpts for his responses), I asked him a prepared interview question: "What kind of male are you, compared to the type of male society wants you to be?"

Condor: Um [pause] I'm a "bozo." ...I don't know. There's. like, all these guys out there...There all different from me... They're foolish... I'm foolish, too.... I don't know, It's kind of, "who's foolisher"? It's weird.... Most guys out there are just trying to meet expectations of people. Trying to get women. I just treat women like guys, and they hate it. [laughs] I don't even call them by their first names, I call them by their last names. They hate it: "Ohh, like one of the guys." I just like friends....And, a girl called me a "flirt," and I hate flirts. They really upset me. ...They're not used to having guys treat them like the guys... I was being friendly...I wasn't with a man, I was with my mom... I was kind of a mama's boy ... I have more manners than those other guys...I'm more of a gentleman, more of a nice guy.... (Interview, Apr., 1994)

Condor's reply showed his conceptions of the variations in his gender identity, and somewhat in his sexual orientation identity, which he hadn't mentioned in earlier
conversations, or in his written responses. In addition, in previous excerpts for Findings Chapters, and in many others not shown, Condor showed a large variety in his scenework gender roles displays, often playing cross-gender characterizations which were stereotyped and stylized. He also was the male member who had originally wanted the research name "Auralia," for example.

Yet, during early AO meetings, Condor exclusively took hegemonic gender role positions regarding emotions: he did not share feelings, he appeared to be somewhat stoic and unfeeling in several volatile situations, and/or he used humor to defuse his own or the group's emotional tension, particularly in the first half of the group's year together. In later meetings (especially after the counseling event in which Brigitta had played Daitch's mother, and Condor had mentioned his discomfort with my notetaking and his desire to become more comfortable with me and with sharing), he became more emotionally demonstrative, or less hegemonically male. He hugged and touched members more (male and female), took more Group Time to tell his own problems, with more emotional displays, and responded to other members, particularly Brigitta, with more intensity.

These changes could be attributed to many influences, both within and outside of the AO group experiences. It is not my task to speculate or theorize as to the reasons for his changes, beyond noting and analyzing what he said about these changes himself, and including what Tony said about Condor in my understandings.

Tony expressed these perceptions about Condor, and the group:

Tony: I think, for example, Condor: I think that one of his big issues, and [shown in] the drawing that he did of his dragon, is this concept of expectations of 'how guys are supposed to be' vs. how he is, which is fully and totally "masculine," fully and totally Heterosexual, as much as I can determine, but not "aggressive," necessarily. I mean, there's an aggressive part of him, too. But I think that ...part of his identity that he's aware of is different from the cultural norm. And, I think that that's part of his confusion.

So, ..."identity" is how we perceive ourselves in the context of our lives, and also in the context of the culture that we live in.

(Interview, Apr., 1994)
As to the AO and wider cultural contexts and their impacts upon these identity perceptions, later in this same interview, Tony continued:

Tony: I think that the intentions around safety [in AO] have to do with some of the Norms and guidelines around confidentiality, especially.... I think that's the single-most important factor...that creates the kind of candor and openness that happens in the group. There's other elements of safety, particularly in this group, that are still unresolved: issues around personal safety, in terms of people really following the norms around respect, punctuality, hitting, name-calling, those kinds of things, that keep the group from fully being what it could be. But, ... the safety to be able to talk about anything is more related to the confidentiality issues. Whether or not people are going to bring those things up within the group, and bring them up profitably within the group.... I think the issues get raised, but they tend not to be as fully explored....If people don't handle it [the group's interruptions] well, it [the member's issue or emotion] never gets fully expressed — that happens a lot with Condor. (Interview, Apr., 1994)

Tony's observations and perceptions of each member were quite valuable to the development of my own understandings, as mentioned in earlier Chapters. In fact, his views of the other males in the group were particularly helpful to me.

In discussing Daitch, his apparent identity variations, and his scenework in AO (during which Daitch often played a character he created and named, "Psycho-Daitch"), Tony said:

...Daitch, sees himself as different from the cultural norm and kind of relishes that. But, relishes that not necessarily from a place of having a real strong sense of "It's OK," but [that] that's the only way he can deal with it right now. To say, well: "I'm weird, I'm Psycho-Daitch, and I'm proud of that." I don't think that's what's really going on. I think there's a lot of conflict there. But I think that he can get through that. (Interview, Apr., 1994)

Daitch had other observations and opinions about his own identities, which he expressed in our interviews quite openly:
Daitch: At school I like, do a lot of, like, weird stuff, just to piss people off, or to make people go, "oh, that's weird"... I don't try to get like "negative attention and shit" at AO... 
Sally: Are you different this year than you were last year?
Daitch: Hell, yeah. Like, this year I have all my rings, and all my earrings, I have, like, longer hair than I did... I can't wait until I get it long: I'm gonna dye it... I think, red — orange-red...
What does all that mean to you: the rings, and the earrings and the hair?
Daitch: I can be any way I want to, and I don't give a shit what other people say.
What do they say?
Daitch: Just, like, "Oh, you're weird, you're messed up." Lots of kids give me bullshit... if you have only earrings in your right ear, that means you're Gay or something, but, supposedly, but that's not true... that's, like, [the] whole myth of the thing. If you have them in both ears, that means nothing... But all the kids at school, say, like, "Oh, you're a fag—you have earrings in both ears"... If they want to think that, fine, go ahead... 'Cause, I go: "I know that's not true," and it just pisses them off [laughs]... 'Cause they want to see me blow up and see me get thrown out of school...
I used to get really pissed off... Someone called me a "fag" last year, and I put him a headlock and punched him the head 7 times until he was knocked out... He tried shoving me down the stairs... That made me the maddest...
I haven't gotten into any fights this year, and I hope I don't... They try to shove me and get me to fight because I go out with J and they, like, hate J. so they shove me... [a teacher came to help me]... Usually no one's around, and, like, that sucks... I was sick of it...
I love scaring people... (Interview, Dec., 1993)

Hegemonic for masculinity, counter-hegemonic for masculinity; both for sexual orientation displays: these all occurred in Daitch's identities. Yet, when I asked him directly about these differences, he foreshadowed his Survey responses:

Sally: What do you think is different with the ways you are with your friends in AO than you are with your friends in school, or youth group, or whatever?
Daitch: I'm pretty much the same.
(Interview, Dec., 1993)

In our April interview, Daitch told me about his reluctance to share personal things with the group. This perception was not congruent with his behaviors in the group meetings. If "personal" includes stories about his sexual activity, his experiences with
drugs and alcohol, his and his siblings' past experiences with abuse, suicide attempts, self-mutilation, facts about his biological father's criminal record and imprisonment, and current relationship problems with his family members and his friends, Daitch had consistently, right from the early meetings, shared personal information.

But, because Daitch knew that he hadn't shared "everything," he perceived himself to be "negative." He told me: "There's a lot of things I haven't told the group or anything" (Interview, Mar., 1994). Whatever the standard of sharing Daitch held for himself, he had fallen short of it. And, perhaps this wasn't just Daitch's personal standard, but the co-constructed standard, or norm, as he perceived it, within the AO group meeting/sharing discourse.

When I asked Daitch my interview question about how he was in other contexts compared to in AO, he said:

Daitch: ...It's just when I'm outside [AO] usually, I act a lot happier than I'm feeling... but when I'm... at home... I just like... be who I want to be...I [often act differently from how I'm feeling]...I act how I'm feeling and stuff when I'm at home...in the group [I don't always show it]...'cause I don't like people, like, sitting there, "What's wrong?" and shit... [don't like people asking] fuckin' nonsense questions... [He then told me that, since my questions have a purpose, they're not "nonsense"]

(Interview, Mar., 1994)

For whatever reasons, Daitch decided to "buy in" to my research purpose, and deigned to answer my questions, whereas in many other situations, in fact, to hear him tell it, with most other adults outside of the AO setting, he usually refused to answer questions and became quite angry if the adults pursued him.

Later in this interview, I asked Daitch about maleness and his position on what he's "supposed" to be. He replied:

Daitch: I'm not the one that everybody expects me to be...I don't know...I'm not, like, the everyday person... Just by looking at me, you
can tell I’m not... Yeah, I’m a lot more depressed than people think... and I’m a lot more caring than people realize...

I’m nothing like the fucking "cultural man"... I think the "cultural man" bullshit eats shit... I think the whole concept is fuckin’ dumb...

Well, men are supposed to be "macho" and all this bullshit, and I’m not like that. I mean, ... I’m "macho" in some ways, but I’m not all that macho-bullshit...

My way of being macho is, like, you’re not afraid of anything, and... You can walk around saying you... can "beat the shit out of anybody you want," and all that shit....

And, yeah, ...and [some guys] think[s] that they’re the hottest shit, and think that women, like, suck, and shit like that... and that women "belong in the kitchen."... It’s not that they’re not afraid of anything, they just act like that... [I’m not like any of these things]...

Sometimes if someone says something, I want to kick their ass and shit like that...

Sometimes I might get into a fight... I get into fights every now and then...

I sometimes act like I’m not afraid of everything... I act like, I fool around, I [tease] that "I’m the hottest shit: We’re so awesome..." (Interview, Mar., 1994)

So, in the stories Daitch told about himself to himself and others, he was not "macho."

Yet, he described his behaviors and attitudes about authority, aggression, and power in ways which are quintessentially "macho": "I get into fights," and "I sometimes act like I’m not afraid of everything." The choice there, of "everything" rather than "anything" connoted a very different meaning, hinting that Daitch knew that he was afraid of some things.

Daitch distinguished himself from his idea of the hegemonic, or "cultural man" because Daitch knew that he had inner feelings and thoughts which he did not share or show, and because he believed that he treated women well. This belief, however, was often challenged by the female members of the group, who didn’t like the ways he handled his relationships, or the names he used for women when he was angry (see earlier excerpts). However, despite those challenges, in this multiple layering, with a swaggering "front" and a "depressed" inner life juxtaposition, along with his perceived lesser degree of misogyny, Daitch created a maleness that did not fit with an unequivocal "macho" labeling for himself. Combining this with his flair for cross-gender attire,
Daitch strove to construct both a counter-hegemonic and a liberated masculinity and heterosexual even while displaying many hegemonic behaviors and attitudes.

When I asked the interview question about how safe Daitch believed it would be, or was, in the AO group, to discuss being, or to be Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual, he had a lot to say in the Premiere year. Some of his comments reiterated his consistent homophobia, and the odd references to anal intercourse/rape which he often made in meetings. In light of the fact that it was Daitch's questioning of Tony which led to the "coming out" events in an October Encore meeting the following year, Daitch made many changes in his attitudes and behaviors in those six months. At this point, in Premiere, Daitch was not one of the members who knew that Tony is Gay.

Daitch: Yeah, I mean, I wouldn't want to be Gay, ... I think, that’s, I don't know, [laughs] I just couldn't find myself butt-fucking a guy... I think it's kind of sick...But, I mean, if that’s someone’s sexual preference, ...I really don't care, as long as they don’t come looking for me, going "Hey, baby!" [laughs]...

I never had a guy, like, walk up to me and ask me if I want to go out, or some bullshit like that... it’s very rare that any men, Gay people, ever do that...because most Gay people are pretty nice and such...

My sister knows a couple of Gay guys... Bisexual...

[laughs]

When you say "Lesbian," me and my friends always joke about my ex-girlfriend being a Lesbian... [He tells a long story about their teasing her.]... It was kind of upsetting to her... I think it's funny, but her sister is a "pure Lesbian."...And her mom knows about it... she’s [the sister is] like, 9 or 10, ... Her mom doesn’t care... [He tells another story]...

I don't really want to know what the fuck they [Gay people] do...

My mom thinks, for some reason,... because of things that have happened to me in the past, that I might be Gay or some bullshit [laughs] I think that’s funny... She wouldn’t care... she would care, actually...

My mom thought my sister was a Lesbian... and she got upset...

No one has to worry about me going Gay, though...[laughs] NO! [shouts]...I’m sorry, I could not find myself doing that... I mean, I really don’t care if another guy does that, but I couldn’t do that.

I don’t know, it’s just sick... No, I don’t think it’s sick, I just couldn’t picture myself doing it...Exactly... like a food I don’t like, like liver, or something...[laughs].

(Interview, Mar., 1994)
The oblique references to what happened to Daitch in fifth grade, or to other, earlier sexual abuse incidents, never became clarified during the Premiere year, and only became partly discussed during Daitch's work in his first Encore year. However, these events, along with cultural homophobia, definitely impacted the ways Daitch and his mother viewed his sexual orientation, and Daitch's feelings about Homosexuality.

At times, it was hard for me just to listen, especially when a member expressed negativity towards themselves or prejudice towards groups of people. I decided not to confront Daitch at this time about his homophobia, because of its link to his unexplored abuse history. I did confront some of the other members in their interviews (see excerpts from Condor's).

About Daitch, I told myself at the time to "back off," to remember that he was "only fourteen." I reminded myself that, if he stayed in AO (which he did), he could become less prejudiced in his language and understandings (Analytic notes, March, 1993). Prolonged engagement in this project, and Daitch's decision to join Encore, allowed me to continue working with Daitch. It was encouraging to me to see that this lessening of his prejudices did occur, and I show some of this transformation in later sections.

In one interview intervention with Daitch, I asked him to counteract some of his own negativity. Daitch had been being so repeatedly self-denigrating that I had felt compelled to follow AO practice and to ask him to say something about himself that was "positive." He seemed almost unable to do this, and his comments returned to issues of gender, appearance, and acceptance.

    Daitch: ...I don't know...Well, ...I think I’m not that ugly or something...  
    ugly...  
    I’ve grown up with everyone saying that I’m wicked  
    My mom says: "Is that my son or my daughter?"...  
    [because of] my hair, my earrings... She’s trying to get me to look , like, different...  
    (Interview, Mar., 1994)
So, I decided to "go with the flow," and I asked Daitch about how he had decided to look this way. The "flow" took him into his suicide attempts, and some stories about self-mutilation, as well as into sexual orientation and family issues, and the interconnections among these topics seemed so important that I have kept the sequence intact in this excerpt.

[Ellipses (...) represent short pauses, not deletions. Where I have deleted some of Daitch's words, I summarized them within square brackets, not in the bold style. Where I have paraphrased him, or he paraphrased himself, I maintained the bold style.]

Daitch: Gradually... well, what happened, last year... my hair got long... [because there was a] talent show...[and I was one of the] Red Hot Chili Peppers [a rock group]... I let my hair grow... Everybody thought it was wicked "queer"... They thought I was Gay... I don't care...

Five days before school started... I pierced my ears...—me and my sister—...like, 3 on this side, 2 on this side... [He shows me.] My mom was kinda pissed off... but I don't really care...

Then I went to school...

I don't know... I just say, "What do I want to dress like today?"... I don't care what people think about me... I feel the same way... I think it's fun... It gets boring dressing the same way every day... That's why I don't like dressing like everyone else, 'cause I'm not like everybody else...

When I went back to school, everybody thought I was Gay 'cause I had earrings in my right ear. I thought that was funny... [He tells a story about earring/infection problems, and then about some self-mutilation discovered by a doctor]

[I still cut myself] every now and then... Sometimes I still do want to kill myself...

Back in 6th-grade [last year], I had a couple of psychiatrists... My mom thought I was kinda mental... I went into [the Mental Health Unit of the hospital]... I took 50 Tylenol...

Since then, I've... come, like, really far... I may go back in there [the MHS], [tells more about changing schools.]

(Interview, Mar., 1994)

Tony offered one psychological explanation:

Tony: Daitch fluctuates... there's a part of him that [knows] that diversity is OK, and there's the other things that have happened in his life that make that too scary.

(Interview, Apr., 1994)
Despite the possibility that diversity within himself and/or others might be "too scary," Daitch nonetheless co-constructed in AO (and other places in his life) the most variety in his gender and sexual orientation identities of any of the group members in the Premiere group, using scenework and performances to show many of his identity versions.

Daitch actually inspired other members to experiment, or to expand their own ideas about themselves, as Tony commented upon in this part of our interview.

Tony: ...Travis, possibly, is more connected to really being OK about being different from the norm....But [he] feels hurt that people won't just give him the space to say that's really OK. I think he's more secure in that. Especially as we talked about sexual orientation, gender identity. ...[Travis] knows who he is, and the fact that other people are different doesn't bother him.

In fact, he and Daitch did a really good scene... One of the topics was "sex." Daitch came in as Travis' boyfriend. And, [Daitch] played it really serious. Travis... smiled a few times but he tried to really stay with it. [In the scene, they talked about when to have sex.] And it wasn't a scene about being Gay, it was a scene about negotiating around whether or not we [sic] want to be sexual. ... What a wonderful way to counteract homophobia!... and stereotypes....

(Interview, Apr., 1994)

The juxtapositions of Daitch's expressed homophobia versus consistent choices to portray Gay or Bisexual characters in scenes, and of his choice to be assumed to be Gay or Bisexual in his life because of his appearance versus his adamant statements and behaviors claiming his Heterosexuality, presented some of the paradoxes which led me to view all identity displays as authentic and contextually variable. This view became one of the bases for the concept of differential authenticity.

There are equally compelling examples from interview statements, scenework, and observations which show these apparent paradoxes for other Premiere members as well. However, at this point I want to show some examples from the Encore group members' experiences.
How Differential Authenticity Occurred in the Encore Group's Data

As mentioned in earlier Chapters, I did not collect weekly notes during Encore group meetings. I often wrote summaries and analyses after meetings were over, or during Breaks, but I do not believe these are as valuable as "primary" data sources. Therefore, I chose to include mainly data from the group and individual interviews, which I conducted with Encore members in April, 1995, since I had video- or audiotaped these interviews.

Encore Group Interview Information

In the following excerpts and my analyses, pseudonyms for Encore members were utilized. Daitch and Amber, as mentioned before, were the only "carry-over" members, and they kept their research names. Even though Daitch gave permission for me to use data from the group and our individual interviews, he declined to participate in the rest of my project's second year, which was another reason I decided only to excerpt from these interviews for this project.

While it would not be valid to draw conclusions from member discussions alone, please keep in mind that the events to which they refer and similar examples of what they discussed can be found represented in behaviors and talk from many other Encore group meeting activities, which I observed or participated in as they occurred.

The three oldest female members present for the group interview were "Terri," "Joanne," and "Hannah," who had been members of AO for several years at the time of this interview. To disguise their identities, I have refrained from giving extensive background or physical descriptions.

The five members present for the 20-minute group interview (four members were absent that day) explored gender and sexual orientation identities as they had been co-
constructing them within AO. They talked about the ways that this setting was the same and different from school, home, and other social sites.

[The interview excerpts are presented in the order they occurred in the discussion, numbered with consecutive Roman numerals for each participant's sections, which I call "sets." Underlined areas show vocal emphasis on the part of the speaker, by increased volume or extra linguistic stress on the words.]

Encore Interview Questions. I used the same questions for both the group and the individual interviews, for triangulation as well as to "catch" those who missed the group interview. For the group interview, I wrote, posted, and spoke aloud the questions with which I opened the discussion. These were:

"What are your ideas about gender identity, yours and anyone else's, and how has being in AO affected your thoughts and feelings, your ideas?"

"What are your ideas about sexual orientation or sexual identity, yours and anyone else's, and how has being in AO affected your thoughts and feelings, your ideas?"

After Amber asked for and received clarification about the questions, the discussion began with Terri's comments. It continued with very little adult talk for the duration.

Encore Group Interview Data and Analyses. Terri, one of the oldest AO members, had been with the program for several years, although she had taken about a year "off." At 19, she had not graduated from high school, having dropped out and not followed through on getting her G.E.D. as of the date of this interview (Terri did, however, acquire both her G.E.D. and a job the following year. She joined that year's
Encore group, plus she joined a newly-formed group for AO older members and alumni, "Surplus Reality," which was devoted entirely to doing psychodrama work).

Terri lived at home with siblings, her mother and her stepfather. Terri is White, and the family is considered lower-middle class (her parents own their home).

Terri's history includes sexual and emotional abuse from more than one adult male, and a recent acquaintance rape incident which occurred earlier in this Encore year. She drank alcohol and used illegal drugs almost daily some weeks, and rarely went a full week without drinking, until the second half of the second year of this project. She also had been smoking cigarettes since she was eleven years old. Terri had been self-mutilating (burning and cutting herself) whenever she felt intensely negative feelings, or felt numb, and could not think of what else to do (her analysis), but had been doing those self-abusive activities less frequently that year2.

One of the most serious and compelling actors in AO, Terri often handled roles in which her character tried to commit suicide, had been sexually abused, believed she was pregnant, came from a violent family, abused drugs or alcohol, and/or was in abusive dating relationships. Terri was very committed to AO, and credited it with "saving her life," and "keeping her sane." She often said, and showed, that some of her "closest friends" are or were in AO.

Terri is able-bodied, but was very thin that year. She often talked about wanting to quit smoking cigarettes and marijuana, and drinking less often. She usually resumed one or all of these activities after only a few days of abstention. That year she was more determined to quit drinking and smoking marijuana, and seemed to have succeeded in reducing both significantly by the time of these interviews.

Terri said that she used to identify as Heterosexual, but her last two years in AO had changed that:

22For unique analyses of the psychological motivations and etiologies for these self-harming behaviors, which Tony, I, and the other AO staff found to have been enormously helpful for understanding Terri, Daitch, and other AO members who self-harmed, see: Miller, D. (1994). Women Who Hurt Themselves: A Book of Hope and Understanding New York: BasicBooks/ HarperCollins.
I, TERRI: ...AO has been a very direct influence on my sexual orientation and how I feel about it. I mean, right now I'm a Heterosexual person, but I'm very Bisexual in the way I think and feel. And that's been a direct result of being with members in the group, just being able to really get open. It's easy to just be here to think and feel and talk about anything...because of the way it's set up — the way we all get close to each other, and we're not here judging each other, and all that....So, if I didn't have AO, I would probably spend the rest of my life being Heterosexual [laughs], and I wouldn't have been able to experience being Bisexual.... [AO has also affected my attitudes about Bisexuality in male sexual partners. She said that she used to think it was "disgusting," but now it's "intriguing" because Bisexuality "is not cutting your sexuality in half.

The next person to speak was Hannah, who had been a member of AO longer than anyone else. Tony often referred to Hannah specially because of this status, and others recognized her as knowing the program and/or Tony "best." Hannah had joined AO without any professional referral, and was one of the few members to come from a "functional" family: her biological family was intact and living together, there was no drug or alcohol abuse, and no sexual or physical abuse among family members or in Hannah's history.

Hannah is White, and her family is middle-class. Hannah was the only member with definite college plans at the time of this group interview. (She did follow through on those plans. She was accepted to and attended a very prestigious predominantly women's college the following Fall, on a full scholarship.)

Hannah's major self-reported problems were social, and she often credited AO with helping her learn how to make and to have friends, having been "a loner and lonely" (her words, from one of her Goals pages) before she joined the program. One of her Personal Growth Plan (PGP) Goals was to improve her ability to care for herself and not to caretake others at her own expense. She expressed in one of our final meetings that she was somewhat successful in this goal.
Hannah is quiet and shy (her characterizations), very articulate and well-read. In fact, she often said that reading was her favorite pastime. She also belonged to a fantasy role-playing game group which met weekly for that year.

In AO, Hannah considered herself a monitor of others' language and attitudes, often pointing out lapses in the AO program Norms in group meetings, offering politically-correct and/or respectful terminology, and acting, somewhat jokingly, as Tony's "compulsivity sponsor." She was often the member others turned to for mediating conflict, to explain difficult words or concepts, or to offer "a view from a functional-family person." Perhaps because of her nontraumatic history, she was one of the most able to take the role of "Auxiliary Ego" in psychodramatic scenework.

Hannah was the first female AO member to identify as Bisexual (this occurred in a previous year), and she referred to that disclosure in this year's meetings. For my second project year's group, she was the first adolescent member to "come out" after Tony and I did, in that same meeting (see previous section, "Coming Out," earlier in this paper). She told us that her family was aware of her sexual identity, but she said they were reluctant to discuss it or acknowledge it even when she brought up the subject. She believed that very few of her friends or acquaintances outside AO knew of her sexual orientation.

Hannah presents as very serious, usually, but can be playful and funny, especially in performance roles. Her first comment in this group discussion was made very carefully and seriously.

I, HANNAH: People can be Bisexual and only act on parts of their feelings for people, and people can be Gay and be married, and never act on their Gay feelings. It's not necessarily defined by what you do....

Amber, as a member of both project years' groups, filled out the survey I created for the first-year project group members. She was the first member to choose her own pseudonym, and liked me to call her by her "fake" name.
One of the survey questions asked members to describe themselves, and Amber wrote: “Amber, flirt, affection [sic], actor, semi-good looking, short, semi-overweight.” She was not overweight, except by “model” standards, but weight was a central issue in her family and for her. Amber performed in school plays, and told the group, on a day we discussed future plans, that she wanted "to be a drama therapist 'like Tony'" for her career.

Amber is White, and was the only member in either year who was upper middle-class, living a very different economic life than other members: she was the only one with her own car. She lived with her original family.

She, like Hannah, noticed instances of sexism often. However, with no self-consciousness, Amber claimed often that her "best friends are guys." It was usually difficult for Amber to be open with her emotions, and partly because of that and partly because of her negative body image, she hated to be videoed, and refused to watch herself on video. (For this and other videos I did for my project, she requested that I "video [her] shoes.")

Amber had several instances both years in which she practiced unsafe Heterosexual sex and then worried about being pregnant or getting an S.T.D. By the end of the second year, she had promised to practice safer sex regularly, or to be celibate, after several encounters in which she felt "used" and "almost raped." She did not seem to have any other self-destructive behaviors, such as drinking alcohol or using illegal drugs, but during the second year of this project, Amber was diagnosed as clinically depressed (although we saw no evidence of this in our AO meetings or performances) and then began to take an antidepressant medication.

Amber was a "good" student, often on the honor roll, but classes were difficult, according to her. She said she wanted to attend college; in her Junior year for the second year of my project, she had not made definite plans yet. (By the middle of her Senior
year, when she was again in Encore, she told me she had been accepted to a small college in New England, where her cousin attended, and planned to go the following Fall.)

Perhaps because the discussion was videotaped, perhaps because she discovered, during this conversation, that she was the only Heterosexually-identified female member present (Becky, the graduate intern, was also Heterosexually-identified, but didn't speak much during this interview), perhaps because she was enjoying listening, or for other reasons, Amber did not speak as much as others did during this group interview. She did, however, offer this comment after Hannah spoke:

I, AMBER: [Amber spoke about "the gender thing": she wants to have men and women] ...switch bodies so each would know how the other really feels by living in the other body, or a Gay body, or Straight body, or a Black body, or a minority body, or anything.

Tony then asked if she thinks "we can do that through the use of theatre?"

II, AMBER: Emotionally, but not physically.

Joanne, 17 at the time of this interview, was again in AO and living at home as of that past January, after having run away from home (to work and travel with a carnival group) the previous September. While with the carnival group, as she told us after her return, Joanne had abused a lot of drugs and alcohol, practiced unsafe Heterosexual sex, become pregnant, and returned home "to have an abortion and try to get [her] life together" (from January, 1995, meeting notes, after Joanne returned). At the time of this interview, Joanne was abstaining and was drinking very little alcohol as well.

Joanne began to remember and to process, during AO meetings and other therapeutic work done in years before this one, that she had been sexually-abused by an uncle, and possibly other male relatives. This and the painful feelings she had about having an abortion were her major issues during group counseling times for the second half of this project year.
Joanne had also dropped out of high school, but was attending night school and planned to get her diploma in about six months (she was graduated from night high school in December, 1995). She often talked about wanting to join the military, the Navy or the Air Force, but had not firmly decided (she did not decide to do this, as of one year later).

Joanne lived with both biological parents, no siblings. She is White, and her family is middle-class.

Somewhat quiet, Joanne could also be quite articulate and funny. She and Terri were very close, referring to each other as "sisters." They reported, and I observed that their relationship was very volatile and intense. Although they had discussed sexualizing their relationship, they had decided against it, believing that sex would threaten their friendship (they each had discussed this in previous AO meetings).

Just considering that sexual possibility was a new experience for Joanne, newer than for Terri, and one Joanne discussed in this group interview, somewhat obliquely. After a pause that occurred following the exchange between Tony and Amber, Joanne reintroduced the topic of sexual orientation and her experiences with it regarding AO.

I, JOANNE: My sexual orientation has changed a lot. A few years ago, I probably would have never have [sic] thought about being sexual with a woman, besides hugging or kissing them....Having sex with them never crossed my mind....At least this [AO] is a very open place where people can bring thoughts like that. I mean, I'm not scared to share in this group.... With friends that I know well, it doesn't bother me, but I wouldn't say it in public.... I talk about it a lot with my friends....Since being pregnant [and having an abortion, which was very traumatic for her], I'm terrified to have sex with a man, and I haven't; something has changed in me. So, I'm wondering if the other side might be better. Maybe I can be more compassionate with a woman, and vice-versa.

Terri immediately responded to Joanne's and Amber's comments in this way:

II, TERRI: And, I think being in AO, [it] also makes it easier to become open about it outside of AO. I mean, everyone that knows me and has a conversation with me knows that I have thoughts about women and being Bisexual...I've even had thoughts about having a sex change... I want to experience, like Amber said, being a man [because she has a lot of curiosity about the "intensity of a man's sex drive"].

Hannah followed that with this statement:

II, HANNAH: I feel like something that's really important in getting in touch with your sexual identity if you are a quote, sexual minority, unquote (but that doesn't really work, either, because, well, I've read that 80% of the population has genes for both, for Bisexuality, basically)... Anyway, the point is, a big part of accepting that, or coming to be comfortable with that part of yourself, is to have some kind of a fertile ground to talk about that, [where] you can feel like it's OK to talk about this stuff. A place where you can talk about feelings and nobody's going to ridicule you for it.... I'm Bisexual,.... If I just said that in school, I couldn't do it. I'm too scared.... People get beat up all the time for being "Fags" when they're not even "Fags" (such a stupid word). Anyway, I wouldn't want to give them a real live Queer person that they could just harass, even not necessarily really harm, just harass.... AO's not the only [support], but I could talk in here...That is something I think about.

Joanne asked, rather rhetorically, after speaking about her mother's lack of acceptance of Joanne's Bisexuality:

II, JOANNE: ...If I'm happy with who I'm with, why should it matter which sex, which gender, it is?

Terri, following some comments from Daitch, offered this insight, which generated a conversation among several members:

III, TERRI: ...I used to worry a lot about what other people think of me, but now I don't care. And, I think I don't have to care because I have AO. Here, I'm validated and accepted and all that good stuff....

III, JOANNE: [to Terri] ...I wish I could be that way....

IV, TERRI: ...AO is a good place where you can really start to look at yourself... and be comfortable enough to ask questions or to want to find out or being able to accept it.... AO is a real dramatic sanctuary.

IV, JOANNE: I don't think I ever would have had any sexual orientation thoughts if I hadn't been in AO and learned more about myself. I probably would have thrown them off as me being bizarre [laughs] and forgotten totally about them.... But I've drawn out in them and I'm really proud of myself for that, and proud of being in this group.... This is a good place, and I'm glad I'm here.

III, HANNAH: [talks about being "raised to be Heterosexual"] ...AO is really different that way.... [We do] scenes about being different [and that] is powerful....It's also important to hear about words like
"Bisexual" and "Lesbian."... AO has really helped a lot... [by getting me to see] other lifestyles.

After a brief exchange between Tony and Daitch, about the October, 1994, AO meeting in which leaders and members "came out," Terri said:

V, TERRI: I thought it was nice, finding out ... about everybody [after Tony disclosed, myself and several members disclosed being Bisexual, and some said they were Heterosexual, that same meeting in October].... [We were] building intimacy with the group.... But it didn't really matter [that Tony is Gay].... Now I look at people for people, and not sexual orientation...

These statements, taken separately or together, were some of the most direct indications from the data, in the members' words, of the perceived impact of ALWAYS ON on some of its members' ideas about their own and others' sexual orientation and gender identities. The major influences of the factors safety and connection, regardless of the exact terms used, also appeared strongly in this group interview.

To triangulate these findings, and to discover more what Daitch and Amber would say (since they were the members in both years of this project, and neither said much in the group interview), as well as to check with Laura, who was absent for the group interview, I interviewed some members individually (all who were willing). In the next section, I analyze some of the data from those interviews.

Encore Final Individual Interviews and Project Research Questions

Encore members' interviews occurred in April and May, 1995. Both the Final Group and the Individual interviews' initial questions were the same. During the Individual interviews, I asked several follow-up and/or clarifying questions for each participant.

In terms of data collection, Joanna, Terri, and Hannah were talkative participants in both types of Interviews. so I have the most data from those three members. Two
participants, Laura and Daitch, were able/willing to discuss a lot more in this Interview than in the Group Interview (Laura missed the Group Interview meeting; Daitch was more willing to talk one-on-one than in the Group Interview setting). Two other participants, Joshua and Carla, missed the Group Interview meeting, and declined to be interviewed individually. Amber was present in both Interviews, but was not very talkative in either setting.

Since Laura's responses occurred only in the Individual interview, I highlight her comments in this and later sections. I begin with Laura's response to the gender identity question, with a follow-up question I posed to her.

...[Asked how she relates to cultural messages about what type of girl/female she is supposed to be]
...When I was younger, ... I was supposed to be this "typical" woman, with make-up and dresses and all that ...Now, ... I feel I can be who I want to be, and not necessarily who people want me to be or perceive me to be...
(Laura, Individual Interview, 5/5/95)

Laura described, here and in later excerpts, the relationships between her gender and sexual orientation identities. Her experiences can be summarized in these statements: "The development of sexual orientation probably parallels, but is not synchronous with, the development of social sex roles. The development of the physical and affectional aspects of sexual orientation may also be asynchronous" (Shively & De Cecco, 1993, p. 86). In Laura's own words:

...I'm not sexually active, and ...all my friends and stuff, not just within the group, you know, have had sex before, or are, you know, Bisexual, and stuff like that. And, it's a real struggle for me, 'cause I really don't know who I am, yet, I guess... There's always that thing in the back of your mind: "Could I be [a Lesbian]?" or "Am I?" ..."Do I feel comfortable with this?"...
(Laura, Individual Interview, 5/5/95)

Not only I, but other researchers and theorists have concluded that being Bisexual, or even considering that possibility for oneself, offers that person unique perspectives on
both gender and sexual orientation identities (Garber, 1995). Another stated: "Bisexuals are a group that appear to be less restricted by gender in their sexual and affectional attractions than either Lesbians or Gay men, and their development of sexual orientation appears to differ from that of gay men and lesbians" (Garnets, 1993d, pp. 110 - 111). This insight was validated by several members' comments. Here, Joanna described her situation.

...[asked about her changes over the years, and how she wants to be?]
Um, my sexuality focus has changed, a lot, through the years. Um, I used to think that being Gay or being Lesbian was OK, but it still wasn't something that I ever wanted to be. I never wanted to experience anything like that: I was strictly Heterosexual, and that was it. But, now, it's like, well, maybe there is another side to it, and maybe I would be better off in that kind of a situation than without it, even if it's just Bisexuality; I mean, even if I'm not strictly Lesbian, you know? And, that's changed a lot...because I've been around people and I respect them for who they are....I am determined to experience the other side...in the future....I mostly want to live my life the way I want...
It scares my mother... .It was OK until their daughter decided to explore [Bisexuality]...
(Joanne, Individual Interview, 5/5/95)

Regardless of the uniqueness of a member's perspectives, members still had to handle family and friends' reactions to their alternative views. Being in AO seemed to assist members greatly in handling these disparities and conflicts, and also provided some much-needed information.

I never heard about "Bisexuality" growing up... I never heard about it until I came here... Now, there's this middle ground....There's this whole new thing....I go more for the person inside than the person outside, or what they appear to be....I want to support my cousin [who recently came out as a Lesbian]... My parents, my family, are very prejudiced...So is my brother...It makes me so angry....
They say: "I hope you never become that way." ...I want [my cousin] to know that there is someone out there who understands...
My sister always talks about how, when I was younger, I was so tomboyish, and they referred to me as a boy....When I was younger, people thought I was a boy....It made me feel very dirty...like, can't you tell?...I had girls my age come up to me [and ask me if I was a girl]....
There have been times I actually wish I was a man instead of a woman... but that's really stupid or something....I want to be a woman, too... because this is how I was born....This is probably what I should be....I

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try and be male, sometimes... I try to be that dominant, aggressive person...especially in law-enforcement situations... or in martial arts...  
(Laura, Individual Interview, 5/5/95)

Furthermore, several researchers have found that living the "typical,"
hegemonically-assigned gender roles can lead to problems with sexual minority teens'
sexual orientation identities' co-constructions: "[A]dolescent gay males and lesbians who
are gender-typical, Heterosexually active, and Homosexually inexperienced encounter
more confusion regarding their sexual identities because their characteristics are at
variance with prevailing stereotypes" (Troiden, 1993, p. 213). Again, in this and other
situations, AO program experiences were said to be uniquely helpful to members:

...I've probably gotten more support from [Encore] than from
anywhere in my life...family, ...counselors, ...friends....Even on my worse
days,...I like to help people [in the group]....It's really amazing how many
people I can actually connect with in the group...
[I asked how she thinks she developed that trust with group members?]
Um, I think it's mainly the whole confidentiality thing....That, and
just being in the group for a couple of years....It feels safe....It's a safe
environment....Here, I have adults who can give me an adult perspective...
and kids my own age or around my own age who can relate to what I'm
going through....I relate better to adults, but the kids here really help me...
(Laura, Individual Interview, 5/5/95)

To relate Laura's and others' experiences with changing opinions, understandings,
and self-identifications to sexual orientation identity changes, one researcher stated
human flexibilities clearly: "Erotic expressions and identities are social constructions that
change cross-culturally and historically within cultures" (McConnell, 1994, p. 104).
Weeks talked about "multiple narratives of sexual life" (1995, p. 6), and in AO, many
members in both years' groups lived these "multiple narratives" in role-plays, discussions,
and scenework in public performances, but this was often problematic. Yet, as
McConnell (1994) pointed out: "the problem is not homosexuality but homophobia and
heterosexism" (p. 105). In the next section, I discuss the interactions of particular
hegemonically-constructed privileges with members' social identities.
Interpretations and Discussion of the Encore Group Interview and Other Salient Data

Rather than discussing each Encore group interview data set separately, I will weave issues and themes together. In addition, I will occasionally insert other quotes or summaries of findings from both years' data.

Interactions of Status and Privilege with Members' Identity Co-Constructions

My view of Feminism prompted me to ask how male privilege operated in these areas. Several females, but only two males were willing to discuss switching, combining, or mixing up gender, in both years of this project. The higher number of incidents in which females were willing to include "maleness" in their gender identities and the lower number of the converse perhaps were reflective of our culture's gender status differences. Or the greater gender awareness of some females, or the greater societal censure for males who could be construed as feminine, could have affected these group members.

Critical theory brackets [homo]sexuality. Critical theory allows us to question taken-for-granted divisions (e.g., gay/straight, butch/femme), of a sexualized world constructed on the basis of power, control, and ideology. Critical theory enables us to understand how the changing intersections of sexuality, race, class, and gender-manifested personal biographies are rooted in a society's history and culture. (Sears, 1992a, p. 151)

Here, Laura commented on similar issues:

...[asked about Martial Arts involvement of hers, and if she considers herself a nontraditional female]

...Oh, yeah! Um, I've always been the tomboy-type person. I've always really connected with the male gender instead of the female gender. Like, I have more friends that are male than are female, and I don't really know why that is. It just happens that way, I don't know. Um, I think it's because I really don't believe in this "male thing."...I really do believe that women are equal....Women can fight just as well as men when they have to, or want to.....I'm just "me."...

(Laura, Individual Interview, 5/5/95)
It seems that most people in this (USA, Western, White, Heterosexual- and male-dominant) culture are encouraged to "trade up," not "down," if they want to be given more credibility. When male actors don female attire and make-up, it is almost always a comedy; when females cross-dress or "pass" for males, they are considered privileged and serious ("Tootsie" and "The Year of Living Dangerously" are film examples of this contrast).

Many females came to AO meetings wearing what originated as "male" attire, e.g., baseball caps, large, heavy boots, extra-large shirts and pants. Only Daitch ever came to meetings dressed or made-up with "female" accessories. In role-plays, however, males used stereotypical high voices and mincing gaits and always garnered laughter. These characterizations would be repeated often by several males as familiar, humorous gambits. Females who played males did it rarely, usually at someone else's solicitation or a scene's need, and rarely for laughs. It was somehow more ridiculous for males to "stoop" to becoming females, which again relates to the higher status males have in most areas of Western culture.

With regard to sexual orientation, it was more acceptable within the AO group meetings for females to discuss investigating Bisexuality than it seemed to be for males, if numbers who were willing to do so is one indication: in two years, six of nine females (Holly, Brigitta, Terry, Hannah, Joanne, and Laura) and only three of eight males [Condor, Nick, and Mike (who left AO in the middle of the second project year)] took that risk, even though the male leader, Tony, came out as a Gay man the second year. So, even in this safer atmosphere ("safer" meaning one which was less risky or dangerous for disclosure or open discussion of sexuality issues than at school, in other peer situations, or in workplaces), with a Gay male role model, these male teens were less able or willing to verbalize or even to speculate about their possible sexual attractions to other males.
The institutionalization of norms and deviance (difference) and the route for the development of stereotypes was well-explained by one researcher (de Monteflores, 1993). Without role models, without awareness of who does and does not consider him/herself Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, or Heterosexual, adolescents flounder, sometimes dangerously, amidst misinformation and alienation. de Monteflores discussed the usefulness of "idealizing transference" and self-revelations by therapists with respect to sexual orientation, as well as its dangers (de Monteflores, 1993, p. 218). It was appropriate, as explained in an earlier Chapter, that we as therapeutic, or clinical group leaders, spend a lot of time deciding whether or not to disclose any personal information, whether it be sexual orientation identities or other facts about leaders' lives.

Tony's coming out to the Encore group did have a profound effect, as Daitch explained:

...Well, I've learned that, it's like, [pause] um, Gay people, like, aren't bad and everything like that. I mean, I've never been told they are and stuff like that, it's just that... I mean, when Tony first told me he was Gay, OK, it, like, made me cringe. But, then, but, I mean, I do care, but I just cringed. But, then, when everyone else said: "Oh, I'm Gay!" "I'm Gay!" [uses different voices for these announcements] I'm like, I thought, I'm like, "OK. What else is new?" [laughs] You know, it's just, like, "So what?" [laughs] I don't care. I don't care if someone's Gay. I don't care if someone's Gay, as long as they don't come on to me, I'm OK. [laughs]

[Do guys come on to you?]
[No. emphatic] They're lucky they don't. [laughs]
[What would happen?]
I don't know...I never had a guy do it to me..... It may, like, piss me off. I don't know...
[discuss differences between a guy and a girl coming on to him]...
[My foster-father] says, like, "Yeah, you walk through the street and guys look at your ass." I say, "That's just 'cause I'm so good-lookin', everybody likes me."...
I don't care if they look at me....As long as they don't say shit to me, I don't care. [laughs]...
(Daitch, Individual Interview, 5/7/95)

Daitch's negativity about being a possible sex object to men was not unusual. Herek (1993) claimed that modern, Western versions of socially-constructed Heterosexual masculinity are inherently homophobic; Daitch often "proved" that claim.
In these comments, he discussed the dangers he believed he would face if he believed he were any identity other than Heterosexual.

...[ask about thoughts about self, being in AO, sexual orientation?]...
I think I'll always like women... 'Cause [pause] [laugh] Yeah. I mean...[pause]
[Could you ever imagine being attracted to another man?]
If I did, I'd probably kill myself.
[That would really upset you.]
Yeah, because it would, like, scare me [laughs].
[It would scare you. What would be scary about it?]
I don't know. [laughs] But, if I ever did, I'd probably kill myself.
[laughs] I probably really would.
[So, what you said earlier that you don't think it's a bad thing for people to be Gay, but what you mean is that you think it would be bad if you were? Or, if you were really Bisexual, you'd be really upset?]
Ye-ah. [pauses]
[Why do you think that is? Why would you be really upset?]
I don't know....
[Have you thought about it at all, or is this the first time you've thought about it?]
I don't know. I've thought about it, once. [pauses] I don't know... It's never happened....
[I ask about others in the group wondering about selves?]
...I don't care... Well, they're talking, so I don't have to talk.
[laughs]... So, in a way, it's, like, I can shut up and not say anything, so I don't have to.... I listen...
(Daitch, Individual Interview, 5/7/95)

In role-plays, however, Daitch (who clearly was not one of the males who willingly discussed sexual identity variations during meetings) often chose to play a Gay or Bisexual male character, or a female (often, a female who was pregnant or extremely sexualized, such as a prostitute). Daitch was also the one male, from both groups, who came to AO meetings wearing nail polish, facial make-up, multiple earrings and bracelets, fishnet stockings, dresses, and hairstyles with his long hair which were traditionally female ("pigtails"). What made it easier, or more desirable, for him than other male members to take gender risks [and thus appear to be "outrageous" (his term)] and to take sexual orientation risks may have had more to do with his sexual and physical abuse history than cultural pressures, or may have been partially a result of his adoration.
and emulation of certain male rock stars who dressed in cross-gender ways, yet were publicly Heterosexual (Daitch's favorite was Axl Rose, of "Guns 'n' Roses").

[I ask him some more specific questions, related to his AO activities and performances and gender roles, like wearing red nail polish last week]

I think I do that just to make people ask questions....It's just funny, to drive people crazy, especially at school....They're, like: "Why do you paint your nails like that?" and I go: "It make you ask questions?" And they, just, like, well, it totally defeats the purpose, for them [of bothering me]....They still try to tease me, but, it's just, like, weird....

What I'm gonna do next, is, I'm gonna paint all my fingernails red, and, you know how I do my black line? I'm gonna do my black line across that. It's gonna look wicked rad. And, on the...Fourth of July, I'm gonna do a red, white, and blue....

I don't like being like all, everybody else....Everyone says that I have my own, unique style, and I definitely do....[laughs]...

(Daitch, Individual Interview, 5/7/95)

Ross (1983) researched three non-Western societies, and made this observation:

"[G]ay men [were] more 'effeminate' in those societies with strict gender role segregation and antigay attitudes. In societies with more liberal attitudes and gender roles, Gay men did not differ from Heterosexual samples" (qtd. in Garnets, 1993f, p. 288). Furthermore, "[a] strong connection between gender role beliefs and antigay attitudes has been documented, reflecting a link between sexism and heterosexism" (Garnets, 1993f, p. 289). Pharr (1988) and many others have made this link; Daitch lived it, yet also lived contradictions to it, in his resistant gender identity displays.

As an avowed Heterosexual, Daitch "ought" to have been more hegemonically male, yet he often was not. In fact, his behaviors and choices contradicted the idea that "...gay men and lesbians may be more androgynous than heterosexuals are" (Garnets, 1993f, p. 291), even though in general observations of many more people than Daitch, this could be found to be accurate.

One researcher aided my interpretations of Daitch's identities: "An understanding of adolescent sexuality...necessarily entails a nuanced grasp of the sex/gender system of the particular culture or cultures into which an adolescent is being socialized" (Irvine,
1994b, p. 9). So, Axl Rose, more than homophobia, may have had the greater influence on Daitch.

Gender roles and sexual orientation identities do, however, often clash in Bisexual or Gay/Lesbian teens, and Terri discussed that.

...The kind of woman my family expects me to be is nothing like the woman I'm becoming....I guess they have...the ideal, kind of norm kind of woman....I'm different because I'm Bisexual, to begin with...and, I actually think I may be a Lesbian, but I just haven't realized it, yet....And that is totally against my family's expectations of me, and beyond their understanding...[laughs]...I guess I feel that my family is kind of like the rest of society....And, I guess, just particular people who have been in AO with me have been an influence on me. And, also, in being able to talk about it [gender and sexual orientation] and wonder about it, openly...

(Terri, Individual Interview, 4/19/95)

Some AO members, such as Terri, would have agreed with this statement: "In this turmoil of discordant voices, sexual behavior, sexual identity and sexual mores have increasingly become matters of choice, at least for those who have the freedom to choose" (Weeks, 1995, p. 27). Here, Terri discussed how that freedom developed.

...Well, I'm not really sure how. I mean, I know that in, like, April of last year, I wasn't homophobic, or I wouldn't call myself homophobic, but I had, I don't know,...a sort of disgust with Bisexuals....Well, mostly men....It was perfectly OK... for people to be Bisexual, but the thought of me having a sexual interaction with somebody who was Bisexual: something about that didn't seem right. I had expressed that in front of AO members, and their reaction to it really made me stop and think about what kind of person I was. [I asked about type of reaction?]

...Well, I remember two people specifically asked: "Why?" or...someone else was really intrigued....A part of me felt really stupid....But then there was a part of myself that had never taken the time to really look at myself and look at why I felt that way....That was when it really started to change....It's happening really fast....

It started out as a joke....I had just broken up with somebody, a man....and I would joke with my friends and my family: "Oh, I'm so sick of men. I'm just going to be a Lesbian and forget it!" And, then my family freaked. You know, my mother told me she'd kick me out if she found me with a woman. And, my brother told me that he'd beat the shit out of me and my-whoever-she-was. It was all this disgusting stuff, and I couldn't believe that people would actually be like that.

So, after that, I was, like, "Why? Why would people want to be like that?" The more I wondered why people could be so homophobic, the
more I wondered why I wasn't Bisexual or a Lesbian....It really made me stop and look at women differently...
(Terri, Individual Interview, 4/19/95)

Identities as Processes

Identity has become more of a process than a given, offering a choice of beings rather than the truth of ourselves....Of course, none of the choices is absolutely free. They are constrained and limited by relations of power, by structures of domination and subordination. (Weeks, 1995, p. 31)

Each member in these groups lived within his/her own mini-context, and moved among multiple contexts on any given day. Poststructuralist theory would note each context as unique, and each set of choices made as appropriate, even if never repeated. "[Sexuality] is probably the most sensitive to social influence, a conductor of the subtlest of changes in social mores and power relations" (Weeks, 1995, p. 10).

Each member's "truth" existed as the "truth" for his/her in each setting. In the ALWAYS ON setting, whether in group meetings, interviews, or writing or drawing on the Survey I created for them, there were many ways to "perform" and to co-construct their social identities, and the norms of AO co-created the parameters of these performances. From my observations and the various types of "performances" I witnessed (and perhaps inspired), I believe some of the group members would have concurred with this assessment of their realities: each aspect of living one's gender and sexual orientation identities is uniquely co-constructed within each context for each person, and may fluctuate frequently. I also believe that they would have been grateful for confirmation from other writers and theorists that some social identities are not fixed.

Several expressed, as seen in these interview excerpts, their own feelings of gratitude at having been in the AO or other contexts and having heard, seen, or felt this mutability, particularly about sexual orientation.
Reconceptualizing sexual orientation will allow individuals to consider options and to construct sexual identities they did not consider before (Herdt, 1989). This change may result in greater flexibility of gender roles and increased regard for human diversity. (Garnets, 1993c, p. 56)

Partly because of the safety and connection members co-constructed, AO was a great place to "consider options."

...I probably wouldn't know anything about sexual orientation, or what Gays were, or what Lesbians were, what their thoughts were on it, you know, how they interact with each other, how do they fit in to — I mean, I wouldn't know any of that stuff. Thanks to this program, you know, I've learned about HIV... [and STDs]...Here,...you get down to the nitty-gritty, ...sharing with people you feel comfortable with, and not necessarily with your parents...

(Laura, Individual Interview, 5/5/95)

Some of these options were potential more than actual, such as at the point of this interview, but were nonetheless felt to be potent.

...I talk about it a lot...and a lot of times I talk about it as if I'm a Lesbian or Bisexual. I mean,...just because of the way I feel, I know I'm at least Bisexual....I haven't really physically been with a woman...

(Terri, Individual Interview, 4/19/95)

Critical theorists would discuss the existence of hegemony, and mention that any resistant or counter-hegemonic moves (see Nicole Gavey, 1989, "Feminist Poststructuralism and Discourse Analysis," in Psychology of Women Quarterly, #13, p. 472, for her distinctions between counter-hegemony and resistance) were important counter-pressures upon each members' living of their social identities.

The links between the social and the personal are constantly being defined and redefined, while at the same time the power relations in the domains of everyday life are being made visible, and the spaces for individual inventions of self are being expanded. (Weeks, 1995, p. 32)
Here, Hannah discussed some of those "spaces":

...I guess, um, I don't really have a lot of gender issues except for not necessarily feeling like I ought to do the soft, feminine kind of thing. I mean, like, I don't feel like it's, I want to feel like, if I want to have some masculine quality, I wouldn't feel like I would need to be a male or act as if I want a male to do that. I think that, um, assigned gender roles don't really make a whole lot of sense, and I don't really feel obligated to follow them much....

(Hannah, Individual Interview, 4/19/95)

If, in each context, one's perception of what is "appropriate" and "acceptable" can change, and if, as in AO, most everything which was respectful was acceptable, it seems to follow that more counter-hegemonic risks would be taken in AO than in some other contexts. Hannah discussed this:

[Is she the same or different in AO than other parts of her life?]
Well, I'm a really a lot more open about stuff than I am in just the regular world, because it's a safer place. Plus, everybody already knows, um, my basic identity and things like that....

(Hannah, Individual Interview, 4/19/95)

This did seem to be the case for many members with respect to sexual orientation and gender identities, as well as in other areas not closely examined in this project. The ways connections among members allowed members to discuss more about their inner lives, and the ways I was able to document this, made this project somewhat unique: "observational studies of self-disclosure in adolescent friendship... are exceedingly rare" (Parker & Gottman, 1989, p. 120). These group discussions also became the foundation for changes in members' lives.
AO Norms and their Influences Upon the Co-Constructions of Safety and Connection

Here, I list some excerpts from the Encore group interview data sets, and then comment upon their relationships to the AO Norms (see Appendix D for the written AO Norms).

a) Terri, I, lines 3 - 6, "just being able to really get open... because of the ways it's set up... we're not here judging each other and all that."
b) Joanne, I, lines 3 - 5, "[AO] this is a very open place... I'm not scared to share in this group."
c) Hannah, II, lines 5 - 7, "you can feel like it's OK to talk about this stuff [here]"; and
d) again in lines 11 - 12, "I could talk here [in AO]."
e) Terri, III, lines 2 - 3, "Here, I'm validated and accepted and all that good stuff."
f) Terri, IV, lines 5 - 7, "AO is a good place where you can... be comfortable enough to ask questions... AO is a real dramatic sanctuary."
g) Joanne, IV, lines 8 - 12, "This is a good place and I'm glad I'm here."
h) Terri, V, lines 2 - 3, "building intimacy with the group."

In each instance, there are implicit or explicit references to the Norms of Respect and Confidentiality, and to the concomitant or resultant perceptions of interpersonal safety and strong, positive connections among members. What makes these more outstanding is that I heard unsolicited statements like these at almost every meeting during both years, and saw evidence of these beliefs in almost every theatre activity and performance. AO members believed that they were more willing to take more personal and public risks together because of the levels of safety and connection they had co-created, and some of these risks involved experimenting with sexual orientation and gender identities.
Influences of Safety and Connection Upon the Co-Constructions of Gender and Sexual Orientation Identities

Several other sections of this discussion illustrate similar points. Terri, II, lines 1-2, referred to the ways she believed that her being in AO affected her openness outside of AO: "I think being in AO makes it easier to become open about [sexual orientation and gender issues] outside of AO."

Hannah followed that comment with her own statements about how difficult it is for her, or anyone, to be a "sexual minority," and how she relies on AO to be "some kind of fertile ground to talk about that [where she] can feel like it's OK."

As somewhat of a negative case, Joanne, III, followed Terri's comments about not caring about what others think as much as she used to, since she had been in AO and had its support. Joanne said, somewhat wistfully: "I wish I could be that way."

Yet, in other comments made on other days, many members (including Joanne) stated that they believed their involvement in AO did provide them with a certain type of security, which then seemed to make some of their life problems less difficult. This security also allowed them to view their own and others' identities more expansively or flexibly.

One Encore member created several metaphors in other meetings to describe this phenomenon. In one, he depicted the safety created in AO as "a bunch of us, each of us on our own tall building, and AO is this net between them all, so if we fall, AO catches us" (meeting notes, February, 1995).

As an example of other types of expansion, Hannah, III, lines 13-16, mentioned the ways AO's scenework and group discussions helped her to view "other lifestyles" positively. Many members, in other meetings and discussions after scenework, had
commented similarly: AO experiences have broadened their views and acceptance of many social differences within themselves and in others.

One Encore member stated, after the October meeting in which some leaders and some members "came out," that he thought and acted differently as a result. "I don't know a lot of people who are Gay....Now, when I meet new people who are Gay, it's OK" (meeting notes, April, 1995).

There were dozens more examples I could have used to illustrate the relationships among my four categories, gender and sexual orientation identities, safety and connection, and the concept I developed, differential authenticity. Instead of risking being repetitive, I move to the next Chapter, in which I draw my conclusions, discuss their implications, and their potential significance.
CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS: "CLOSING CIRCLE"

[After Tony's prompt, which reminded Daitch of his having created the venue for Tony's coming out to him and to the group by Daitch's having asked a direct question, back in October. (This was the first time a member had directly asked a staff member about sexual orientation in AO's six years.)]

DAITCH: I didn't really care [that Tony or others are Gay]... I don't know a lot of people who are Gay....It's not wrong....People can't control it either way....But, when Tony [first] told me, I just cringed; my stomach turned over; and I didn't know why....[Knowing] helped a lot.... Now, when I meet new people who are Gay, it's OK.

(Final group Interview, Encore, April, 1995)

Research Questions, One Final Time

Closing Circle involved a quick, sometimes humorous, round-robin sharing, in which everyone responded to a leader-generated question or statement related to the group's activities, past or future, or to members' lives. Although not as brief, as an actual Closing Circle, this Chapter will briefly touch on each major theme and topic already discussed regarding my project, and look to the future as well.

In this section of this Chapter, I, as the leader, state my research questions one more time. Then, I use some data and final analyses to draw conclusions, and to examine some of the implications of these conclusions. Recapping the research questions:

1) How were hegemonic (socially prescribed) norms and constructions of gender and sexual orientation identities enacted and discussed in these group meetings?

2) What instances of non-traditional (or counter-hegemonic, resistant, and/or liberational) gender and sexual orientation identities enactments and ideas occurred in these groups?

3) What relationships did the members perceive between their co-constructions of their own and each others' gender and sexual orientation identities and their perceptions of particular factors within the group?
4) How did the members express and describe these relationships?

In the following sections, the first two questions, and analyses of data related to them, will be combined. Discussion regarding questions three and four will also be combined, and handled in subsequent sections. I also add members' self-reports on these topics, through the use of some Encore members' interview data.

The data sets used for these conclusive analyses (and for the Chapter opener, above) came predominantly from the transcripts of the final individual interviews with Encore group members, conducted in the last months of this project.

Although physical scientists, especially physicists, do not support the scientific use of physical science facts to explain or define social science occurrences, many social scientists use ideas and concepts from physical science to create metaphors that are useful in discussing human behaviors and attitudes. For this project, I found some of the ideas from microchemistry and quantum physics to be metaphorically useful, and will continue to refer to some of these ideas in the following sections.

Co-Constructing Social Identities

Many members did not stop with discovering counter-hegemonic stances for gender and sexual orientation, but began to co-create, and accept multiple and changing viewpoints and positions as authentic, moving beyond counter-hegemonic, or reactive positions, into new, liberational territory. Once one member led the way, he or she became like a waking-up hypnon, nudging or bumping the other molecules, or members, out of equilibrium and into movement among themselves and their social identities.

Co-construction is a living process, where each participant's words and behaviors, body language and facial expressions, every social cue, interact with one another's as well as with the wider cultural milieu, to create jointly a constantly-changing, ever-negotiated
social conversation. This nonequilibrium is precisely what occurred in AO meetings regarding sexual orientation and gender identities, among other aspects.

What supported these moves? Terri discussed this, after I asked her a follow-up question about what she believed made AO safe.

...Confidentiality is a big one...and, the feeling that the leaders of the group aren't, like, an authority. They're just people who know more, who have a little more experience, and know which questions to ask....That stuff is really great...
(Terri, Individual Interview, 4/19/95)

Rising levels of safety and connection influenced the degree to which this identity movement occurred for members, and for some leaders, in AO groups, as evidenced by the group interview transcript, and many other examples in the project's data.

Members did not always feel safe, nor were all members equally or consistently connected. Yet, this variability seemed to be more a part of the variability of adolescent life, with its ever-changing alliances and interpersonal loyalties, rather than a failing of the intentionally co-created atmosphere in ALWAYS ON meetings.

Even when members had conflicts or felt less connected, there seemed to be a faith in the process, and in the AO Norms, that pervaded and continued. It is the components of this atmosphere, the "stuff that is really great," that members perceived to be the most significant factors in determining the ways members felt, related, and changed within AO, and in their lives because of their AO experiences.

Differential Authenticity in ALWAYS ON

Creating and co-creating our selves relates very strongly to context. In ALWAYS ON, I examined how counter- hegemonic or resistant stances were negotiated for gender and sexual orientation identities, and the ways these temporary positionings led to more purposeful experiences. Although the leaders of AO, including myself, did not intend
that members reconsider their identities, the AO theatre scenework and counseling activities allowed for experimentation and disclosure regarding every aspect of their lives, including social identities, in novel ways.

Once a member, such as Daitch in the quote, above, became more aware of possibilities, this new perspective served to naturalize sexual orientation in all its varieties, and gender as versatility rather than rigidity. Furthermore, leaders in AO did intend that members become more aware of choices, decisions, perspectives, and agency in every area of their lives. Therefore, we supported members when this awareness fostered the somewhat accidental co-constructions of fluidity in social identity perspectives.

Perhaps it was inevitable that, once the idea of empowered self emerged in action, all of the social mores and "facts" would become negotiable among the members. Adolescence in modern Western cultures is a time for questioning authority of every kind, of tossing all givens into the air and letting the information reform into new patterns. Sometimes termed rebellion, sometimes identity development, this activity is so commonplace as to be considered a requirement of healthy adolescent life.

Certainly AO leaders wanted members to be able to take a more critical position regarding their choices about substance use, social interactions, and communication, to see themselves as agents and subjects rather than objects, or victims. Empowerment is the single-most effective tool against tendencies towards or feelings of self-destructiveness. Although this project did not "count" or research this directly, I observed that members who entered AO with histories or current behaviors such as self-mutilation, substance abuse, unsafe sexual practices, physicalized peer conflicts, or school failures changed during their time in AO, and all of these changes were in "positive" directions.

Once the abilities to be self-critical and socially critical became enhanced, this critical perspective must be applied to all areas of one's life: once we've seen things anew,
nothing can look the same ever again. Learning that he or she can be the agent, not always a victim, is a world-altering experience.

Many of the worlds altered first in scenework. Playing the reversed roles, parents or teachers, aggressors or sober teens, Homosexuals or opposite sex, allowed members to feel new possibilities, and to re-examine their usual ways of behaving and deciding, their attitudes and feelings.

A frequently-used tactic when doing performances for audiences about the topics of HIV/AIDS and/or homophobia was to create an "alternate universe," in which the majority of the people are Homosexual, and births occur only through same-sex partnerships. Every major power figure (police, entertainers, Presidents, teachers) is Gay or Lesbian, every set of parents is Homosexual: everyone in this universe is Gay or Lesbian, except for a much-maligned, closeted, and often despised Heterosexual minority, and an even smaller, less understood Bisexual contingent. Playing these roles, saying parental lines like: "How could you do this to me? Dating a man [the teen is a female] is disgusting! What about my grandchildren? Now I'll never have grandchildren!" has tremendous potential to alter radically and permanently both the participants' and the audience members' perspectives on Homosexuality, Bisexuality, and sexual orientation in general, and to affect the co-constructions of gender roles as well.

Challenges to one's ideas about sexual orientation and gender within AO were frequent and intensive, in both scenework and counseling times, particularly during the Encore year, after the "coming out" meeting. Therefore, members who allowed the possibility in themselves and others for these identities to be flexible found that that permission was supported by the safety and connection within AO groups.

Viewing gender and sexual orientation identities as flexible, and then observing what these AO members perceived to be the major influences upon this changeability enabled me to develop the interpretations that became the concept of **Differential Authenticity**. Liberational, yet authentic social identities were able to be lived whenever
AO members contextually chose to present alternative versions of themselves. My study demonstrated the ways that safety and connection influenced these variations in the AO contexts.

Changing Theories of Social Identities

Modernists theorists from many disciplines have proposed that an individual's self is fragmented, invisible, or false when one shows different versions of that self in various situations. Even Critical theorists posit the existence of "false consciousness." They, and many feminists, believe that individuals must have their consciousness "raised," implying that some aspects of what we think and feel are less "real" or "true" than others.

Postmodernists/poststructuralists departed from this view. Every perspective within and among individuals is equally legitimate, equally "true," and none of them is solely the truth. Every "loop" in inner space, every molecule, every microparticle, has both uniqueness and mutability, and this mutability is interactionally conditional: the parts affect the whole, the whole affects the parts, and the parts affect one another. There is both stability and fluidity in our physical world, and this duality exists in social groups as well.

Unfortunately, in Conservative, "right-wing" political and religious climates that currently dominate, in 1995 - 1996, many U.S.A. communities have passed or are trying to pass laws, or enact policies which censor or fire educators who use curricula to confront homophobia and heterosexism. With these restrictions, Homosexuality cannot be presented as a healthy, viable identity or lifestyle.

Moving away from conceptions of social identities as fixed would probably cause even more problems with these Reactionaries: it may be "one step forward, two steps back" for a while. Action may be difficult or impossible to undertake successfully in many public educational sites. Despite wider cultural backlashes and restrictions,
variability in these two identities occurred frequently in the AO settings. As shown, members described the AO Norms, especially those of confidentiality, respect, and commitment, as the main factors which effectively guided the members' positive interactions to foster and maintain the safe atmosphere.

Sharing This Research

Some parts of this project have already been made public. I presented some preliminary Findings and Interpretations from this study at the end of my first project year, at the Ethnographic and Qualitative Research Conference in Amherst, Massachusetts. After that favorable reception, I incorporated many suggestions before I presented my completed work at NERA (Northeastern Education Research Association) in October, 1995. Feedback from these presentations affected the final version of this thesis.

As seen in Appendix G, a portion of my first-year agency report, in which I "translated" concepts and terms from Critical theory for my project's participants, ALWAYS ON staff, and its parent agency, was published in a regionally-edited small press magazine (Ember, 1995). Several people from each of these "audiences" have reacted with interest and appreciation.

I attended a pre-conference session of the 1996 AERA annual conference, in New York City. This session, led by Jim Sears, Pat Griffin, Patti Lather, Glorianne Leck, and Walter Tierney, focused upon Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Issues in Research. From these workshops and lectures, it became clear to me that my research is unique.
Suggestions for Future Research

There were many decision-forks, during this project, just as there were dozens of those in every AO meeting. As an observer/participant the first year, I was more of an outsider to the group’s leadership. I naturally became more involved as a decision-maker for the second year of this project, when I co-led the Encore group. However, as a researcher, especially when conducting interviews, I was very aware of the ways I was influencing the participants as I constructed my follow-up question; as I chose my tone, inflection, demeanor, and body language during their interview time; and as I discussed my ideas about this project. I did take positions, make statements, have opinions and express them, within clinical guidelines; but, as a critical ethnographer, I felt obligated to do so in certain situations, because inaction is a type of action:

[N]ot taking a given action (e.g., introducing an intervention) is itself an action...which maintains the status quo, regarding educational or clinical identity interventions. (Waterman, 1994, p. 234)

As two researchers noted:

[U]nless scholars engage themselves with future possibilities and take the risky step of advocating some human actions over others, they abdicate responsibility to their students, discipline, and culture. (Sterk & Turner, 1994, p. 213)

This type of philosophy promotes activism and public sharing of research as "advocacy scholarship" (Sterk & Turner, 1994, pp. 221 - 222), and I believe that this research and its conclusions can become a part of that body of work.

There were so many areas I could have, but did not explore during these two years. I became interested in gender and sexual orientation identities, and in AO groups it became clear: "Adolescence is the moment when gender becomes entangled with sexuality in new ways" (Tolman, 1994, p. 251). Knowing this, another possible avenue
to explore which has been little studied, about which I have some data from this study, is that of adolescent females' desire (Tolman, 1994).

Additional research routes could explore more closely the intersections and interactions of identities. Although ethnographic studies are particular, and not generalizable, by design, I believe that involvement in group climates similar to AO's could be especially helpful to adolescents with acknowledged multiply-targeted identities, such as those who are biracial/ethnic and Homosexual/Bisexual, or Jewish, disabled, and female, or transgendered and working class, etc. (Davidman, & Davidman, 1994; Geismar & Nicoleau, 1993; Gibbs & Moskowitz-Sweet, 1991), since social identities for these teens would already be somewhat multifaceted and complex.

Moving further along Critical theory lines, future research could take into account what Irvine (1994b) noted: "[I]t would be useful, for example, to ascertain how power is negotiated between young women and men as they grapple with decisions about contraception and safer sex" (pp. 13 - 14). Since sex is now more than ever a life-and-death set of choices, these decisions would be crucial to understand; as critical ethnographers, once some understanding were achieved, we would then attempt to influence those decisions positively.

Teens who develop into adults who are fluid, flexible, critically aware, and more accepting could become positive community leaders (Cohen, 1994; Nieto, 1992). Many former AO members have been involved in community education, through AO projects as well as others, and often continue to maintain contact with and offer support to one another years after their tenure at AO has ended. A follow-up study of AO members, which would be longitudinal in scope, could examine the rates of teen pregnancy, substance abuse, court involvement, school achievement, and other mental and physical health factors, and compare these rates to the teen populations' rates in local areas and nation-wide.
The fostering of group safety and connection can offer members the potential for liberational group experiences, enhanced social justice activism, and increased self-awareness in adolescents and adults (Finlay & Scheltema, 1991; Fonow & Marty, 1992).

Until we have changed society so that masculinity and femininity are not such salient features of social life, gender is a difference that makes a difference. (Turner & Sterk, 1994b, p. xv)

AO's Norms and activities could easily be adapted for classrooms, to benefit educators and students, and be used in many clinical group settings as well. I have co-authored a workbook (Cossa, et al., 1996) to be used by clinical group leaders and educators. Another research project could explore the ways AO activities and Norms are used and what the outcomes would be for members of non-AO program groups.

As mentioned earlier, Selman & Schultz (1990) used social perspective-taking, training, and coordination, to help children and adolescents to develop into more aware individuals, and to become better friends. Comparisons among these participants and AO members along similar scales would be informative.

Furman & Gavin (1989) stated a need for further research, such as "more detailed descriptions of the nature of the [prosocial] interventions" in order to "identify the change ingredients" (p. 334) needed to create prosocial behaviors. There have been a lot of community service, or service learning projects and research since 1989. Comparing their outcomes to AO members' prosocial behaviors, and comparing the techniques and Norms used, could guide future leaders of many types of groups and programs.

Closing Thoughts

The conclusions of this project are controversial and yet, many current and recent researchers would support my interpretations and their implications, despite their potential to "rock the boat."
...declaring that every [sic] person has the capacity to form emotional, physical, and spiritual relationships with both males and females and that those at one of the two extremes on the sexual continuum are, at best, a small minority and, at worst, sexually fixated, rocks the orthodox beliefs of lesbian/gay activists as well as fundamental Christians. (Sears, 1992a, p. 151)

Even in a mostly dated, homophobic book, a researcher and anthropologist who worked with Margaret Mead stated: "It is...feasible to hypothesize that all people are potentially bisexual when born..." (Money, 1980, p. 32).

The nineties have experienced or engendered (pun intended) an explosion of interest in every type of media on the topics of sexual orientation and gender identities and roles. Many books, movies, music videos, sports broadcasts, and periodicals have focused upon a famous person or story related to these topics, or on the topics themselves. Attitudes affect politics, and the expected liberalization and backlash, or reactionism and radicalism, have occurred in many states, and on the federal level, with laws about domestic partnership, enlistment in the military, civil rights, and HIV/AIDS monies being proposed, passed, and contested.

Terminology is needed to discuss many "new" beliefs and changing identities. Blumstein & Schwartz (1993), used "ambisexuality," which means "a person's ability to eroticize both genders under some circumstances," rather than "bisexuality," which seems to be a fixed position between two poles (p. 170). Baber (1995), in a publication I don't read, but whose article title was intriguing, seemed to have coined the term "multisexuality," in an attempt to be humorous, but the underlying implications matched those in more serious articles. "Omnisexual" (Keppel, Hamilton, & Gentle, 1994) and just "sexual" have also been proposed as labels for all people.

From popular magazines, such as Newsweek (Begley, 1995; Leland, 1995), Cosmopolitan (Johnson & Erlbaum; 1995), Science News (Bower, 1994; Bower, 1996), JET (Staff, 1996), Scientific American (Byne, 1994; LeVay & Hamer, 1994; Horgan,
1995), *Esquire* (Van Meter, 1996), *The Economist* (Staff, 1996), and *Harper's Bazaar* (Darling, 1995), through most educational, psychological, and sociological professional journals and quarterlies (see References), the topics of sexual orientation abounded during and since the years I conducted this research project. Most of these profiled homosexuality, bisexuality, or newer configurations such as those mentioned above, in increasingly "normalizing" modes. For example, in a 1994 *Phi Delta Kappan* article (Anderson), as well as in the daily *New York Times* newspaper (Brune, 1996), teachers and administrators were exhorted to discuss gay issues more openly and respectfully in public schools, to improve the school atmosphere for both students and faculty.

If I had introduced some of these ideas and new terms, and the possible meanings, to AO members, I believe that several participants would have agreed that one or more of them could be used to describe themselves, since they discussed these self-images in several group meetings and in interviews. In my work with AO groups since the years of this project, I have opened the topics of sexual orientation and gender identity more intentionally in both scenework and group discussion times, and many members of these groups have spoken or performed in ways which were similar to those of the participants in this project.

To the extent that the nonhuman animal realm has bearing on gendered human lives, Money (1980) offered this insight about Labroides dimidiatus fish:

> when the male leaves or dies, one large female morphs, in one or two weeks, into a male; if the male returns, she reverts to a female again; earthworms, barnacles, oysters, slugs are hermaphroditic. (Money, 1980, p. 135)

Since AO is a program whose foundations include psychodrama, it seems appropriate also to draw upon J. L. Moreno's thoughts. The founder of psychodrama wrote: "Roles do not emerge from the self, but the self may emerge from roles" (1972, p. 157).
Members of AO frequently expressed similar sentiments. As Brigitta expressed, each could have said: "I am more who I am here than I am anywhere." Many of us would appreciate a setting in which these sentiments were true, a world in which most contexts were this safe, and in which we felt positively connected, so that we each could explore our own differential authenticity.

These teens in ALWAYS ON were fortunate to have had these and other supportive and growth-inducing opportunities for their personal and theatrical lives. Sears (1992a) closed his article with some social theory questions, one of which highlighted aspects of my project:

*To what degree can insights from Freirean-type liberation methodology (Freire, 1970) be used to develop alternative models for working with sexual minority youth? [sic] (Sears, 1992a, p. 155)*

Freire would have been in agreement with most, if not all, of the techniques and leadership utilized in ALWAYS ON meetings. Creating community, with caring, conscious members, can lead to a variety of positive outcomes.

>[T]he purpose of community is to develop the conditions for empowerment where individuals may accept and honor one another's differences, rather than merely tolerate them or assume that those individuals who are "different" ought in some way to conform to the norm. (Tierney, 1993, p. 130)

At best, we can become flexible, understanding, creative, and open to change. At worst, we become frightened, intolerant, rigid, closed, and autocratic, which often leads to violent encounters with "others." Usually, we experience a combination of these.

The real problem does not lie in whether homosexuality is inborn or learnt. It lies instead in the question: what are the meanings that this particular culture gives to homosexual behavior, however it may have be caused, and what are the effects of those meanings on the ways in which individuals organize their sexual lives? This is a question which is highly political [which] forces us to analyse the power relations which determine why this
set of meanings, rather than that, are hegemonic; and poses the further question of how those meanings can be changed. (Weeks, 1995, p. 7)

I, and many of the participants in this project, want social identity to be acknowledged as mutable, with no penalties for any identity anyone claims, as long as this identification does not restrict another's flexibility, impinge upon anyone's safety, or denigrate another. Then, we could stop using many human differences to exclude or to delegitimize each other.

Increasing our ability to examine more critically how stigma and privilege operate in our society characterizes the preferred outcome. In order to do this, we must recognize the significance of difference and variety, and understand the multiple ways these interact in each context.

These hopes are more within the realm of Critical theory, with Feminist reformist and social justice goals. Poststructuralism promotes the recognition of the existence of varied perspectives and the legitimacy of changeable identities. All of these perspectives have been useful to understanding the data from this ethnographic project.

It seems fitting to allow Laura's comments to be the final words on this topic:

...I'm just allowing things to happen the way they happen... Two years from now, I could feel totally different about it. I could say, "OK, I'm definitely Gay" or "Yeah, I'm definitely Heterosexual." I'm fine with this. But, right now, I'm at a point in my life...[when] I'm still trying to find out who I really am, what my identity is, where I've come from... what kind of woman I am... (Laura, Individual Interview, 5/5/95)
APPENDICES

Some Tables and Figures are placed within the text of the first section in which they are discussed, for referral purposes, and are not repeated in this section.
Group's last meeting alone = May 9; Final meeting, with other AO groups, = May 12.

Performances with other AO groups, for families and public.

I co-facilitated the performance, with group leader.

In mid-March, during University Break. I became a Participant; sessions were videotaped from then on.

This time, I interviewed the leader as well as members.

Performances with other AO groups, for children.

Male assistant leader joined group, just for Thursdays, and Feb. performance.

Female group leader left group in mid-October.

Group's first meeting was 9/29, with parents. Not all members attended; not all parents attended.

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**TABLE 3: Data collection time table**

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<th>Int/OB</th>
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</table>

**COMMENTS**

Weekly handwritten fieldnotes (FN); typed transcriptions of audiotaped interviews (INT); Videotapes of some sessions (VT); AO quarterly newsletters (NL); AO public performance programs (PERF PROG); Surveys administered in mid-March (SV); Data summaries and analysis of Surveys (SV, DS); Analytical Memos and research group responses (MEM); Mid-Study and Final Reports, with AO leader and study group responses (REP); Frequent phone conversations and one-on-one meetings with leader throughout the year.

**TABLE 2:** Demographic profile of the premiere group study of 9 adolescents (4 female; 5 male) and one male staff leader, S/29/93 - 5/12/94.
**TABLE 4: Data collection time table**

Data for the ALWAYS ON Encore group study of 7 - 10 adolescents (5 - 6 female; 2 - 4 male), and two staff and two intern leaders, 8/94 - 6/95.

**Types of data:** Handwritten Fieldnotes from participant/observations (FN); Typed transcriptions of audiolapd interviews (INT); Videotape group interview (VTG/P); Typewritten fieldnotes from videotaped session (VTFN); AO quarterly newsletters (NL); Frequent phone conversations, AO program staff meetings weekly, and one-on-one meetings with leader, throughout the year (STAFF CONT)

**Types of observations** = More participant than observer (P); weekly and retreat attendance at AO meetings (MTG/P; RET/P); public performances (PERF/P); rehearsals for public performances (REH/P); individual interviews (IND INT/P); videotaped group interview (VTG/P); facilitate performances with members of all AO groups (PERF/P); Holiday party and Final meeting, with other members of AO groups (SOC/P).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATA/ORG TYPE/MONTH</th>
<th>FN</th>
<th>IND INT/P</th>
<th>VTG/P VDFN</th>
<th>REH/P PERF/P</th>
<th>NL</th>
<th>STAFF CONT</th>
<th>SOC/P</th>
<th>MTG/P RET/P</th>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEPT</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Staff meetings began in August. Organizational meeting for all Encore members in early Sept; not all members attended. Encore began in mid-Sept.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCT</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC (during school)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Holiday show with all AO members; performance and party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEC (vacation)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAN (vacation)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAN (during school)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEB (during school)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEB (vacation)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X (RET)</td>
<td>Encore Retreat last weekend of school break.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAR (before Unver. Break)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X (RET)</td>
<td>Laura's last meeting (intern who left).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAR (during &amp; after Unver. Break)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>In mid-March, Encore moved to new space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APR (during school)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Group interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APR (vacation)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X (NYC trip)</td>
<td>Trip to NYC to see maine, with all AO program members who could go; individual interviews this week as well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAY</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Group's last meeting alone = May 9; Final meeting, with other AO groups = May 11. Final staff meetings into end of May. Performances continued into summer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B: CATEGORY TABLE AND NARRATIVE
### TABLE 5: Category co-occurrences table

Gender, Sexual Orientation, Safety, Connection, Differential Authenticity = 5 categories

10/4/93 - 3/7/94, Meeting Notes and some Interview Transcripts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Co-Occurrences:</th>
<th>2 together page #s</th>
<th>3 together page #s</th>
<th>4 together page #s</th>
<th>5 together page #s</th>
<th>those &amp; others (list) page #s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dates/events</td>
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<td>16, 17, 18</td>
<td>16, 17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7, 11, 12, 18: appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/11</td>
<td>6, 7, 10, 12, 14, 15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14: appearance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/25</td>
<td>2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 17</td>
<td>9, 12</td>
<td>5: appearance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/1</td>
<td>3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17</td>
<td>7, 11, 12, 14, 16</td>
<td>3, 6, 17: sex</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/8</td>
<td>3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 13</td>
<td>5, 16</td>
<td>3, 5: sex 3, 6: appearance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/15</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12</td>
<td>2, 7, 11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1, 7, 10: appearance 8, 9: sex</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/29</td>
<td>1, 4, 6, 7, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22</td>
<td>10, 11, 13, 15, 17, 22</td>
<td>1, 6: appearance 15, 19: sex</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/6</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17</td>
<td>4, 5, 7, 10, 12, 16, 17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1, 3, 4, 7: appearance</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/13</td>
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<td>9, 14, 17</td>
<td>9: appearance</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT: Daitch</td>
<td>7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13</td>
<td>7, 8</td>
<td>10: appearance</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INT: Holly</td>
<td>14, 15, 16, 17</td>
<td>14, 15, 16, 14</td>
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### Table 5, continued

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<tr>
<th>Dates/event</th>
<th>Co-Occurrences:</th>
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<th>4 together page #s</th>
<th>5 together page #s</th>
<th>those &amp; others (list) page #s</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INT: Brigitta</td>
<td>18, 19, 20, 21</td>
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<td>INT: Travis</td>
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<td>INT: Keith</td>
<td>27, 28, 29</td>
<td>27, 28</td>
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<td>INT: Marcy</td>
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<td>36, 39</td>
<td>39</td>
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<td>INT: Nick</td>
<td>42</td>
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<td>INT: Condor</td>
<td>11, 12, 13</td>
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<td>1/3/94</td>
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<td>7, 8, 10, 15, 18, 19</td>
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<td>1, 3, 7, 8: appearance 14, 15, 16, 18, 20: sex</td>
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<td>1/6 (THURS)</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8</td>
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<td>2, 7: appearance</td>
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<td>2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19</td>
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<td>2, 10, 13, 14, 15, 17: appearance 3, 4, 6, 16: sex</td>
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<td>2, 10: appearance 9: sex</td>
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<td>7, 8: appearance</td>
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<th>4 together page #s</th>
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<td>6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19</td>
<td>17, 18</td>
<td>2, 6, 13, 14, 17: appearance</td>
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<td>2/28</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>5, 7, 10, 13, 16: appearance</td>
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<td>3/7</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24</td>
<td>6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 19, 20, 22, 24</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2, 3, 7, 12, 19: appearance</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**TOTALS:**

(## of pages) 213* 122* 22§ 4§ 82* 280

**COMMENTS:**

C/S = most freq. pairing until 11/1

C/S = most freq. triple, until after 11/1.

After 11/1, many of C or S plus 2 others.

*Several occurrences of each per page.

**Abbreviations:**

C/S = most freq. pairing until 11/1

After 11/1, C/S, C/O, C/D, C/G all occurred with almost equal freq.

*Several occurrences of each per page.

C/S + one other = most freq. triple, until after 11/1.

After 11/1, many of C or S plus 2 others.

*Several occurrences of each per page.

C/S + 2 others for most quadruples.

§More than one occurrence per page.

Almost always C or G+ another; G + A = most freq. pairing; many O+ another, esp. X. *Several occurrences of each per page
As noted in the final page, final row, regarding pairings: **connection** and **safety** co-occurred most frequently as a pairing until early November (when the group had been meeting together for one month). After that, **connection** co-occurred with almost equal frequency as a pair with **safety**, **sexual orientation**, **differential authenticity**, and **gender**.

Regarding co-occurrences in triples, almost every triple included either **connection** or **safety**, but before early November, these occurred together most often, adding one of the other three categories with their pairing.

For quadruples, again **connection** and **safety** co-occurred with most of these, as a pair with varying other pairings among the other three categories. Quadruples became more frequent after November 15.

Quintuples, or all five categories co-occurring within the same speech event or meeting sub-section, on the same page of data (which meant within the same conversation, scene, or set of behavior moments), co-occurred at the very first meeting, but only at four meetings. However, some pages included two or more quintuples on the same page, during the same or different events. And, none of the quintuples occurred during the Interviews, which further validates the significance of the co-occurrences which did happen, since those happened without any inadvertent "coaching" on my part (I was a silent observer during the meetings listed on this Table).

As further validation of the significance of **connection**, **gender**, and **sexual orientation** as categories, each of these co-occurred with two others of the second tier of categories: **appearance** and **sex**, with the obvious pairing of **gender** with **appearance**, and of **sexual orientation** with **sex**.
SURVEY & QUESTIONNAIRE
created by Sally Ember for AO students, 1993-1994

DIRECTIONS: Please mark 1 - 3 for each statement, as honestly as you can.
1 = Very negative, never or weak
2 = Neutral, or sometimes
3 = Very positive, always, or strong

Name ______________________ (You may use your research name)

A. Your connection to this group, as a group, is: (put an "X" where you believe it belongs for you)
   A. 1 2 3

B. Your connections to individuals in this group are, for each person (put an "X" where it belongs for each person):
   B.
   Condor................................. C 1 2 3
   Keith................................. K 1 2 3
   Amber................................. Am 1 2 3
   Marcy................................. Ma 1 2 3
   Brigitta.............................. B 1 2 3
   Holly................................. H 1 2 3
   Travis................................. Tr 1 2 3
   Nick................................. N 1 2 3
   Daitch................................. D 1 2 3
   TONY................................. TT 1 2 3
   SALLY................................. S 1 2 3
   RICK................................. R 1 2 3

C. How safe do you feel to share about yourself in this group: Why?
   C. 1 2 3

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
D. What helps you to feel safe to share about yourself, or to try new things, in this group? (Circle all that help, then “X” over each of those which make it less safe. Ignore those which don’t matter.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Laughter</th>
<th>Jokes</th>
<th>Fun</th>
<th>Silence</th>
<th>Pauses</th>
<th>Quiet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warm-Ups</td>
<td>Group Sharing Time</td>
<td>Breaks</td>
<td>Arrival Time</td>
<td>Games</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who you sit next to</td>
<td>Who is there that day</td>
<td>Who is absent that day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departure Time</td>
<td>Role-Plays</td>
<td>Opening Circle</td>
<td>Closing Circle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Awareness Activities</td>
<td>Performances</td>
<td>Leading the group yourself</td>
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<tr>
<td>Watching</td>
<td>Directing a scene yourself</td>
<td>“What’s On Top?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rehearsals</td>
<td>Improvisations</td>
<td>A Script</td>
<td>Microphones</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Video camera</td>
<td>Helping</td>
<td>Crying yourself</td>
<td>Others crying</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hugging</td>
<td>Giving hugs</td>
<td>Getting hugs</td>
<td>Shouting yourself</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Others shouting</td>
<td>Touching others</td>
<td>Being touched</td>
<td>Sitting Alone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitting close to others</td>
<td>Passing on your turn</td>
<td>Participating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Talking yourself</td>
<td>Others talking</td>
<td>Sally there</td>
<td>Sally not there</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally writing</td>
<td>Sally not writing</td>
<td>Sally participating</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interviews with Sally</td>
<td>(Add your own and mark them)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

E. How would you describe who you are? (List all the labels, identities, titles, characteristics that you believe are true about you, and give information about who you are.)

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

F. What do you wish or hope would happen in this group? ________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
G. What are you afraid of, or what do you wish would not happen in this group?

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

H. In what ways are you different in AO than you are in other places?

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

I. In what ways are you the same in AO as you are in other places?

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

J. Why do you act the same, or differently, in AO as you do in other places?

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

K. If you were free, in this group, (of fears, worries, problems, restrictions, other people’s rules), what would you … say? do? feel? believe? during group time?

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

L. Anything else you want to tell or ask Sally? Write it here:

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

M. Draw a picture of the way you see yourself in relationship to the others in the AO group, labeling each other individual in the group. Put each person close or far away from you, depending upon how you feel with each person. You may draw connections or separations any way you want. Label how you indicate stronger or weaker connections. Use the list on page 1 to make sure you draw everyone. Write in a few words if you want, but mostly this is a picture. Use the back of this page for your picture.
**SURVEY & QUESTIONNAIRE: DATA SUMMARIES & COMMENTS**  
created by Sally Ember for AO students, 1993-1994

**DIRECTIONS:** Please mark 1 - 3 for each statement, as honestly as you can.  
1 = Very negative, never or weak  
2 = Neutral, or sometimes  
3 = Very positive, always, or strong

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONDOR</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEITH</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMBER</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRIGITTA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2XXXXXXXXXXX3XXX (circled around both numbers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOLLY</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 3 X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRAVIS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2X 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NICK</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 3X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAITCH</td>
<td>1X</td>
<td>2 3 (reversed ordination?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARCY</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 3 X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TONY</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 3X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MY COMMENTS:** Except for Daitch’s, which I believe may be a reversal, since he is L.D., no one gave a mark lower than a 2. Only two gave a 2, while one marked a combination of 2 - 3. Two forgot to mark this one: Marcy & Holly.
B. Your connections to individuals in this group are, for each person (put an "X" where it belongs for each person):

Condor................. TONY'S...3...
Keith.......................... 2.3....
Amber........................... 2.7...
Marcy.............................. 2....
Brigitta.......................... 2.7....
Holly.............................. 2.3...
Travis............................ 3....
Nick.............................. 3....
Daitch............................ 3....
Tony.............................. (X).......................... 2.3...
Sally.............................. 3....
RICK............................ (X).......................... 2.3...

COMMENTS: The lowest rating Tony gave most members was marked in about the "2.3" position (he used open circles, not numerical distinctions, when he marked between ratings). He seems reluctant to show extreme favoritism.

Seeing that desire, it is still four of the five males he rated as "3," and no females (except me) received higher than a "2.7." The female members he rated the highest were Brigitta & Amber; Marcy received the lowest rating of anyone in the group, a "2."
The lowest male rankings were given to Keith (and to Rick), both a "2.3."

It would seem, then, that Tony does "prefer" males, except for Keith and Rick. It would also appear that The "sameness" of the "3" ratings is not upheld in the sociogram. Tony actually seemed to feel closer to Keith than to Travis, when discussing that drawing. Tony also expressed stronger connections to Amber, Rick & Holly through the drawings than the ratings.

ALL RATINGS FOR EACH MEMBER:
B.
C 1 2XXXXX 3XXX
K 1 X 2XXXXX 3XX
AM 1 2XXXX XXX 3X
Ma 1XXX 2XXXX 3X
B 1X 2XXXXX 3XX
H 1 X 2XXXXX 3XX
TR 1X X 2XXXX 3XX
N 1 2XXX 3XXXXX
D 1XX 2XXXX 3XX
TT 1 2XX X 3XXXXXX
S 1XX 2XXX 3 XXXX
R 1X 2XXXX 3XXX

COMMENTS: [(X) = ONE PERSON FORGOT RICK.]
Marcy was rated the lowest overall, with 3 "1" and only one "3." Daitch was next-lowest, with two "1" and 2 "3," but I also received two "1" ratings. Condor, Keith, Amber, Holly, Nick & Tony received no "1" from anyone. Condor, Amber, Nick & Tony received nothing below a "2" from anyone. Marcy & Amber each received only 1 "3" each, which puts Amber in the interesting position of being the person about whom others felt the most neutrally or least consistently connected. Nick and Tony received the most "3" ratings, but Tony was able to obtain one more than Nick since all the members rated Tony and only eight could rate Nick (no members rated themselves). I received the next-most, with four "3" ratings; Condor received 3 "3" ratings, but the same "one-fewer = the same" rule for students to adults operates here as well. Everyone except Nick, Tony and I received mostly "2" ratings.
B. Your connections to individuals in this group are, for each person (put an “X” where it belongs for each person):

Condor...............TONY’S...3...

Keith..........................2.3........
Amber..........................2.7....
Marcy..........................2....
Brigitta..........................2.7....
Holly..........................2.3...
Travis..........................3.....
Nick..........................3.....
Daitch..........................3.....
Tony..........................
Sally..........................3.....
Rick..............(X)..............2.3...

MALES RATING EACH MEMBER:

B.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2XXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2XXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2XX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma</td>
<td>1XXX</td>
<td>2XX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>1X</td>
<td>2XXXX</td>
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<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>TR</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2XX</td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1XX</td>
<td>2XX</td>
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<tr>
<td>TT</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>1XX</td>
<td>2XX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>1X</td>
<td>2X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COMMENTS: I put Tony’s here again, but comments are on the first, combined page.

COMMENTS: [(X) = ONE PERSON FORGOT RICK.]

I decided to distinguish between the males’ and females’ rankings of each member to see if gender plays a role in who is considered a close connection and who is not.

It appears that Nick is the highest rated male from all the males; Amber is the highest rated female from the males. Marcy, Brigitta and Daitch are the only members to receive “1” from males; (Rick & I also received some “1” ratings). Holly received a “1.5” from one male. Condor, Keith, Travis, Nick and Amber (and Tony) received “2” or “3” from all the males.

Since Amber is very male-identified (by her own description: see first interview), and Daitch is ambiguously gender-identified (by his clothing, jewelry, make-up, talk), their rankings did not surprise me. Brigitta’s and Holly’s low ratings did surprise me, but I expected Marcy’s to be low.
B. Your connections to individuals in this group are, for each person (put an "X" where it belongs for each person):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Females Rating EA. Member:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C  1  2XX  3XX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K  1  X  2XX  3X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AM 1  2XX  X  3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma 1  2XX  3X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B  1  2X  3XX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H  1  2X  3XX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TR 1X  X  2XX  3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N  1  2XX  3XX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D  1  2XX  3XX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TT 1  2X  3XXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S  1  2X  3X XX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R  1  2XXX  3X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COMMENTS: Keith & Travis are the only members, including adults, to receive lower than a "2" from female members. Travis received the only "1" any female gave to any member. Condor, Nick & Daitch were tied as highest ranking of any member, with 2 marks each in both the "2" and "3" ratings, but all the females ranked each other in the "2" and "3" range, with no female giving another female a "1." Tony and I received the same ratings as each other (1 "2" and 3 "3"), but Rick's were lower than ours (3 "2" and 1 "3").

It seems the females were reluctant to make distinctions among themselves, not wanting to choose favorites too obviously, but Brigitta marked her "3" for Holly with a bold circle around it. Brigitta was the only female to mark halves (Condor, Nick and Tony also used between ratings marks). Brigitta was the only member, male or female, to write comments about her ratings, and to explain movement ("getting there" was written twice).
C How safe do you feel to share about yourself in this group:

Why?
“[C] I feel safe to share some things.”
“[K] I tend not to share my deep feelings, fears & secrets with anyone, including my parents, friends, etc.”
“I’ve never been one to share but, when I do. You better listen. [sic]” [Amber]
“I feel safe with the group, but not with myself to share my thoughts, feelings, etc.” [Brigitta]
“I trust the group and I think I’m good at sharing myself w/them.” [Holly]
“The people in the group are nice and some are more caring than others, but I don’t know any of them quite well.” [Travis]
“because I don’t believe anyone in the group would betray group confidentiality; and if they did it wouldn’t matter much to me” [N]
“Because I Don’t like talking about everything” [Daitch]
“Sontimes when I had a Bad weekend I go to a group and Lean on there shoulders If they want to. But If I feel Great I help other as they helped me.” [Marcy]
“not a matter of safety but of boundaries” [Tony]
D. What helps you to feel safe to share about yourself, or to try new things, in this group? (Circle all that help, [= V for data summary] Then, "X" over each of those which make it less safe. Ignore those which don’t matter.)

"if used in the right content" [sic] [about all the top ones, all circled]

xxLaughtr√√√√√√√ xXxxJokes√√√√√√ xSilnce√√√ xxPauses √ xQuiet√√√√
non/positive”[2] √ “both? not about
works
people in or out of group” non/positive”[2] sometimes — to think

xWarm-Ups√ Grp Sharg Tm√√√√ Brks√√√√ xArr Tm√ Games√√√
“sometimes bad when I’m

Who you sit next to√√√√ xWho is there that day√√√√ xWho is abs that day√√√
“unless it’s someone
sways[?] me” non/positive” 2

xxDepar Time√ Role-Plays√√√√ Openg Circle√√√√ Closing Circle√√√
“sontimes” [sic]

Self-Awareness Activs√ Perf√√√√√ Perfs√√√√√ xxLeading the group yourself√√√
“sontimes” [sic]

xWatching√√√ xxDirecting a scene yourself√√√ “W On Top?”√√√√√√√
“everybody should have fun”

xRehearsals√√√√ Improvs√√√√ xA Script√√√ xMikes√√√√

xVideo cam√√√√ Help√√√√√ xxCryg yrself√√√ xxOthers cry√√√√
“good to let it out — I wish I could”

Hugg√√√√√√√ xGivg hgs√√√√√ Gettg hgs√√√√√ xxShoutg yrself√√√√
“sontimes” [sic]

xxOthrs shoutg√ xTouchg othrs√√√√ xBeing touchd√√√√ xxxSttg Alone√√√√

xSittg close to others√√√√√√√ xxxPassg on your turn√√√ Participatg√√√√√√√
“sometimes” “OK”

xTalkg yourself√√√ xOthers talking√√√√ Sa there√√√ xxxSa not there

Sally writing√ Sally not writing√ Sally participating√√√√√√

Interviews with Sally√√√√√√√ (Add your own and mark them)[No one did]

COMMENTS: Tony marked these according to what he believes makes the group safe, but I did not include his assessments in these tallies.
E. How would you describe who you are? (List all the labels, identities, titles, characteristics that you believe are true about you, and give information about who you are.)

“I’m a neut, a tall neut. I’m a semi-indecisive clown. I’m moderately OK at acting, not unwell at art, and kind of a chicken — wish I could ask a girl out.” [Condor]

“Keith, male, intelligent, talkative, brother, son, friend, good at video games, enjoy reading, physically un-self-motivated, good handwriting”

“Amber, flirt, affection, actor, semi-good looking, short, semi-overweight.” [sic] [Brigitta]

“women, Italian, tall, sometimes shy, open, outgoing, caring, loving, good listener, controlling, deep, needy, low self-esteem.” [sic] [Travis]

“Bitch, nice, mean, snob, caring, sensitive, white, difficult, loving” [sic] [Holly]

“handsome, intelligent, caring, loving, courageous, a good listener, assertive except around girls I like, frustrated, full of energy” [sic] [Travis]

“Male, Son, Brother, GrandSon, Classmate, Former Smoker, Nephew, Cousin, Freind, Drug User, Student, Wise Man” [sic] [Nick]

“A Fuckin’ creep. I hate myself. I’m desucting.” [sic] [disgusting? destructing?]

“Man, Short, Mature, Gifted, Zestful, Creative, Solitary, Dancer, Director” [sic] [Tony]

F. What do you wish or hope would happen in this group?

“I wish we would be taken by terrorists When together, when they weren’t looking, we take them out, no one would get hurt (except the terrorists, when I jack ‘em in the head) and we would be brought closer together.” [sic] [Condor]

“I hope that everyone here could become very good friends, and that we all were able to be in Always On next year.” [sic] [Keith]

“everyone is happy, not sick, getting along extremely well.” [sic] [lots have been sick, and two are today] [Amber]

“That what ever barrier stand between people in the group that they are broken down. And EVERYONE feels safe and able to share thier thoughts, feelings, etc.” [sic] [Brigitta]

“Everyone would be able to open up more.” [Holly]

“I wish that I could get to know everyone in the better and that we will be able to trust each other more.” [sic] [Travis]

“I wish that the members of this group that have walls of vanity and embarrasment surrounding them outside of group but not in group would realize what a contradiction they represent.” [sic] [Nick]

“do a lot of shows” [Daitch]

“If they yell they can tell me Beforehand or I’ll Leave. If I could control the scence myself and anybody can come to me about there problems.” [sic] [Marcy]

“That people find the support to make significant life changes and the awareness to discover the things that need to change.” [Tony]
G. What are you afraid of, or what do you wish would not happen in this group?
“I hope we don’t lose touch with each other.” [Condor]
“I don’t want people to talk behind others backs, or keep secrets that need to be told.” [sic] [Keith]
“That one day someone will leave and not come back. Joining the encore group.” [sic] [Amber]
“People closing up. Or not saying how they feel, shutting others out.” [Brigitta]
“Everyone fighting.” [Holly & Brigitta were not getting along this day.] [Holly]
“Someone leaving it” [sic] [Travis]
“I hope that, when this group is over with and people go or not to the Encore group, people will stay on the same level with each other as they are while they’re here, and not fall back into the ditch of conformity.” [Nick]
“Nobody to leaves” [sic] [Daitch]
“I prefer if they don’t yell because it scares me. Or I could leave room and then depending? on my mood, I prefer not to be touched. But not to ignore.” [sic] [Marcy]
“Competition for attention, people devaluing self & others.” [sic] [Tony]

H. In what ways are you different in AO than you are in other places?
“No difference am the same everywhere, (con’t in I)” [Condor]
“I’m not as talkative here as I am in other places. I’m not as interested in being in control here, either.” [Keith]
“I share a little more of myself here than anywhere. I’m more myself because, people don’t judge me.” [Amber]
“I think I share more about myself and care less about my appearance and what others will think of me.” [sic] [Brigitta]
“I think I’m more truthful.” [Holly]
“I trust some people in the group more than other people” [Travis]
“Here, I say less in jest and try to be focused on the matter at hand as much as possible.” [Nick]
“I’m different at home I’m usually depressed” [sic] [Daitch]
“I can talk about my feeling as well as [be Always On]. And now that I’m safe with some of the group, without getting hurt.” [sic] [Marcy]
“I am less open about who I am personally and more in tune to needs of others & group.” [Tony]

I. In what ways are you the same in AO as you are in other places?
“Why act different, (con’t in J) [sic] [Condor]
“When I listen, I’m attentive.” [Keith]
“I’m just the same person you just see a different side of me.” [Amber]
“I’m a good actress and focus.” [Brigitta]
“I try to have fun.” [Holly]
“I be myself” [Travis]
“In Always On I’m still the same person, I still have the same type of thoughts.” [Nick]
“I acted the same everywhere except at home” [sic] [Daitch]
“I space out were ever [wherever] I go and that can be scary because — you don’t come [don’t come] back. Shy — Neglect — Scared If they yell.” [sic] [Marcy]
“I am energetic and a take-charge guy — sensitive, creative, organized.” [Tony]
J. Why do you act the same, or differently, in AO as you do in other places?

"should be yourself" [Condor]

"I think that listening skills are very important, here and in the rest of the world. I don't talk as much because other people need time and space to speak here." [Keith]

"I feel more comfortable w/these people. We all know each other differently than other friends." [Amber]

"Because I feel safer and there is confidentiality." [sic] [Brigitta]

"In Always On I feel more comfortable expressing myself so I do." [sic] [Holly]

"I think some of the people in the group care about me more than others not in the groups" [sic] [Travis]

"I'm more focused here because I don't want to take away from the group for other people." [Nick]

"Because I just that and shit" [sic] [?] [Daitch]

"Sometines I can be free and then I could be locked up in a zoo. It can come quite confusion." [sic] [Marcy]

"Role & boundaries associated w/it." [sic] [Tony]

K. If you were free, in this group, (of fears, worries, problems, restrictions, other people's rules), what would you ...say? do? feel? believe? during group time?

"I want a girlfriend, I like to be close to a woman, not necessarily sexually, just close." [Condor]

"I would probably talk more about underlying things from my past that bug me. I would also take my full share, and not feel ashamed that I didn't make it easier for other people. I might also show my feelings more often." [Keith]

"We probably wouldn't even have a group. If we did it would be kaotic. No one would listen or care. Nothing would ever get done." [sic] [Amber]

"I would say how I really feel. That I'm not always fearless, I'm not always there for others."[sic] [Brigitta]

"I really don't know." [Holly]

"I'm not sure, and wouldn't be sure unless someday it is really like that." [Travis]

"I would probably make more extraneous comments." [sic] [Nick]

"I'd be happy and more open" [Daitch]

"watch a real movie then scitt [skit] it out or If eazier write It down then Act It Out [be Always On]. If I was not scared I could act like the group." [sic] [Marcy]

"I would be more physical w/members and possibly more confrontive?" [sic] [Tony]

L. Anything else you want to tell or ask Sally? Write it here:

"Will this be shared with that group, or whatever, that only knows me as Condor? Do you like spam." [sic]

[blank]

"I want a copy of this paper when it's all done."

"I love you and I'm glad your in this group." [sic]

Sally I really appreciate you and love you w/all my heart! (I mean it!)." [sic]

[blank]

[blank]

"Sally, you are pretty Fuckin' cool!" [sic]

"no"

"I LOVE YOU!" [sic] [Tony]
M. Draw a picture of the way you see yourself in relationship to the others in the AO group, labeling each other individual in the group. Put each person close or far away from you, depending upon how you feel with each person. You may draw connections or separations any way you want. Label how you indicate stronger or weaker connections. Use the list on page 1 to make sure you draw everyone. Write in a few words if you want, but mostly this is a picture. Use the back of this page for your picture.

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE DRAWINGS:

CONDOR: did a bar graph, and almost left Nick out, so squeezed him in on the far left (he told me this when he handed it to me). Left to right, on the graph, Nick’s bar is the largest, which means Condor feels the closest to Nick. Next to that is a bar labeled “avg.” which is about one-third the size of Nick’s. Daitch’s is almost the same as Holly’s, Amber’s, Travis’ and Tony’s, which are the next largest to Nick’s, and all about twice the “avg.” bar’s size. Brigitta’s is the next-largest, about one-fourth smaller than that group’s bars, and about one-fourth larger than mine, which is next largest to Brigitta’s. Marcy and Keith have bars just a tad smaller than mine, and about the same as each other’s. Rick’s is the smallest, and is about the same as the “avg.” bar. No one’s is smaller than the “avg.” bar’s size.

Condor’s order was, in closeness: Nick, Daitch - Holly - Amber - Travis - Tony, Brigitta, me, Marcy - Keith, Rick. In his drawing, he used the same order I used on the survey, but added Nick “first,” later, out of “turn.” He remembered everyone.

KEITH: did more of a sociogram. He wrote a KEY at the top: a long, solid line was labeled “strong connection”; a wavy line was labeled “weak connection”; a dotted line was labeled “average connection.” He put himself in the center of the group, and drew lines from himself to each member, each person being represented by a circle with his/her name inside of it. All the circles were roughly the same size, but not the same distance from Keith. Clockwise, from the top, he drew Marcy with a weak, long line; Travis with a strong, short line, Rick and Tony both with strong lines, but Tony’s line was shorter (closer to Keith?) than Rick’s; Daitch had a average line, longer than Tony’s but shorter than Rick’s; Condor’s was average but short (?); mine was average and about as long as Rick’s; Amber’s was strong, and about the same length as Travis’; Brigitta had a weak, but short line; Holly had an average line about the same length as mine and Rick’s; Nick’s was strong and short, about the same as Travis’ and Amber’s.

Keith’s order, in closeness, was: Tony, Travis - Amber - Nick, Rick (all “strong”), Condor, Daitch, me - Holly (all “average”), Brigitta, Marcy (both “weak”). He
remembered everyone, but didn’t use the survey order. It’s possible that the lengths of
the lines are not relevant, since he didn’t put that aspect in his KEY, and some of the
weaker connections are shorter lines.

AMBER: drew stick figures for her people, labeled with each person’s name, not
differentiated for sex. She wrote in the bottom left corner: “the fatter/ the line/ the
stronger/ the bond or/ realationship/ the longer line/ less of a bond or realationship” [sic]
[/ = line breaks] She drew very fat lines for Condor and Nick, somewhat fat lines for
Travis, Holy, Brigitta, Daitch and me, a thinner line for Marcy, and Rick’s was the
thinnest; she forgot Keith and Tony! The shortest lines were between Amber and Condor
and Amber and Nick. Shorter than Daitch’s and mine were Travis’, Holly’s, and
Brigitta’s. Rick’s was the longest, with Marcy’s slightly shorter than Rick’s. Amber put
herself in the middle, with Nick on her right and Condor on her left, in a straight-line
arrangement for those three members. Below Amber, straight down, was Travis.
Coming off of Travis’ line was a short line, diagonally to the right, for Holly, and
another, longer diagonal line to the right of hers for Brigitta. The three stick figures for
Travis, Holly, & Brigitta were all next to each other below the lines, but the figures were
in a straight line. Diagonally to the upper left, above Nick, was one line, off which
branch Daitch on the left and me on the right, with my line slightly fatter, but both the
same length for the branches. Marcy was diagonally up and to the right, above Condor,
with a thin line. Rick was straight up from Amber, with a thinner line which ended
beside his figure in some dots.

Amber’s order, in closeness, was: Condor, Nick, Travis, Holly, Brigitta, me,
Daitch, Marcy, Rick, with Tony and Keith unknown.

BRIGITTA: started to draw figures, gave up, and started over on another page, where she
drew a bar graph. For the graph, she used the survey’s 3 - point scale, but put in halves as
well. She drew bars with filled-in parts to a point on the scale, which was on the left.
Her highest were Holly, Tony, Marcy, Condor and me, and we were all “3” which went
all the way to the top of the graph. Next highest was Amber, then Rick, both between “3”
and “2 1/2,” but higher than “2 1/2.” At “2 1/2” was Daitch. At “2” was Nick. Keith and
Travis were both slightly under “2” but not down to “1 1/2.”

Brigittta’s order, in closeness, was: Holly - Tony - Marcy - Condor - me, Amber,
Rick, Daitch, Nick, Keith - Travis. She did not use the survey order, nor did she go in
order of preference. She remembered everyone.
- strong connection
- weak connection
- average connection

Keith

Holly

Nick

Brigitta

Amber

Sally

Mercy

Travis

Tony

Rick

Caelk

Condor
the longer line is a bad or realtionship.
TRAVIS: drew a KEY which showed numbers from one to ten, with a small, thin, light line at "one" and showing the line growing in intensity, width and darkness by the time it rises to "ten," where it is very wide and dark. He called this his "Closeness scale."

Above that is a label "Disconected" with dotted lines beside the word. In the drawing, which is like a sociogram, he drew stick figures with faces, most of which seemed to be with smiling or straight-lined mouths (some were too small to distinguish). The figures of Amber & Holly & Brigitta seem to have "skirts," but Marcy's "skirt" looks like it may have been erased (!). (Possibly he just moved Marcy further down (away) and the erasures were her earlier, closer "legs.") I don't have a "skirt": my figure looks just like the males' figures, straight legs only. Travis is labeled "Me" and he is one of a few who has "hair." Amber has some hair, as do Holly and Brigitta, who has less, and all four of their "hair" styles are flat, close to the head, seemingly "neat." Daitch is the only male with hair, and his is sticking out from his head at all angles, as he had for the part in the public performance as the "Sun." Marcy has no "hair," and no other males have "hair." I also have no "hair." For connections, Travis drew Brigitta to his right and Holly to his left, both with the darkest, widest lines (Holly's is slightly wider), and both are shorter than anyone else's (Holly's is slightly shorter). Amber is below Travis, directly, and Amber's line is about as dark as Keith's, but Keith's is longer, diagonally down, to the right. Daitch and Marcy are the only dotted ("Disconected") lines. Daitch is diagonally down, to the left, all the way in the corner of the page, and Marcy is diagonally up, to the right, almost all the way to the top, but because Travis is closer to the bottom center, Marcy's line is much longer than Daitch's, so that may not be significant. Daitch's dotted line is darker and wider than Marcy's, which may mean Travis feels closer even amidst disconnection to Daitch than he does to Marcy, whose line is light, very short dots, faint and almost erased near her figure. Directly above Travis, with a line about as dark, long and wide as Keith's, is Tony. Nick is diagonally to the right, above Brigitta, with a line slightly less dark and wide than Tony's and Keith's, and a little longer than theirs. Condor is curved, going around to the left of but ending up above Tony, at the top of the page, with a light line, not very thick, about a "3," not quite as dark as Nick's and a lot longer than anyone's except Rick's and Marcy's. Rick's line is very light, but solid, and he is diagonally to the right and above Travis, between Condor and me. My line is about the same as Rick's, but a little shorter. My line doesn't come from Travis, either, but branches off of Condor's curved line, putting me diagonally up and to the right, but below Rick.

Travis' order, in closeness, was: Holly, Brigitta, Amber, Keith, Tony, Nick, Condor, me, Rick, Daitch, Marcy. He remembered everyone.
HOLLY: drew stick figures in a sociogram, with faces and hair for everyone, but otherwise no “human” characteristics. Each person’s name was written above or beside his/her head, except for Holly’s. Holly put herself in the middle of the diagram, and she is the biggest figure, but she forgot to leave room to label herself, so her name is way over to the right, where she wrote “Me” and below that, “Holly,” with an arrow pointing from the words to the figure of her. Everyone’s mouths are smiling except for Holly’s, which is a wavy line. Holly is the only one with “clothes,” which are a square for her torso and a triangle for her hips (a shirt and skirt?). Everyone but Nick has circles for their hands and feet: he has nothing at the ends of his “limbs.” At the bottom, she drew a KEY: each connection level was symbolized by a heart with lines through it. One dotted line through the heart was labeled “= Not very strong”; one solid line through a heart was labeled: “= strong”; two solid lines through a heart: “= stronger”; three solid lines through a heart: “= strongest,” making a four-point scale. Clockwise, from left: Condor is connected to Holly directly to her left, with “stronger”; above him is Nick, also “stronger”; Marcy is “strong”; I am at 12:00, with “stronger”; Rick is “not very strong”; Tony is “stronger”; Daitch and Keith are “not very strong”; Brigitta is the only one who is “strongest”; Travis is “not very strong”; and Amber is “stronger.” The darkest lines are for Amber’s and Tony’s connections, with Nick’s and mine next, but this may not be significant, since it wasn’t differentiated in her KEY that way. Holly made some attempt to show likenesses, with the hairstyles: hers is long and straight; Brigitta’s is long and curly; Amber’s, Daitch’s, Nick’s and Travis’ look almost alike, medium and straight; mine is thick, medium length, and curly; Marcy’s and Keith’s look the same, and Tony’s looks like theirs, but Tony’s is longer; Rick’s is the shortest, with Condor’s next-shortest, but thicker. In actuality, some of these similarities and distinctions aren’t accurate.

Holly’s order, in closeness, was: Brigitta, Amber - Condor - Nick - me - Tony, Marcy, Rick - Travis - Keith - Daitch. She remembered everyone.

NICK: drew a line/bar graph. At the top is his KEY. He distinguished between “outside AO” and “in AO.” (He was only one who thought to do this; he also commented on this topic, of different connections while in and while out of the group, in his narrative.) For his scale, he used, from top to bottom: “close freinds” [sic]; “freinds” [sic]; “get along”; “tolerate each other”; “ignores me”; and “enemy.” He used initials for each member and adult, following the survey’s order and initials format. For Condor, who had the longest lines, all the way to “close freinds” for both “in” and “out” of AO, which were at the same level. Condor’s were the only ones that went that high. Next highest, in “freinds,” were Amber, Travis, Tony and Rick, and all of these were the same for “in” and
While they're here, and not fall back into the ditch of conformity.

- outside AO
- in AO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>close friends</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>friends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>get along</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tolerate each other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ignores me</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enemy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Candace, Amber, Mary, Brigitta, Holly, Travis, Didi, Tony, Sally, Rick
"outside" of AO, except for Rick, who had no mark for "outside" of AO. Next highest was Keith, but only for "in" AO; for "outside" of AO, Keith was slightly lower, between "friends" and "get along." At that same point, between those two regions, was Holly’s "inside" AO rating; her "outside" rating was in split into two places, with "(sometimes)" written beside each one: one at "get along," and one down at "ignores me." Brigitta’s rating for "in" AO was at "get along," but her "outside" rating was "ignores me." Marcy’s and Daitch’s ratings were the same for "in" and "outside" and were all at "get along." My rating was only for "in" and was at "get along." Rick and I were the only ones to have no "outside" AO ratings. No one was rated lower than "get along" for "inside" AO, and only Brigitta and Holly were rated lower than that for "outside" AO either. All the lines were drawn with about the same intensity and thickness.

Nick’s order, for closeness, was: Condor, Amber - Travis - Tony, Rick, Keith, Holly, Marcy - Daitch, me, Brigitta.

DAITCH: did not spend a lot of time on his (he was done first, by almost ten minutes before the next person). At the top he wrote: "My SHitty Draw" [sic], and at the bottom, he wrote "LOVE," and then signed, in cursive writing: "Psycho Daitch" [which he wanted to be his research name] linking the longer end lines of the "o" and the "h" to draw something which looks like inverted and regular "Vs" together, one on top of the other, with another line horizontally inside the space between the two points of the "Vs." I can’t tell what it’s supposed to be. It almost looks like a logo for something. He did a sociogram, with everyone coming from a circle, at the center, which he labeled "ME." Each person is connected to the circle with the same kind of dotted line, about the same distance from the circle, like spokes from a center of a wheel. I asked Daitch if these were supposed to be "all the same," and he said: "Yeah."

So, Daitch put everyone the same "closeness" to him. He remembered everyone, but didn’t follow the order of the survey.

MARMY: spent so much time creating details for the airplane and the tree for her drawing that she wasn’t even finished with two "people" by the end of the first half of group. She finished during break. She drew people as if they were parachuting from this airplane, which I suppose is symbolic of her, since she isn’t anywhere else in the drawing (unless she is the tree...?) The tree, way over to the left, at the bottom, in either the land or the water, has five main branches, each with limbs off of them, and smaller ones off of them, but no leaves at all. Everyone but me was drawn upright; I am prone, looking like "super[woman]" flying above some of the other parachutists! Rick’s parachute has a
My SHitty Draw
(all even - I count)

Nick
Holly
Tony
Amber
Keith
Brigetta
Rick Condor
Travis
Marcy Salt

love
psycho
faith
"I like kick, Keith. The best reason I got along with him." "You like flying sideways." "Light bulb, you're always thinking... on the roof!"

"I also have a hard time with myself." "Sally?"

"I was waiting for 3/21." "What's up?"

"He has no parachute. I can't hear you." "What?"
smiling sun in it, and a “3” by his name, beside his head, and Tony’s has a smaller
smiling sun inside his ‘chute, with no number. My ‘chute looks like it has a light bulb
drawn inside the loop, where the other two adults have their suns. (Am I “smart”?) I also
have a “3” by my name. Keith is way over to the left, by Tony, but each is drawn
separately. Rick is right below the plane, and I am also, but to the right. To my right are
Brigitta, Holly, & Daitch, all looking like they are holding hands, in a line. Below me are
Nick, Amber, and Condor, each with a “2” beside their names, and also holding hands in
a line. Everyone but Travis is in the air, with a parachute. Travis has no ‘chute, and
looks as if he is in the “water,” or half-buried in the ground, upright, all the way at the
bottom of the page, alone. Travis has “1” by his name. No one else has numbers.
Rick’s head is the only one drawn too small to see the face clearly. I am clearly smiling,
and I have curly hair (the only one of the females with hair). Brigitta, Holly, Daitch,
Tony, & Keith are also smiling. Nick, Amber, Condor and Travis are frowning. Rick
,Travis and I have thick bodies, with hands and fingers, looking like we have clothes on;
Rick’s chest has dots, like buttons. Brigitta, Holly, Daitch, Keith, Nick, Amber and
Condor have no circles or anything for hands; only Amber and Condor have circles for
feet. Nick, Amber and Condor have triangles for their lower bodies, with stick legs and
circle feet coming from beneath these triangles. Tony has circles for feet on stick legs,
but loops for arms and no hands. Travis, the only other one with “hair,” has spikes
sticking from the tops of his head (not as in real life at all).

I’m not sure how to interpret this in terms of closeness, but using the numbers to
mean the same as the survey scale, with “3” as closest, noting relative distances from the
plane, and factoring in the facial expressions, seem reasonable to do. In that case,
Marcy’s order, in closeness, would be: Rick - me (“3”), Brigitta - Holly - Daitch (who
could be the same as Rick and me, but have no numbers), Nick - Amber - Condor (“2”),
Keith, Tony, (who may be the same as the “2”s but have no numbers), Travis (“1”). She
remembered everyone.

TONY: we discussed his sociogram on the phone that night, so these are his words in
quotes, to describe the meanings of the drawing. Tony put himself in the center, as a
circle, and all the other males were also circles. The females were all triangles. Each
had the name written across the symbol. Counterclockwise, from left, Daitch was the
shortest distance from Tony, but with two heavy, non-connected straight lines. Tony
said: “We have a very intense relationship, but a major piece hasn’t fallen into place,
yet.” Tony believes that he “may be the most important positive male in Daitch’s life
right now,” and told stories to me about that. conjecture related to conversations they’ve
I could not right-- left message, so I tried discussing it. He checked back. It offered interpretation, he responded yes, no, clarified, chose our words. I took notes on lines on diagram.
had. Keith’s was a partially heavy line, but not as heavy as Daitch’s, from Keith to about two-thirds of the way towards Tony, then got lighter and thinner. Tony said: “I haven’t connected with who Keith really is” and “Keith’s connection to me is stronger than mine to him.” Nick’s line was shorter than Keith’s, and didn’t quite reach Tony, and Tony’s didn’t quite reach Nick, and they weren’t heading for each other’s lines, either. The lines were about the same thickness and darkness as Keith’s darkest part. Tony: “Our connection is potentially strong, but we haven’t reached each other.” Travis’ line was wavy and light. Brigitta’s was also wavy, but with sharper peaks, almost jagged. Comparing them, Tony said: “There is less struggle and the connection wanders” almost like Travis’ ubiquitous “IDK.” With Brigitta, Tony described the connection as one of “conflict vs. cooperation, which is OK, but an intense effort for us both.” Between Brigitta and Travis, Tony put Condor, Rick, & Amber. For Condor, the line was one of the darker ones, like Nick’s, and very short, but with little curvy parts wisping off in two places, in different directions. “We are close, and the connection is strong, but each of us ‘goes off’ occasionally.” Rick’s line is shorter than anyone’s except Daitch’s, but not very dark, more like Amber’s. Tony said: “We are moderately close, and our connection is OK.” Amber’s line is fairly strong, and she is further away than Condor but closer than Keith. Tony said “we have a strong connection.” After Brigitta, way up in the right corner is Marcy. Between Marcy and Tony is a straight-line series of question marks, and no line. He said: “A connection exists, but the nature of it is a mystery.” She is the most distant from him in terms of length of line-space from the Tony circle. Holly is directly above Tony, with a weak straight line, about the same distance as Brigitta’s and Amber’s. Tony said: “we have a weaker connection, but a positive beginning.” I am very far away, the longest line, way up in the left corner, but the darkest, widest line except for Daitch’s. Tony said he “put you [Sally] in the corner because I really feel the distance between our roles during the group meetings” but also feels very strongly connected to me:

Tony’s order, in closeness, was hard to discern. There were so many factors to consider, and they weighed differently at various points of the discussion. I’ll attempt it here and ask him later: Daitch, me, Condor, Amber, Rick, Brigitta, Keith, Holly, Nick, Travis, Marcy. He remembered everyone.
D: ALWAYS ON WRITTEN NORMS
ALWAYS ON GROUP NORMS

- CONFIDENTIALITY -

- All material discussed in group stays in group. This applies to group members and therapists alike.

- Therapists are required by law to report cases of suspected physical or sexual abuse and intention to injure self or others.

- Counselors do not initiate communication about a group member with parents, school officials or anyone outside the group except at the request of a group member.

- If counselors are contacted by an outside person or agency regarding a member, the content of that communication is shared with the member, privately, and the member will be encouraged to share this information with the group.

- Any information brought to group leaders by a member about another member cannot be held in secret by the leaders.

- RESPECT -

- The group is a safe place to express feelings, thoughts and ideas. Members respect each other's right to be who they are without fear of ridicule.

- No form of verbal or physical abuse or threats of violence against another will be permitted at any time.

- Members are encouraged to use physical contact with each other consciously and kindly.

- Excessive profanity is not an acceptable form of group behavior.

- Members will not attend sessions under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

- Members of the group will respect the space in which the group interacts, and will observe the rules of those facilities within which we work.

- PARTICIPATION -

- Each member is encouraged to participate in all activities of the group. The choice to do so remains the student's.
Students are encouraged to reveal personal material to the group at their own pace and to the extent that it is appropriate to their needs.

Success of the program and its benefits to members depends on each member's full, regular and punctual participation.

Any pattern of absence or tardiness by a member will result in review of their member status by the leaders and the group.

In the event of illness or emergency, group leaders should be notified as soon as you are aware of the need to miss a meeting.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MEMBERS -

- Members are strongly discouraged from becoming "romantically" involved with each other both inside and outside of the group.

- The group is not an appropriate place for dating behaviors.

- Members pursuing friendships with other members outside the group will keep the confidentiality norm in mind at all times.

- Members are reminded that individual relationships may limit their capacity to be fully present to all who make up the group.

TERMINATION -

- Leaders reserve the right to ask a member to leave the group, for a session or permanently, should he or she be unable to follow these established norms, maintain regular attendance, or cause severe disruption to the group.

- No one will be asked to leave without prior discussion with the counselors and the group.

- Should a member consider withdrawing from the program at any time, they are requested to discuss their concerns with the leaders and the group.
E: ETHNOGRAPHIC MICROANALYSES
Jan. 3, meeting, FIELD NOTES, pages 6 - 7

DURING MEETING: Role-plays, “directed and created” by student director, improvised by actors. This one was created and directed by Daitch, acted by Condor, Keith, Holly.

Daitch asks Condor and Keith if they’ll be “gay lovers”? They agree.

Daitch casts Holly as Condor’s mom, who didn’t know they are gay and is “all pissed off” now that she found out.

Condor, to me: “He’s not my type.” about Keith.

They do scene. Holly says: “My one and only son, Condor, is a fag.” Spits out word “fag.” She is angry. “I think it is absolutely disgusting.”

Condor starts to talk, in a simpering way. Holly interrupts him, says “Talk like a man, not a girl!”

Condor: “OK, mom.” in a falsely low voice.

Holly throws Keith out of her house. Keith and Condor leave together.

Scene ends.

Daitch applauds, gives feedback. Condor and Keith object to Daitch’s feedback. Daitch asks them to add more to scene. Daitch changes Holly to Keith’s mom.

Tony asks Daitch if audience may give feedback? Daitch says “yes.”

Brigitta gives feedback. Tells Holly to be “more emotional.”

Tony agrees with Brigitta.

They re-do scene.

At end, Condor presents as a bisexual, denying gay relationship with Keith, shocking Daitch, the audience and actors.

Daitch tells Holly she did much better. He goes to hug her.

Compliments Keith and Condor.

Tony validates Daitch’s comments.
Jan. 31 meeting, FIELD NOTES, page 9

DURING MEETING: Group sharing
time, round-robin turn taking.

Brigitta’s turn.

Brigitta reads something she wrote. 1st piece is about her loved ones keeping her alive. 2nd piece is about God as “he,” and her becoming more of a Christian. She tells about her weekend retreat with Holly: “best and most powerful of my entire life… redefined myself to Christ… everyone shared and cried: men, women, all… they’re all my best friends, now… we’re all so close… I rediscovered who Christ was.” Tells about this new guy, “it’s not sexual… the physical wasn’t important… realized what God wants and what He doesn’t want… it’s Heaven on earth, believing in Him.” Her mom is “so happy” about this, talks about the time Brigitta and Holly brought a Playgirl to group. “We got that, a joint, some cigarettes and burned it all, piece by piece… it’s not ‘me’ [anymore] and I just need to be truthful to myself… God doesn’t want me to have premarital sex… I’m trying to quit swearing… I’m in love with a family [does she mean Holly’s?]…”

Tony asks Brigitta how this will impact her?

Brigitta: “It already changed me… I talked less [in school]… I care less about how I look (gestures to her clothes)… I am more who I am…”

Holly adds things occasionally; Brigitta uses all of her suggestions. Brigitta says she “wants everyone to know my joy…” Talks more about sharing this with others.

connection: trusts group; wants to share
conn/safety: needs closeness to live
gender roles: God as “He”
connection: personal time spent with member

gender roles: both sexes can cry & share
safety/conn: intimacy through sharing
connection: closeness through sharing
connection: closeness through sharing
sex orientation/conn: fem dates & sees males as dates even when non-sexual
gender/safety: God= “He”; doing “right”
safety: pleasing parent and God = “right”
gender/sexual orientation: men as sexual objects for women
differential authenticity: changing behavior = finding true self
sex orientation: heterosexual presumed
differential authenticity: trying to change connection: closeness = “in love”
differential authenticity: changing behaviors, more true self
differential authenticity: same
differential authenticity: same
conn: friend tells about friend’s life
connection: friend accepts friend’s tales
connection: sharing = joyful, desirable
connection: wants to share with group
BEFORE MEETING: Group members often gather early. When I enter, Holly, Brigitta, Marcy are sitting together, talking and eating/drinking snacks. Tony (the leader) arrives later.

2:40 I arrive to find Holly, Brigitta, & Marcy eating and talking about guys, sex, Christian “rules” about both.

Brigitta announces that she has strep.

Marcy indicates how Brigitta & Holly pass it back and forth, with her hand and a bottle of water.

Brigitta: “We share everything, she and I, ’cause we’re, like...” She gestures to Holly, shares her soda, looks at me, smiles.

Marcy shows me her rose, from her honey.

Holly & Brigitta discuss one particular guy and Brigitta’s being “allowed to smoke in his car.”

Holly shrieks in disbelief: “I can’t believe he let you do that! He must really like you!”

2:45 Tony arrives. I give him my present from Detroit. I say: “It’s a cross-national elephant!”

Brigitta, about me: “She’s so cute. I love her.”

Holly nods. “She is.”

Brigitta gets up and stands behind Holly. She leans over on Holly, with Holly’s upturned, reverse-positioned face in Brigitta’s breasts.

Brigitta leans over and kisses the underside of Holly’s neck. “I love you!”

Holly: “I love you, too.”

Tony tells me about last Thurs.’ rehearsal, Amber’s not being here until after Feb. break because of drivers’ ed extensions/bad weather.

2:48 Marcy, Holly, Brigitta leave together.

Holly & Brigitta make plans to see their boyfriends, eat dinner, talking about loving each other as they leave. Marcy trails behind them.
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: Both poststructuralist and feminist perspectives (Davies, 1993; Weedon, 1987), which involve critical theory, social construction theories of social identity and of social discourses, and their kinds of research on gender role and sexual orientation development augmented my own observations and corroborated my interpretations of and questions about these adolescents’ behaviors. (Adler, Kless, & Adler, 1992; Gudykunst & Hammer, 1988; Hoare, 1991; Levine & Evans, 1991; Rust, 1993)

The interplay among media images, familial and religious messages, and school-based ascriptions formed the current discourse to which these teens have to respond.

The participants who functioned successfully within this then must decide if: they want to continue unchanged; both they and those who were already marginalized could find this group to be a setting for discovering conscious agency.

Questions to be addressed through my current lens could include:
1. Who is/is not being silenced?
2. Who is/is not experimenting frequently with versions of their gender roles
   or sexual orientation?
3. What are the power dynamics within this group, and how do these determine members’ roles and displays?
4. What are the contradictions among language, behaviors, roles?
5. What do the teens say about themselves and to each other, and what they do with each other related to these roles and identities signify, especially when there are contradictions?
6. How does the existence (or absence) of strong interpersonal connections and the construction of high safety affect each member’s participation in the group identity discourse?
7. How do these interactions reflect the hegemony of cultural discourses on gender and sexual orientation?
8. What group experiences have challenged or reinforced this hegemony?

Since I designed this study to be more descriptive than critical, only the questions such as these would be answerable by my data at this time.
F: COPIES OF PARENTAL/PARTICIPANT CONSENT AND INFORMATION FORMS
Dear Research Participant:

I am a doctoral student at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in the Department of Education. As part of my graduate education, I am taking a course in qualitative research methods, which requires each graduate student to perform research and create a written report of the study. For my research project, I plan to study a small group of middle and high school students, looking at the ways they learn about their own and others' social identities, in a theatre/therapeutic setting.

The staff and supervisors of ALWAYS ON have reviewed and approved my proposal for this research for the “Premier” group which meets in the Public Library on Mondays and Thursdays this year. I will attend two or three meetings in their entirety, and then attend partial sessions for the rest of my study. Information and insights about the learning processes of these students that would be gained from doing this study will be used to plan similar groups in the future. Since I will be sharing my research and the results with the staff of ALWAYS ON, my work will also benefit these students throughout the year.

The requirements for my university research course entail on-site observing and in-depth interviewing for six to eight months. The observations will result in field notes, which I will write during and after the observations. The observations may occasionally be videotaped, and then transcribed or turned into written notes. The interviews will be audiotaped and/or accompanied by handwritten notes, which I will transcribe. Portions of the transcriptions and the field notes may be presented to colleagues in my research class and my two professors, and a final written report will also be presented to colleagues in the field of education at research conferences. However, no one but myself will listen to or view the tapes; and, no one would read the original notes, or later written interpretations, unless each of the participants’ names and...
other identifying information would be protected. You should understand that I will use direct quotes from the interviews and the field notes for my report, while protecting the participants' identities.

Although my presence will be incorporated into the group's experiences as smoothly as possible, with support from the staff, the ALWAYS ON group meetings are for benefit of the students. Any participant may withdraw from this study at any time, without leaving ALWAYS ON, and without difficulty.

If you would agree to allow your child/yourself permission to participate in this study, please read the accompanying explanatory materials carefully, then sign and return this form. If you have further questions, please contact me at home: (603) 357-3373.

Thank you for participating in this project. I appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

Sally Ember, M.Ed.

I agree to participate in Sally Ember's study, but I can change my mind at any time:

Participant Name (print):______________________________
Signature of Participant:______________________________
and date: __________________

I give permission for my child to participate in Sally Ember's study, if he/she wants to do so:

Name of Parent/Guardian of Participant (print):______________________________
Signature of Parent/Guardian of Participant:______________________________
and date: __________________
Dear Parents/Guardians of Research Participants:

Tony, the creator and director of ALWAYS ON has been a colleague of mine for over ten years. We have worked together doing theatrical, counseling and health education programs in public and private schools, with adults and children of all ages, in New Hampshire and Vermont. As part of our early work together, we co-created the predecessor to ALWAYS ON. I am delighted to see how this program has changed and expanded to serve so many adolescents, and to reach other children and adults with their public performances. I am even more pleased to be able to work once again alongside him, researching the format, effectiveness, and successes of ALWAYS ON for this academic year.

I am currently a doctoral student in Multicultural Education at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. My Masters', also from UMASS, is in Cultural Diversity/Curriculum Reform. My doctoral work includes studying issues of identity development, language acquisition and communication, insuring access to successful learning, and other aspects of teaching and planning educational experiences for diverse learners.

For the past two years I have been leading groups of students and faculty at Brattleboro Union High School, which I continue to do. For this research project, I plan to study a small group of middle and high school students, those in the Premier ALWAYS ON group. I will be looking at the ways they learn about their own and others’ social identities through participation in ALWAYS ON, and how the program best meets the needs of these students.

Since I have been working in education for over twenty years, I bring a variety of experiences to this project. I have taught or worked in educational programs with students of all ages, pre-schoolers through adults. Most recently, I have been the co-academic director and a teacher in the Upward Bound high school summer program. I also have a middle-school-aged son. Personally and professionally, I am interested in how programs such as ALWAYS ON and the one in Brattleboro can influence adolescent development so that our children may live more positively with their own and others’ differences.

I look forward to studying this excellent program, and to sharing my results with the staff and supervisor of ALWAYS ON. If you would be interested in reading the final report, please write a note to me or call me sometime in the Spring of 1994. The report will be available after May 25.

If you have further questions, please contact me at home: (603) 357-3373; 284 Water St., Keene, NH 03431. Thank you for supporting your child’s participation in this project.

Sincerely,
Sally Ember, M.Ed.
Dear Research Participant:

I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in the Department of Education. For my research project, I participated in one ALWAYS ON Premiere group last year, looking at the ways they learned about their own and others' social identities, in AO. This year, I am continuing my study by doing individual interviews (in April and May) and one group interview (APRIL 11) with the Encore group.

Information and insights about the group processes of AO members that would be gained from doing this study will be used to plan similar groups in the future. Since I will be sharing my research and the results with the staff of AO, my work will also benefit AO members in this and future years of the program.

The individual interviews will be audiotaped and accompanied by handwritten notes, which I will transcribe. The group interview will be videotaped, but only I will listen to and view these tapes. When I am finished with them, they will be erased. Only I will read the original notes.

You should understand that I will use direct quotes from the interviews and the notes for my report, while protecting the participants' identities. Whoever reads the formal written interpretations will discover that each of the participants' names and other identifying information have been protected through pseudonyms and other changes.

If you would agree to allow your child/yourself permission to participate in this study, please read the accompanying explanatory materials carefully. Then sign and return these forms.

Any participant may withdraw from this study at any time, without leaving AO, and without difficulty. If you have further questions, please contact me at home: (603) 357-3373.

Thank you for participating in this project. I appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

Sally Ember, M.Ed.
DEAR PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS:

As all of you know, I am one of the ALWAYS ON (AO) group leaders this year in **Encore**, with **Tony** and **interns**. I am also currently a doctoral candidate in Multicultural Education at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. My Masters’ degree, also from UMASS, is in Cultural Diversity/Curriculum Reform. My doctoral work includes spending time with AO groups and studying the ways the program group members work together.

For my research project, I have already spent one year with a **Premier** ALWAYS ON group. I looked at the ways they learned about their own and others’ social identities through participation in ALWAYS ON, and how the program best met the needs of its members.

As a continuation of this study, I want to do a group interview on April 11 with members and staff of the **Encore** group. I also want to schedule individual interviews with willing AO members in April/May of this year.

Even if you have already granted permission, and especially if you have not, I need you/the AO member (if over 18 years old) to read this and decide if you/he/she will allow permission to participate in the group interview on April 11, during group time. This form may also be used to grant permission for the member to be interviewed individually as well.

Personally and professionally, I am interested in how programs such as ALWAYS ON can influence adolescent development so that our children may live more positively with their own and others’ differences.

I will be attending several professional conferences at which I will present some of my understandings from this research. I will also write several articles, and my dissertation, based upon this research. All members’ true identities and names or other identifying information will be protected through the use of pseudonyms and other changes.

If this meets with your approval, please sign the attached form and have the AO member bring it to the next meeting (APRIL 11). Thank you for supporting this member’s participation in this project. If you have further questions, please contact me at home: (603) 357-3373; 284 Water St., Keene, NH 03431.

Sincerely,

**Sally Ember, M.Ed.**
I agree to participate by being in the group interview in Sally Ember's study, but I can change my mind at any time:

Participant Name (print): ________________________________
Signature of Participant: ________________________________
and date: ______________

I agree to participate by being interviewed individually by Sally Ember, but I can change my mind at any time:

Participant Name (print): ________________________________
Signature of Participant: ________________________________
and date: ______________

I do not want to be an official participant of these interviews in Sally Ember's study. I may speak in the group interview, but Sally may not use my words, even under a pseudonym.

Participant Name (print): ________________________________
Signature of Participant: ________________________________
and date: ______________

If participant is under 18 years of age, please also read and sign below:

I give permission for my child to participate in Sally Ember's study, if he/she wants to do so:

Name of Parent/Guardian of Participant (print): ________________________________
Signature of Parent/Guardian of Participant: ________________________________
and date: ______________

PLEASE RETURN THIS ENTIRE PAGE, EVEN IF YOU DECLINE TO PARTICIPATE.
G: CRITICAL THEORY FOR LAY PEOPLE
What follows is a description of some of the major principles of Critical theory that I wrote for the adolescents and leaders of my Premiere group. It was published in a bimonthly magazine, and many readers gave it a positive reception.

Critical Theory for Lay People

There is one word I use, *hegemony*, which I want you to understand at this point. Some people use the term “internalized oppression,” some use “colonization,” and some talk about being “co-opted,” “selling out,” or “buying into it.” All of these ideas have to do with several concepts. I number these sections to make it easier to see each of my points.

1) The culture in which we live creates certain ways of being which are favored and certain ways which are not. For example, our culture tells us, through movies, books, religions, schools, family discussions, the government and other communication routes, that particular ways of being male and female are better than others. Beyond that, our culture tells us that men are better than women, that Whites are better than people of mixed ethnicities or people of color, that certain kinds of “attractive” (thin, blond, physically-fit, etc.) are better than other kinds.

2) Lots of other messages like this and the accompanying rules, laws, privileges and policies, are severely restricting to everyone’s freedom to be safe and respected for who we are, and to be respectful of others. These messages make it almost impossible to feel positive about who we and others are unless we are definite members of the "ideal" categories: White; Heterosexual; married; able-bodied; Christian; middle-class; male; within about ten pounds of the insurance companies’ target weight for our age and height and sex; between the ages of thirty and fifty-five; employed; mentally healthy and of average or above-average abilities in whatever we do for work. Membership in these categories makes a person "normal," which means that those categories we can't claim to be members of make us "abnormal," or less important or respected. We can't even
imagine who we would think we are or what we would think about other people if we had never heard so many negative messages about people who do not fit the "ideal" categories.

3) We all grow up hearing these messages, and after a very short time, we begin to tell ourselves these messages. Once we have agreed, whether on purpose or not (usually not) to put these messages into our own minds and hearts, we have allowed these ideas to have hegemony over us. Cultural hegemony begins when the people who are targeted as "bad," "ugly," "stupid," or "less worthy" believe it about ourselves even if no one continues to say it to us. Hegemony begins when we accept negative labels about ourselves, and becomes totally effective when we not only believe all of the negative and positive messages about ourselves, but we also believe them about each other; and, furthermore, we also believe that these ideas are our own. Then, we say and think that these ideas are our own "preferences," or "feelings" because we have forgotten that we once thought, or could have thought, otherwise. At this point, these cultural messages could stop coming at us, and we would still "buy in," because by then we believe these messages "all by ourselves."

We become invested in being as close to "normal" as we can, because we see and feel that "normal" people have the most power in this culture; the further we are from "normal," or powerful, the less control we have over our lives, and the more endangered we become. People in targeted categories get sick more often, die sooner, have trouble getting jobs and promotions, have less money, and therefore have less access to safe and appropriate housing and medical care. Seeing this inequality scares everyone, even the ones in power, because they know that becoming "abnormal" is only one category change away for everyone: a car accident can make anyone disabled; getting older happens if we live long enough; illness is unpredictable, and can be debilitating permanently; anyone can be labeled Homosexual and excluded, fired or even killed for that, even if the person is not Homosexual. This situation also makes most people angry.
But, instead of being angry at the unfair systems we have created, people get angry at each other, especially at people who seem less "normal" than we are. Many people spend lots of time and money trying to keep some members of certain groups from having a fair share of anything. As long as we spend our energy fighting for our "piece of the power pie" instead of trying to take it apart and remake a new power structure, we are continuing this terrible cycle.

Therefore, 4): Recognizing the hegemony is the first step to resisting these messages of negative, prejudiced and damaging cultural messages about women and men, attractiveness, sexual orientation, intelligence, age, family backgrounds, and other kinds of human characteristics and circumstances. Full resistance is called counter-hegemony. Counter-hegemony occurs when people are still connected to the same cultural message “machine,” but instead of “buying in,” they believe the opposite views. For example, the machine tells us “fat is ugly”; counter-hegemonic messages would sound like this: “I don’t care how I look,” or “Fat is beautiful.” Being in resistance, and making those counter-hegemonic moves are important steps to liberation from the hegemonic messages all together.

5) Liberation is the goal, but we don’t know exactly how that would look or sound, because we see few societies in which people are living that way. Examples of liberational thinking about appearance (which would include cultural ideas about attractiveness as well as “race”) could sound like this: “Everyone looks different from each other, but different is fine.” or, “Appearance is irrelevant. How I or anyone else looks doesn’t matter at all.” About gender, sex roles, “race” and other ideas, we who are liberated might believe: “People can be divided up into many different categories, for a variety of reasons. The human categories of biological sex, ‘race’ and age are not usually important, or no more important than hair color, height, blood type or shoe size. There are not just two sexes, since bodies come in a range of types. There are not just four or five ‘races,’ since most people have been traveling and intermarrying, having children
together through choice or rape, for thousands of years. There are many ways to be who we are that are not based upon our physical selves." Liberation, from oppression and oppressive messages, and creating public performances which challenge hegemony are two of the major goals of our group work (published in a slightly altered form as Ember, 1995).
H: ADDITIONAL QUOTES AND DATA SAMPLES
Since there were many outstanding statements that could not be included in theody of the thesis, but which nevertheless caught my attention, I decided to offer them here. Readers who want to know more from each author may then continue their studies.

Quotes from Various Sources

...the transformation of an individual or a society comes when those playing by the rules realize that it is the game itself that must be changed. ... these categories [heterosexual, bisexual, and homosexual] reflect a rigidity that is not often found in the everyday lives of people. (Sears, 1992a, p. 154)

McKinney (1994) listed adolescents' five responses to the prospect of change: 1) "anticipation," which he described as "looking forward with pleasure"; 2) "escape," which he said was an urge to "go forward to leave the past behind"; 3) "petrification," in which teens would become "static," "clinging," or "scared"; 4) "apprehension," which included both a "fear of moving and of sameness"; and, 5) "constancy-seeking," which foregrounds the "fear of the maturing process and of transitions" (pp. 252 - 254).

The postmodern recognition of the instability of the self, of openness in the choosing of identities, seems to many to reduce everything to flux: there are no fixed boundaries between people, only arbitrary labels. Identities are relativized, and there it seems to some diminished. yet we cling to them....Identities, personal and social, are both precarious and essential, historically shaped and personally chosen, affirmations of self and confirmations of our social being. (Weeks, 1995, p. 33)

...the meaning of authenticity is itself something that has to be fought for, and constructed....[It] generally implies being true to oneself, to one's own desires and wishes, and implies a fixity of the self that cultural trends have combined to undermine. (Weeks, 1995, p. 67)

Authenticity, if it is to have any useful meaning in relationship to sexuality, must involve more than either a realization of a putative true self, or a dissolution of the self in the pursuit of polymorphous pleasures. It requires some perception of the meaningfulness of our practices of freedom; what we exercise them for. The autonomous self does not exist outside time and context. It has to be created. (Weeks, 1995, p. 69)
[If sexual identities’] historicity, openness, flexibility and conditional nature — fictional qualities — are acknowledged fully, they provide the opportunity for thinking about not only who you are, but also about who you want to become. They reveal the power relations that inhibit change by making power visible. By interrogating and challenging normalizing and imposed forms of identity, it becomes possible to invent oneself anew. Identities in this sense are less about expressing an essential truth about our sexual being; they are more about mapping out different values: the values of autonomy, relationships, of belonging, of difference and diversity. (Weeks, 1995, p. 100)

Heath used Dorst (1989) to state:
Community studies can no longer take historical identities as given; researchers must attend much more to ways that groups and institutions create alternative historical identities for themselves. (Heath, 1995, pp. 126 - 127)

"... [T]here is no natural, given, essential sexuality that is repressed or revealed; rather, all sex is culturally mediated" (Raymond, 1994, p. 134).

"We need to consider the processes whereby, for each individual, either stability or change [sic] of sexual identity occurs.... individuals may undergo one of more redefinitions of sexual identity during their lifetime" (Richardson, 1993, p. 121)

...a postmodern definition of self and identity works from a desire to provoke difference rather than unity; a critical notion underscores the need for self-empowerment and the development of voice. (Tierney, 1993, p. 126)

By utilizing critical theory I work from the assumption that individuals have a significant part in the creation of the reality that surrounds them, but they do not have a linearly deterministic role.... [T]he social, cultural, and historical contexts in which individuals are embedded play an important role in the creation and substantiation of what individuals come to define as reality.... [O]ne of the central roles of research and [educational] institutions is to enable people to come to terms with their own historical circumstances. (Tierney, 1993, p. 129)
Gender Data Samples

(2/7/94, p. 9, Field Notes, after Break, before WoT? time)
[Brigitta, Holly, and Amber were all absent for this meeting, so Marcy was the only female member present.]

Nick: This is going to be a pretty uneventful WoT? ! [since there are] "not many people here. [Sounds disappointed. As if "eventful" resides with Brigitta and Holly, or all three absent girls.]

(2/28/94, p. 2, Field Notes, arrival time)

Daitch: [to Brigitta and Holly] Hey, Brigitta and Holly: Do you like my earrings? [He swings his head so the 2"- silver hoops on each ear swing.] I got them at the mall.
[Brigitta and Holly don’t answer, but smile at Daitch.]

Sexual Orientation Samples

(11/29/93, p. 4, Field Notes, What's on Top? Time)

Keith: I broke up with [my girlfriend] yesterday... it’s OK... we were fighting constantly for two weeks... it was hurting our friendship... we decided to cut it off. [Said without much affect, very matter-of-fact.]

(2/7/94, p. 7, Field Notes, Theatre Skills Time)
[While rehearsing for the play they will put on for the public in three weeks, they videotape their rehearsal and then watch it and make comments.]

Travis: [about the group on tape, which includes himself] What a bunch of queers!

(2/14/94, p. 11, Field Notes, Group Counseling Time)
[Amber had been absent for several meetings because of Drivers' Education classes. During that time, she had written a letter to Brigitta, and one to Tony/the group, about being angry at Brigitta over a confidentiality breach. Here, they discussed the incident and the letter, and their interpersonal problem, in front of the group, at Tony's instigation.]

Brigitta: [agrees to discuss it] [We had a] fight about something wicked "gay." [She tells story, from her perspective, and calls the incident] a communication problem.
Safety Samples

(2/7/94, p. 2, Field Notes, Arrivals)
[Condor and Marcy were playing with a handpuppet brought by Tony.]
Condor: [to Marcy] He’s part of the group, now: you’d better give him some respect!

(3/21/94, pp. 5 - 6, Theatre Skills time)
[They have been voting on a title for their play. There were lots of comments, and then an argument erupted.]
Brigitta: [to Condor, about his vote] That’s "queer!"
Condor: [to Brigitta] Go to hell! [shouts]
Tony: [to Brigitta and Condor] Don’t say that! [angrily.]
Amber and Daitch: [also protest] Don’t do that here!
Brigitta: [defending herself] I didn’t say he was "weird," I said that was "queer!"
Condor: [to Brigitta] That’s worse! I would’ve apologized if it was just "weird"!
[Lots of talk, comments.]
Tony: [impatient] Let each person vote!
[Condor and Brigitta argue over titles. It gets mean-sounding.]
Daitch: Please don’t be mean: we don’t be mean to each other here! [pleads with them.]
[Brigitta sees Daitch is upset. She gets up and goes to hug Condor, very showily, lays/sits on top of him rather hard.]
Nick: [protesting Brigitta's behavior towards Condor] That’s sexual harassment!
Condor: [chair tips from their combined weight.] I don’t want to die! [seems really nervous, not pleased.]
Tony: [to Brigitta] Please go to your seat! [sternly.]
Brigitta: [to Tony] I had to give Condor a hug! [whining]
[Brigitta goes back to her own seat.]

Connection Samples

(10/4/93, p. 13, What's on Top?)
[They are discussing calling one another.]
Daitch: I like getting phone calls.
Condor: So do I, but no one calls me.
Brigitta: I’ll call everyone.

(11/8/93, p. 5, Field Notes, What's on Top?)
Holly: ...I don’t want to take up too much time, but I have a lot to say. [She was sick last week and missed group meetings] I’m glad to be back.
They have been playing a version of Hollywood Squares which Tony made up, with questions about HIV transmission and infection, testing, etc., as the topics, in preparation for a performance they will be doing. There is a girls' team and a boys' team, at Tony's instigation. Just after the game, it is Break time. Holly is absent today.

 Brigitta lays in Amber's arms, on her shoulders, talking to the others from this position.

Amber returns without her skirt on (has on tights and a long shirt). Holly has it; is trying it on.

Condor and Amber hug.

They have been doing Fluid Sculptures, on the topic of "What it is like to live with HIV/AIDS." Some watch, some do; then they switch, about three or four up at a time.

Nick stands, with his arm around Amber.

Daitch leaves; I think to use the bathroom.

Holly and Brigitta hug, dance a bit together when it's time to trade places.

Brigitta sits, and watches the next group, which includes Holly.

Next scene. In the audience, Brigitta sits with legs on Holly.

Holly: [to Brigitta] **You are such a pain!** [Holly laughs. Holly hits Brigitta.]

Brigitta tickles and touches Holly.

Holly does it back. Scene is going on, now.

Holly and Brigitta hold hands through most of it.

Brigitta also holds onto Marcy's chair, on her other side.

Condor gives Holly a suck on his lollipop.

**Brigitta:** I love all of you. I'll miss you Thursday.

Amber's legs are on Condor's lap. Condor's hand is on her legs.
[2/14/94, p. 4, Field Notes, *Warm-Ups*)
[They went over to make a standing-up circle. As they moved from the sitting circle, many made friendly, connecting gestures towards one another.]

[Keith and Daitch "slap five."]

[2/14/94, p. 5, Field Notes, *after Warm-Ups*)
[Brigitta had been sick and absent for several meetings, and seemed still to be quite ill, coughing, moaning, and weak throughout this meeting. Several members moved into positions close to her and touched her in various loving ways during this meeting.]

[Brigitta lays on floor, belly down.]

[Holly sits on Brigitta's butt and massages her back.]

[Condor does a backwards somersault, hurts himself, moans.]

[Daitch lays flat on his back.]

[Brigitta and Holly lay on the floor, hugging, Brigitta on top of Holly.]

[Brigitta coughs.]

[Holly pats Brigitta's back.]

[2/14/94, p. 5, Field Notes, *Scenework*)
[Just after the above events, rehearsal for their play began.]

[Condor and Brigitta sit together to watch. Brigitta has her head on Condor's lap, Condor is sitting up.]

[Actors do opening.]

Tony: [stops them, asks] *for more fluidity [and] focus on togetherness.*

[Condor rubs Brigitta's back lightly, massaging her shoulders, which are bare.]

[Brigitta is dressed in very little clothing, especially for Feb. and someone who is ill. Her top continually falls off her shoulders, and she has no sweater even though she has many sweaters that I've seen her wear. Gender or laundry issues?]
(2/28/94, p. 22, Field Notes, Group Counseling time)
[Tony created an activity in which members were to draw their personal "dragon" and the "jewel" it guarded, and then bring the drawings to the group to share and discuss them. Condor was talking about a girl he wanted to date, and the way her current boyfriend dressed, in order to describe his artwork.]

Brigitta: I love you, Condor!

(3/7/94, p. 7, Field Notes, Arrivals)
[Holly noticed Marcy's haircut.]

Holly: Marcy, I like your new haircut!

(3/7/94, p. 11, Field Notes, WoT? time.)
[Brigitta was often the most verbally expressive of her love for the group, or for individual members. There were several occasions of this on this date. At this meeting, she explained the reason that she became so verbal about her love for her friends.]

Brigitta: I love this girl [Holly] more than anyone in the whole world (except for S, who killed herself)... I won't talk about her [Holly] behind her back — we agreed not to...

(3/7/94, pp. 12 - 13, Field Notes, just before Break time)
[Holly has to leave early.]
[Tony gives Holly her papers about the AO final performance.]

Brigitta: [to Holly] I love you!
Holly: [to Brigitta] I love you, too!
Brigitta: [to Holly, as she leaves] I love you, Sweet Pea!

(3/7/94, p. 15, Field Notes, Business time)
Brigitta: I tell everyone I love them because of my friend's suicide. All the time, I tell them. I really do love you, Condor. [said lightly, but earnestly.]

(3/14/94, p. 3, Field Notes, Activity time.)
[Members have been working on, or just completed, my research survey. Some have taken a Break, some were still working on it, some were talking quietly. Daitch and Holly were both finished. Holly had already expressed a lot of sadness and worry in an earlier part of the meeting, and had cried. Here, Daitch talked to her.]

Daitch: [talks to Holly] Are you tired, or are you depressed, or a little of both? [seems concerned.]
Holly: [sits on floor heavily, nods to Daitch] Both. [said in an exhausted, depressed, despairing tone.]

(3/14/94, p. 7, Field Notes, Break time)
[Daitch shares soda with Condor.]
Differential Authenticity Samples

(2/28/94, p. 1, Field Notes, Arrivals)
[Daitch often arrived first, or with no other members, for meetings. Usually Tony was already there before any members arrived, but on this date only I was there.]

[As I get ready to take notes, Daitch arrives, alone, very chipper.]

Daitch: Yes, it's the "me." Yes, it's me. Yes it's the only queer in the whole place! [He half-sings, shouts as he enters saying this. When he sees me, he smiles, and goes to put his stuff down. Then he comes over to me, sees the chairs are all disarranged, and says excitedly and conspiratorially, to me] C'mon, let's you and me set up the chairs and we'll be the leader instead of Tony! [He actively moves the chairs into a circle.]

Me: [As he does, I consider what to say. Since I don't want to do that, since I want to be writing and not using my bad leg so much, I say, jokingly] You do it, and you'll be the only leader!

(3/14/94, p. 11, Field Notes, WoT?)
[Members had been sharing, taking turns. Tony asked members with stepparents to state what they call them. Daitch told a long story about being asked to call his stepfather "Dad," and his angrily refusing. Daitch then talked about his biological father, and he abruptly changed his demeanor.]

Daitch: My real dad sends me letters [from prison, where he has been, for murder, for most of Daitch's life]... I cry whenever I read one.
CURRENTLY INTERESTING CATEGORIES:
Safety (physical and emotional; in and out of group time)
Interpersonal Connection between group members
Gender roles and ideas about gender
Sexual Orientation issues and questions
Espousing one’s Personal Philosophy overtly (leader’s or member’s)
Physical Appearance/Attractiveness issues

LESS INTERESTING CATEGORIES, CURRENTLY:
Divorce in one’s family
Mental Health, incl. suicide, of member, or member’s family members or friends
Participation in group activities, or non-p/ passing
Jail in members’ lives or members’ families’ lives
Cultural differences or stereotyping
Anomalies in action or speech which strike members’ as out of place for that moment

POTENTIAL REPORT TITLE, & EXPLANATION OF THAT AND OF FIELD NOTE SECTIONS SELECTION FOR CONCEPTUAL MEMO #3:

"WHO I AM HERE IS NOT WHO I ALWAYS AM."

This relates to the awareness, expressed by group members and by the leader, that the ways they behave and communicate in this group, both for the therapeutic and role play times, are different from the ways they present outside of this group time.

One example: Condor (male) had performed with another of Tony’s (the leader) groups at Condor’s high school in October. Tony remarked to me after the subsequent group meeting I attended that Condor “was so different in that performance than he is here.” He went on to describe Condor in that setting as “focused,” “serious,” “attentive” and almost a “different person.” At group meetings, contrastingly, Tony described Condor as “clownish,” “distracted,” and often off-task. Tony speculated that Condor “feels safer here [in group], and can let more of his different selves show.” He discussed with me how group members often tell him that they can “try out other versions of themselves” in group because they know “no one will make fun of them.”

I am becoming interested in how this analysis and speculation play out in the data I collect, in my observations and in my future interviews. I’m looking through what I already have in order to see what “counts” to support or refute these ideas. I also want to see how, if, the negotiation of each member’s social identities interacts with these notions.

By social identities, I mean the member’s presentation and self-awareness of his/her gender roles, sexual orientation & its development, ethnic/racial background(s), socioeconomic class background(s), religious affiliation, if
salient, and other aspects of one's social roles. I am particularly interested in gender and sexual orientation at this time, since this is largely a white, working & middle-class, native USA, English-speaking group. [One student may have a mixed ethnic/racial heritage (African-American- or Latino-American- Euro-American, but this has not been mentioned or explained, so I am speculating about this based entirely on my own assessment of his physical appearance and his family and given names.]

Feeling safe enough in this group to allow oneself to be affectionate and open, or honest with each other and especially to same-sex friends, while not worrying about being called "Gay," or "Bi," also has come up in several members' contributions to group discussions. I am focusing on this aspect for this memo, looking at two of the girls, Brigitta and Holly. Other members' contributions will not be highlighted here, but there are many which are relevant.

Brigitta and Holly attend the same high school, and are one year apart in age (Brigitta is older). They did not know each other before this group began, except by sight.
FIELD NOTE SECTION(S): Three different sessions, about one month apart.

10/4/93, p. 16:

[Discussing talking on the phone with each other outside of group time, to offer and get support]. Brigitta says: “That’s it.” It’s “really cool” to share. “Guys have feelings, too.” ... “No one is less of a person or any less of a gender if they show their feelings or physical...” [She trails off, and Nick [another member] enters the discussion on another topic.]

p. 17:

[Close in time to the previous discussion. After a change of topic, they come back to talking about affection, for same-sex friends in particular.] Holly says that her friend of last year was Nick’s sister. She is her ‘best friend.” But they “aren’t Lesbians.” They “kissed, would hold hands.”

Tony [the leader] asks: “Would it be OK if you were?” Holly: “Not to me. It’s a sin in my religion.”

Tony asks if it would “be OK for others?” Holly: “They’re OK.”

[Others go on to say that being thought of as “Gay” or “Bi” is only a problem because others’ prejudices, but is not a problem for them.]

p. 18:

[During an intense sharing of personal issues, Tony has just cleared the floor for a new participant to talk.] Brigitta hesitates, looks around, and then speaks. She tells of being anorexic and bulimic since I was 10-years-old.” She just wanted everyone to “be aware of it.”
96 [Brigitta] said she is "very
97 sensitive" in this area. She
98 asked people not to use the words
99 "fat," "skinny," or others like
100 them because it "upsets" her to
101 hear them.

102
103 10/25/93, p. 13:
104 [During some quiet, intense
105 sharing, after the other group
106 leader has announced she is
107 leaving the group, and the group
108 has been processing this for over
109 an hour. They have been/continue
110 to be shifting physical positions
111 several times. Now, Holly sits
112 on the floor, with Brigitta’s
113 head in her lap.] Holly strokes
114 Brigitta’s hair. Brigitta closes
115 her eyes.

116 pp. 17-8:
117 Holly goes to sit between
118 Brigitta’s legs.
119 pp. 20-1:
120 Holly is in a chair ... Brigitta
121 leans against Holly’s legs...Holly
122 strokes Brigitta’s hair.

123 pp. 22:
124 Holly & Brigitta lay down,
125 Brigitta’s head is in Holly’s
126 lap, Holly behind Brigitta

127 11/1/93, p. 4:
128 [Before doing a complex rhythm
129 exercise for the second time,
130 after failing as a group to
131 master it the first time.] Braygitta
132 asks that they all sit
133 up. Brigitta slaps Holly’s butt.
134 Holly: “Ouch!” Holly sits up.

135 pp. 5:
136 [Before doing some role plays,
137 Tony says:] “Pick partners.”
138 Brigitta shouts: "I want to be
139 with Condor." [sounds like a
140 sing-song] They arrange to do it
141 together the second time, since
142 he already is partners with
143 Nick... Holly gave no obvious
144 reaction to Brigitta’s
145 announcement of her preference,
146 and worked very well with her for
147 their first scene together.

148 [Pairs for first scenes: Amber -
149 Datch; Nick - Condor; Keith -
150 Travis; Marcy - Tony; Holly -
151 Brigitta.]
THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE:
So, for example, looking at [these pieces] of data, I would ask: How do Holly and Brigitta see their connections to each other? Since Brigitta and Holly have adamantly asserted their Heterosexuality on many occasions, both overtly and by frequently discussing their experiences with their respective boyfriends, how do they view their interpersonal and physical connections? How do the cultural acceptance of female affection without assumptions of Homosexuality, and the cultural presumption of Heterosexuality, operate consciously in their perceptions and decisions? How do Holly’s professed religious beliefs, which prohibit Homosexuality as a lifestyle for her, and Brigitta’s self-acknowledged obsession with her own appearance, come into play in their relationship?

How does Holly respond/feel when Brigitta chooses Condor over her when partnering choices are offered? What are the influences of the cultural and institutional privileging of males over females in this situation?

How are these feelings, perceptions and ideas communicated? I want to notice their facial expressions, physical proximity, space and touching, other body language messages, as well as speech acts. I want to try to understand what is purposeful to each of them (is discussed overtly) and what seems to be more unconsciously done.

If the data become available, I may also look at how Condor and Nick, who profess (from Condor’s perspective, and Nick doesn’t disclaim it) to be “best friends,” live their relationship within the group. Are they physically or verbally affectionate with each other? Who initiates contact? How do their fears/worries/concerns about being perceived as Gay or Bisexual affect their communication with each other?

The interactions between Condor and Brigitta fit into this in a variety of ways, and I want to examine those as well. It might then be interesting to compare this pair of friends with Holly and Brigitta regarding gender and sexual orientation roles, perceptions, and “public” choices.

INTERPRETATION AND JUSTIFICATION:

Brigitta seems interested in creating and maintaining social and physical connectedness, and in having others want this, also. She wants this more than she wants to support traditional male role behaviors, which, by her definition, wouldn’t involve verbal and emotional sharing [lines 4 - 6]. She also avows her own Heterosexuality often (other data available supports this; see last pages of this memo), which may serve as “protection” against anyone’s perceiving her as a Lesbian or Bisexual because of her overt affection towards Holly.

She wants physical connection with Holly, especially when one or both is upset, but even when they’re not [lines
Knowing Holly’s experiences with previously being called a Lesbian, and knowing Holly’s religious beliefs prohibiting Lesbianism [lines 11 - 16], Brigitta nonetheless experiences and solicits physical closeness and affection from Holly quite often: it’s mutual [lines 29 - 30; 33; 35]. Holly is verbally clear about her Heterosexuality, and also clear about accepting whatever others choose for themselves sexually [lines 12 - 16]. She accepts, invites, and initiates herself physical closeness with Brigitta [lines 29 - 30; 33; 35; 37; 40 - 41].

Both of these young women seek out and enjoy each other and their new friendship. They attend the same school, and often refer very positively to in-school, bus trip, or after-school contact with each other (other data confirm this often). They both have other friends predating each other, and within the group each is forming alliances besides with each other. Brigitta is more “out-going” than Holly, so Brigitta is often the one who seeks other contact, but Holly seems to accept this easily [lines 45 - 46].

Holly and Brigitta seem to feel safe enough in the group to disclose very personal and difficult information [lines 10 - 12; 21 - 25]. This type of disclosure is common with some, but not all, of the group members by this point in the group’s life.

Some of the information Brigitta shows has varied credibility, though; or else, she has changed in her feelings since disclosing it. An example is her claim of being upset if she hears the word “skinny.” This wasn’t borne out two weeks later:

10/25, p. 19:
Amber hugs Karla [the leader who is leaving] next. “She’s so skinny, she’s making me sick!” “She smells good, too!” about Karla.
Condor, hugging Karla: “You’re so short!”
Amber, repeats: “You’re so skinny!” about Karla, to Condor.
I look over at Brigitta, but she is not reacting in any way I can see to Amber’s comments.

I wonder if Brigitta feels so safe, or secure, that usual “triggers” don’t operate? I wonder if Holly feels so safe, or secure, that usual safeguards or restraints (which might prevent her from being physically affectionate with Brigitta) aren’t needed?
REFERENCES


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