



Lesbian Lives: Psychoanalytic Narratives Old and New

Maggie Magee, Diana C. Miller

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In this groundbreaking re-visioning of lesbianism, Magee and Miller transcend a literature that, for decades, has focused on the timeworn and misconceived task of formulating a lesbian-specific psychology. Rather, they focus on a set of interrelated issues of far greater salience in our time: the developmental and psychological consequences of identifying as homosexual and of having lesbian relationships. Their consideration of these issues leads to a rigorous review of major psychoanalytic and biological theories about female homosexuality and a probing examination of current notions of gender identity. These tasks set the stage for Magee and Miller's own model of psychologically mature sexuality between members of the same sex.

The developmental and clinical issues taken up in specific chapters of *Lesbian Lives* include the challenges facing lesbian adolescents; the psychological and social significance of "coming out"; the various meanings and contexts of coming out as a gay or lesbian analyst; the interaction of individual psyche and social context in clinical work with lesbian patients; and the history of homosexual therapists and psychoanalytic training. The chapter on "Bryher," the lesbian-identified life partner of the poet Hilda Doolittle (Freud's patient "H.D."), relying on unpublished documents, is not only a wonderful exemplification of themes developed throughout the work, but an invaluable contribution to psychoanalytic history.

Lesbian Lives is a heartening sign of the generous scholarship and humane impulse that are transforming psychoanalysis in our time. In writing infused with an experiential immediacy born of personal participation in the stories they tell, Magee and Miller weave a multiplicity of narratives into a fabric of explanation far richer, far more colorful --far truer to lived experience--than anything psychoanalysis has heretofore offered on the subject.

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