

Spring 1-1-2016

Networks of Many Loves: a History of Alternative Media in the Polyamory Movement

Megan Hurson

University of Colorado at Boulder, megan.hurson@colorado.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholar.colorado.edu/jour_gradetds

 Part of the [Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Ethnicity in Communication Commons](#), [Mass Communication Commons](#), and the [Sociology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Hurson, Megan, "Networks of Many Loves: a History of Alternative Media in the Polyamory Movement" (2016). *Journalism & Mass Communication Graduate Theses & Dissertations*. 34.
https://scholar.colorado.edu/jour_gradetds/34

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by Journalism & Mass Communication Program at CU Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journalism & Mass Communication Graduate Theses & Dissertations by an authorized administrator of CU Scholar. For more information, please contact cuscholaradmin@colorado.edu.

Spring 1-1-2016

Networks of Many Loves: a History of Alternative Media in the Polyamory Movement

Megan Hurson

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholar.colorado.edu/jour_gradetds

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by Journalism & Mass Communication Program at CU Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journalism & Mass Communication Graduate Theses & Dissertations by an authorized administrator of CU Scholar. For more information, please contact cuscholaradmin@colorado.edu.

NETWORKS OF MANY LOVES:
A HISTORY OF ALTERNATIVE MEDIA IN THE POLYAMORY MOVEMENT

by

MEGAN HURSON

B.A., Pennsylvania State University, 2005

M.A., Temple University, 2012

*A dissertation submitted to the
Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Colorado in partial fulfillment
of the requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Media Studies*

2016

This thesis titled:
Networks of Many Loves: A History of Alternative Media in the Polyamory Movement
written by Megan Hurson
has been approved for the Department of Media Studies

Dr. Polly McLean, Ph.D.

Dr. Patrick Greaney, Ph.D.

Dr. Janet Jacobs, Ph.D.

Dr. Kelty Logan, Ph.D.

Dr. Michael Tracey, Ph.D

Date_____

The final copy of this dissertation has been examined by the signatories, and we find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards of scholarly work in the above mentioned discipline.

IRB protocol # 14-0150, 15-0101

ABSTRACT

Hurson, Megan (Ph.D., Media Studies)

Networks of Many Loves: A History of Alternative Media in the Polyamory Movement

Thesis directed by Associate Professor Polly McLean

This dissertation examines the role of media and media technologies in the polyamory movement from its emergence in 1984 until present day, 2016. Polyamory individuals and the media they produced have helped educate and support individuals within the polyamory community, as well as create external awareness and increase visibility in the public sphere. The shift from modern traditional communication technologies which fosters one-to-many communication models, to postmodern alternative new media technologies which utilize many-to-many communication models are mapped upon the changing social and cultural landscape as it pertains to identity formation, particularly as it relates to the shift in the relationship models of polyamory from a deconstructionist nuclear family model to a queering individualistic non-hierarchical model. Employing textual and discourse analysis of the archived material from the Kenneth R. Haslam Collection at *The Kinsey Institute*, as well as conducting semi-structured interviews of major polyamory media practitioners, this project illuminates the ways in which media have been strategically used to achieve public visibility and to counter mononormative discourses that privilege monogamy as the normative.

DEDICATION

Over the course of one's life there are a handful of people who have truly inspired you to continue on your journey up the windy, snake-ridden, dusty hill, carrying a bunch of heavy books on your back that you checked out from the library for too long. There is one person in particular, however, who was waiting for me on top of that hill, my grandfather, Raymond Hurson.

I cannot express my gratitude and love for my grandpa in his continued support, compassion, and praise of me along this journey. Nor will I ever conceptualize the number of people he has boasted about my journey, including his pharmacist, and probably his proctologist.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Throughout my tenure at CU there has always been one person continually cheering me on, and making sure that I did not starve on Christmas when I had the flu. This individual has taught me patience, diligence, craftiness and cleverness, as well as provided endless support to me, even during times of my stubbornness. Thus I wish to acknowledge my appreciation for my dissertation chair, Dr. Polly McLean, for providing me the opportunity to work with her, to grow with her, and to come out on the other side with work that I am proud of.

I would also like to thank my other committee members for their support and participation in this process, Dr. Patrick Greaney, Dr. Janet Jacobs, Dr. Kelty Logan, and Dr. Michael Tracey.

Lastly, without a great cohort providing support, and always a beer or wine glass to cheers, getting through the program would have been impossible and quite the bore. Thank you to Tyler Rollins and Giulia Evolvi for walking this path with me and showing up to every academic event as the best cohort that ever could consume as many open bar drinks as possible.

More importantly, however, has been the kindness, patience, and tender loving care of my partner, Aaron DeLeon. Thank you for nursing me back to health after a torn ACL, encouraging me to write through the pain, and for providing me with a mirror to see the confidence in myself that I needed to finish.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER

I.	INTRODUCTION	1
	Problem Statement & Significance of Research	1
II.	DON'T FORGET YOUR ROOTS	12
	Non-Monogamy and the Emergence of Polyamory	12
	What's in a Name?.....	20
III.	LITERATURE REVIEW	25
	Sexual Identity Politics	25
	Mainstream Mediation of Deviant Discourses	32
	Canon of Polyamory Produced Media Texts	36
	Polyamory as a Reconstructive Space	39
	Polyamory as a Social Movement.....	45
IV.	THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS	47
	New Social Movements	47
	Alternative Media and Social Movements.....	55
	Resource Mobilization: Networks as Strategy.....	59
	The Public Sphere: Visibility as Strategy	71
	Queering Discourses: Social Construction as Strategy.....	81
	Lifestyle Movements	95
	Research Questions.....	96
V.	METHODS AND PROCEDURES.....	97
VI.	CENTRALIZING ORGANIZATIONS: BUILDING NON-TRADITIONAL NETWORKS THROUGH TRADITIONAL MEDIA.....	107
VII.	PIONEERS & VOYEURS.....	125
	Network Television & Polyamory	125
	Reality Television & Polyamory	143
	Radio & Polyamory	148

VIII.	VISIBILITY OF DISPARATE VOICES: THE INTERNET AS A SPACE OF CONNECTIVITY	152
	Activist Networks: Linking Ideas	152
	Critical Visibility: Locating Polyamory in Mainstream Media via Alan M.'s Polyamory in the Media Blog.....	155
	Intimacy Between Your Ears: Podcasting With Cunning Minx on Polyamory Weekly.....	161
	Bite-Sized Lovestyles: Tikva Wolf & Kimchi Cuddles' Comic ...	170
	Laughter is the Best Medicine: Terisa Greenan and <i>Family</i> Webisodes	178
IX.	CURATING THE MESSAGE	190
	Press Releases, Media Appearances, and Conferences: <i>Loving More's</i> Mainstream Initiatives	190
	Coming Out To The Public.....	191
	Loving More Today	197
	Uniting a Movement: Formation of the Polyamory Leadership Network.....	209
	Training Media Personalities: Joreth and the Polyamory Media Association.....	222
	More Than Two Publishing Houses: Franklin Veaux and <i>Thorntree</i> Press	229
	Continuing the Continuum of Sexuality: The Curation of the Dr. Kenneth Haslam M.D. Polyamory Collection at the Kinsey Institute	234
X.	INTIMATE PRIVILEGE: AT THE INTERSECTION OF RACE, CLASS, GENDER, ABILITY, AND SEXUALITIES	237
	Intimate Privilege in the Public Sphere	237
	Social Media Communities: Ron Young & the Black and Poly <i>Facebook</i> Group	243
	Featuring a Plurality of Voices: Kevin Patterson & the Poly Role Models Blog.....	253
	Intersectional Polyamory Representations.....	260

XI.	DISCUSSION	269
XII.	CONCLUSION.....	297
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....		299
APPENDIX.....		312
	Glossary of Terms.....	312
	Figures.....	314

FIGURES

Figure

1. Dimensions of Social Movement Analysis.....313
2. Map of Non-Monogamy.....314

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement & Significance of Research

Ménage à trois, threesome, swinging, don't ask/don't tell, 100 mile rule, open relationship, polygamy, affair, entanglement, infidelity, fling, liaison, and cuckoldry. Do I have your attention? All these labels are relationship models that fall under the non-monogamy umbrella, except for one— polyamory. Polyamory, a relationship model that includes multiple partners beyond the dyadic monogamous relationship, is predicated on openness, honesty, and ethical intimate and sexual relationships with the knowledge and consent of all parties involved. More succinctly, ethical non-monogamy. What makes polyamory distinct from all the aforementioned relationship models is the movement network that has been growing over the past thirty-two years, gaining polyamory visibility in the intimate public sphere.

Concomitantly, intimate spaces in the public sphere, particularly mass media discourses, representations, and narratives, have expanded to make visible alternative relationship models that have been forced to stay closeted, and made invisible for so long. No longer are we shocked by single parents like Murphy Brown; or taken aback by the meta narrative of Ellen DeGeneres' character 'coming out' on the *Ellen* show and herself in real life coming out on *Oprah* the day before; or surprised when the characters on *Sex In the City* advocate for promiscuity and self-pleasure. More recently, shows such as *The L Word*, *Queer as Folk*, *Big Love*, and *Sister Wives*, have all paved the way for sexualities that earned little spotlight in popular culture, but are now gaining more traction. In the past year or so, polyamory has been taking center stage as the next sexual relationship style to gain media visibility and momentum in popular culture.

A cursory look into polyamory representations in popular culture draws our attention way back to a 1933 movie, *Design For Living*, in which a woman is forced to choose between two men. While not necessarily as defining as polyamory is today, where partners don't have to choose, the narrative of choice for more than one partner made its way into film in the early part of the 20th century. Spike Lee directed *She's Gotta Have It* in 1986, a movie centering around a woman and her three lovers. Films such as *The Substitute Wife* and *A Husband, A Wife and a Lover*, acknowledge the role of a third romantic partners when declining health of one individual comes into play. It was no surprise then, when *Showtime*, a subscriber-based channel, created the first reality television show about polyamory, *Polyamory: Married and Dating*, which exposed audiences to the lives of triads, quads, and multi-partner relationship households.

More recently, *House of Cards*, a popular Netflix-produced series, prominently featured non-monogamy as the relationship style of lead characters, Frank and Claire Underwood. The momentous representation was picked up by *Slate*, *Bitch Magazine*, *The Irish Times*, *Psychology Today*, discussed heavily in the polyamory sub-reddit, showed up on Imgur, and on a whole host of poly-centric blogs lauding the show for its poly-positive dialogue from the feature character, Frank Underwood. Underwood explained to his wife about one of her lovers:

“He should stay on, because he can give you things that I can't. Look, Claire, we've been a great team. But one person—one person cannot give everything to another person. I can't travel with you. I don't keep you warm at night. I don't see you the way he sees you. It's not my permission to give, but you'll do what's right for you. But I want you to know, if you wanted, I know you'll be careful. And I'll be fine. I mean, if we're gonna go beyond marriage, let's go beyond it” (Dobbs, 2016).

As online dating tools have infiltrated dating trends, in January, the website *OKCupid* recognized multi-partner relationships by adding a function that allows people to link their profile to their other partners. If you list yourself on the website as “seeing someone” “married” or “in an open relationship” you can link your profile to all of those involved in your multi-

partner connection. According to demographic data on OKCupid, those who identify as being committed to monogamy are in the minority, 44% of users, whereas 24% of users identify as being interested in group sex, and 42% of users are interested in dating a person who is already involved in another relationship (Khazan, 2016).

Harnessing the social mantra regarding relationships, ‘it’s not official until it’s *Facebook* official’, Huffington Post, recognizing *Facebook*’s list of available relationship statuses (single, in a relationship, engaged, married, it’s complicated, in an open relationship, widowed, separated, divorced, in a civil union, in a domestic partnership) called for an inclusion of polyamory whereby users can choose more than one partner to link to their profile and show up in their friend’s newsfeeds (Nichols, 2016). As it stands, *Facebook* only allows you to link to one partner. In the past, *Facebook* gained recognition in 2015 by the LGBTQ community by including a gender-free form, in which an individual could write in their preferred gender instead of being limited to the pre-determined gender categories. A year prior, users were able to choose their preferred gender pronouns, a feature the *Facebook* team added in 2014, a team comprised of a transgender engineer who helped create the new options (Wong, 2015). Currently there is a Change.org petition with over 3,000 signatures calling on *Facebook* to allow multi-partner profile linkage in the same way *OKCupid* recalibrated their profiles.

However, not all relationship technologies are getting a fair shake these days. *The Poly Life*, an app created for polyamorous individuals to manage their multiple relationships, has been getting a lot of negative feedback from the polyamorous community, specifically those who have embraced the more fluid, non-hierarchical relationship model. *The Poly Life* has features that allows a user to ‘rank’ their partners from primary, secondary, tertiary, and so on, and also keep track of what level of intimacy each partner is at, such as fluid-bonded (meaning having

unprotected sex), as well as who is considered family, and who is just considered a partner. The app was created by an anonymous polyamorous family with the assistance of a developer to allow polyamorous individuals to keep track of different date nights with his or her multiple partners. The feature with the most amount of backlash is the file upload for partner contracts, rules, and boundaries that pertain to each person in the hierarchy—a model of polyamory that many prominent polyamorous activists in the community feel is outdated and have sought to make visible the constraints and unequal power relationships that typically exist in these types of hierarchal models.

So while polyamory is a word that is becoming more and more common in everyday vernacular, as evidenced by the increase of media articles covering the subject, and more and more user applications recognizing their user base includes polyamorists, there are still people questioning the viability of the relationship model and whether culturally we are ready for a model that infiltrates our institutionally monogamous bound ways of ‘doing’ things the way that monogamy has constructed so many things we take for granted. In an article titled, *Has Polyamory Reached The Tipping Point?* marketing and social media blogger, Kitty Stryker, asks if polyamory has hit the saturation point in mainstream media, thus marking the death of the dyadic couple (2016). Stryker points to poly-centric conversation in magazines like *ELLE*, *Forbes*, and *Daily Mail*; more prominent exposure via a panel at SXSW featuring a new polyamory television show, *You Me Her*; as well as integration into the recent series of *The Bachelor* that may feature two women ‘winning’ the (final?) rose at the end, shattering the predictable monogamous fairy tale ending the series has maintained for its 20 seasons.

Stryker, however, despite highlighting all these popular culture representations asks the reader if we are really ready for mainstream media to provide us with accurate polyamory

depictions verbatim, as she argues what makes for compelling television are the age-old tropes of good versus evil, winners and losers, and a whole host of binaries that create tension and suspense; a binary that would be dismantled and flat-lined by eliminating the hard choices and decisions characters might make when only able to choose from two. Stryker speaks about the negotiations, and at times, lengthy and involved communicational dialogues practiced in polyamory relationships, arguing that these types of conversations are boring and are really about mundane household chores, which makes for lousy television. She aptly points out, “dogged attachment to monogamy over any other relationship style is part of what gives our media the passion and tension that viewers crave. It’s just no fun if people don’t have to make these choices . . . how can we, as consumers know our identities if we don’t have a team to cheer for?” (Stryker, 2016). Certainly there is an air of cynicism in her blogging, where she clues the reader in later when she mentions the end of television . . . until more creative writers are hired; but the pointed reference to consumer identities draws our attention to the consumption aspects of identity and representations in media.

Thus it seems technology, culture, media, and polyamory are close bedfellows these days. Yet, despite the strides for more inclusive relationship models, monogamy is still the dominant model, dyadic relationships are still privileged from a legal and governmental perspective, and polyamory is still often perceived as a relationship choice that entails lots of sex with lots of people, and still lacks the presentation of diversified models that make up ethical non-monogamy.

In the meantime, however, the cultural permeation of polyamory is gaining wider and wider visibility. The larger question then, is how did we get here? How has polyamory managed to garner more recognition in the public sphere by way of popular culture? Continual and increased

representations in popular culture being a pretty good indicator that the relationship model is trying to mark out some cultural permanence, rather than be perceived as a passing sexual trend.

In a 2014 *Rolling Stone* article, titled, *Tales From the Millennials Sexual Revolution*, Alex Morris seeks to connect the dots between polyamory, hookup culture, non-monogamy and the Millennial Generation's embrace of sexual fluidity bolstered by the peak of divorce rates in the '80s presenting a model of failing monogamy at the very birth of the Millennial Generation. Tying it to a recent trend in psychology called 'The New Monogamy,' a concept coined in the journal *Psychotherapy Networker*, Morris explains this new monogamy is "a type of polyamory in which the goal is to have one long-standing relationship and a willingness to openly acknowledge that the long-standing relationship might not meet each partner's emotional and sexual needs for all time" (Morris, 2014). The article reads like a how-to manual for polyamory couples, citing one person in a couple handing her partner *The Ethical Slut*, the seminal and often referenced primer or 'polyamory bible' for people looking to open up their relationship to multiple partner; coupled with the mentioning of 'Poly Cocktails,' a mixer group in NYC where non-monogamous individuals chat over cocktails and presumably find more partners to add to their relationships ala the long held traditional of attending monogamous style singles mixers. The article thus reduces polyamory to a simple progression in sexual evolution, bolstered by the Baby Boomers increase in pre-marital sex, rising divorce rates, and now skyrocketing sex into the 'no emotional intimacy required' zone as practiced by college students who are simply looking for pleasure rather than commitment. While these statements are certainly indicative of a more modern individual-centered culture, the cultural penetration of polyamory as a concept and model of ethical non-monogamy in alternative and mainstream media may lend itself to a larger understanding of polyamory visibility in the public sphere.

As Stuart Hall (1980) states, “in modern societies, the different media are especially important sites for the production, reproduction, and transformation of ideologies” and that media are “part of the dominant means of ideological production. What they ‘produce’ is, precisely, representations of the social world, images, descriptions, explanations and frames for understanding how the world is and why it works as it is said and shown to work” (34-35). Therefore, ideologies about sexuality, and the evolution of a particular sexuality should show up in different media.

As William Gamson, David Crouteau, William Hoynes & Theodore Sasson (1992) also posit, there are two realms in media discourse— the uncontested and contested. The uncontested situated with the presentation of facts about the world, framed in ways that are naturalized and unquestioned by audiences, a process referred to as ‘transparent descriptions of reality.’ These descriptions are not presented as interpretable, but rather taken for granted as the way things have always been. This realm of sexuality discourse presents as the normative compulsory monogamy narrative (Emens, 2004; Heckert, 2010; Ritchie & Barker, 2006) in which monogamy is factually presented as the way individuals have and should always partner up to maintain fidelity, but which does not draw our attention to the systemic manufacturing and construction of the normative that monogamy privileges and oppresses certain individuals (Peppermint, nd; Rambukkana, 2015).

The contested realm, on the other hand, is a site where struggle and contestation of discourses take place. Once a site of normalized discourses presenting a limited frame, now alternative media support alternative or oppositional discourses, often initiated by social movements, revealing divergent viewpoints, and disrupting hegemonic discourses (Gamson et al., 1992). This does not mean that the larger hegemonic discourses do not necessarily dissipate

or alter, but moments of rupture become visible and mediated which leaves the initial framing and naturalization unstable. Gamson et al. (1992) explain this limitation of media frames and their fragile structure:

This underlines the usefulness of framing as a bridging concept between cognition and culture. A cultural level analysis tells us that our political world is framed, that reported events are pre-organized and do not come to us in raw form. But we are active processors and however encoded our received reality, we may decode it in different ways. The very vulnerability of the framing process makes it a locus of potential struggle, not a leaden reality to which we all inevitably must yield (384).

Frames are not necessarily just the setting up of a particular event to be viewed in a certain way, rather frames can also be used to understand the process of meaning construction (Gamson et al. 1992, 385). In these instances, frames are read as the evolutionary story of actors competing to garner attention for their preferred frames. As Gamson et al. (1992) posits, “the media, in this view, provides a series of arenas in which symbolic contests are carried out among competing sponsors of meaning” (385). Thus the actors in the polyamory community are competing with the actors in, not just the media realm, but the entire institution of compulsory monogamy and its competing frames and systemic purveyance of monogamy as the normative.

One effective and continually utilized space of transforming symbolic discourses and media frames is found within the use of media in social movements. Tracing the evolution of media and media discourses within polyamory produced media will illuminate the changing cultural and technological environment that makes the polyamory community visible in the larger public sphere. Analyzing the history of a movement provides insight into changes that occur to the dominant discourses, changes in leadership and activist roles, and changes on how communication is more effectively achieved both internally and externally to publics within the polyamory community and publics outside of the polyamory community.

As our concept of social movements are no longer relegated to the solely political and labor-related, identity politics and identity movements are gaining larger traction and attention, some of which center around sexual identities as can be widely framed within the continuing evolution of the feminist movement, LGBTQ rights movements, and more alternative models of sexualities and sexual practices. The obvious media-related trappings of any periphery or non-normative sexuality, specifically polyamory, is held captive to the ‘slippery slope’ mantra in which dominant news framing negatively stigmatizes subordinate sexualities with parallels of extreme sexual behaviors such as bestiality, pedophilia, and associations with polygamous relationship styles as witnessed predominately in mainstream news through a Mormon-religious lens as restrictive, oppressive, and abusive (Bennion, 2012). Tracing the burgeoning progress of same-sex marriage legislation that now shifts our discourse from ‘gay marriage’ to ‘marriage equality’ with the passing of marriage for all persons, these negative narratives seem rote, but nonetheless are still part and parcel of the larger power/knowledge (Foucault, 1980) struggle that heteronormative sexuality discourses utilize to maintain a dominant narrative the general public encounters and naturalizes as the normative. The history of the polyamory movement can thus be situated along with the history of changing sexuality discourses in our culture and as presented in re-presentations in mainstream media.

Foucault (1980) argues, only after examination did discourses of sexuality produce power; prior to this, sexual acts were just acts, but once those acts were tied to a subject in a process of revealing/confession, they became truths via the construction and legitimation of expert knowledge. The examiner, or recorder then becomes a validator of the truths of the confession, “the master of truth” (Foucault, 1980, 67). Thus the examiner, those who have been charged with presenting and creating knowledge, are also employed with re-presenting these

knowledges. Mass media texts can be thought of as a collective of re-presenters, examiners, and creators of knowledge. This notion is backed by Ritchie & Barker (2006) who contend that “the language around us shapes our self-identities and our understanding of sexual identity depends on the language of sexuality available to us” (585). If media present a frame of non-normative sexuality discourses, there are typically attempts to ensure the audience knows that the dominant discourse of heteronormativity is the preferred reading, constructing the alternative as a subordinate, and less than favorable possibility to maintain heteronormativity as the prevailing ideology.

In contradistinction to mass media, alternative media, as produced by those within the polyamory community, offers this reconstructive, oppositional and contested space in which polyamory media practitioners are able to construct discourses for their internal publics, as well as construct positive information and representations provided to external publics, creating opportunities to provide more accurate representations of ethical non-monogamy models, and provide external audiences with models that are not necessarily, or accurately, represented in the mainstream.

Furthering this construction of ideologies via the circulation of media texts and media discourses, Hank Johnston (2014) draws on the importance of media texts from within a group, rather than about a group, proposing that:

texts give insights into the shape of a group’s communicative behaviors, or its discourse. Discourse, simply stated, is what is said in a group, how it’s said, and how it’s interpreted. While it is diverse and multifaceted, it is also the connective tissue of a group’s collective interests...the totality of a group’s words and meanings can itself be understood as a text performed by the participants (78).

Therefore the aim of the study is two-fold– understanding the historical evolution of a communities usage of media for external publics and visibility within the public sphere, but also

analyzing these media texts from a production and network perspective to determine the role of polyamory media practitioners in the community internally. Tracing the history of the polyamory movement via its use of media and media discourses can potentially be mapped upon the changing dynamics of community, individuality, and sexual fluidity, and provide insight into the question, 'how did we get here?' as asked above. More importantly, by situating the discourses within a community, it elevates the conversation around polyamory as a viable alternative to monogamy as social movements are formations which groups give voices to their concerns about individual rights, recognition, tolerance, acceptance, and the well-being of themselves and others by engaging in a collective voice in the public sphere.

CHAPTER TWO: DON'T FORGET YOUR ROOTS

Although polyamory falls under the larger non-monogamy umbrella, it is important to note that the following study only analyzes the polyamory community, specifically tracing its roots to particular leaders and texts that are notable within the polyamory community. While there is a great deal of overlap between the polyamory community and other non-monogamy models, such as swinging, BDSM, and open-marriages, the emphasis is not on these intersecting communities, but on the media and media practitioners that subscribe to the narrow definition of polyamory as ethical non-monogamy. Before the word was coined, other terminologies were used to describe ethical non-monogamy, and are explored in the chapters below, but it is important to note that while using different language, the principal action and ideologies are the same, unlike the other non-monogamy models (see figure 1., for map of non-monogamies).

Ethical Non-monogamy and the Emergence of Polyamory

Non-monogamy and group marriages are not a new phenomenon, but rather can be traced to religious-based groups in the nineteenth century, specifically noted as originating with the utopic Oneida community (see Anapol, 2010 for more early non-monogamous groups). Oneida, founded in upstate New York in 1848, was premised on the notion of complex group marriage which translated to everyone in the community being “married” to one another, the practice of mandating members to have sex with one another non-exclusively, which often led to breaking up intimate relations between just two people to maintain this openness. As Anapol (2010) noted, within the Oneida community, ‘love of many’ was witnessed as the better way to live to be closer to God. As professed by the founder, “the new commandment is that we love one another,

not by pairs, as in the world, but en masse” (Barnard, 2007) Through the practice of coitus reservatus, a method in which the men would abstain from orgasm to prevent the act of procreation, control over men’s bodies regulated the outcome of sexual desires (D’emilio & Freedman, 1988). Younger males, who were not as well practiced with this method would be encouraged to have sexual relations with menopausal women to prevent childbirth (D’emilio & Freedman, 1988). So while these alternative models of community rejected the norm of sex for procreation, and the traditional family unit, they still practiced social control within their communities.

Another non-monogamous community frontrunner was influenced by science fiction books, specifically Robert Heinlein’s book, *Stranger in a Strange Land*. Oberon Zell and his wife, Morning Glory Zell, formed the Church of All World’s (CAW) in 1969. The church’s philosophy was influenced by Heinlein’s characters questioning the possessiveness inherent in monogamy, rather, offering up a new religion based on sharing (including intimate partners) that permeated the philosophy of Oberon Zell and his neo-pagan followers (Anapol, 2010). Oberon Zell likens shared intimate networks to archaic strategies of marrying princes and princesses from one country to another to maintain neutral alliances, but contemporizing the usefulness of these networks by pointing to the availability of a large pool of individuals who can be called upon to help out in instances of moving or providing social support when necessary (Anapol, 2010).

The modern polyamory movement, however, can be more closely linked to the deconstructionist free love counterculture movement in the 1960s and 1970s, a time when individuals were starting to question the heteronormative nuclear family standard, specifically the value in monogamy (Sheff, 2012). In the instances of the free love movement, however, the

emphasis was on self-pleasure and individual liberation from traditional society norms, rather than committed relationships and shared group resources. The fear of STDs and AIDS in the early 80s turned many people off from this continued sexual exploration, and many open relationships were once again forced underground as monogamy once again dominated relationship styles (Khazan, 2014, Conley et. al, 2012; Rust, 2003; Rubin, 2001). Many of the communes that were prolific during the '60s and '70s dismantled, and conversation waned in the mainstream news as *Time* magazine declared the sexual revolution over in 1984 (Anapol, 2010).

One such counterculture commune that sustained itself throughout the years and incorporated open relationships was the Kerista commune in the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood of San Francisco existing from 1971 to 1991. The Kerista commune at its maximum consisted of thirty members who lived in group marriages or single group marriages, often called Best Friend Identity Clusters (Anapol, 2010). They co-parented, shared economic responsibilities via pooled income, and functioned in a shared living environment inclusive of those in the commune community (Sheff, 2012). This type of living arrangement was coined as practicing polyfidelity, meaning the individuals would only commit to, and have sexual relations with, those in their group, thus maintaining fidelity within the chosen clusters, or the 'many' in the group.

Vasectomies were often the preferred choice of birth control as limitations on the number of children were enforced in the community (Anapol, 2012). The commune existed amongst several houses, each member holding a key to each house. Initially, the community found employment through cleaning and gardening, but as newer tech savvy members entered the commune the philosophy of the community to share knowledge and learning paved the way for the Kerista commune to become heavily involved in the tech industry in the late 1980s (Kahney, 2002). The Kerista business, Abacus, at the height of its success netted \$35 million in sales servicing and

selling Apple computers and influencing the social networks of Silicon Valley (Kahney, 2002). Because the commune was pooling their resources they were able to seek out a variety of business ventures, including workshops, consultations, training, and publishing services which all amped up their presence in the tech industry. One of the members of the sales team, EvaWay, successfully reached out to John Sculley, the CEO of Apple from 1983-1992, to obtain a license to sell Mac computers, leveraging her gender as a way to increase the number of women in the reseller network (Kahney, 2002).

The presence of women as leaders in the polyamory movement can be situated from the expansion of these types of network connections, specifically the often noted overlap of polyamory individuals who work in the IT industry as influenced by the women Mac computer resellers in the Bay Area; as well as the influence in neo-pagan/sacred sexuality circles mostly sporting women leaders and activists. Interestingly, most of the early non-monogamous communities (Oneida, Sandstone) and influential texts (*Stranger in a Strange Land*, *The Harrad Experiment*) were led and written by men, whereas the modern polyamory movement is dominated time and time again by women leaders.

The language of these early movements, specifically, polyfidelity, the term used to describe the Kerista relationship style, would also be used in the Polyfidelitous Educational Productions (*PEP*) *PEPTalk* newsletters as originated by Ryam Nearing in 1984, one of the co-founders of the modern polyamory movement. Nearing was involved with, and influenced by the Kerista commune (Sheff, 2012), later publishing her first book on this type of communal living in 1992, titled *The Polyfidelity Primer*.

Around the same time as Nearing was publishing her *PEPTalk* newsletters, another non-monogamous practitioner and psychologist, Deborah Anapol, was using her organization to

create networks stemmed from the sacred sexuality movement around such types of living. Anapol was influenced heavily by Stan Dale, the founder of the Human Awareness Institute (HAI) in 1968, and his partners Helen and Janet. Dale, a former Chicago radio personality, had created HAI to foster a space of learning about multi-partner relationships by offering educational workshops such as the Love, Sex, and Intimacy Workshops both nationally and internationally. After meeting Stan Dale and his partners in 1981, Anapol was immediately drawn into the television talk show circuit that Stan and his partners frequently appeared on, as Anapol was contacted by the *Phil Donahue Show* as an expert “preferably one with a Ph.D. after her name” to appear alongside Stan and his partners on a show about the triad (Anapol, 2010). After receiving an immense viewer letter response, the majority of which were addressed to Anapol inquiring about non-monogamy, she created the *IntiNet* Resource Center (IRC), and the newsletter, *Floodtide*, to help individuals educate themselves about non-monogamy and sacred sexuality (Anapol, 2010).

While their two efforts were initially separate, Nearing and Anapol later met on the set of the Playboy Channel’s *Women on Sex* television program in 1985 and briefly shared communication with each other via their respective newsletters in December later that year, (Anapol, 2010). Nearing and Anapol were called together at the September 1993 Kirkridge retreat conference, *Sexuality and Spirituality* (later forming *The Body Sacred* coalition), a conference in the Poconos area of Pennsylvania, for those who “recognize, affirm and celebrate the existing diversity of established intimate interpersonal relationships, and want to positively link sexual behavior to a spiritual commitment” (Sexuality and Spirituality Conference flyer, 1993). The goal of this conference was to, “create a supportive network for those already involved in such relationships, and to plan strategies for action to gain acceptance and

affirmation of such alternative patterns in church, media, culture” (Sexuality and Spirituality Conference flyer, 1993). At this early conference there were efforts to influence the media through talk show appearances and articles, create a national networking database, have a relationship hot line, and figure out ways to change the church and educational establishment (Sexuality and Spirituality Conference workshop itinerary, 1993).

At this conference they were encouraged by other sexuality activists such as Robert ‘Bob’ Franceour, a biologist and sexologist, and Robert Rimmer, author of *The Harrad Experiment*, to make visible the polyamory movement by joining efforts. Both Franceour and Rimmer were advocates for non-monogamy relationship models. Rimmer’s *The Harrad Experiment* explored a fictional college campus where three men and three women agreed to live together and share partners, and several other of his books explored advocacy for legalization of group marriages. In a letter Rimmer wrote in February of 1993, he outlined his vision for the outcomes of the conference later that fall, “to achieve wide media attention, it’s my opinion that the participants must dare to present proposals which could be transformed into law and new legislation. In plain words, any group of psychologist, sociologists, and marriage and family counselors have to face the reality. American needs a new approach to sexual morality which as Rustum Roy has pointed out in the past “sacramentalizes human sexuality” and eliminates the “poisoning of eros” that has been our Christian/Judeo inheritance . . . In my opinion, this can only be accomplished by a strong political leader who sees the light and dares to lead the way” (Rimmer, 1993). Rimmer then argues for government subsidized primary and secondary education courses that are instructive on alternative relationship models, and emphasizes the need to differentiate these alternative models from swingers, particularly citing the culture wars and attempt to remove sex and sexuality from all public view. The book he was shopping around

at the time, *Sexual Sanity Now*, outlined these proposals, and included the need for a ‘Future Families of America Commission’ that would “experiment with alternate family styles” as a way to “challenge the New Right . . . the only way to resolve sexual decadence is not with censorship, but a national consensus on new approaches to education and sexual morality as the only solution for America” (Rimmer, 1993).

Rimmer, was a major influence in the proposal of a glossy magazine to bring the movement together. In snail mail correspondence with Anapol, Rimmer explained the differences in culture between the free-love movement in the 60s, and where he saw the non-monogamy movement in the early ‘90s, particularly with more emphasis on the economic aspects of multipartner relationships later on. Rimmer went so far as to write to *Prometheus Books*, as well as Cynthia Hefner from *Playboy*, to encourage those publishers to fund Anapol & Nearing’s proposed new venture. Drawing on his own research, Rimmer suggests that the new journal have an editorial policy based on his talks on Future Families of America, and prospective subscribers would be in the 40% upper-income range, specifically people who had affairs but were looking for alternatives to divorce (Kenneth R. Haslam Collection).

In a follow up press release to the Kirkridge Body Sacred conference, ‘*Sexuality/Spirituality Conference Forms New Coalition*’ drafted by Loraine Hutchins, the joining of these forces solidified the beginning of the networking efforts of the non-monogamy community. Hutchins writes,

Ryam Nearing, who runs *PEP*, spoke with Deborah Anapol about 4 different kinds of multiple relationship forms: (1) neotribal intimate networks, (2) polyfidelity. (3) open marriage, and (4) non-responsible forms like cheating. Catholic historian Robert Francouer spoke about global networking efforts sex education information and how he felt it was based on the emergence of women worldwide and a willingness to talk about honest, consent and abuse . . . Robert Rimmer, a novelist who sold ten million books on sexuality topics, spoke about experiences in the publishing industry and how a new generation is now discovering his books . . . Rimmer commented that “the sexual revolution was really

only a rebellion” and created a lot of “sick sex.” He praised Deborah and Ryam for being “the younger generation who’re saner, who give me hope.

Sunday morning we divided into action-oriented task groups (naming, infrastructure, database, education/research/media, coalition-building politics) to work on different aspects of building a broad-based national spirit/sex coalition. Deborah spoke about “bringing back a respect for eroticism in the culture, and that what we need to build a sex and spirit movement that can meet up with a new families movement and with grassroots and public policy alliances with the lesbian/gay/bisexual movement because: (1) polyfidelitous folks need to support queer family freedom issues (2) confronting this and biphobia are important to making change for all, and (3) we need to unite to lower barriers to polyfamily formation in this society in general”

People spoke at the report-back session about how everyone saw the family in trouble and no longer viable as a sole form of social organization, that somehow we need to dream a new, broader paradigm under which we can work and be connected Proposals were also made about a speakers bureau, about targeting groups to build coalitions, creating sex-positive media, and about making this gathering an annual thing on the east” (Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, Press Release, Hutchins, 1983).

Heeding the call for this newer generation to make waves, shortly after, Nearing and Anapol organized a conference together in Western Massachusetts at the Rowe Conference Center, Ryam moved her *PEPCon* conferences to Berkeley, California, and future conferences were held in Harbin Hot Springs. Nearing and Anapol also combined their newsletter subscriber base to create the *Loving More* magazine in 1994, and began using the terminology of polyfidelity, open relationships, and intimate networks to describe what are seen as modern day polyamory relationship styles in the magazines articles, and by expanding and establishing bi-coastal *Loving More* Conferences, today still maintained under the name Poly Living conferences. The aforementioned definitions, before there was the word ‘polyamory,’ were printed in Nearing’s 1992 edition of *Loving More: the Polyfidelity Primer*, and in Anapol’s 1992 edition of *Love Without Limits*. Anapol edited *Loving More* magazine with Nearing the first year and then left the venture as she felt that financially *Loving More* magazine could not sustain itself without proper funding. Rimmer, wanting to keep the magazine going, wrote to Anapol,

encouraging her and Ryam to write a prospectus to keep *Loving More* afloat, saying donations are not enough. As the two women were supported by their husbands at the time, Anapol felt she needed to bow out of the production and leave it to Nearing and her partner Brett Hill, who maintained the magazine until 2003 when Nearing and her husband left the movement altogether to raise their son.

What's In A Name?

It was not until Oberon Zell and the Ravenhearts, members of the *CAW*, wrote about this new type of open relationship style in their magazine that the proliferation of the word 'poly-amorous' began to circulate amongst open relationship groups. Oberon Zell, in a 2009 FAQ Q&A, originates the coining of the word due to his third 'wife' Diane, the then editor of *Green Egg*, wanting Morning Glory Zell, Oberon's legal wife, to commit to a solid definition that defined the rules of their relationship that she always spoke of, and thus she coined the word 'poly-amorous' (Ravenhearts, 2009). Morning Glory Zell claimed to have coined the terminology in 1990, having come up with the word at Deborah Anapol's kitchen table, debating better terminology along with Oberon, Anapol, and Paul Glassco, Anapol's then lover, after Anapol suggested responsible non-monogamy (Anapol, 1992). The word was later used in the *CAW*'s newsletter, *Green Egg* magazine, in an article titled, *A Bouquet of Lovers* as well as published later in their 'Glossary of Relationship Terminology' printed for a 'Polycon' in UC-Berkeley where the members of *CAW* were guest speakers (*Polyamory In The News*, 2007). Deborah Anapol picked up on Morning Glory Zell's usage of 'poly-amorous' in 1990 and reprinted the article first mentioning it, *A Bouquet of Lovers* in her book, *Love Without Limits* in June of 1992.

In February of 1992, however, during a flame-war on the Usenet alt.sex group, Jennifer Wesp was debating multi-person relationships and their stigmatization by labeling them polygamous. At this time Wesp claims to have coined the term ‘polyamory’ as a label that more accurately described her relationships that did not involve marriage, as polygamy does. She wrote:

I have always disavowed the term poly{gyn, and gam]y. It is illegal to practice them in this country. They imply marriage, which is something I have no intentions of doing. All told. They are not something I want to be doing. Polyamorous, or loving many, seems closer to what I am (Kenneth R. Haslam Collection).

Allen Warren, another member on the board in response writes:

Polygamy is illegal. Polygyny usually refers to the animal kingdom (of which some of us are) ;) Anyway, I do like the name polyamorous, and besides, you can call it whatever you like, right? What’s really in a name anyways? (Kenneth R. Haslam Collection).

Later in May of 1992, Wesp formed the Usenet group, alt.polyamory to continue the dialogue around multi-partner relationships. Polyamory became the preferred terminology from this point onward.

There continues to be much debate regarding the origin of the word ‘polyamory’ between these two camps. Wesp claiming to have never heard Morning Glory Zell use it, whereas others claim that Wesp had attended many non-monogamous conferences at this time and might have overheard the term being used. In an interview with Wesp regarding her usage of the word, she points out that she had always felt she was polyamorous, and was active on the Internet in ‘86, when she first attended college. During her doctoral work at the University of Virginia is when the alt.sex group gained traction, and she began getting into these arguments online about non-monogamy. After three separate correspondences, beginning in 1994, it wasn’t until September of 2006, that the Oxford English Dictionary credited Jennifer Wesp with coining the term which they attributed led to its wider circulation via the Internet, rather than through the small circles in

which Morning Glory Zell frequently gave presentations. Polyamory according to the OED, was defined as ‘the fact of having simultaneous close emotional relationships with two or more other individuals, viewed as an alternative to monogamy, especially in regard to matters of sexual fidelity; the custom or practice of engaging in multiple sexual relationships with the knowledge and consent of all partners concerned,’ with the etymology assigned to Wesp and her early circulation amongst her Usenet news group. While consulted about the origin, Morning Glory Zell was not able to add her own alternative definition until 1999 as follows, “The practice, state or ability of having more than one sexual loving relationship at the same time, with the full knowledge and consent of all partners involved” (Ravenhearts, 2009).

Speculation regarding the initial accreditation to Wesp had been made by Alan M. from the *Polyamory In The News* blog in 2007, positing that the OED contains the word polyamory, and not poly-amorous, the latter being attributed to Morning Glory Zell.

Alan M. has been avidly working on a more comprehensive history of the word ‘polyamory’ and various poly-related forms aided by the continuing efforts of Google Books and its searchable database. As of 2011, in a search of years January 1st, 1400 to December 31st 1991, he has found the usage of the keywords ‘polyamorist’ in a passage from the 1958 edition of *English Literature: Chaucer to Bernard Shaw* by Alfred Charles Ward as follows:

. . . If Henry VIII had not been a determined **polyamorist** to whom divorce or some more drastic means to annulment of marriage was a recurrent necessity, the break with Rome would probably not have come in his reign, [Thomas] More and others would have died naturally . . .

And another passage from a 1969 novel, *Hind’s Kidnap: a pastoral on familiar airs* by Joseph McElroy, as follows:

. . . Maddy disqualifying John Plante, "You have to conclude the Family quote unquote is finished as a viable socio-entity because you're committed to your **polyamorous** roller

tribe, so you can't even so to speak let me into court." Occupying, taking over, stealing me and my flat while I shook too much chervil into the eggs, pretty too . . .

Prior to the 90s, many polyamorist identifying individuals struggled with a whole host of words to describe their types of relationships. As Alan M. discusses,

Before the early 1990s people in the modern multi-love movement, including me, floundered with such awkward mouthfuls as "utopian swinging" (now there's a contradiction in terms), "modern polygamy", "waterbrotherhood" (per *Stranger in a Strange Land*), "polymorphous perversity" (per Sigmund Freud), "synergamy" (per Robert H. Rimmer), and "the *Harrad Experiment* lifestyle" (referring to Robert Rimmer's most famous book) (*Polyamory In The News*, 2007).

The co-efforts of Ryam Nearing and Deborah Anapol quickly placed the new terminology of polyamory into the households of individuals who had never heard of the words polyfidelity and non-monogamy. Conferences were held on the East and West Coast, as well as several retreats, some often women-only, at Harbin Hot Springs in Northern California.

It is within the confines of the Internet, however, in which the polyamory movement has been frequently noted as the space in which the language of polyamory began to proliferate ten-fold by connecting geographically dispersed individuals via the initial polyamory-related Usenet group and other polyamorous organizations. As Sheff (2012) argues, these networks also tended to overlap with other sexual minorities such as bisexuals and kinksters (practitioners of BDSM), and expanded the different ways of 'doing' polyamory to create even wider webs of non-monogamous relationship styles. Sheff (2012) refers to the age of the Internet and expansive networking as the Third Wave of polyamory, preceded by the second wave movement in the '60s and '70s free-love sexual liberation, and the first wave of group-like marriage in the 1800s with the Oneida commune as an initial starting place for non-monogamous marriages and relationships (Sheff, 2012).

While the alt.polyamory website still exists today, and includes a listing of terminology created by the polyamory community, FAQs, resources such as fiction and non-fiction books, as well as houses a large number of email lists for overlapping poly communities (Sheff, 2012), it has not been as active a media source as other platforms have seen greater prominence and salience amongst not only community members, based on their higher levels of participation fostered by newer two-way communication, but also via recommendation by the more well-known polyamory media practitioners as will be discussed in detail later.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

The following section provides a review of literature that examines polyamory as situated in sexual identity politics, particularly by highlighting the increased discourses that have cropped up about polyamory as a potential successor of the next sexual model to gain cultural acceptance. Additionally, a review of literature follows that examines the representations of polyamory in mainstream news media texts, as well as looks at a handful of the early books written by polyamory people. While there is a great deal of media coverage that outlines the polyamory community as being a concrete social movement, to date, there has only been one study that has sought to apply social movement theory to the polyamory movement, as discussed at the end of this chapter.

Sexual Identity Politics

Given the progress that gay rights has made, polyamory has received a great deal of attention when it comes to pinpointing the new ‘sexual revolution.’ For some time now, mainstream media have been moving their way down the slippery slope after each new sexual minority gains new visibility, tolerance, acceptance, and marriage rights. This discourse begs the question as to whether polyamory is the new sexual revolution, and why is it being presented as so over sexual minorities such as bisexual, queers, transgender folk, and other legally sanctioned and protected sexual identities, of which polyamory is not. The major difference between the gay movement and the polyamory movement is the focus on the legal recognition of individual rights, rather than couple rights, as was the political backing of same-sex marriages.

In a 2010 article titled, *Poly Is The New Gay*, Linda Kirkman, who holds a doctorate in Health Science at LaTrobe University, situates polyamory as the new gay because of the larger

visibility it is gaining in the public sphere. Mentioning celebrity non-monogamist, Tilda Swinton's open dialogue about her open relationship style, Kirkman provides parallel examples of mediated texts and in which authors as well as journalists protect themselves and their subjects by using pseudonyms, or providing anonymity to those being interviewed. In recent years, however, more and more people are feeling comfortable enough to use their real names in magazine articles, as well as in later editions of their poly-related books because of the changing climate around polyamory.

Robert George, a writer for *The America Interest*, discusses the legal implications of plural marriage in his 2015 piece, *Is Polyamory Next?* George highlights the often cited legal discourse that stands in the way of plural marriage, specifically pointing to the bureaucratic nightmare applying laws pertaining to coupledness would encounter if opened up to more than one person. Same sex marriage was in part successful because it so easily mapped upon the already established heterosexual marriage model. Polyamory on the other hand would require a restructuring of legal recognition, some in the community even opting for individual rights such as healthcare and government benefits rather than advocating for plural marriage to avoid these constant pitfalls. More importantly, however, George discusses the ways in which polyamory is presenting itself in the public sphere in a similar vein to gay rights campaigns, specifically by identifying polyamory as a sexual orientation rather than a sexual lifestyle that one chooses. This is backed by a lot of discourse in the polyamory community linking plural sexual relationships to the biological acts of Bonobo primates as a way to situate polyamory in the nature camp, moreover than the nurture camp, a move that early gay rights activists used to qualify same-sex attraction as inherent rather than as a lifestyle choice. Because polyamory is not recognized as a sexual orientation, and therefore, not protected under discrimination legislation, this is another

hurdle that must be overcome before plural marriage rights is taken up more seriously. Academic scholars in polyamory research have gone back and forth regarding the orientation/lifestyle debate (Anapol, 1997; Benson, 2008; Breitman, 2007; Chapman, 2010; Klesse, 2014; Newman, 2004; Robinson, 2009; Tweedy, 2011), but no consensus in the public sphere, nor in the community, has solidified polyamory in one direction over the other.

Honing in on the discourse of marriage, George points out that marriage is not necessarily defined as between two people by marriage equality advocates, but as “committed sexual-romantic companionship or domestic partnership” which alleviates the emphasis on only dyadic relationship from a legal perspective. He writes, “the new idea of marriage is an innovation—not an “expansion” of marriage but a genuine redefinition, one that treats what has historically been regarded as a relevant difference, namely sex or gender, as if it were irrelevant, not central to the very idea and social purposes of marriage” (2015). Therefore, the traditional language of marriage which outlines the conjugal union, predicated on procreation, monogamy, and the bearing of children for the good of society, is removed from the revisionist concept of marriage, especially holding true given the inability for same sex couples to procreate with one another. Eliminating conjugal union from the traditional social expectations of marriage creates a union of individuals based on emotional bonds or sexual companionship, and polyamory as a model includes the possibility for this companionship to be spread amongst more than two people.

Steven Nelson, a writer for *U.S. News Report*, points to the dissenting comments of Chief Justice John Roberts relating to the SCOTUS decision on marriage equality. Framing the marriage equality dissent as a parallel to the dissenting discourse by Justice Antonin Scalia in the 2013 *US vs. Windsor* case, comments which warned of laying the groundwork for same-sex

marriage, Nelson quotes Roberts as writing, “polygamy has deeper roots in history and that the decision allowing gays to marry "would apply with equal force to the claim of a fundamental right to plural marriage” (as quoted in Nelson, 2015). With the 2013 Utah case brought about by practicing Mormon polygamists (recently overturned in 2016, making cohabitation by married individuals with another other than their spouse illegal), decriminalizing cohabitation laws can be likened to the removal of homosexuality from the DSM as a mental illness, decriminalizing sodomy laws for same sex couples as in the 2003 Lawrence vs. Texas case, as well as decriminalizing gay marriage, laws that were enacted by many states before the marriage equality act overturned these state-based laws and nationalized marriage equality for everyone. The parallels, however, do not outweigh the stigma that surrounds loving more than one person, the complicated institution of marital rights as applied to more than one person (e.g. social security benefits or health insurance) nor the availability of funds and deep pockets to sue the government to allow plural marriages in the same way that the gay community was able to garner funds to advance gay rights.

In the article, *Beyond Gay Marriage: The Road to Polyamory*, Stanley Kurtz, a research fellow at *Hoover Institute* draws our attention to the discourse on radicalizing marriage in a piece written for the *Weekly Standard*, in 2003, well before the marriage equality ruling. Drawing on the comments regarding polyamory made by Andrew Sullivan, a gay rights activist, during the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act, Kurtz points to the beginning of the slippery slope argument, noting that Sullivan argued that bringing plural marriage into the conversation was a simple act of fear-mongering, and even going so far as to say he knows of no polygamist organizations that are striving for the legalization of plural marriage. Sullivan likens the fear mongering to conservative attitudes around interracial marriages breeding children with birth defects. In

hindsight, we can certainly see that same-sex marriage rights have indeed fostered a larger community of activists who are seeking legal recognition of plural marriage, one step down the mythical slippery slope discourse.

Providing a thorough analysis of the implication of same-sex marriage as paving the way for plural marriage, Kurtz particularly highlights the popularity that polyamory and polygamy have gained in the family law sector. Citing several notable lawyers who are vying for the reorganization of marriage, Kurtz argues that many of these lawyers had been critical of same-sex marriage as marriage equality activists were not radicalizing the institute of marriage, but rather expanding the definition of marriage beyond solely between a 'man' and a 'woman'. The family law cohort, however, were more interested in gay marriage as a marker of difference rather than assimilation to already standardized marriage constructs (Kurtz, 2003).

Interestingly, Kurtz points to Tom Green, the subject of a Utah polygamy case in 2002, in which Green had violated Utah's "don't ask, don't tell" polygamy policy by flaunting his lifestyle on *Sally Jessy Raphael*, *Queen Latifah*, *Geraldo Rivera*, *Jerry Springer*, *Dateline NBC*, and *48 Hours*. Because of this visibility, Green was taken to court because he violated the request to remain invisible by the state of Utah. Proponents of this case also cited similarities in gay marriage discourse for the legal recognition of polygamy (Kurtz, 2003). While Kurtz is not arguing for the legalization of polyamory, he does provide a seemingly insightful historical timeline of arguments against monogamous two-person marriage, thus showing the ways in which polyamory is following suit in the same visible 'civil rights' movement as gay rights. Furthering these discourses around marriage we can draw on poststructuralist theories, particularly honing in on the ways in which legal and cultural recognition can forge new opportunities for other periphery groups to gain recognition and remodel their relationship styles.

In poststructuralism, the subject is perceived not as a preexisting entity, but is instead socially constituted by discourses, institutions, laws and practices that cater to, and make up the norm. Thus in the instances of the formal legal cases, subjects are formed and re-formed when gaining state-sanctioned visibility.

Foucault (1990) argues that it is these structures of dominant/subordinate network relations that maintain the power/knowledge relationship, specifically in who does the talking about sex. Due to these networks, points or nodes of resistance are continually at play, continuously creating tensions against the ‘natural’ or ‘normal,’ thus requiring a persistent maintenance by the heteronormative dismissing and devaluing competing sexual models. We can see these competing models with the slippery slope discourse, first beginning with interracial marriage, which would lead to same-sex marriage, which would lead to plural marriage, (further stigmatized by the oppressive and abusive nature of Mormon polygamy), and then into the realm of incest and bestiality; each new periphery group gaining momentum in the public sphere separating themselves from intersecting identities, as the separation of gay rights activists from polyamorists and polygamists, arguing that same-sex marriage is only seeking marriage for two, not expanding the definition of marriage too far from its already monogamous normative framework.

However, according to Nikki Sullivan (2003), “resistance is inseparable from power rather than being opposed to it. And since resistance is not, and cannot be, external to systems of power/knowledge, then an oppositional politics that attempts to replace supposedly false ideologies with non-normative truths is inherently contradictory” (42). Thus the elevation of one particular sexuality over another seeks not to understand and reveal these inherent power relationships, but instead replaces one dominant sexual ideology with another– it seeks to oppose

the normative rather than interrogate the structures that make up that normative in the first place. We witness this with the reproduction of same sex marriage manifesting homonormativity via participation in state sanctioned institutional marriage, but not an interrogation or restructuring of the institute of marriage itself. The power of the state is not interrogated, but upheld by a larger citizenship by their very participation in same-sex marriage. Thus subjects remain in this single-identity stand-still on the periphery until the very law that created visibility for same-sex marriage can reasonably be used by those seeking out plural marriage, and inevitably the deconstruction of not just conjugal marriage, as has happened with marriage equality, but marriage as a institute of more than just government benefits is revamped at large.

Jeffrey Weeks (1987) also contends that sexual identity itself is a politicized characterization in that self-identifying as ‘queer’ ‘lesbian’ ‘gay’ etc., privileges sexuality over other identities of alignment such as “class, or racial, or professional loyalties” (31). Drawing on Jane Gallop, he furthers this claim,

‘Identity must be continually assumed and immediately called into question’; or alternatively constantly questioned yet all the time assumed. For it is provisional, precarious, dependent on, and increasingly incessantly challenged by social contingencies and psychic demands- but apparently necessary, the foundation stone of our sexual beliefs and behaviors (1987, 31-32).

Therefore, attempts by competing sexualities to achieve dominant acceptance, or privileging of a better way to do sexuality, contradicts the deconstruction of the normative; whereas competing sexualities attempting to develop equal models argues for sexual identities *in addition* to the normative, rather than in place of, and remains true to the ‘practice’ and ‘doing’ of queer or deconstructivist politics. Polyamory discourse centering on ethical non-monogamy follows the same road of essentializing identities by cordoning itself off from other sexualities under the non-monogamy umbrella. Sexuality, however, is not essential, and is formed and being formed

through culturally and historically specific conditions creating cleavages in moments of change (Weeks, 1987). The same way gay rights redefined heterosexual marriage, activism toward plural marriage can redefine monogamous models and open up an infinite number of family relationship styles.

Mainstream Mediation of Deviant Discourses

There is an extreme dearth in academic literature analyzing the intersection of polyamory and media. And there is no academic research that looks at the media texts produced by polyamorous activists and community leaders beyond literature framed through discourse analysis on anecdotal, experiential, and seminal how-to self-help books (see Haritaworn et al., 2006; Klesse, 2011; Noël, 2006; Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2012). Some researchers point out that until the advent of the Internet the community discourses of polyamory had remained at the periphery, only bolstered by finding like-minded people in chat rooms and discussion boards online (Black, 2006; Strassberg, 2003).

Nikó Antalfy (2011) is one author that explores mainstream media representations of polyamory in U.S., UK, Canadian, and Australian mainstream media sources. Her research situates narratives found in newspaper and magazine articles. Findings from the study reveal that the majority of mainstream newspaper and magazine representations juxtapose polyamory primarily with sexual behaviors associated with monogamy, such as infidelity and cheating. Antalfy, drawing on pro-polyamorous blogger, Pepper Mint, argues this positioning creates a presentation of a false dichotomy, that “cheating is not only commonplace and expected, but is punished and thereby it is also a spectacle that reinforces the norms of monogamy” (Antalfy, 2011, np). Polyamory in these instances is described not as ethical non-monogamy, but as a behavior of infidelity. Mint continues, “a more meaningful distinction would be between

monogamy and types of ethical consensual non-monogamy such as polyamory” (as cited in Antalffy, 2011, footnote 2).

The discourse of cheating, therefore, negates the ethical and open aspect of poly-centric practices. By labeling the behavior of polyamorous peoples as cheating, the media are only trying to assert the dominance of a normalizing monogamous narrative by drawing on language that is specific to monogamy, and directly comparing polyamory as an inferior sexuality that only comes into play after the failing of fidelity in a monogamous relationship. Antalffy defines this tactic as presenting the articles as titillating, in that the articles frame polyamorous behavior as “salacious, forbidden or desirable . . . to present the reading with voyeurism” (2011, par. 20). This, she argues, is a way to frame polyamory against the discourse of monogamy, in that the depraved image of cheating polyamorous individuals is presented to naturalize and legitimate monogamy as the only acceptable way to behave.

The power/knowledge (Foucault, 1980) dynamic is also represented in these research findings in which polyamory is further subjugated through stigmatization by associating the model with polygamy. This particular association is framed in a way that suggests polyamory is the same as multi-person marriages, perceived as inevitably destroying and invalidating a two-person, traditional monogamous relationship. These same arguments were made with regards to same-sex marriage as an attack on heterosexual rights and the perceived destruction of the institute of marriage. Not surprisingly, these types of correlation discourses are predominately contrived by religious organizations or moral figureheads who fear that immoral behavior of non-monogamous individuals will lead to the neglect of children of poly-relationships, and will breed an unethical and sacrilegious group of people (Antalffy, 2011).

As her research finds, media discourses attempting to combat these negative associations typically come from articles written by polyamorous individuals, in feature articles in polyamory-themed magazines, and research-based articles that provide an in-depth analysis, predominately from non-laypeople. However, even within these pro-poly representations Antalffy claims there is little nuance, and polyamory is still framed as an alternative rather than an equal choice of sexuality, thus maintaining the dominant/subordinate relationship hierarchy in which monogamy still maintains its hegemonic positioning. Antalffy's study, while providing a cursory look at a mix of international print media, does not provide a clear methodology for selecting the articles at hand, nor provides a robust analysis of the characteristics of a particular medium that may provide opportunities for more accurate representations.

Sourcing her own national discourses, Ritchie (2010) investigated representations of polyamory in British media finding that polyamory arose after public research indicated an increase in infidelity. Using 19 different articles across newspapers and magazines in the UK, Ritchie characterized confessional type narratives from the 'tell-all' perspective of a poly individual being interviewed, unveiling popular themes within polyamorous discourses that separate polyamory from other non-monogamous behaviors, such as infidelity, swinging, or casual sex (Ritchie, 2010, 47). The lion's share of discourses, however, positioned polyamory as the next viable step in failed monogamous relationships, reaffirming monogamy as the first natural order of relationship models, and polyamory as a model that one falls into when monogamy fails. Ritchie found that polyamory discourses also emerged in tandem to reports on the Civil Partnership Act of 2004— legislation that enabled same-sex relationships to be recognized in the UK.

Ritchie's research emphasized the importance of storytelling narratives surrounding polyamory; her results similar to Antalfy's, suggesting that positive representations were more likely to be promoted if the narrative was presented from the perspective of a polyamorous identifying individual. Despite the increase in first-person accounts, a dominating framework positioning polyamory against mononormativity still prevailed. Recurrent themes in which the discourse of polyamory is framed against particular sexual behaviors were also found throughout the articles, thus defining polyamory as a sexual practice versus representations of polyamory as a form of sexual identity. Some articles, however, noted the ethical and honest aspect of having multiple relationships, while downplaying the sexual aspects of sleeping with multiple people. This downplay is productive in that it illustrates the failed monogamous narrative contrasting polyamory against affairs or cheating (Ritchie, 2010).

Drawing on Parsons, Ritchie suggests that the ways in which poly people present themselves in media interviews are opportunities to generate a poly discourse, that "the situated production of narratives and discourses may or may not reflect wider social practices" (2010, 63). She stresses this point, arguing these voices offer a way to position polyamorous discourse in a space between non-monogamous and monogamous sexualities, as an oppositional-mononormative identity, one that relies on the discourse of love versus acts of sexuality (Ritchie, 2010).

Despite similar analyses of media representations, the research is still in its infancy and offers multiple opportunities to evaluate different media which lend themselves to different forms of discourses and representations. Much like the nuances found within different genres of newspapers— in depth interviews, poly-authored articles, and feature articles— different types of

polyamorous representations should also materialize when utilizing a different medium to reach a diversity of audiences.

Canon of Polyamory Produced Media Texts

Melita Noël (2006) finds there is a tendency for polyamory narratives, specifically in poly-centric texts, to focus around the individual and laud their personal choices— perpetuating the privilege of a few. She points out these texts lack in looking at ways in which to challenge heteronormativity, forge better opportunities for larger communities of allies, and for self-reflexivity through critical reflection of existing polyamorous narratives circulating in their texts.

Noël's research analyzes the ways in which 12 polyamory self-help texts published between 1992 and 2004 consider diversity such as: nationality, race, ethnicity, education, class, language, ability, age, gender, and sexuality, separating the texts into two distinct cohorts, one focusing on the language and practice of polyamory, and the latter cohort focusing on the link to spirituality. Noël (2006) notes the audience for which polyamory texts are written paints a very rigid portrayal of what a polyamorist 'looks like,' predominately white, middle-class, college educated; and that the authors of these texts tend to cite one another, thus arguing that the literature itself is inclusive of a closely kept narrative of experiences and representations.

What sets Noël's research aside from most is her forthcoming self-reflection of her own positionality, specifically as a third-wave feminist in contrast to the second-wave identities of the authors she is analyzing. Given her third-wave status, she emphasizes deconstruction and intersectionality for social justice; and her own interests in queer communities of color leads her to look through a particular lens when contextualizing the absences of intersectionality and lack of self-critique in the texts. Using this deconstructive lens, Noël found that even though there is

interrogation of the oppressive and abusive nature of monogamy and the structure of marriage in the poly-texts' narratives, often the authors do not reflect on their own oppressive and appropriational language. One particular instance illuminates how one author overlooks and ultimately undermines the larger impact that polyamory as a queer paradigm can have by glossing over the "racialized, colonialist use of the term 'tribe' or superficial appropriation of basing her polyamorous model on other cultural paradigms" (611). The language of tribe appropriated by colonizers as a way to signify community, without recognizing their own role as colonizers in destroying the communities of others.

The word 'slut,' as used in *The Ethical Slut*, is also interrogated for the lack of conversation around the racialized classist discourse of sexuality in which the word 'slut' is weighted more heavily, and predominately used negatively in reference to women, moreover than it is used to describe men in similar sexual situations. Again, the author of this polyamory sex positive 'bible' lacks in a self-reflexive personal narrative questioning how wider cultural discourses on sexuality play into the application of 'slut,' and calls into question further appropriation forcing the re-appropriation into the background.

Fourteen years after *The Ethical Slut* was published, in 2011, more attempts to re-appropriate the word 'slut' have emerged. One such example includes public demonstrations referred to as 'The Slut Walk' carried out to renounce 'slut shaming' in the public sphere. During these walks, women wore little clothing to protest Toronto police officer Constable Michael Sanguinetti's remarks that "women should avoid dressing like sluts" to avoid sexual attention. The global movement around these slut walks has received praise and criticism; the latter camp arguing that woman marching scantily clad does not exempt them from the male gaze of spectators, nor questions the larger concern of consent regardless of what apparel is worn, thus

undermining the deconstruction of rape culture and the initial usage and attempts at re-appropriation of the word 'slut' across a multitude of contexts.

Lastly, Noël (2006) analyzing the spiritually-focused cohort of polyamory texts finds narratives that universalize polyamory, again, reducing the experiences of sexuality to exist on one plane, discharging cultural differences created through inequalities based on race, class, gender, and sexuality into a homogeneous experience, mainly of white, middle class, able-bodied individuals. A reflection of privilege within the polyamory community is called into question, and attempts to speak to privileged sub-cultures for a shared experience is interrogated. Instead of speaking on behalf of others, similar to Wilkinson (2010), Noël insists on forging collaborative institutions and practices that invite and seek out allies whose lived experiences are affected by systemic inequalities.

Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli (2008) also looks at three polyamory texts, overlapping with books from Noël's study. Her analysis, however, is much less critical, and instead lauds the authors for their ability to provide internal and external advice to those seeking to understand the polyamory lifestyle. Pallotta-Chiarolli analysis specifically references *The Ethical Slut's* narrative toward external real world effects, stating, "the social ostracism an ethical slut faces is openly discussed, including discrimination and legislative barriers in the workplace, in children's schools, and in accessing housing and health services" (232). What she fails to address, however, is who embodies this 'ethical slut,' meaning, who is allowed to be publicly visible, what intersectional identities are most often discriminated against, or denied access to housing or health services?

This lack of critical interrogation is furthered when conversation about cultural appropriation is acknowledged when Pallotta-Chiarolli quotes from *The Ethical Slut*, "a slut

living in mainstream, monogamy-centrist culture . . . can learn a great deal from studying other cultures, other places, and other times: you're *not* the only one who has ever tried this, it *can* work" (2008, 233). Her attempt toward recognizing inclusivity and colonizer relationships is flattened by the lack of problematizing the studying of other cultures and appropriation into one's privileged lifestyle.

Not all is doom and gloom in these texts, however. Pallotta-Chiarolli (2008) points to Deborah Anapol's text addressing consumerism, possessiveness, and control; she writes, "polyamory breaks down cultural patterns of control, as well as ownership and property rights between persons, and by replacing them with a family milieu of unconditional love, trust and respect, provides an avenue to the creation of a more just and peaceful world" (as quoted in Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2008, 233). Unfortunately, the lack of intersectional work still provides no frame of reference on family, love, and property across the multitude of cultures outside the white able bodied polyamory community. This comes as no real surprise as the end note to the article thanks two of the authors in the texts analyzed for being such an influential model in the author's life. Criticisms amongst the polyamory community are on the rise, but still in the minority of academic literature.

Polyamory as a Reconstructive Space

Most discourses of polyamory do not necessarily claim inclusiveness, or an identity/sexuality that is infinitely superior to monogamy, but can offer a space of reconstruction through the action of deconstruction, or as Jamie Heckert (2010) theorizes, of creating anarchistic relationships that do not prescribe to borders, but instead emphasize nomadic boundaries that are much more fluid resembling a continuum rather than a hierarchy. In Jin

Haritaworn, Chin-Ju Lin, & Christian Klesse's (2006) research, they compile a special issue of the journal *Sexualities* in order to argue that polyamory is:

An exciting new construction site that presents a rare and refreshing change from the anti-essentialist stalemate, which has caged progressive sexual thought for the last one and a half decades. The articles in this volume reflect this sense of hope, optimism and belief in a positive queer presence and future, which does not remain stuck in deconstruction but dares to actively construct (2006, 518).

The last point about active construction is central to the practice of queering as a way to illustrate how deconstruction occurs, but to push it further to find the practices and discourses that encourage productivity, that solidify queer as not just a noun describing an identity marker, but as a verb that can ultimately reshape the boundaries of available sexuality discourses. Within polyamory relationships there are perceivable spaces to reveal the naturalization of heteronormative ideologies.

Ani Ritchie & Meg Barker (2006) explore the ways in which language construction within a UK polyamory community disrupts the social control of previously constructed discourses on sexuality. Particularly, they point to the ways in which emotional control of language can coerce an individual into limited ways of thinking and identifying. The availability of limited discourses thus prohibiting validation of an individual's own self-identity as language is structured within the boundaries of its making. Most importantly, their research explicates an understanding of self-creation and appropriation, such as the re-appropriation of the term 'slut' by adding to the term now reading 'ethical slut' in the polyamory self-help book by the same title. The authors likening this action to the appropriation of 'queer' affording a removal of its pejorative context, and instead opting for reconstruction and empowerment through its positive association of queer as a practice of deconstruction and interrogation.

Analyzing the book *The Ethical Slut*, Ritchie & Barker (2006) discuss the inherent value judgments found within mononormative sexuality discourses, such as slut in a pejorative sense, and non-monogamy rigidly associated with only deviant sexual behaviors as described in monogamy discourses as infidelity and promiscuity.

The research found that polyamorous individuals seek to renegotiate the binary of friend and lover, suggesting that one should not have precedent over the other based on sexual intimacy, but rather values are delegated based on individual relationship styles, and thus creates a continuum of relationships rather than a rigid bifurcation of lover you sleep with and friend you love. To alter these dichotomies, the Internet polyamory message boards showed a community reconstruction of the word ‘mistress’ or ‘lover,’ traditionally stigmatized in monogamous relationships as the ‘other’ in a monogamous couple, and instead the community creation of a new word– metamour– used to provide a positive context for one’s partner’s partner. Everyone in the poly relationship are aware of the metamour, unlike a mistress kept as a secret in a monogamous relationship. Using the term metamour implies a non-monogamous relationship outside of the language boundaries put forth in a monogamous border, which would typically relegate anything outside the pairing as deviant. Ritchie & Barker (2006) suggest that this construction of language is a way of being (identity), as in a form of identity construction, in contrast to a way of doing (sexual behaviors). This, however, creates a junction of biological identity versus practices that comprise identities, rather than a dialectical relationship that maintains a working negotiated relationship style of sexuality and identity. While the authors carefully point out that their research is one narrative that is not all-inclusive, and constantly renegotiated, it still maintains a particular viewpoint that straddles the either or relationship of

being and doing, again, leaning more toward border constructions than boundary continuums as Heckert (2010) maintains is more realistic in terms of relationship structures.

In Barker's (2005) research, she reaches out to 30 poly-identifying individuals from another message board in the UK and looks at two similar dichotomizing discourses: polyamory as different and similar to monogamy; and polyamory as a natural sexuality versus polyamory as a chosen sexual practice. Focusing on the latter, Barker (2005) points to recent Western discourses that privilege identities deemed natural or biological, and thus observes many of her interviewees using this type of naturalization rhetoric to persuade and validate their own sexual choices. In many of the polyamory discourses there are endeavors to explain polyamory as biologically hard-wired, with a direct emphasis on the social construction of monogamy as the 'naturalized' way of doing things. The dialogue positions polyamory as an inherent sexual identity, but excludes monogamy as only socially contingent. This type of rhetoric delegitimizes monogamy by relegating it as a socially constructed practice, while at the same time privileging polyamory as a way to justify its non-monogamy stance as external to historical and social contingency. One could argue the exemption of polyamory from historical and socially specific conditions is a way to combat the invisibility polyamory has been forced to undergo throughout monogamies reign; instead, however, we see a valorization of polyamory as a more natural biological way of doing things, while relegating monogamy to the realm of false consciousness. Heckert (2010) asserts that privileging any sexuality in a hierarchical fashion replaces one dominant mode of thinking with another, rather than questioning subjectivities of polyamory based on behaviors and relationships/positionalities in society.

Haritaworn, et al. (2006) try to combat this normativity, suggesting that engaging with theories of power and power structures found within polyamory could "help to problematize who

has so far gotten to define polyamory, its theoretical and political remit, and its social membership” (519). They point to a lack of intersectionality, or the superficial attempts for inclusion of intersectionality in polyamory research to maintain a level of political correctness, as being factors that limit the boundary pushing and instead form more rigid borders that are reminiscent of the power that the institutionalization of heteronormativity has on subordinating non-heteronormative sexualities (Heckert, 2010).

Trying to disrupt this tendency toward normativity, Eleanor Wilkinson (2010) argues for a queer politics within the non-monogamy movement, distinctively separating the absence of political mobility of an individual undertaking behaviors that can be labeled polyamory, versus one choosing to be polyamorous from a political and ideological position that rejects ‘mononormativity’ through an alliance of anti-mononormativity politics. She emphasizes, “in order to make a queer political intervention, polyamorous politics must make a move from identity to affinity” (2010, 346). This anti-mononormativity politics positions polyamory as a counter-identity, not just oppositional. As explained previously, counter-identities are similar to Williams’ (1973) oppositional identities in that, “a meaning or a practice may be tolerated as a deviation, and yet still be seen only as another particular way to live. But as the necessary area of effective dominance extends, the same meanings and practices can be seen by the dominant culture, not merely as disregarding or despising it, but as challenging it (138).

Via Wilkinson’s research, popular polyamorous narratives tend to lack a rejection of neoliberal narratives that center on the egoistic self and the love one can acquire in a sexual relationship. Instead, she argues these popular narratives opt for terms that separate and elevate such as ‘advanced sexuality’ as proffered in *The Ethical Slut*, that sustain a “polyromanticism” that does not reject the normative narratives around love, but instead positions the polyamorous

individual as a superhuman capable of loving more than one person, or situating polyamory in a hierarchy as practicing a better form of non-monogamy (opposed to swinging or open marriages). Positioning polyamory in this way does not appropriately allow the dichotomous relationship between monogamy and non-monogamy to become visible. Without this visibility, and subsequent political traction via a critical interrogation, polyamorous behaviors imitate dominating heteronormative structures found in everyday domestic life, thus limiting attempts at solidarity as it constructs polynormativity practices that fail to identify with other non-monogamous sexualities also oppressed by monogamous structures (Wilkinson, 2010). She writes, “queer politics attempts to move beyond issues surrounding sexuality and instead positions itself in opposition to all hierarchies, exclusions and inequalities” (2010, 354), and thus queer politics seeks to abolish inequality, to “(de) construct and then (re)construct” spaces in which sexuality is not a definable identity system, not just in a space of one sexuality maintaining a non-monogamous stance but practicing normative behaviors.

Proposing queer anti-mononormative politics as a way to question monogamous family structures calls for an interrogation of what the privileging of monogamous living has provided for society, and also how non-monogamous sexualities— such as polyamory— can contribute to systems of alternative sharing, or contribute to intentional communal groups that may subscribe to normative sexualities but practice behavior that is in direct tension with nuclear family structures, and ultimately mononormativity.

Pointing to the ways in which contemporary alternative family narratives are positioned as personal choices driven by the “depoliticization of intimate life” in the neoliberal state, Wilkinson calls for resistance in an individual’s everyday practices. She aptly points out,

These wider political affinities could be found in practices such as communal housing, caring, non-sexual co-habiting, single parents, and all those who are discriminated against

by state policies that refuse to give recognition to anyone whose bonds fall outside the normative romantic couple form (360).

Therefore, an anti-mononormative practice of politics would interrogate the advantages given to legally married couples, or those choosing to cohabite in ways sanctioned by the heteronormative state. A dialectical relationship between ideology and personal practices, identity and sexual preferences is imperative for not only the visibility of the institutionalization and suppression acted out through monogamy and heteronormativity, but also as a way to make visible the moments of normativity and privileging within the polyamory movement that can prohibit the revealing of the subjugation of all lifestyles hindered by these systems.

Polyamory As A Social Movement

Jasmine Walston (2001), the secretary of the *Unitarian Universalists for Polyamory Awareness*, Louisville, Kentucky chapter, provides a cursory tracing of the polyamory social movement utilizing the framework of value-added theory to argue that polyamorists are not seeking to overthrow monogamy, as in value-added movements, but the movement is reacting to the lack or deprivation causing dissatisfaction with monogamy as the normative and perceivably only viable option for relationship models, described as a norm-oriented movement. Added-value theory in social movements relies on collective behavior theories, positing that there are predictable patterns that emerge before a collectivity is achieved. These patterns are comprised of the following six social determinants: structural conduciveness, meaning a social event that inspires collective behavior; structural strain, in which a lack or deprivation exists; generalized beliefs, beliefs that circulate to make the grievance meaningful, and to locate the space in which the grievance is sourced; precipitating factors, as acts that confirm this belief; mobilization of participants; and lastly, social control (Knottnerus, 1983).

Walston (2001) argues that structural conduciveness originated with the larger and less conservative circulation of sexuality discourses, particularly referencing the Kinsey Reports and the free-love movement in the 1960s. Structural strain for the polyamory movement is conceptualized as the hegemonic naturalization of compulsory monogamy. Walston (2001) determines that relative deprivation strained this discomfort within monogamy with the advancement of the gay rights movement gaining more visibility, as well as pressure for same-sex couples to maintain monogamous relationships by seeking out same-sex marriage equality.

The burgeoning texts on non-monogamy applies to the growth of generalized beliefs, and the precipitating factor increased these beliefs when Deborah Anapol, one of the founders of the polyamory movement, created a newsletter after receiving a wealth of questions pertaining to non-monogamy in the early '80s. Walston (2001) attributes the public availability and widespread use of the Internet as mobilizing actors based on these shared beliefs, thus providing support and anonymity to actors, as well as organizing conferences, groups, and email lists. Lastly, social control, particularly failure of social control relates to individual rights that polyamorists may seek beyond the traditional marriage laws, as well as the ability for polyamorists to share their experiences and circulate new discourses online without government intervention (Walston, 2001).

Furthering Jasmine Walston's paper on polyamory theorizing added-value theory in social movements, this study aims to situate media at the center of the movement's visibility, as well as the community's interactions with these media that foster a larger and more visible polyamory social movement under the rubric of postmodern identities in new social movements.

CHAPTER 4:

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The following chapter describes the triangulation of theories in order to first situate the polyamory community as an evolving community into what may or may not be perceived as a traditional social movement to a new social movement over the course of its emergence in 1984 until present day, and then to highlight the private and public divide that sexual identities embody in today's modern sexuality discourses. Incorporating several tactics within social and new social movement theories aids in understanding the strategies employed by the media practitioners in the movement to breach the public and private divide necessary for public visibility.

New Social Movements

Traditional social movement theory has focused on labor-related activism centralizing in industrialist society with an emphasis on political ideologies that define a movement in a particular social strata, e.g. socialism, conservatism, capitalism (Johnston, Laraña, & Gusfield, 1994). Analysis would center around locating the oppressive structures impeding on a particular group as the centralizing feature for social movement mobilization. Later, researchers recognized that ideology was not necessarily the feature variable in mobilization, but rather access to resources and the assessment of costs and benefits to the social actor in particular moments of action added a different analytical lens (Johnston et al. 1994). This additional analysis treated the *actions* of actors in social movement as specific strategies and opportunities in competing negotiations for specific requests relevant to the movement. Charles Tilly, a seminal author on

social movements, suggests that there are three facets to studying these traditional social movements:

- 1) The groups and organizations that make up a collective action;
- 2) the events that are part of the action repertoire; and
- 3) the ideas that unify the groups and guide their protests (cited in Johnston, 2014, 8-9).

He argues that the researcher is drawn to all of these parts concomitantly, even if the trajectory of research emphasizes the actions and ideas of one component or overarching ideology. Analyzing all three of these components ensures that a more nuanced understanding of the particular social movement is achieved, rather than pinpointing any one particular event as pivotal toward social change.

Generally, when describing social movements one thinks of structural political action motivated by a set of agents to challenge larger authoritative state structures in order to gain legal rights that have not been established for the respective members in the collective movement. A contemporary example would be the LGBTQ movement to gain same-sex marriage rights, thus affording not only the ability to participate in the institute of marriage for same-sex couples, but also the economic and social benefits one receives from the government through this participation; at play is the collective directly engaging with larger authoritative agents for specific interests.

In a traditional social movement model, however, the lifestyle of same-sex couples is then reduced to a political framework in which gay rights are only associated with participation in marriage, thus alienating everyday practices and recognition of cultural difference to the domestic, posturing the gain of heterosexual marriage rights for same-sex individuals in the forefront of political discourse. Focusing on the actions that reduce the everyday to publicly

recognizable political visibility, Ross Haenfler, Brett Johnson, & Ellis Jones (2012) assert, “this divide has created a scholarly blind spot concealing the intersections of private action and movement participation, personal change and social change, and personal identity and collective identity” (2). Lifestyles are then regarded as self-centered or egoistic, positioned only around the individual, whereas political action is regarded as homogenous collective action for the benefit of the whole, absent nuance and daily struggle. It is important to note that when this project uses the term lifestyle, with regards to social movement theory, it does not connote choice, as in choosing a vegan or vegetarian lifestyle, but simply describes the actions of living one’s life in a particular way, whether that is a choice or inherent does not come into play until further contextualization is applied.

New social movements (NSMs) have been loosely defined as movements emerging in post industrialist or advanced industrialist society. Examples of such would be movements regarding the environment, women’s rights, animal rights, alternative religions, alternative sexualities, and so on and so forth. Thus analysis in NSM theory have strayed from centralizing class and labor-related ideology as the impetus for movement, but instead moved toward identity politics and human rights as the larger force behind collectivity. Social rights such as change and recognition of cultural differences in identity and lifestyles are the units of analysis, rather than economic and ideological motivation for class-based demands or competing political ideologies. This is not to say that traditional social movements as have been previously defined have been supplanted by NSMs. The increasing momentum of the national adoption of the \$15 minimum wage still functions in the traditional social movement paradigm, particularly centralized around poor and working class citizens and localized public protests outside workplaces.

However, there are a variety of movements that oscillate between traditional and new social movements. The #BlackLivesMatter movement is one that is based on the segregation, discrimination, and maltreatment of poor black individuals who are seeking civil rights from a traditional socio-political and structural realm, but a movement that also places identity at the forefront of its political messaging (Ruffin, 2016). The intersection of institutional discrimination and racialized politics makes this movement an amalgamation of both types of movements.

One could argue that a push for national maternity leave could be analyzed from an economic standpoint found in traditional social movement theory; highlighting job security and paid time off as a motivating factor for political mobilization. However, the hierarchical spaces of gender in the workplace, as well as the symbolic nature of childrearing being predominantly viewed as a woman's responsibility, places the emphasis on women's rights and closer to an identity-based movement. Women no longer being relegated to solely secretarial or educational occupations pushes maternity leave into a new social movement paradigm providing a much more thick description of identity and human rights than does the ideology behind the glass ceiling. The addition of maternity leave for men furthers this movement into a more identity-based realm than economic realm.

As Johnston et al. (1994) write, in NSMs "the grievances and mobilizing factors tend to focus on cultural and symbolic issues that are linked with issues of identity rather than on economic grievances that characterized the working-class movements. They are associated with a set of beliefs, symbols, values, and meanings related to sentiments of belonging to a differentiated social group; with the members' images of themselves; and with the new, socially constructed attribute about the meaning of everyday life" (7). Thus bearing the responsibility of

child care and child rearing is an on-going process– an attribute of everyday life– no matter what the outcome of policies on maternity leave.

Johnston (2014) provides a theoretical expansion from the traditional approach to social movement analysis in order to take account of expanded categories inclusive of NSMs, creating a Venn diagram (see figure 2, Appendix) of overlapping concepts:

- 1) *Structural sphere*, as a fixed network of relations among social movement organizations including but not limited to informal groups and participants;
- 2) *Ideational-interpretive sphere*, in which values, interests, beliefs, frames, motivations, ideologies, and identities surface;
- 3) *Performative sphere*, where repertoires of collective actions are displayed, often found in everyday practices.

Similarly to Tilly, Johnston (2014) writes, “each of the larger spheres represent a fundamental dimension of social life with a wide distribution of different forms and foci, but the social movement analyst is interested in those that congeal towards center by virtue of how they challenge the status quo through extraordinary, non institutional actions” (7). Therefore looking for more centered actions can help focus the research toward actions, ideologies, performances, and groups that transcend the identity making of a particular group, and moreover mobilize the political aspects of the movement. Simply put, what aspects are literally moving the movement.

Jeff Goodwin & James Jasper (2004) however, warn that going too far into the cultural standpoint can have prohibiting effects, pointing to process theorist’s conceptualizing “it as a distinct (and delimited) empirical social sphere or type of social action– instead of conceptualizing (and analyzing) culture as an ubiquitous and constitutive dimension of all social relations, structures, networks, and practices” (47). We should not be left with the chicken or the

egg analysis, but again, a dialectical analysis of the intersections of structures, social behavior, and identities.

NSM research, however, has sought to engage with the ways in which individual actions can lead to an ideological collective, larger social awareness, and gain a political momentum. As Su Lee (2007) suggests, new social movement themes:

encompass collective definition[s] of situation and identity formation, public discourse and informal networks, issue publics and mass media, micromobilization and value orientations, construction of meaning and protests, cognitive-symbolic resonance in participant mobilization, community based citizen activities and multi-organizational fields, and the political culture as a symbolic reservoir from which to generate an action-orientation (1-2).

There is a tendency not to flat out reject class warfare, ala proletariat protest, from NSM theory, but to situate intersecting positionalities based on race, gender, and sexuality as products of the capitalist system, but not identities reducible to property ownership or specific class systems (Lee, 2007). Therefore, in new social movement analysis there are opportunities to look for movement from other social locations than just the economic. This does not suggest moving away from the traditional understanding of class-consciousness, but it does point to a different theoretical underpinning that does not conflate the working class as the only segment of society that is inherent to change.

Haenfler et al. (2012) expound upon the differences between NSMs and traditional social movements indicating that traditional movements target state apparatuses, typically in protest cycles, whereas NSMs “target cultural codes and individual practices” regardless of moments in which political action is most favorable (elections, national/international meetings, legislation barring or passing equal rights, etc.) (7). Rather, NSM theory presents movements in terms of struggling over:

postmaterialist values, identities, and cultural practices rather than class-based economic concerns and material resources. And that NSM theories have expanded the focus from movement organizations and conventional politics, pointing to broader definitions of movements based on loosely organized networks, collective identities, and cultural challenges (Haenfler et al., 2012, 4).

Goodwin & Jasper (2004) urge social movement analysis to engage with a multitude of tools that do not reduce the movement to a specific realm of just the political, cultural, or only focusing on opportunistic moments when protest is more viable. Instead, they argue for diversifying frames to include the strategies of social movement leaders and activists to include their own efforts at opportunity-making that is not contingent on protest cycles, or moments of rupture with the state, but moreover recognizes the fluidity of culture as shaping structural relationships within the social movement, and the variable nuance of actor's on both the contested and contestee's sides.

Language features into the NSM movement paradigm as well. As van Dijk (1993) asserts, critical discourse analysis is "an account of intricate relationships between text, talk, social cognition, power, society and culture" (253); all of these elements at play in NSM theory. Scott Hunt, Robert Benford & David Snow (1994) also point to 'talk' as a central element of identity formation. They argue that collective identities are constituted through interactions, specifically through talking; and that group-related discourses are contingent upon ever-in-flux group dynamics, thus pointing to the malleability and ephemeral nature of collective identity formation. They urge the researcher not to seek out individual experience as an objective fact, but as informing analysis as to the ways identity is formed through group interactions, and alters through nonlinear processes and experiences. Emphasis should be placed on specific moments of change within group norms that illuminate when discourses, and subsequent identity formations, shift. Thus analyzing the historical trajectory of media texts, and the subsequent construction of

discourse in group and community interactions can aid in revealing not only the salient community issues that become the glue for a larger cohesive collective identity, but looking at the processes that are involved in group communication through the addition, subtraction, and (re) negotiating of concepts for a larger group narrative.

Johnston (2014) furthers this by drawing on the influence of symbolic interactionism in new social movement theory. He states, “this is a view that, as applied to social movements, focuses on the realization that collective identity, like self-identity:

(1) is emergent– defined and confirmed in performances occurring at least partly in the context of movement activities; and

(2) involves various audiences or publics, both internal and external to the movement (88).

This draws on the importance of various publics and the narratives they produce. The internal publics are found within the polyamory movement– creators and disseminators of the mediated texts, and the community negotiations and performances that contribute to the larger narrative. The external publics, such as those interpreting the information disseminated, contribute largely to the dominant narratives circulated about the polyamory social movement. Both the construction and reception processes are important for the larger narrative analysis. This process of internal and external publics collaboratively constructing narratives about sexual identities almost never occurs, as is indicated in the ever so often mainstream misrepresentation of different sexuality models; therefore, representations circulating in mass media have limited basis on real-world experiences, yet are often perceived as credible sources of information.

Lastly, NSMs move beyond traditional social movements as they take account of the various changes within a group structure and relate that back to the changes in the culture and society at large. Technological innovation can have a large impact on the ways in which

communities communicate and mobilize. As with the Arab Spring uprising, social media, particularly Twitter, a medium accessible on cell phones when Internet access was restricted by the government, played a tremendous role in organizing protestors.

Alternative Media and Social Movements

Different forms of media can disseminate information on behalf of all of the types of networks and organizations described above. In more formal networks, access to the resources of traditional media, such as television and radio, can be achieved more readily by organizations that have more clout and public visibility. However, with the advent of new media and alternative media available to a larger audience, social movement actors in the informal and loosely organized networks are able to leverage their voices in myriad ways to contribute to the social movement at large. While traditional media have certainly served its purpose in the spreading of radical and alternative messages, particularly social movement theorists studying the use of pamphlets and newsletters in social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, alternative media in the post industrialist era tends to centralize less around the one-to-many model, and emphasizes the liberatory effect of new media technologies that allow a many-to-many model to reach dispersed networked communities. In earlier social movement theories, media were seen as tools to help organize the movement, however, in later conceptions of NSM theories, media are observed as spaces in which the organization takes place, rather than as additional resource opportunities for communication (Lievrouw, 2011).

Within the era of new media, particularly, online and social media, the birth of the prosumer (Toffler, 1981) affords once passive audiences opportunities to now be active producers and consumers of alternative and competing information through alternative media

(Lievrouw, 2011). These new alternative media alter our understanding of mediation as several distinct realms of the advancement of technological communications as separate from the cultural “interpersonal process of participation or intervention in the creation and sharing of meaning” (Lievrouw, 2011, 4). Rather, this amalgamation of the technological and the cultural features movement within social movement media as the central force in which the participation and creation can be observed. As Leah Lievrouw (2011) aptly notes, new media technologies serve a multitude of purposes based on the needs of particular groups, specifically as it pertains to users adopting existing media tools for their own needs, but more importantly, by expanding upon the pre-existing structures to ‘remix’ the media for re-presentations and adaptations of new media messages, referred to as reconfiguration and remediation. She writes, “reconfiguration and remediation allow people to work around the fixity of traditional media technologies and institutional systems, and to negotiate, manipulate, and blur the boundaries between interpersonal interaction and mass communication” (2011, 5). Thus new media technologies can be situated in the postmodern free-flowing paradigm in which the ‘fixed’ institutions are deconstructed to reveal the lack, particularly as it pertains to alternative representations that do not fit into the normative.

Manuel Castells (2012), discussing the features available in multimodal communication models writes, “the characteristics of communication processes between individuals engaged in the social movement determine the organizational characteristics of the social movement itself: the more interactive and self-configurable communication is, the less hierarchical is the organization and the more participatory is the movement” (15). For Castells, the autonomous feature of the Internet allows leaderless movements to occur in spaces that are away from the dominant institutions that seek to change; however, he notes that while organizing online allows

these types of cultural movements (as opposed to protest movements) to flourish and expand, it is not the only route that movements need to move, particularly highlighting the need for face-to-face gathering to work out the most important issues and occupy physical spaces.

Reworking new media definitions, Lievrouw (2011) adopts a definition that is useful for the analysis of media projects in alternative and activist communities, specifically the ways in which the medium functions in terms of its assets and tools, the ways in which people use these media, and the ways that people are structured or organized around these media systems:

- 1) The material artifacts or devices that enable and extend people's abilities to communicate and share meaning
- 2) The communication activities or practices that people engage in as they develop and use those devices; and
- 3) The larger social arrangements and organizational forms that people create and build around the artifacts and practices (7).

According to Lievrouw (2011), new media differ from traditional media as they are the product of individuals' ideas and innovation; centering around ever in flux and shifting technology modes and technological needs; amongst a 'network of networks' in which connections are limited only to the technologies ability to expand beyond the local and into the global; reaching audiences in nonlinear and in an asynchronous fashion; are ubiquitous; and are interactive in that the technology allows for user feedback, but also facilitates actor participation.

As new media pertains to activist networks, Lievrouw (2011) draws on radical media research to pinpoint the subversive nature of media networks, particularly the ways in which the medium itself is used as a channel of opposition, concomitantly with the oppositional actions of those creating the messages with that specific communication technology as a way of doing, or action against fixed institutional media, ideology, or politics (19). New social movement theory tends to situate the oppositional actors in these movements as "knowledge workers," coming

from highly educated backgrounds seeking out cultural and symbolic justices rather than material goods (Lievrouw, 2011). She writes, “participants in NSMs have been precisely those members of society who are most involved in the production and circulation of culture, including media culture and information technology” (2011, 42).

The scope of alternative media in NSMs also varies, from individual run campaigns to a small network that parse out information amongst volunteers (Lievrouw, 2011). Because individual actors vary in their resource capital, access to funds that afford larger scale media communication is limited, and thus the organizational nodes found within new media networks create points of collectivities across a multitude of positionalities. These small-scale DIY networks then provide a sense of intimacy and trust amongst these networks; it is much easier to get comfortable with issues of cultural diversity and sexuality when you feel the person on the other end of the medium is not just an anonymous Internet user, but a real person identifying in the same way you are.

New media activists are also seen as ‘cartographers’ or creators of ‘mediascapes’ in ‘heterotopic’ spaces where counter discourses can take place, bolstered by newly invented safe spaces to share periphery or minority viewpoints (Lievrouw, 2011, 64). For NSM mobilization, an on-going identity-based collective needs to maintain itself so that actors can participate by jumping in and out of the collective conversation without sustaining roles of traditional social movement actors organized around specific tactics and institutionalized strategies (Lievrouw, 2011). The macro and micro effect of media communication and usage in NSMs points to the intersection of broadcasting and dissemination of information, as well as the interpersonal and collective identity building that takes place on these media networks thus making “engagement via new media both symbolic and material” (Lievrouw, 2011, 158). The mobilization that takes

place due to this online/offline, micro/macro relationship is what helps move the movement, a term that Lievrouw calls ‘mediated mobilization’. This moves beyond resource mobilization theory that suggests movement is predicated on organization, acquisition, and application, but rather includes the solidarity building, identity-strategies of new social movements centering around lifestyle identities.

Resource Mobilization: Networks As Strategy

Resource mobilization theory (RMT) has been a prominent feature of traditional social movement theory since the 1970s, when social scientists shifted their analysis from the psychologically based collective group mentality (see origins with LeBon, 1897; Turner & Killian, 1957; Kornhauser, 1959; Smelser, 1962) in social movements, toward an analysis of the ways in which “variety of resources that must be mobilized, the linkages of social movements to other groups, the dependence of movements upon external support for success, and the tactics used by authorities to control or incorporate movement” (McCarthy & Zald, 1977, 1213).

RMT is predicated on rational actors having a grievance(s) with the current political system, and thus those same actors seeking to organize into groups in order form a collective to address those criticisms on a mass scale. Rational actors are necessary as the individual will have to weigh the cost/benefit of participating in a group in hopes of achieving collective action. RMT is interested in understanding why individuals join social movements, how they are recruited, and why they stay. RMT also looks at an individual’s particular role within them, whether they are an active member, possibly receiving incentives for participation, or a free-rider, someone who is along for the ride to gain without fully participating (Buechler, 1993). According to Steven Buechler (1993), RMT “views social movements as normal, rational, institutionally rooted, political

challenges by aggrieved groups” (218). In traditional political arenas, special interest groups have access to policy makers, whereas individual actors do not (Buechler, 1993). Therefore, RMT situates social movement organizations as a network of collective actors working for collective action to gain access to resources from non-traditional political routes. As outlined by John McCarthy & Mayer Zald (1977), organizations are defined as formal structures, such as social movements, social movement organizations, social movement industries, and the social movement sector. Lievrouw (2011) suggests that RMT theorists pinpoint the most effective social movements as being led by individuals who “are able to recognize the political, organizational, economic, and technological “opportunity structures” available to the movement, to identify incentives for action, and to capture and use those opportunities and incentives” (45). Therefore, actors who can leverage the intersection of the political and cultural will utilize their resources in the most productive way.

RMT emerged when scholars of social movement theory witnessed a paradigm shift in emerging social movements starting in the 1960s such as the civil rights movement, the women’s movement, and movements against the war. As Buechler (1993) states, even during this time, using the RMT framing did not accurately depict the complexity of these emerging movements. As Buechler (1993) asserts, traditional RM theorists argue that gaining and utilizing resources is the dominant factor that controls the emergence of collectivities, and that grievances, while a part of resource mobilization, are secondary to the cause, and not enough to cause a collective to form. In Buechler’s research on the various waves of feminist movements, he argues that systemic discrimination was not necessarily the sole factor for women’s participation in these movements, rather the social construction of grievances is what caused them to mobilize, particularly by identifying as a woman (1993, 222).

Buechler (1993) also points to RMT lack of ideological analysis, again, locating the movement of a movement based on the collective accrual to access and utilization of particular resources. Within the women's movement, Buechler argues that ideology was central to the organization, writing, "[it] is through the development and diffusion of feminist ideology that grievances become politicized ("the personal is political"), that women develop a collective identity rooted in gender, and that they re-interpret their social environment as consisting of potential movement resources" (1993, 222).

Formal structures in RMT are also problematic for Buechler, as he argues that theorists tend to only analyze actors in organized structures found within formal social movement organizations, and thus ignore the other dispersed networks that make up the larger social movement. Particularly, emphasis on social movements emerging due to piggybacking on pre-existing movements undermines the informal networks, which Buechler refers to as the social movement community, spaces in which activists decentralize networks to avoid hierarchical or bureaucratic organization which inevitably aligns with their antiestablishment policies of power positioning (223).

Jane Jenson (1991) points to three theoretical trajectories that shifted traditional social movement theory from a crisis centric approach to a more organizational and resource accrual approach: the feminist movement, neo-Marxism, and neo-institutionalism. The feminist movement, as evidenced in Buechler's (1993) research above, helped to centralize informal networks, but as Jenson (1991) points out, also looks at the ways in which the social construction of gender effects the everyday. Particularly, the feminist movement draws our attention to the social inequalities inherent in gender construction, but more importantly on the ways in which alternatives ways of conceptualizing gender can deconstruct and offer more balance in the ways

in which women are viewed and treated, “thus, the 'feminist turn' has involved thinking about the ways ideas powerfully organize our lives and define our interests” (Jenson, 1991, 44).

Additionally, the feminist movement has drawn our attention to moving beyond essentialist notions of identity by demarcating the innumerable differences amongst women-identifying populations (Jenson, 1991).

Turning her focus to neo-Marxism contribution to the change in social theory, Jenson, quotes Gramsci in an effort to highlight the emphasis the role of ideas and the exchange of ideas in social movement theory—“[for] Gramsci, ideas have become newly important precisely because they provide the "mental frameworks - the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation - which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out and render intelligible the way society works" (1991, 45). She goes on to explain that false consciousness in traditional social movement analysis has been replaced by analysis concerning power structures and the ‘material force’ unequal power can have upon disenfranchised groups. Because power is ever evolving, the emphasis on historical specificity with regards to space and time is featured in newer social movement theories as it pertains to the ways in which new ideas arrive, rather than how the reproduction of certain social conditions maintains dominant ideologies (Jenson, 1991).

Lastly, Jenson outlines the contribution Neo-institutional theories have had on social movement theory, positing that these theories contributed to inclusion of analyzing the relationship between the state and social relationships, however, Jenson argues this theory tends to fall short as it fails to address the actors’ aspirations, goals, and self-identities as it played out in this state-personal level. Only until these theorists recognized the limited malleability of

change within state structures did they choose to include the historical specificity of ideas as a force for change (Jenson, 1991). Jenson argues,

as soon as deterministic formulations are replaced by ones with greater attention to subjectivity, it becomes clear that only in specific places and times is it possible to observe the meeting of the general and particular, with politics being an historical construction, of people making their own history albeit never under conditions of their own choosing (1991, 47).

For Jenson, political struggle has always included identity politics, but now there is a focus on identity politics from an agentic perspective, rather than politics including identity from a production-class oriented perspective. She points out that new social movements should locate the actions of a particular actor, understanding that while those actions are creative and disruptive forces, the individual doing the acting is still a constituted subject. Thus the actor represents themselves to others through collectivity ('representation of self'), as well as presenting representations of their interests ('representation of interests') (Jenson, 1991). It is the dominant social relations, however, that help determine which representations are received and acknowledged at any given time— a dialectical relationship between structures and the everyday.

Castells (2010) also sought to understand this shift in collective class consciousness toward a more individual-centric society in the information age, and the ways in which networks manifest themselves in individuals' everyday practices. In 1997, Castells set out to elaborately explore the changing socio-cultural landscape as a result of globalization, computer-mediated communication technologies, and the restructuring of identity territories. In his work, *The Rise of the Network Society*, often referred to as an encyclopedic volume of the information society, Castells pursues an analysis of the arrangement of society in a time of uncertainty, particularly as it functions in a post industrialist, postmodern, fluid and free-floating form. His emphasis centralizing around the new networks that move beyond the nation-state, and subsequently

become less able to be harnessed by the nation state, that spread information globally, and seek to create new identities with this wealth of information.

Specifically honing in on the transformation of space and time, Castells, like many of the other theorists discussed here, directly relates the shift from the modern traditional social movements to new social movements based on this historical unhinging and emphasis on social constructions. Particularly, Castells looks at space as experientially constructed, in that “space defines the time frame of relationships” (2010, xxxi). Castells uses the concept of ‘space of flows’ to understand why networks have been produced by experiences: “the material support of simultaneous social practices communicated at a distance” Castells draws our attention to particular nodes in the network that make this communication possible, suggesting that “it is the functional need that calls for the development of infrastructures...infrastructure of communication develops because there is something to communicate” (2010, xxxvii).

Castells also outlines these new networked societies in a variety of ways in the preface to the 2010 edition of his first volume: “the development of horizontal networks of interactive communication that connect local and global in chosen time has intensified the pace and broadened the scope of the trend that I identified more than a decade ago: the multimodal, multichannel system of digital communication that integrates all forms of media” (2010, xxvii). In his book, *Networks of Outrage and Hope*, Castells asserts that power is organized around networks, and thus communication networks are sources of power-making, particularly as it pertains to influence. In his earlier conceptions of mass-self communication, he argues that the individual is capable of determining how a message is constructed through many-to-many models in which the receiver is self-directed by the sender, in a selected network of communication streamlining from a horizontal communication model. He writes, “mass self-

communication provides the technological platform for the construction of the autonomy of the social actor, be it individual or collective, vis-à-vis the institutions of society” (2012,7).

However, it is important to note that while communication networks have provided a sense of agency and autonomy to the individual, the state and political structures also have access to these communication resources, and they too harness the power inherent in these network structures to construct and circulate their own ideas about society, particularly identity—“so, while communication networks process the construction of meaning on which power relies, the state constitutes the default network for the proper functioning of all other power networks” (Castells, 2012, 8). This creates a relationship between what Castells calls the programmers (government institutions) and the switchers (pertinent to this study, media organizations and media elites) who sustain these overlapping relationships to maintain dominant discourses

Teasing out identity and communication in these networked societies, Castells (2010) argues that identity is a centralizing feature, particularly the search for identity due to the “widespread destructuring of organizations, delegitimation of institutions, fading away of major social movements, and ephemeral cultural expressions (3). Since identity is heavily influenced by the circulating discourses predominantly dominated by the ‘programmers’ and the ‘switchers,’ Castells argues counterpower is able to be harnessed by reprogramming and offering competing and alternative interests and values. He is pointing to the ability of actors to create their own alternative messages within the confines of the pre-established networks, specifically as it relates to the circulation of sharing experiences. By offering up their own institutional networks, actors in social movements are able to draw upon other switchers in other movements (particularly other new social/lifestyle movement actors) to understand the ways in which these movements were able to gain visibility and rights in their own constructed public spaces.

Because institutional space is the only space in which to be heard (Castells, 2012), alternative communication needs to occupy these established spaces by forging new spaces that embody their personal ideals in order to achieve visibility. Castells points to the occupation of physical urban spaces as in Occupy Wall street, to embody this visibility in new community making. These occupied spaces, whether real or virtual, are necessary components for social change for three reasons: they create community, they embody symbolic power, and they are capable of creating a public space through this occupation (Castells, 2012, 11). The individual is the central feature in social movements for Castells, as the individual is the beginning of the communication process that allows other individuals to share their oppressed, discriminated, misrepresented or ignored standpoints, which effectively allows a collective to form to fight on behalf of this disenfranchisement.

Castells outlines several patterns of new social movements under this networked society. The first pattern is that social movements are networked in multiple forms, meaning they occupy both online virtual spaces as well as offline physical space, and they have expansive networks that do not require centralized leadership, or vertical organizing, thus increasing participation amongst these open networks. The second aspect for Castells is the 'space of autonomy in which movements occupy the physical urban/symbolic space to manifest the movement beyond the online organizations. This physical space represents the appropriation of the public institution in which the new social movement is able to articulate its own ideals and values in a free forum. Another feature pattern is the local and global aspect of networked movements, allowing individuals to express their personal experiences by connecting with similar organizations across the globe, particularly in timeless time, a fourth pattern Castells recognizes. Timeless time

encompasses the present everyday experiences of those imagining their new ideals, as well as the future possibility of newly constructed lives sought after by the movements.

Networked movements are also spontaneous, as Castell explains, often evoked by an event or series of events that induces an emotional resistance to the current order of things, thus asking for a “call to action from the spaces of flows that aims to create an instant community of insurgent practice in the space of places” (2012, 224). Moments are also viral given the nature of media communication technology, and “the transition from outrage to hope is accomplished by deliberation in the space of autonomy” (Castells, 2012, 224). Community is an important feature in networked movements, but as a goal of the movement; it is the togetherness that brings the actors together into a community through organized movements that is key. By having a dispersed leaderless network, Castells argues that trust is gained amongst the actors so they don’t feel like a replication of the normative institutional hierarchy is at play.

The last few patterns of networked movements can be defined as self-reflexivity, lack of a singular motive (as many factors go into the organizing), non-violent activism, and lastly, are political in nature through the standpoint of producing a new utopic ideal. As Castells (2012) asserts, “when societies fail in managing their structural crisis by the existing institutions, change can only take place out of the system by a transformation of power relations that starts in people’s minds and develops in the form of the networks built by the projects of new actors constituting themselves as the subjects of the new history in the making” (228).

There are positive aspects of having diversified networks in identity based social movements, particularly as a way of reaching audiences that do not subscribe to one particular sexuality model. As Johnston et al. (1994) points out, “there is a tendency toward considerable autonomy of local sections, where collective forms of debate and decision making often limit

linkages with regional and national organizations,” allowing a whole host of networks to emerge, a practice called the “self-referential element” (8-9). David Swartz (2012), drawing on Bourdieu states that, “for Bourdieu, the possibility of collective existence depends on *both* shared life changes and their symbolic representations. He stresses, however, that it is the struggle over representations that shapes whether or not groups develop a significant social identity. Group power depends largely on the capacity of individuals to organize around a name for which they are able to obtain some official recognition” (186). Thus, being self-referential allows groups to garner these networks to gain credibility and legitimacy in the public sphere.

Swartz points to the importance of a cohesive identity narrative:

processes of group formation require the delegation of symbolic powers as well as the creation of a group identity. There must be agents capable of imposing themselves as legitimate spokespersons and delegates for the class. . . Group origins and existence, Bourdieu maintains, derive not only from the self-interests of group spokespersons or from the structural linkages between group leaders and followers, but also from the process of symbolic delegation, “in which the mandated representative receives from the group the power to make the group.” In short, he points to the importance of processes of institutionalization of authorized leadership of social classes (187).

Mario Diani and Doug McAdam (2003) offer insight into the networks that make up social movements by drawing on the expansion of network analysis to include the intersection of culture and traditional networks. They note that social networks are typically comprised of nodes (individuals and organizations; events linked by persons or speech), ties (direct or indirect) or boundaries (realist or nominalist). Direct ties are defined as ties linking people through collaborative efforts, such as rallying support for the same things, or individuals who know each other personally; whereas indirect ties link individuals who share something in common like a resource or have overlapping interests. Boundaries are separated in nominalist and realist, the

former set based on the criteria a researcher sets for inclusion with any given network, and the former, more of a grounded theory in which the researcher observes network categories as they are defined by the group they are analyzing (Diani, 2002).

Networks in social movements can create connections in a whole host of ways. As Diani & McAdam (2003) write, “networks may provide opportunities for action through the circulation of information about on-going activities, existing organizations, people to contact, and a reduction of the practical costs attached to participation. . . Networks may facilitate the development of cognitive skills and competences and/or provide the context for the socialization of individuals to specific sets of values. They may also represent the locus for the development of strong emotional feelings” (8). In terms of indirect and direct ties, Diani & McAdam (2003) argue that there is much debate about the efficacy between these two, where one might assume direct ties would be more effective by way of peer pressure or influence, the authors argue that indirect ties, particularly in social movements, may create larger connectivity due to the diversity of those involved in indirect networks.

The nodes in these networks, although not typically studied in the same way that traditional network analysis methodically charts each connection that node has, may link individuals to leaders within the larger social movement network, and create new opportunities for subjects within the larger group (Diani & McAdam, 2003). With regard to organizations within social movements, Diani & McAdam (2003) argue that direct ties within these organizations typically exchange information and the pooling of mobilization resources, whereas indirect ties, have shared administrators, participate in the same activities or events, and are exposed to the same media.

In particular, however, the authors posit that shared identity is the commonality amongst these networks that create specific boundaries. Despite these boundaries, however, subgroups within these networks may be fragmented, based on differences and ideologies, as well as compete for the same socio-cultural space (Diani & McAdam, 2003) Most interestingly, however, is the analysis of collectivities in social movements, particularly the ways in which collective performance is achieved. As Diani & McAdam point out, variables in social network analysis tend to focus on the behaviors and choices of actors in the movement, as well as the locations of the organizations in connecting these actors to the larger nodes. Particularly, performativity has sought to move beyond just the choices actors make, and has been used to locate communicative advantages within a movement for successful mobilization. These advantages also including the ways in which organizations create continuity for the larger movement's cohesive identity so that individualized efforts do not remain unnoticed (Diani & McAdam). However, there is a tendency to choose one analytical path, rather than combining the advantages of both analytical applications.

Melucci (1996) focuses on this disjuncture, citing either an emphasis of the actions of actors with a given structure, or on the identification of actors in social movements. He locates the two sides of the coin in traditional social movement theory that tend to separate the structural realm and the ideological interpretive realm, specifically urging the researcher to combine the two as way to highlight "the ways in which actors construct their action" (16). This conjoining helps reveal the ways in which current societal conditions, particularly as they relate to the political economic, shape individual actor choices, ideas, beliefs, etc., but also provide insight into the agency that individuals utilize when making these choices to further collective action. Thus the political economic and cultural studies dualism is more closely linked in social

movement theory under Melucci's collective action analysis, particularly with symbolic interactionism.

Citing resource mobilization theory, Melucci (1996) argues that it has shown "us that collective action does not result from the aggregation of atomized individuals. Rather, it must be seen as the outcome of complex processes of interaction mediated by certain networks of belonging" (18). However, he is apt to point out that collective action is not unstructured, as discourses surrounding collective action contend. We can attribute hegemonic power structures to these discourses that seek to undermine the logic in collective action as a way to subordinate any action or collective identity that threatens the current system's normativity.

The Public Sphere: Visibility As Strategy

Identity is a centralizing feature of new social movement theories, particularly as it pertains to the loss of identity in the modern state, and a move of post-industrialist material movements into postmodern identities in newer formations of identity politics. Johnston et al. (1994) characterize four factors in postmodern identities: "material affluence, information overload, confusion over the wide horizon of available cultural alternatives, and system inadequacies in providing institutionally based and culturally normative alternatives for self-identification" (11).

Hall (1996) understands identity as requiring discursive work, "the binding and marking of symbolic boundaries, the production of 'frontier-effects'. It requires what is left outside, its constitutive outside, to consolidate the process" (3). Hall continues, pointing to the historical relation to identity, writing, "though they [identities] seem to invoke an origin in a historical past with which they continue to correspond, actually identities are about questions of using the

resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not ‘who we are or ‘where we came from,’ so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves. Identities are therefore constituted within, not outside representation” (4). For Hall, identity is then historically specific, constructed through discursive strategies as a way to exclude or mark one as different.

Diana Fuss (1991) in her book *Inside/Outside* interrogates this systemic power of language and sexuality as it pertains to visibility and recognition. She offers an interrogative perspective on the dominant/subordinate binaries found within sexual discourses. She argues that—

“the philosophical opposition between “heterosexual” and “homosexual” like so many other conventional binaries, has always been constructed on the foundations of another related opposition: the couple “inside and “outside.” The metaphysics of identity that has governed discussions of sexual behavior and libidinal object choice has, until now, depended on the structural symmetry of these seemingly fundamental distinctions and the inevitability of a symbolic order based on a logic of limits, margins, borders, and boundaries” (1).

The work in her collection, *Inside/Outside*, tries to negotiate these limits and boundaries, to find spaces where these discourses can be worked upon, turned inside out in order to reveal the limitations of the binaries themselves, as well as individual positions within them.

Fuss (1991) urges us to remember that while some may be relegated to the outsider realm, they also have opportunities to be insiders, and thus navigate a multitude of positions within the power struggle. Her example of these opportunities is exemplified in the traditional practice of coming out of the closet, proposing that while at the same time one reveals oneself as homosexual, which is perceived as an outsider role, one actually is now inside, in that once you are ‘out’ you gain a certain visibility— you are exposed in your exposure. In a larger context, I

argue this insider status may gain an individual or set of individual discourses a certain visibility as well.

Heteronormative discourses are perpetuated and maintained to keep these boundaries separate and distinct. The dominant discourse does not take kindly to encroachment upon these borders, and therefore always needs to maintain a distance (Fuss, 1991)— a distance that is found in the delegitimizing of particular sexualities, always in contrast to the dominating values of heteronormativity. Fuss (1991) contends that there is a lack found within the dominant form in the inside/outside binary, which is projected in its opposition, and that the “greater the lack on the inside, the greater the need for an outside to contain and defuse it, for without that outside, the lack on the inside would become all too visible” (Fuss, 1991, 3). She argues that:

for heterosexuality to achieve the status of the “compulsory,” it must present itself as a practice governed by some internal necessity. The language and law that regulates the establishment of heterosexuality as both an identity and an institution, both a practice and a system, is the language and law of defense and protection: heterosexuality secures its self-identity and shores up its ontological boundaries by protecting itself from what it sees as the continual predatory encroachments of its contaminated other, homosexuality (2)

What Fuss posits is that heterosexuality needs the other in order to maintain its own boundary. She contends that the “contaminated other” as in the homosexual, is seen as a lack in two senses: the first sense in that it lacks the traits of the dominant identity— heterosexuality— therefore it is excluded from the normative because of these deficiencies; and the other lack found within the outsider sexuality, but which is a projected lack of the inside (Fuss, 1991). What this means is that homosexuality was constructed to fill a void that exists in the institution of heterosexuality. Thus, homosexuality was constituted in direct response to the identity-formation of heterosexuality.

As Foucault (1980) also writes, "homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy into a kind of interior androgyny, a

hermaphroditism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species" (43). When knowledges about heterosexuality were formed, so were practices to inform the categorization of homosexuality. Fuss (1991) argues that this emergence was also a "double sense of invisibility" – while homosexuality was relegated to deviance, as a sexuality ou[s]t[ed] from heteronormativity, it also provided an opportunity to come 'out' of the closet (4). Thus coming out provides a certain sense of visibility, as one has tripped up the initial ousting of the outsider status, and instead has chosen to regain the outing status for reclaiming an identity.

However, Fuss (1991) urges us not to consider 'outsider as insider' status as a definitive and concrete position. Nor should the discourse around coming out of the closet be lauded as revolutionary. She aptly points out that knowledge construction can also replace one struggling part of the binary with the other, as we see in homonormativity. If the heteronormative institution is hegemonic in the sense that it is constantly struggling to maintain its dominant positionality, then subordinate or periphery sexualities seeking to undermine its institutional hold risks supplanting their own dominance in the same exclusionary way. Fuss (1991) writes, "sexual identity may be less a function of knowledge than performance, or in Foucauldian terms, less a matter of final discovery than perpetual reinvention...toward an imaginative enactment of sexual redefinitions, reborderizations, and rearticulations" (7). It is important to frame her usage of knowledge as it pertains to empirical research and ways of knowing where one is situated in the inside/outside binary at any given time. Foucault (1980) argues that knowledge construction is what wields power, as those constructing the knowledge reinforce institutions that subordinate.

Looking toward spaces in which knowledge production is created, we can begin by looking at the emergence of the bourgeois public sphere and its relationship to meaning-making, media usage, and collective identity in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. As

Jürgen Habermas (1991) states in the very first paragraph of the chapter titled '*The Transformation of the Public Sphere's Political Function*,' "the shift in function of the principle of publicity is based on a shift in the function of the public sphere as a special realm. The shift can be clearly documented with regard to the transformation of the public sphere's preeminent institution, the press" (181). And with the press is a starting point to visibly locate the shift of publicity within the structures of newspapers and journals as a change from literary journalism to institutional journalism, or as Habermas said, the "merchant of news" was now "a dealer in public opinion" (182). The infiltration of external funding into the objective nature of the press muddled this rational extension of public opinion; now held captive to aligning messages with the ideas of its funders, the press became bedfellows with institutional ideologies— the press "became the gate through which privileged private interests invaded the public sphere" (185).

Habermas marks this as the "shift from a journalism of private men of letters" to a shift "to the public services of the mass media," where the sphere was transformed by "the influx of private interests that received privileged exposure in it," (189) thus marking the political transformation of public opinion in which the public presentation of private interests was now common place. Thus the press functioned as a circulatory system for the 'public' as a way to present "facts and calculated stereotypes. . . for a reorientation of public opinion by the formation of new authorities or symbols which will have acceptance" (194). In this instance, public opinion can no longer be viewed as a culmination of society's ideas and values, but rather as a megaphone for the ideologies set forth by the investors that strong-arm journalism through a dominant and disciplining institutional sway.

Nancy Fraser (1992) is well-known for her critique of Habermas' public sphere, particularly within four distinct elements: class equality by way of bracketing of status for equal

standing; a lack of counterpublics that compete with the dominant public sphere; private life remaining inadmissible when discussing public issues; and the necessary divide between civil society and state. After the decline of journalism, and the staging of public opinion by economic investors, we are able to see the emergence of special interest groups and unions, what Fraser would classify as counterpublics with their own needs and particular ways of knowledge building and spaces for articulation. As Fraser argues, these counterpublics are necessary to diversify the public sphere, to offer a space in which multiple publics are able to express their concerns in a venue where differences are not bracketed. Arguing against Habermas' realized bourgeois sphere Fraser writes, "declaring a deliberative arena to be a space where extant status distinctions are bracketed and neutralized is not sufficient to make it so" (1992,115). Rather, Fraser asserts that inequalities should be unbracketed and thematized to draw attention, or make visible, the public nature of these inequalities. Opting for a space in which the parity between dominate and subordinate groups is more even-keeled, Fraser suggests that the recognition and execution of multiple publics or 'counterpublics', can help rectify this inequalities and lack of visible differences of opinion. The counterpublics serving as subaltern publics or "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (Fraser, 1992, 123).

Cultural knowledges, ideas and values were exiled from Habermas' bourgeois public sphere, as Fraser states, functioning in spaces of "zero degree culture" (120). This elimination of culture separates the socio-cultural aspects of society, instead elevating the institutional and the claim of production of the material as the replicators of the social order. Fraser states, "however limited a public may be in its empirical manifestation at any given time, its members understand

themselves as part of a potentially wider public, that indeterminate, empirically counterfactual body we call “the public at large” (1992, 124). Thus while in postmodern, post industrialist society individuals are viewed as autonomous actors and creators of their own meaning, however, the cultural and the material come together as a interlocking relationship, one cannot be separated from the other, and thus knowledge-production as a creative process still inhabits structures ‘not of one’s own making.’ For Fraser, the multiple spheres created by deliberation in subaltern publics “are not only arenas for the formation of discursive opinion; in addition, they are arenas for the formation and enactment of social identities” (1992, 125). Articulation of these social identities in the subaltern publics is necessary to gain visibility within the larger public sphere. Using Habermas’ understanding of the functionality of the media as affording public exposure of the private, we could argue that alternative media can be successful in gaining this exposure with deconstructed ideologies or reconstructed identities, or via the appropriation of traditional media channels with these reconstructed media messages. Thus visibility of the private is gained with publicity.

Michael Warner (2002) also contributes to the visibility discourse by interrogating the relationship between the private and the public sphere specifically engaging with identity politics and the desire for public recognition of a private identity. He argues, “identity politics in this sense seems to many people a way of overcoming both the denial of public existence that is so often the form of domination and the incoherence of the experience that the dominations creates, an experience that often feels more like invisibility than like the kind of privacy you value” (2002, 26).

Warner utilizes a genealogical lens to interrogate the historical specificity of public and private. He streamlines the emergence of ‘private’ as a direct negation of ‘public’ value, in that

private matters had no value in the public arena at all. However, he notes as the conditions of modernity altered social relationships, the private began to assume characteristics of ‘freedom, individuality, inwardness, [and] authenticity’ (28), traits of identities less easily molded into binaries of either/or, particularly as they pertained to the constitution of the subject. Despite the shift in subjectivity, attempts to dichotomize the public and private experience via value judgments were, and are continually perpetuated. Most notably, the gendering of the private and public is applicable to a socio-historical context, in that the (feminine) domestic is still regarded as the private, not legitimated or recognizable through unpaid labor via the (masculine) public sphere. Interrogating these dichotomies, and the fluidity of the public versus the private can help illuminate the ways in which new social movements focus on the privacy of sexual identities as a political in the public realm, drawing our attention to a specific historical context responsible for the subjugation and invisibility of non-normative sexualities.

Warner (2002) argues that Habermas’ conceptualization of the public sphere functions for traditional social movements, particularly the ways in which traditional movements sought remedy from the state in the arena of civil society. However, he points to the changing climate among the relations of the state, mass media, and the market to identify new social movement categories, specifically citing movements around gender and sexuality. He writes, “movements around gender and sexuality seek to transform fundamental styles of embodiment, identity, and social relations— including their unconscious manifestations, the visions of the good life embodied in them, and the habitus by which people continue to understand their selves or bodies as public or private” (2002, 51). Habitus as a space for individuals to understand their identities draws our attention to the subjective nature of counterpublics as universalistic concepts for a homogenizing identity seeking recognition and visibility in the public sphere. Whereas medical

experts are able to articulate knowledge discourses surrounding the body in an authoritative and homogenous way, individual patients expressions and discourses are specific to their own subjectivity, often times one not of their own making. As Warner argues, the closet is a cultural construct, as someone who is said to be in the closet had not constructed that space themselves—“people find themselves in its oppressive conditions before they know it” (2012, 52). This cultural constructed closet straddles both the public and the private, as it constitutes private subjects by the public construction of shame and appropriateness. Warner aptly points out,

it is also constantly being shaped across the range of social relations, and perhaps especially in the mass media, with their visual language and incorporation of desire. The public sphere as an environment, then, is not just a place where one could rationally debate a set of gender or sexual relations that can in turn be equated with private life; the public sphere is a principal instance of the forms of embodiments and social relations that are themselves at issue (2012, 54).

Thus the visibility of the ‘outsider as insider’ status draws our attention to these social constructions and the lack that is found in these structures and social relations.

While traditional publics are arenas to bring forth issues of identities that are developed in the private life, as with traditional social movements, counterpublics, on the other hand, are arenas in which identity is negotiated as constituted both publicly and privately, as well as outside the traditional conjugal dyadic couple family (Warner, 2012). For Warner (2002), a counterpublic is not just an arena, or space in which to communicate, but “mediated by print, theater, diffuse networks of talk, and the like” (56). Here we can see that Warner is pointing to the relationship between the interpersonal communication models as well as the broadcasting communication model. While the counterpublics create the safe space, the utilization of media technology as a tool for external communication is important to transcending the public and private divide.

However, even counterpublics are faced with limitations in their own mediation of identity, specifically as mass media are perceived as the public media, thus defaulting to much more public exposure than alternative media are for the counterpublics. These in between spaces of non-state media, however, are arenas in which the power of public opinion can be deconstructed and reimagined.

Warner argues that publics are created and organized by their discourses, exist only by being addressed, must be organized by something other than the state, and can only create solidarity if organized through this discourse rather than external networks. More importantly, he states that publics cannot be separated from the discourses that address them, meaning that what is said about a public also constitutes the ways in which that public sees itself— “only when previously existing discourse can be supposed, and when a responding discourse can be postulated, can a text address a public” (Warner, 2012, 90).

Solidarity is achieved by bringing strangers together to form these publics, by “reshaping the most intimate dimensions of subjectivity around co-membership with indefinite persons in a context of routine action” (Warner, 2012, 76). This routine action is necessary in order for the public to exist, otherwise they will dissipate when attention wanes and they are no longer addressed, therefore, constant participation by a multitude of actors is necessary, more importantly, active participation rather than ‘ascriptive belonging’ (Warner, 2012, 89). Lastly, counterpublics exist in time and space that is specific to historical conditions; therefore, the constant action is necessary to keep these publics alive, as they are ever changing and their discourses are also always addressing new publics in history.

Queering Discourses: Social Construction As Strategy

At the same time the word polyamory was being coined, the term queer was gaining acceptance in poststructuralist discourses in the early 1990s. As Wendy Peters (2005) points out, contrasting homosexuality against heterosexuality replaced “one inadequate category with another similarly inadequate category,” particularly as fixed identities (102). Kai Namaste (1994), contributing the binary logic of the inside/outside model to Derrida’s understanding of supplementarity, also draws on the parallels implemented in poststructuralism as it relates to queer theory, specifically with regards to the deconstructionist aspects of this type of analysis. She writes, “deconstruction seeks to make sense of how these relations are at once the condition and the effect of all interpretation” (1994, 223). Queer theory disrupts these categories as it does not maintain a fixed set of characteristics, but instead is fluid and disruptive. Queering something then inherently creates a sense of malleability and critical analysis of constructed fixed identities, and as Peters argues, “it is seen as a category that can change the form of sexuality, rather than just the content” (2005, 102).

Thus envisioning the term queer as a verb, as in queering something, the practice of queering seeks to “trouble, undo or unfix categories” (Peters, 2005, 102). However, Namaste (1994) aptly argues that one cannot be entirely outside of a discourse, nor inside; and that queer theory affords a negotiation, not necessarily a destruction or obliteration of these binaries and the ways in which they construct and maintain themselves through a queer dialectical antagonism.

Utilizing Barthes connotative and denotative concepts, she points to an analysis of popular culture texts such as the *Laverne and Shirley Show* in which it is argued there are underlying queer tensions between the two lead women characters, but that inevitably lesbianism is relegated to a “parenthetical” space to reinforce heterosexuality (Namaste, 1994). By the clear

lack of recognizing the female-centered relationship, heteronormativity is maintained, but the presence of homosexuality still exists in the production. She states, “a focus on this paradox– the simultaneous exclusion and presence of homosexuality– forces an examination of the manner in which heterosexuality achieves its legitimacy and apparent “naturalness” (226). Poststructuralist queer theory not only understands how homosexual identities are constructed, but also the ways in which, and reasons for, the social construction of heterosexuality.

In her research, Peters (2005) gains an understanding of the myriad ways in which queer or ‘to queer’ is adopted amongst the participants in her online research. Many of these women adopted the term queer after identifying as lesbian, moving on to dyke, and then realizing these former fixed categories did not fully explain their everyday feelings on gender and sexuality. Her informants helped Peters identify how some individuals position queer solely in opposition to heterosexuality, while others include any non-normative sexuality, including the practice of polyamory experienced through heterosexuality, as a form of a queer identity. The main takeaway being that these queer identities were chosen to easily explain to friends and family how their identities were constantly in flux, but ultimately perceived as adopting a label for the benefit of those needing an explanation.

Most importantly, this research illuminates the ways in which identities are chosen and unchosen in circumstances in which a label is not desired, but can easily be taken up as a political identity in instances in which one feels a descriptor is necessary to hone in on systems of domination even within marginalized populations – “such politics were held...in opposition to gay and lesbian identity politics where race, class and disability are sometimes viewed as distractions from the “real issue” of sexuality” (Peters, 2005, 105). Thus, choosing queer as an

identity argues for inclusivity of all identities across a multitude of intersectionalities, not experiences perceived to be identities in a vacuum.

She argues that the performativity of non-normative fixed identities does not interrogate the ‘othering’ that occurs from a heterosexual normative requirement of proving one’s behaviors align with the non-normative sexuality they are being asked to perform. Performing ‘queer’ then is not a performance for the normative, but a fluid practice that does not subscribe to a set of fixed behaviors, thus interrogating the ‘other,’ and performance of the ‘other,’ for the benefit of the normative. She writes, “the ‘others’ are still given the responsibility of distinguishing themselves while society is allowed to continue on with the practice of heterosexism” (106). Choosing queer disrupts the limitations and perceived borders of a non-normative sexuality and at the same time critiques those whose everyday behaviors reinforce these constraints. As Namaste (1994) posits, “if we focus only on the subculture of homosexuality, and if we never interrogate the conditions which engender its marginalization, we shall remain trapped within a theoretical framework which refuses to acknowledge its own complicity in constructing its object (or subjects) of study” (228). Therefore an analysis of the construction and institution of sexualities is important to reveal the power relationships that play out in everyday life. However, queer theory argues that even if an attempt at normalizing the abnormal were made, there would still be nodes of resistance in these networks— regardless of the mobilization in the hierarchy, one’s positionality still remains. Therefore, being or doing queer is conceptualized as a positionality and not just a fixed identity (Sullivan, 2003) that is attributed to a certain group or network of groups, but instead opens up a space for anyone who observes a positionality in opposition to the normative across all spectrums, not just sexuality.

Queer theory of the subject heavily relies on poststructuralism. The contention amongst queer scholars, however, is naming what queer theory is, and Alan McKee (1999) argues that once a label is applied, once a set of principles is confirmed, once a canon is established, queer theory assimilates and contradicts its initial intentions. Therefore, negotiation and fluidity is necessary to keep the action of queering from becoming stagnant and easily labeled. Identity should be interrogated not as a fixed property, and an analysis of the evolution of polyamory discourses are helpful to understand attempts to create a privileged polynormativity.

In other words, since the sexual behaviors are not defining the identities, the subordinate group, polyamory, gains control of the identity by making the identity of opposition, conflict, and interrogation primary. The 'species' (Foucault, 1980) of polyamory did not evolve until after an examination of the behaviors; polyamory had always been a way of life. It was not until polyamory was differentiated from the normative via discourses of unequivocal practices that it was constructed as an identifiably constructed subordinate emphasized only for salacious titillating behaviors, stigmatized in monogamous relationship styles.

Peyman Vahabzadeh (2003) adds to the identity work concept by situating NSMs in the postmodern information age. He begins by summarizing the changes outlined by most old versus new social movement theory, arguing that old movements sought to revolutionize for the rights of the citizen, whereas NSMs concern themselves primarily with awareness and the rights of the individual, this shift placing NSMs primarily in the civic arena rather than the political arena. The conflict of subjects comes into play when the old social movement theory tended to locate the central conflict of a movement, as political change typically centered around one specific issue. In post industrialist information society, however, Vahabzadeh argues this homogenization of citizens is still encouraged by the government in which institutions try to organize individuals

into broad categories for participation (perception of a two-party system, and participation as two party voters). As Melucci states, “the paradoxes of post-industrial democracy are linked to both the pressures for integration and the needs for identity building” (as quoted in Vahabzadeh, 2003, 17). Vahabzadeh (2003) points out, individuals in the postmodern individual age are much more fragmented into groups and subsets, thus they are vying for autonomy amongst a multitude of complex group identities rather than just one political identity. These fragmented groups are the spaces in which identity building can take place.

Further dislocating the subject from one governing identity, Vahabzadeh (2003) looks at the subject’s place in what Touraine calls, ‘new modernity,’ particularly positioning the Subject (with a capital S) as a social movement, rather than an actor within a social movement– “the Subject is a *social movement* (emphasis in original text) because its very existence lies in its struggle against all forms of governmentality” (21). Drawing on Touraine, he writes, “as a social movement, the Subject is “at once a social conflict and a cultural project”” (21). From a theoretical standpoint, Vahabzadeh is arguing the Melucci and Touraine, the most cited new social movement theorists, conceptualize NSMs as expressions of a postmodern state. This is problematic for Vahabzadeh, however, as he argues their new social movement theories dismiss identity-based movements in developing countries in which postmodernity does not have as strong a foothold on societies the way that Western countries have developed in the information age.

According to Vahabzadeh, (2003) Melucci was strict in his use of the word class for the short period of time he used it, referring to its use “as an analytical tool to define a system of conflictual relationships within which social resources are produced and appropriated” . . . which included the “new middle class,” particularly two subclasses, “new elites who are just emerging

and challenging the already established elites, and ‘human capital’ professionals, who experience both the surplus of potentialities offered by the system and its constraints” (as quoted in Vahabzadeh, 2003, 25). These new subclasses are indicative of the changing system around us, but also new actors constructed in these NSMs.

Vahabzadeh goes on to cite Klaus Eder as positing culture as the middle ground between new classes and NSMs or between class and action. Eder argues that class is not a totalizing variable in social movements, however, it “has effects on collective action through cultural constructions which are generated in historically specific life-forms” (as quoted in Vahabzadeh, 2003, 26). Eder uses Bourdieu’s habitus as a way to operationalize this middle ground by analyzing the different types of capital certain groups have access to in the myriad positions they inhabit. Specifically pointing to the cultural occupation of the dominant class in constructing the experiences of those in the habitus, Vahabzadeh, argues that Eder is able to utilize this constructivist theory of class to locate NSMs and the potential mobilization and action they may have for not only locating group identity or lifestyle, but also challenging the dominant class.

For Eder, his middle ground constructivist class theory is comprised of the following: agency; the context in which agency is located; and the structural outcome of the action that has taken place in the cultural field (Vahabzadeh, 2003). Thus Eder locates the subject in NSMs and their ability to transform norms, analyzes the social and cultural conditions in which agency is afforded, particularly in ways that make the group distinct from all other groups, and finally, determines the end result in relation to the subject’s positionality. Most notably, however, Eder points out that class cultures are “limited by the cultural resources that can be mobilized in collective action. Agency is thus intricately related to the cultural space that it creates and draws upon in order to constitute and reproduce itself as a collective capacity for action” (as quoted in

Vahabzadeh, 2003, 27). Ultimately, actors in these NSMs are not only seeking inclusivity, but are seeking to “reveal the antagonistic norms, interests and values” of the dominant class (Vahabzadeh, 2003, 27). Similar to Melucci’s elite new classes, Eder points to actors in these NSMs as embodying the “petit bourgeois habitus” as they highlight the continuity of the shift from traditional labor based movements to more ideologically based postmodern identity movements (Vahabzadeh, 2003). For Eder then, “NSMs engage in three forms of collective action: cultural movements, they embark on a struggle against dominant moral values and norms and on a “symbolic crusade” to achieve recognition of the legitimacy of their culture. Second, as political movements, they create political pressure groups to struggle against various prevalent practices that undermine or weaken their status in society. Finally, as social movements, they strive to radically democratize social relations” (Vahabzadeh, 2003, 28). Unfortunately, Vahabzadeh disregards Eder as he argues that Eder is locating NSMs by his emphasis on the relationship between the new middle class and NSMs. He points to Eder using Bourdieu’s habitus to illuminate the dominant structural constructions of class based on the petit bourgeois habitus, as a tactic to move away from pre-determined class characterizations based on demographics, still a system of classification, just supplanting a class formed through demographics (working class, middle class, etc.) to a class constructed through structures (beliefs and ideologies held by those in positions that benefit from institutional restructuring in a postindustrial system).

Moving beyond this essentializing characteristic of identity, Vahabzadeh, posits that NSMs have emerged in postmodern conditions, specifically that they seek no universalizing utopic goal, or the overthrowing of a particular government in a revolutionary act, but that “articulated experiences set the content for identities and make the emergence of social

imaginaries possible. The movement actor, therefore, receives his or her identity from the destinal path toward a social imaginary” (2003, 3). For Vahabzadeh, new social movements still often function within the logic of the state, specifically those seeking visibility by way of human rights. For example, the gay rights movement, while seeking to differentiate their culture and lifestyle from the heteronormative, still made demands upon the state for same-sex marriage, within the framework of legal marriage. Despite their differing identities, by wanting and participating in the institute of marriage, they effectively have given into the integration (possible assimilation) that the modern state upholds. Thus, NSMs that can situate themselves outside the hegemonic structuring of change require “a genuine articulation of experiences [to] set forth a non-hegemonic, transgressive destiny, one that defies the limitations that the hegemonic regimes impose on action. The great challenge before the new social movements of our day is to free their practices from what I call the oppressive categorization of actors by contemporary hegemonic regimes of technological liberalism” (Vahabzadeh, 2003, 3).

Drawing on Laclau and Mouffe, Vahabzadeh at length discusses the concept of hegemony in the role of identity play. Darryl Murphy (2005) summarizes Vahabzadeh’s analysis of hegemony as follows:

identity claims should more accurately be understood as acts of identification. These acts of identification consist in the articulation of experiences of possibility, and such possibility is made available by the under-defined aspects of the governing hegemony. In other words, no hegemony is such that it contains or otherwise defines all possible sources of meaning within the context it governs. The agent or collective recognizing this, what Vahabzadeh refers to as the “unfixity” of the hegemony, is free to act in a manner that is directed towards the acquisition of meaning and identity out of such possibilities (391).

Vahabzadeh, therefore, is pinpointing actions in NSMs that lead to articulated experiences in one’s life not already established by the hegemonic ordering. He argues that in order for one to

assert identity, experiences must be articulated through historically specific conditions. For example, Vahabzadeh uses the identity (discursively constructed) of the abused spouse to explain this concept. Similar, to Foucault's point about the emergence of the homosexual as a species, Vahabzadeh argues that the experience of the abused spouse was not articulated until human rights were acknowledged, this shift of articulated experiences understood by pointing to "languages [as] markers of eras" (2003, 85). Though he asserts that experiences are bound by the existing codes and language, and that the social imaginary is also bound by the hegemonic formation, he finds that articulated experiences via mediated language are what is "new" in NSMs, specifically as they pertain to change.

Citing the Zapatista movement, he argues that the Zapatista's identity, while borrowing the name and revolutionary energy from General Emiliano Zapata— famous for leading the Mexican Revolution— creates a movement that is connected, as well as distinct from the past, as it uses experiences opened up from the present to articulate itself. He states that the Zapatista movement sought to fill a lack for the Mexican people— freedom, democracy, and justice, and that the identity of the Zapatistas based on this lack becomes a signifier of what it will fill— what articulates their experiences, due to the lack of these components in history. The Zapatistas presumably are able to achieve a social imaginary because "rather than signifying a specific mode of existence, the Zapatista identity has a metonymic character of representing something larger than itself: freedom, democracy, and justice— in short a 'new world'" (2003, 90). He goes on to point out that this representation as a lack actually turns the signifier into a signified. The existence of the Zapatista as a signifier was only able to come into existence due to the articulated experiences through the discourse of the movement. Zapatista means freedom, democracy, and justice, not a movement seeking power, but a movement seeking a new world

based on a social imaginary. For Vahabzadeh, “a social imaginary refers to a possible, alternative phenomenal configuration that has unconcealed itself to the actor as a possibility” (91), particularly in the instance of articulated experiences revealing movement toward an identity. The example of the abused spouse is brought up again to highlight the unconcealment of a particular historical time and place that allows the experiences of the spouse to be articulated and realized when the discourse and language of ‘abused spouse’ is engendered, as opposed to the experiences being simply of “a disciplined woman” (90). The epochal unconcealment of the possibility of being something and experiencing something, other than as a disciplined woman, becomes a possibility to the person, now identifying as the abused spouse due to the change in discourse. Vahabzadeh defines epochal unconcealment as “the intelligible and practical possibility of an arrangement of phenomena as well as the language, objects, and deeds they prompt, different from the existing one” (2003, 91).

The most important aspect of Vahabzadeh’s argument about the signifier becoming the signified is the ephemeral quality of the social imaginary, particularly the ways in which something recedes in identification the closer it moves toward that social imaginary. Vahabzadeh illustrates this point by highlighting the changing representations of the Zapatista movement in which the identity of the Zapatista’s shifted from ‘freedom, democracy, and justice’ for the displaced pheasants, to a larger movement in Mexico City in which many individuals, not just the pheasants, identified– “We are all Zapatistas,” to further receding via the expansion of the goals of the movement. He writes, “the total realization of the social imaginary, the end of destiny, amounts to the total dissolution of the identity. But dissolution of an identity is at the same time its full constitution” (92). Thus in the case of the gay rights movement, after gaining

same-sex marriage, the identity moving toward the social imaginary of same-sex marriage dissolved the moment marriage equality was achieved.

Vahabzadeh parallels this with Marxism, drawing our attention to the emergence of the proletariat class, the class created by certain capitalist conditions, subsequently, the only class able to revolutionize against these conditions. If revolution were attained, then the dissolution of the proletariat class would occur at the same time. He writes, “thus, identity is defined as the perpetual presence of a receding signified. The condition of the receding of the signified is at the same time its consequence: in receding, the signified does not just move back while still retaining its “origins” within itself. While receding, it incorporates “new” contexts, constituents, and complexities into the condition of its possibility” (93). This is where Vahabzadeh connects articulated experiences with social movements, specifically focusing on the actions (discourse) that allow the epochal unconcealment, allowing a social imaginary to be visible as a possibility to the actor, which in due course permits the actor to move closer to achieving identification, but ultimately leads to dissolution of the identity that sought that social imaginary in the first place. Thus identity is always in flux, always changing, and also shifting within any particular historical era. And, as Vahabzadeh posits, disruption takes place when “new horizons radiantly unveil themselves, emanating new possibility, animating different destinal movements” (97). NSMs, then, are caught up in this unveiling, and comprised of action toward the social imaginary. Future discourses surrounding these actors in these movements have yet to reach a hegemonic state, and thus their articulated experiences become transgressive (Vahabzadeh, 98). Because hegemony is a constant struggle, and institutions are not wholly impenetrable, spaces in which NSMs are able to bubble up from are newer possibilities.

This middle ground approach, situated in postmodern theory, allows NSMs to function in a space that does not reduce one's action to a bifurcation of the personal versus the political. Unhinged, yet not wholly separated from, economic structures, NSMs seek to first gain visibility of new identity arrangements rather than tackle issues from a traditional crisis-centric movement in which very specific rights are addressed in movement activities from already established discourses around certain social classes. Rather, postmodern identity in NSMs is actionable and performative. The everyday is political as sexuality and sexual identities becomes more and more featured in the public sphere.

Judith Butler (1992) is the most notable queer theorist that also contends identity as performative, rather than as fixed or stable. Butler draws on Foucault's power/knowledge conceptualization positing that identity, particularly in her case gender identity, is held captive to discourse and power, thus ever in flux. Butler (1992) proposes that there is no pre-given subject that begins its existence with a sort of agency, but that agency comes into play when that subject is affected by political construction—“agency is always and only a political prerogative” (163). Therefore, to understand subjectivity we must consider the ever-present, ever-evolutionary power plays that continue to maintain that subject even after it has been already constituted. Here Butler is drawing on the concept of hegemonic maintenance in which hegemony is a constant struggle, preservation, and erasing of certain subjectivities to enhance the visibility of dominant subjects, particularly the heteronormative. Within postmodern theory, Butler points to the normalization of the experience of women, positing that the subjectivity created through historically specific contexts has already enabled a certain subjectivity predicated on exclusion, as not all women fit under this vision of the collective woman experience, particularly when rallying points for the collective is central to motherhood. She asserts, “paradoxically, it may be

that only through releasing the category of women from a fixed referent that something like ‘agency’ becomes possible. For if the term permits of a resignification, if its referent is not fixed, then possibilities for new configurations of the term become possible” (1992, 167). Sarah Salih argues that Butler is suggesting there is no tabula rasa when it comes to gendered sex; that society inscribes meaning on bodies as soon as they are born. She writes that this points “towards the conclusion that gender is not something one *is*, it is something one *does*, an act, or more precisely, a sequence of acts, a verb rather than a noun, a “doing” rather than a “being”” (as cited in Salih, 2007, 55). For Butler, there is no subject or I that exists prior to language, that it is language that constitutes the subject and inscribes meaning of the ‘masculine’ or feminine’ onto the body as an effect rather than an impetus.

Raymond Williams (1973) uses the language of alternative and oppositional identities in order to conceptualize residual and emergent cultures in new class formations. In his seminal essay, *Base and Superstructure*, Williams describes residual culture as integrating itself into newly constructed identities based on the lingering attributes of former cultures. Emergent culture, on the other hand is comprised of, “new meanings and values, new practices, new significances and experiences” which “are continually being created” (Williams, 1973, 137). Furthering this distinction, Williams offers alternative and oppositional identities, the former, while potentially offering a distinct and divergent way of being, may still be tolerated by the dominant, whereas oppositional identities are much more indicative of revolutionary means, as they are in direct dispute with the dominant, seeking to challenge its ideologies (Williams, 1973). Worth noting, however, is the claim that hegemonic cultures, to some degree, constitute their periphery subjects, and the social conditions in which their emergent ideology is able to thrive or dissipate.

Similar to Williams' presentation of oppositional and alternative practices, Judith/Jack Halberstam (2005) in their article, *In a Queer Time and Place* points to oppositional-identities dissimilar from counter-identities (alternative identity for Williams). They argue that queer spaces are not dictated by "birth, marriage, reproduction, and death" therefore they are in opposition to heteronormative spaces; whereas those that are institutionally held to social legitimization through marriage rights, health insurance, etc. are characterized as counter-identities in response to dominant identities' maintenance of the order of things, or status quo (Ch. 1, np).

While polyamorous people, as well as gays and lesbians, can participate in some of those cultural milestones, their culture is not bound by the heteronormative discourses that dictate particular rituals associated with those milestones– the dyadic couple as polyamorous people can only be married to one person at a time. Despite some efforts that have legalized power of attorney, there are no common laws that allow multiples in polyamorous relationships to receive the same rights as married couples regarding medical issues, healthcare, or inheritance. These alternative practices offer an oppositional opportunity to distinguish polyamory not as a subordinate or alternative sexuality, but as an alternative equal sexual model that has the possibility of interrogation of the norm by revealing the construction of heteronormativity as naturalized, and holding court for particular disciplining reasons. Polyamory is thus seen as outside the already prescribed construction of marriage and coupledness, as well as the legal and symbolic discourses.

Hall (1996) also argues that identity is constantly under transformation, "identification is, then, a process of articulation, a suturing, an over-determination not a subsumption. There is always 'too much' or 'too little'– an over-determination or a lack, but never a proper fit, a

totality” (3); rather than stating identity as constantly transforming, ‘under transformation’ points to larger socio-cultural forces that construct identities at any given time. For Vahabzadeh (2003), power in this sense is hegemonic, in that whomever culturally substantiates identity from the top-down, predetermines what that particular identity encompasses. (e.g., homosexuality as a mental illness, or later, homosexuality as a lifestyle choice, rather than homosexuality as an identity).

Lifestyle Movements

Utilizing this historical specificity approach, we can turn to Haenfler et al. (2012) pinpointing this centered performative location, situating new social movements in between (individual) identities and (collective) social movements as described as lifestyle movements, housed closer to the new social movement (NSM) paradigm, but borrowing tactics found in traditional social movements.

According to Haenfler et al. (2012), Lifestyle movements (LM) have three central tenets:

- 1) lifestyle choice as a tactic of social change,
- (2) the central role of personal identity work, and
- (3) the diffuse structure of lifestyle movements

Miller describes lifestyle movements as movements “that consciously and actively promote a lifestyle, or way of life, as their primary means to foster social change” (as quoted in Haenfler et al., 2012, 2). The lived experience can be witnessed as political action through conscious decision making in one’s everyday actions such as recycling for the environmental movement, or more relevant to sexual politics, utilizing chosen gender pronouns that obfuscate the ‘reading’ of one’s gender while drawing attention to the naturalization of constructed gender binaries. Further, lifestyle movements can almost challenge ‘cultural authorities’ daily by

disrupting the normalizing discourse surrounding mononormativity or heteronormativity as the dominant way of sexual practice through consistent actions that need little-to-no group organizing (Haenfler et al., 2012).

To address the myriad theoretical considerations listed above as they apply to the modern day polyamory movement, specifically addressing the role of media, counterpublics, networks, and discourse circulation, the following research questions will be posed throughout this project:

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1: In what ways have media historically been used by the polyamory movement?

RQ2: How is leadership manifested in polyamory community-produced media? Who speaks for the community? Who is disseminating the majority of the information?

RQ3: In what ways, and in which instances, have polyamory media discourses centered polyamory as a traditional social movement, a new social movement or a lifestyle movement?

CHAPTER 5 METHODS & PROCEDURES

Qualitative research will be used as an inquiry-based process to make claims about the polyamory movement and the discourses of those in the movement. The main goal of this study is to understand how self-identifying polyamorous individuals use alternative media to produce and construct representations that differ from the normative representations found in mainstream mass media focusing on polyamory, as well as to trace the intersection of media with the momentum and visibility of the modern polyamory movement.

The study will focus on the triangulation of qualitative methods—converging different sources of information from textual analysis, critical discourse analysis, and open-ended semi-structured interviews. Historical research is the core element of this project as it seeks to create a timeline of polyamory and media representations, both created within and externally to the polyamory community. Berkhoffer (as cited in Berger, 2000) argues that historians looking to analyze a history that is not attainable by any other means than through surviving documents or texts are not reconstructing history, rather they are interpreting history through conceptual and theoretical frameworks as not all texts have survived. He writes, “they confine their history to man’s past, but not even all of that concerns them, for they further select from these data parts that can be organized according to some interpretation or theory” (as cited in Berger, 2000, 129). Therefore, the history of the polyamory movement, as it pertains to this study, is framed through a media lens, and comprises just one of the many histories that exist. This study also employs a comparative historical approach, by analyzing the changes that have taken place over time in the ways in which alternative media have been used, and the ways in which the discourses within these media have been documented. Mahoney & Rueschemeyer (2003) write, comparative

historical analysis concerns itself with “causal analysis, an emphasis on processes over time, and the use of systematic and contextualized comparison” (10). It is important to note that an archive is a finite resource, held captive to the material that is donated. Rather than constantly seeking out relevant texts and documents that could contribute to a much larger history of the movement, the archive itself can be seen as a meta-text, in that the voices and texts contained within tell a specific story with a singular overarching narrative.

Triangulation is an important strategy to employ in order to observe the data from multiple perspectives. Because of the aforementioned limitations on archival research, the implementation of multiple methods provides a more robust and thick description of the movement over the course of its emergence through present day. According to Flick (2004), triangulation “of data combines data drawn from different source and at different times, in different places or from different people” (178); and the triangulation of theories “means ‘approaching data with multiple perspectives and hypotheses in mind... Various theoretical points of view could be placed side by side to assess their utility and power’ (Denzin, as cited in Flick, 2004, 178). This study employs triangulation of interviews, textual and discourse analysis, and archive research to reconstruct the history and timeline of the polyamory movement from those who chose to participate, and who were identified as the most prominent media practitioners and producers in the movement as it stands today.

Textual analysis is defined as a data-gathering process in order “to understand the ways in which members of various cultures and subcultures make sense of who they are, and of how they fit into the world in which they live” (McKee, 2003, 1). McKee posits, texts can illustrate the sense-making that occurs for individuals in any given time or place. By linking the individual texts to the larger structural and cultural ideologies at the time, this study is able to historically

trace the ways in which groups identifying within the polyamory community understand the evolution of polyamory as a sexual model over the course of the history of the movement, and more specifically, the ways in which those creating media texts, presented and re-presented their ideas in the greater public sphere.

Discourse analysis is also a valuable methodology that interrogates the language that is used by individuals and groups. As defined by Fairclough (1995) discourse analysis:

aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations, and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony (132-133).

van Dijk (2001) also defines critical discourse analysis, but looks more closely at the ways ideologies are expressed through structures, rather than just relationships as defined by Fairclough. van Dijk (2001) writes, “critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context (352).

Discourse analysis is an appropriate methodology for this study as it allows the ideological structures and power struggles to come to the forefront in social movement discourse, particularly looking at the salient goals of the movement, the changes and potential implementation of these goals throughout the history of the movement, and the institutions in which they flow through affecting the ideological outputs in the larger public sphere.

As van Dijk (2001) argues, critical discourse analysis involves members and their membership in groups; action and process, specifically individual acts as members of these groups; the context of social structures, in which pressures come from the top down or the bottom up; and the personal and cognitive, whereby members evoke their own personal

experiences to inform their opinions and share knowledge amongst the group (354). van Dijk (2001) also looks at the power within a group, and who has access and control to public discourses that are presented on behalf of the group or institution.

Lastly, semi-structured qualitative interviews contribute to the project. Qualitative interviews are a valid method in social science research as they offer a technique that allows the "phenomenon of interest [to] unfold naturally" (Patton, 2001, p. 39). Interviewing subjects allows for an understanding via "experience and perspective through stories, accounts, and explanations" which provide narratives, rationale for behavior, and self-interpretation (Lindlof & Taylor, 2010, p. 173).

The study used a semi-standardized, open-ended interview technique. A list of predetermined questions was asked and questions were excluded or added throughout the interview based on the responses given. The interview method used for this study combines "stratified" and "purposive" sampling (Schutt, 1999) as subjects were chosen based on their role as a polyamory media practitioner utilizing alternative media as their primary means of communication. Interviews were conducted in person and over Skype. Relying on snow-balling and word-of-mouth techniques, the sample drawn included ten media practitioners, five male and five female as follows: Alan M hosting the Polyamory In The Media blog, Franklin Veux, co-owner of Thorntree Press, Dr. Kenneth Haslam, curator of the polyamory collection at The Kinsey Institute, Ron Young, creator of the Black & Poly Facebook group, Kevin Patternson, creator of Poly Role models blog, Cuning Minx, creator of Polyamory Weekly podcast, Tikva Wolk, creator of Kimchi Cuddles comics, Terisa Greenan, creator of the Family webisodes, Robyn Trask, director of the Loving More magazine, and Joreth The Innkeeper, creator of the Polyamory Media Association.

In order to answer **RQ1: In what ways have media historically been used by the polyamory movement?** textual analysis will be used to analyze the texts found within the Kenneth R. Haslam polyamory collection at the Kinsey Institute, a collection predominately comprised of donated material by leading polyamory figures, video recordings of talk shows in which polyamory leaders were guests, personal correspondences between polyamory leaders, and a multitude of material goods that were created during brainstorming and workshop sessions of national polyamory meetings. This collection embodies the ever-growing transformation of polyamory discourses that are preserved in physical form for educational and awareness purposes. Education and awareness help mobilize social movements, and understanding how the ideology and community issues are developed in conjunction with these initiatives is important to understand the meaning-making and negotiation that takes place in spaces where counter sexualities use a deconstructionist method for interrogating heteronormative models of sexuality commonly circulated in media.

The importance of employing textual analysis is to observe the evolution of the mediated polyamory movement since its presence beginning in the early '80s until present day. Textual analysis and discourse analysis will be useful to discover the recurrent themes, goals, and salient issues that are raised and outlined in collaborative workshops, directives for larger awareness. I will also investigate the positionalities of those involved, their particular investments and rise to leadership roles in the movement, and subsequent availability and access to resources that allow them to assume said roles as creators and disseminations of knowledge and discourse on behalf of the polyamory movement. As Johnston (2014) points out, "Texts give insights into the shape of a group's communicative behaviors, or its discourse. Discourse, simply stated, is what is said in a group, how it's said, and how it's interpreted. While it is diverse and multifaceted, it is also

the connective tissue of a group's collective interests...the totality of a group's words and meanings can itself be understood as a text performed by the participants" (78).

Semi-structured interviews will also contribute to understanding the use of media in the movement, specifically by incorporating the rationale and efficacy of each particular medium as described by its practitioner in aiding the initiatives and goals of the larger polyamory community's goals.

To address **RQ2: How is leadership manifested in the polyamory media? Who speaks for the community? Who is disseminating the majority of the information?** semi-structured open-ended interviews of major figures producing media within the movement will help me situate their own personal investment in the movement, the ways in which they construct discourses on behalf of the movement, and their own interactions and opinions on the importance of the creation and dissemination of media texts for and from members of the polyamory movement. Interview subjects were chosen based on their cultural resonance within the movement, specifically interview subjects were sought out if they appeared on the most popular polyamory websites and groups, were mentioned in several of the historical documents available in the Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, or were recommended by other media practitioners. Semi-structured interviews will also allow for a collaborative space in which the researcher, myself, will be transparent about my motivations for conducting the research and my interest in their own self-reflexivity, divulging my awareness that there is a marked lack of intersectionality portrayed in the demographic profile of polyamory individuals in these texts. Offering a space to reflect on the major figures' reception in the movement, and degree to which they seek out to create discourses of inclusivity or external awareness can help understand the process and intention of including or excluding certain experiences.

Gesa Kirsch (1999) points out “that scholars often withhold their judgment until they conclude their research, doing so for many reasons: not wanting to interfere in participants’ daily routines, not wanting to influence the research results, or not wanting to alienate the participants on whose good will and time they depend” (28). Offering a venue for collaboration and self-reflexivity aids in the research as it allows there to be an on-going conversation about interpretation and the ‘final’ results are then more closely attuned from this working dialogue.

Lastly, to address **RQ3: In what ways, and in which instances, have polyamory media discourses centered polyamory as a traditional social movement, a new social movement or a lifestyle movement?** Historical archival research and data analysis from the aforementioned interviews will be used and mapping the different dimensions of social movements will be useful to determine which lifestyle practices coordinate with political social movement practices to discern what issues presented in poly-centric media texts are enabled to be acted upon, negotiated, and deconstructed in individual’s every day occurrences.

Gaps And Research Limitations

In order to address gaps in current academic polyamory literature, this study will also utilize an intersectionality lens in order to understand the positionalities of those who are constructing and disseminating information as representatives of the polyamory community. As Foucault (1980) posits, it is not just that sex is being talked about, but who precisely is doing the talking. At times, even within marginalized sexualities, there are attempts to speak on behalf of an entire community, often homogenizing identities based on the lived and expressed experiences of a privileged few who have access to these resources and access for disseminating this knowledge. Wilkinson (2010) argues, polyamory functions as a non-monogamy that often locates itself in a privileged liminal discursive space outside of the monogamy/non-monogamy

binary by utilizing the language of ethical non-monogamy, as though “other” non-monogamous sexualities are further down the moral hierarchy.

Polyamory discourses situated in counter narratives (Wilkinson, 2010) outside of the dominant/subordinate binary are useful to interrogate the power structures, dominance, and naturalization of mononormative and heteronormative culture. This politicization, if widely taken up by the movement, can further the movement from a solely experiential discourse toward activist and political discourse that will not only help mobilize the movement into greater discursive visibility, and potentially validate polyamory as a viable equal sexual alternative, but should also reveal the social construction of sexuality binaries and the power/knowledge relationship that is evident in mainstream discursive representations of heteronormative sexuality. The hegemonic relationship to subordinate sexualities, and relegation of non-monogamous sexualities into pejorative contexts such as deviance and as the ‘Other,’ is a constant process and negotiation that requires all non-heteronormative sexualities to remain invisible and subsequently invalidated.

The first limitation is my own positionality. As a researcher who identifies as a straight, White, female I am an anomaly regarding academic research in the polyamory camp as most of those publishing self-identify as polyamorous, have experienced polyamorous relationship styles, or identify outside of the heterosexual identity. Since my research is not from an auto-ethnographic perspective, and since my methods do not include interview partners whom I have had a close intimate polyamorous relationship with, as is the case with some of the other academic researchers, my results ultimately will be speaking on behalf of the community based on my contextualization and interpretation of the data.

In order to ethically conduct this research it is imperative for me to ensure that the material I am collecting is not analyzed in a way that would disparage the polyamory community, while still presenting the information in a factual as objective manner as possible. One way to ensure that I am not intentionally biasing information is twofold: first by looking at the media texts that are created by the members of the movement specifically created for the purposes of information dissemination; and secondly, by conducting interviews with those who are creating these media texts, or have had direct involvement with these media texts, I can corroborate the oral narrative with the written narrative to ensure that the intention is reflected in the analysis of the material.

Open-ended semi-structured interviews are limited if the interview is not face-to-face as the person being interviewed will not be able to read my body language. Additionally, since I am an outsider, may be younger, or am using this research for my dissertation there is the possibility the interview subject may be wary of my motivations and concern for properly recording their true perspective and using this information for the benefit of the community and not just to earn a degree. As most polyamory organizations have a directive for members on interacting with the media, myself as a media studies practitioner may be counted as someone potentially capable of misconstruing information about the movement.

Using mixed methods is a lengthy process and therefore is limited by time constraints. Given the scope of the study, there is no feasible way to analyze every media text or discourse produced and consumed by the polyamory movement. Voices will remain invisible outside of the domain of accessible and widely distributed polyamory media texts. International perspectives will also be lost, therefore, this undertaking can only be perceived as a case study of media texts circulated in the United States. Lastly, using textual analysis is not easily replicable, in that my

own biases as a researcher are never able to be fully neutralized as they are based on my own methods of deconstruction and sense-making.

CHAPTER 6: CENTRALIZING ORGANIZATIONS: BUILDING NON-TRADITIONAL NETWORKS THROUGH NEWSLETTERS

The following chapter explores the early newsletters and organizations that jumpstarted the modern polyamory movement, particularly the ways in which each organization utilized the medium of print to reach wider audiences, education and create awareness campaigns, as well as situate the movement in contrast to the normalization of nuclear family sexuality discourses. These newsletters were venues of support, awareness, and places in which identity could be explored and could evolve. Most notably is the media-savviness that the early leaders incorporated into their organizations and communication outreach, utilizing as much innovative technology and resources that were available to them and their networks at the time.

Local Newsletters Supporting Relationship Choices

Before the larger polyamory-centric organization emerged, there were several local communities across the country that were practicing multi-partner relationships that are closely aligned with the modern polyamory movement, yet never gained traction on a larger scale. Many more local groups also cropped up in the late 90s, as the *Loving More* organization began creating networks on a national scale. A few of the most notable organizations and intentional communities are *Life Course Options* established in 1978; *21st Family*, in 1980, both out of Portland Oregon, *Delaware Valley Synergy*, from 1974, defined as “a group of individuals involved in alternate lifestyles. (Alternate life styles include liberalized monogamy, open marriage, singles in open relationships, group marriage, expanded families, communal living, etc.)” (*Delaware Valley Synergy* newsletter, 1984); *Family Synergy* based out of Huntington Beach, California, established in 1979 as a “non-profit volunteer-run, education and social

organization for people interested in non-possessive, caring, interpersonal relationships...and to facilitate the exchange of ideas and the dissemination of information about open, multiply [sic] committed relationships and all types of intentionally expanded families” (*Family Synergy* pamphlet, nd). *Beyond Monogamy*, a group hailing from Denver, CO, with editors Will Mahoney and Genie Whitaker, established in 1978 as a “non-profit educational, social, and support organization dedicated to exploring and facilitating alternatives to traditional monogamous relationships. . . founded as an outgrowth of open relationships classes offered through Denver Free University” (*Beyond Monogamy* pamphlet, nd); adopted from *Family Tree*, established in 1982 in Boston/Acton, Massachusetts, the organization *Loving Alternatives*, from State College, Pennsylvania, as “a support and discussion group for those interested in multi-intimacy” (*Loving Alternatives* pamphlet, nd). Other groups included in the Kenneth R. Haslam Collection were the Chrysalis intentional community in Arlington Virginia, the *Potomac Area Polyamory Network*, from 1982, the *Chesapeake Polyamory Network*, established in 1998, and the *Unitarian Universalists for Polyamory Awareness* established in 1999, involving Kenneth Haslam, himself as a prominent figure in the church and advocate for open polyamory awareness in religion.

IntiNet & Floodtide

Deborah Anapol started the *IntiNet* Resource Center (IRC), a combination of the words ‘intimate’ and ‘network’ along with her lover Paul Glassco, in 1984 for disseminating information about multi-partner and non-monogamous relationships. In addition to the quarterly progress reports, *Floodtide*, often called IntiLetters, accompanied the IRC as a newsletter that kept members apprised of the on-goings of the organization, the non-monogamy movement, as well as updates in the increasing network, particularly new organizations being linked with

IntiNet. The IRC also spawned the *Expanded Family Network* in 1987. Based in the San Francisco Bay Area, the *Expanded Family Network* was a monthly potluck gathering for discussions around expanded family, and to “support people in exploring committed, multiple, primary, sexualoving relationships” (Anapol, 1989b).

An early mission statement and goals for the IRC reads as follows:

InitNet’s mission is to foster visionary non-exclusive (long term) connection/intimacy/love/friendship/family relationships by offering (A) access to a closed/open network of individuals, organizations and resources in the context of political/economic/social change and (B) a high degree of safety, both physical and psychological” (IRC pamphlet, nd).

The centralizing feature of this mission statement is the networks that Anapol speaks about, specifically the ways in which she harnessed the organization, newsletters, and external media to build larger awareness for the non-monogamy community. These goals become more clearer as the IRC began to grow: “to provide a clearinghouse for people seeking information on ethical multimate relationships and a new paradigm for sexuallove; to link up individuals and organizations isolated by the social stigma which has kept many non-monogamous people “in the closet”; and to create a voice and a focal point for all who envision a future in which our marriage and family customs are designed to promote health, happiness and well-being for individuals and society – especially for our children” (Anapol, 1989a, 2). Projects of the center consisted of the publication of Anapol’s book and newsletter, *Floodtide*; online computer conferencing and referrals; providing technical assistance for local area support groups (the local being the Bay Area with a hand-written note mentioning a contact in Chicago); and developing screenplays about non-monogamous relationships.

In the November 1985 IRC report, Anapol makes reference to Robert Theobald and his concept of many-to-many (m-2-m) networks used by the *Action Linkage* group as a way to

spread information about multipartner relationships, the same type of communication groups members of the Kirkridge retreat formed. Theobald, an economist and futurist was the coordinator for the *Action Linkage* group, a national network of social change activists. He is known for being a ‘radical economist’ advocating for communication technology, such as the Internet and computers, as tools to facilitate consensus gathering from individuals who were geographically dispersed. The many-to-many model had not been widely popularized until much later when the Internet was more commercially available, and really not until larger community-organization and two-way conversations were recognized in new media technologies.

Anapol described the *Action Linkage* group as a ““transformational” organization with about a dozen different m-2-m’s of 50 to 100 members, each with a specific focus/special interest such as education, alternative energy, communities, ecology, world peace, etc.” and points out that there are no m-2-m’s that deal with “cellular families or inclusive relationships” (*IntiNet*, 1985b). She further explains the actions within the network as the individuals would Xerox letters and articles sent to the editor who then adds a cover sheet/summary of the contents and sends it on. She states, “this creates a large, unwieldy, and sometimes partially illegible—when the letters are handwritten—packet, but it does serve to decentralize the communication process” (Anapol, 1985b). Anapol saw this as a way to create broader networks of information sharing across the subscriber base she was beginning to accrue, crowdsourcing her audience to form a consensus on best practices for the organization to aid the movement and the subsequent goals. In the follow up report, Anapol continues to ask her readers for their input, explicitly outlining the goals as “primarily to facilitate the acceptance of multimate relationships as legitimate and valuable options in our culture and to support groups and individuals who are pioneering these domestic frontiers” (Anapol, 1985c).

One goal of, “outreach-communication/external network” is listed for the center, specifically addressed by a reviewer of the initial *IntiNet* goals. The reviewer states, “I interpreted [Outreach-communication/external network] to mean finding other networks such as *IntiNet*, communication with the public or organized groups or through the media...[this] appears to be more a function (al outgrowth) given what is probably the necessity to ‘proselytize’ in order to provide us who are currently seeking to expand our relationships with more contacts 1. (I have heard concerns expressed about the “smallness” of the network and potential for becoming ingrown. . .) (Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, 2015).

Anapol was most ardent about organizing the networks of non-monogamous relationship styles. She created a manual, ‘*A Resource Guide For The Responsible Non-Monogamous*,’ dated 1989, featuring a multitude of non-monogamous organization networks (*Family Synergy, Family Tree, Kerista, Loving Alternative, Los Angeles Loving Community, Polyfidelitous Educational Productions, Phoenix, Potomac Area Lifestyles, and Touchpoint*) linked to the movement, lifestyles that she felt had “the most potential for enhancing and sustaining human evolution;” a chapter on initiating support groups for inclusive relationships, discussion topics, and several articles written by herself and a bibliography of other materials written on the subject. A notation at the end of the organization network chapter points out that none of these groups are swinging groups, and do not welcome swingers, in order to maintain a distinction between the non-monogamous expanded family models and the swinging models. Anapol also lists groups that are allies to the movement in the ‘Tools’ section of the guide. (Anapol, 1989).

She specifically notes that there is a lack of support and experience to move the movement forward and create alternative relationship styles. Drawing her reader’s attention to the unifying need for homogeneity in external language, Anapol writes in her manual,

There are a few points that may be confusing. One has to do with language. In working with individuals, families, and groups who are pioneering new lovetypes; I've found that we very much need a common language. Currently, everyone has their own definition and unique associations for many of the terms used to describe alternative relationships. I tend to favor inclusive relationship or multimate relationships over polygamy or non-monogamy (Anapol, 1989b).

Anapol also writes in her 1989 IRC newsletter that she felt the most successful component of her efforts was not the clearinghouse, but the local efforts of the Expanded Family Network. Thus, she encouraged her readers to create their own local networks of support groups. Before these groups could come to fruition, however, Anapol felt that awareness of “the joys and benefits of responsible alternatives to monogamy; a new paradigm for loving relationships; and a new name for plural ones” were the most important goals (Anapol, 1989a, 2). She writes, “The fate of the family is far too important to be left to outdated images and stereotypes...the best way to transform the way people think about non-traditional relationships is to stage a public awareness campaign” (Anapol, 1989a, 3). At this point the goal of the movement was stated as follows: (1) continue publication of *Floodtide*, (2) sponsor an online computer bulletin board or conference for non-monogamists, (3) build a coalition of organizations advocating or sympathizing with responsible alternatives to monogamy, (4) create a task force to develop and implement strategies for integrating multimate relationships and combo families into the mainstream culture, (5) wage a media campaign including development of a pilot for a television “sit com” about a combo family, and (6) organize a conference on the Future of the Family and invite experts to objectively examine the full range of options to the current crisis in family” (Anapol, 1989a, 3).

The IRC gave many lectures and presentations at conventions and conferences that were relevant to sexuality and lifestyle choices. In 1991, they were on a panel about ‘Multiple Adult Family Relationships’ at *The National Sexuality Symposium*, as well as the *Whole Life Expo*;

several other lectures were given at *Mensa sexsig*, the *Bay Area Bisexual Network*, the *Bioregional Congress*, and the University of California. Anapol mentions in 1991, being interviewed by *WGR* radio in Buffalo, NY, and attending Ryam Nearing's *PEP* conference in Berkeley. IRC had also done radio interviews in Chicago, San Francisco, Nashville, Detroit, Denver, and Philadelphia. Anapol created a six week residential learning community apprenticeship to be held in Marin County, CA at the cost of \$1,800 room and board after her book, *Love Without Limits* was published in 1992. The second edition of the book, in 1997, gained a great deal of media attention from *The New York Times Magazine*, women's magazines, major metropolitan newspapers, local television, *KPIX*, *KNBC*, all running spots on polyamory (Anapol, 1997b).

The usage of media, as well as monitoring of media representations was a main feature in the *Floodtide* and IRC progress report newsletters. A regular 'Media Campaign' feature updated members on all the initiatives the IRC was implementing in order to gain exposure. In the Spring 1991, IRC IntiLetter report, Anapol writes, "exposure in newsletters and magazines published by sympathetic organizations is a very effective way to increase our numbers" (Anapol, 1991). She even offers advice to her readers on how to effectively write to these magazines to gain their trust by applauding the magazine through compliments, personalizing and self-disclosing about one's character to be more likeable, make positive suggestions. After this media appeal, she also provides "this month's target" article written by D. Patrick Miller, in the *YOGA Journal* titled "*Journey of the Heart*". Anapol notes the article centers around relationships and spirituality, but fails to mention polygamous relationship styles.

In the 1985 IRC letter, Anapol mentions several multimate films being aired, *My Other Husband*, and 1984's film, *Micki & Maude*. Situating these presentations in the larger mass

media arena, she notes many presentations of extramarital affairs and jealousy on mainstream television series and movies, and encourages her readers to “bring multimate relationships out of the dark age” by writing to these stations about their poor representations. She cites research conducted by *Choosing Our Future*, a non-profit that mobilizes viewers to write in for more “socially responsible uses of television” arguing that polyfidelity is ready for prime time television, as well as asks for help in collection videos tapes to create a library of films and talk shows related to multimate relationships. *Choosing Our Future* describes itself as,

an unique, non-partisan and non-profit organization based in Menlo Park, California. We have been working since 1981 to support the development of a new generation of “citizen-responsive” television that can revitalize communication in our democracy. “Choosing” does not seek to promote any particular view of the future; rather, we seek new uses of broadcast television that can help us all work together in freshly envisioning and choosing our future. We are working on behalf of the “silenced majority”—citizens who have much to say but no way to voice their hopes and fears, goals and priorities. Our work is premised upon a faith in democracy and a belief in the wisdom and good judgment of the American people” (Public Vision, 1983).

In the Winter 1992 issue of *Floodtide*, Anapol points to family values as the hot topic of the year. She quotes a 1992 *Time* magazine article. . . “what is occurring today is a war of American myths, a struggle of contending stories. And pop culture, often television, is the arena in which it is being fought. . . The American family desperately needs new folklore, a driving myth. The old version, which in caricature is a 1950s suburban setting out of *Ozzie and Harriet*, does not entirely work anymore, except in nostalgia, in Kennenport, Maine, or in Ronald Regan’s afternoon naps” (as cited in Anapol, 1992, 10). Anapol cites several other articles that discuss the dismantling of the nuclear family and calling on extended family, as she argues is still practiced in the African American community at that time, as being the answer, and by expanding the definition of family beyond the two-person household as they cannot possibly provide all the wisdom a child would need. In a later 1993 edition of *Floodtide*, bringing

representations from the television full circle, Anapol mentions Tom and Roseanne Arnold, and the speculation that they were going to wed Tom's assistant, a rumor that was reportedly started to mask Tom's infidelity, but Anapol, points out, nonetheless, that the possibility of a plural marriage had made its way into mainstream conversation circulating discourses about alternative models.

In a Fall of 1990 edition of the IRC Quarterly Progress Report, a section header titled Media Campaign contained the following message:

We are still working on identifying sympathetic media professionals. Once again, let us know if you add to our list – and thanks to you who already have. As we mentioned last time, we are gearing up for a letter writing campaign. We plan to send addresses and sample letters to all our supporters on a regular basis so that you can easily drop a line to selected media moguls, and let them know we're out here and waiting to read/hear/see more material on the positive aspects of non-monogamous relationships. Now that the new season is starting, please send your votes for television shows which deserve feedback (good or bad) (Anapol, 1990).

In 1991 & 1992, the Media Campaign section of *Floodtide* mentions work on a *Star Trek: The Next Generation* script, in which Anapol had worked with screenwriter, Jim Heddle, to integrate a multi-adult families and non-monogamous relationships. Otter and Morning Glory Zell, Jon Russell, Roland and Laine Juli, and Paul Glassco were also part of later workshopping efforts to create myriad possibilities for the script. Submitted in the summer of 1992 to Paramount, the script synopsis reads as follows:

Data and Troi consult COMPUTER and report on what has come to be known as “the Cereal Anomaly”. Local biospheric conditions have led to genetic mutation among some of the Cereal colonists and a subsequent political, religious and cultural polarization between the Polys and the Monos.

Mono-Cereans follow a “normal” human maturation cycle in which physical gender is established at birth and culturally anchored in sexually differentiated roles and norms in the context of a society whose main institution is the male-dominated nuclear family

Poly-Cereans have an egalitarian culture based on the multi-adult family. Poly-Cerean children are of indeterminate gender until puberty, when, in a ceremonial context, each child consciously chooses from among seven possible biological and social genders.

The Poly Cereans are unselfish, consciously physically affectionate, and emotionally caring with each other, but not in such a way that there are any “couples” discernable among them, nor any observable possessiveness or jealousy. This is not “promiscuous” or “provocative” behavior. It is gentle, mutual and nurturing (Star Trek: The Next Generation script, 1992).

Anapol’s work through IRC saw the value in creating awareness and educational opportunities, by writing into magazines and journals, appearing on talk and radio shows, as well as relaying this information to her readers to make them aware of the progress of the publicity efforts. Trying to solidify a movement amongst IRC’s intimate network, in in the Winter 1991 edition of *Floodtide*, an article is printed titled “*How You Can Become An Advocate For Responsible Non-Monogamy*” encouraging those practicing polyfidelitous multi-partner relationships to become advocates for the movement by writing letters, becoming group leaders, and being a public affiliate; by also becoming well-informed about the movement, particularly as several of the same questions crop up around the lifestyle which are addressed in Anapol’s *Love Without Limits* book; as well as recognize that change is slow, but to continue fighting the good fight; and lastly, to use effective strategy and maintain cooperative working relationships, particularly by reaching out to those who are not already dead-set committed to monogamy, but rather supporting those who are like-minded. Anapol’s call for action is much more internal than external in this issue, as she is interested in building a mass of advocates committed to the cause, rather than try to proselytize people who practice monogamy.

In the Spring 1992 Volume 3, Issue 3 edition of *Floodtide*, Walt Patrick authors the article titled, “*Why We Need A Polyfidelity Movement.*” In this article he calls for a movement to clarify the distinction between sex as a primary factor in polyfidelitous relationships versus polyfidelity as “a relationship between three or more people that is comprehensive, fundamental, and enduring” arguing that sex is not an essential characteristic toward relating intimately with

other people (as cited in Anapol, 1992). Another article appears in this issue titled, “*The Decline of the Nuclear Family*” in which Anapol posits that with the increase of divorce rates, illegitimate childbearing, and spousal/child abuse, that politicians need to recognize new family models. She calls for a diversity set of models, in which there is not one uniform dominant model, particularly with monogamy as being the go-to relationship style. She also argues for shorter work weeks with higher care, education in schools, and subsidies for new parents, all which factor into developing closer intimate bonds and caring for children in their most impressionable years. Anapol created a “speaker’s bureau” as a way to keep people in non-monogamous relationships on call to speak on radio and television programs. She also began publishing the on-goings of other non-monogamy groups in her newsletter in the section ‘News From Near And Far’ as a way to showcase all the geographically dispersed efforts of members from all over the country.

After her book, *Love Without Limits*, was published, Anapol faced trouble placing the book in libraries and getting bookstore to purchase her work. She noted in *Floodtide* that she had sent out hundreds of review copies, but the mainstream press was not interested, despite all the interviews she had done on radio and talk shows. She reached out to Robert Francoeur, a notable sexologist who had attended the Kirkridge retreat, to write her a book review, referencing how Robert Rimmer had been blacklisted for his controversial topics. Anapol also reached out to Robert Rimmer, asking him for reviews, suggesting that that *New Age Journal*, *Unte Reader*, and *Playboy* would be appropriate places to get a review from him of her book. Later Anapol would also write to Rimmer discussing her desire to self-publish her follow up book, rather than go the route of a traditional press, but not having the funding to self-publish so the project was put on hold. Rimmer then reached out to *Alternative Lifestyle Journal*, a

publication from Newbury Park, CA started in the 70s, in hopes the journal could subsidize or publish her book.

Early on, Anapol struggled with the financial aspect of running the *IntiNet* resource center, and most every communication to her membership asked for donations to keep the projects up and running herself. The 1989 newsletter mentions a sizeable \$25,000 budget for seed money to grow the IRC. Later in 1994, after the Kirkridge retreat brought Anapol and Nearing together, she asks her readers for a donation toward the \$500,000 goal to create a “Sandstone of the 90s” on a farm in the Orcas Islands, one of the San Juan Islands in Washington State’s Puget Sound (Anapol, 1994, np). One issue of *IntiNet*’s progress report mentions a collaboration relationship with *ECOSOURCE*, a company that offers non-toxic home and garden cleaning products. She encourages her readers to purchase items from this company, as 10% of the price of the order will be donated to the IRC, thus helping to mitigate the costs of Xeroxing and binding the Resource Guide, Anapol had put together.

Polyfidelitous Education Productions (PEP) & PEPTalk

Ryam Nearing began searching for her own Kerista-like polyfidelitous relationship, seeking out individuals who wanted to be a part of a relationship structure that had no sexual partners outside of the agreed upon group. Nearing lived in Oregon, and gained visibility as early as 1983 by rotating on local television and radio talk shows, as well as hosting *PEPCon*, polyfidelity conferences since 1987 in hopes of reaching individuals who were seeking out alternative models of relationships. Later moving to Hawaii, Nearing was involved in a polyamorous triad, and would speak on network television shows through the *Pali Paths* group about her relationship style. Nearing wrote:

It all began in the early 80s when my family (a polyfidelitous triad) used to get letters and calls from others interested in group marriage and community. At the time there were few polyamorous resources and we all were struggling with questions about what works and our feelings of isolation. I felt that it was essential to start to bring together all the stories, both successes and failures, so we could all learn from each other. To build a poly community, it seemed clear to me that we needed a central place to contact each other and to list events and gatherings. In other words we needed a written culture so we wouldn't feel like we were floating in space, alone and disconnected (as quoted in Walston, 2001).

With her emphasis on written culture, Nearing founded the organization, Polyfidelitous Educational Productions (*PEP*) in the summer of 1984, and began circulating her newsletter, *PEP* Talk and taking on members in September. Accompanied by *PEPCon* conferences premiering in July of 1987 at the Koinonia Center, Nearing established her organization to start building out the resource network she spoke about above.

PEP defined itself as “a not-for-profit educational organization. We provide learning materials and information about polyfidelity: a fidelitous form of group marriage. Our members range from individuals who simply support our educational projects to those who have been polyfidelitous for years. . . *PEP* connects people who are interested in group marriage. We advertise nationally and present workshops, classes, video tapes, and give interviews for the media. We also see Eugene as a geographic center for individuals and groups interested in and/or already living this lifestyle” (*PEP* pamphlet, nd).

Polyfidelity, as explained by the *PEP* pamphlet is described as “a form of group marriage: a loving family of more than two committed adults....supporting values and structures that support successful committed multiple adult families (*PEP* pamphlet, nd):

- Relationships based on clearly expressed and mutually desired values and lifegoals
- A written listing of these, a social contract, helps to clarify and communicate each family's micro-culture
- A personal attraction and compatibility of style among all partners
- All partners are valued equally by all other partners...non-preferential, all primary
- Personal growth and clear communication

The *PEPCon* conferences quickly became popular venues for individuals seeking out multi-partner relationship styles and polyfidelitous unions. While there was no material from the earlier conference schedules found in the Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, some of the workshops at *PEPCon* 1991 are as follows: Sharing Money and Financial Independence, Spiritual Alliance & Integrity, Polyfidelity Beyond the Triad, Building Local Support Groups, Building Successful Relationships & Building Successful Community, Coming Out, Future Sex, Shared Housing, Community, and Polyfidelity, and Alternative Spirituality for Sex-Positive lifestyles. Many of these workshops were taught by individuals brought in by Anapol, such as Paul Glassco, members from Expanded Family Network, and Oberon and Morning Glory-Zell from the CAWs, as by this time the two had already exchanged information and were collaborating on the conferences that Nearing had already established five years prior. The language of ‘*Loving More*’ and ‘*More Loving*’ had been used on *PEPCon* pamphlets almost since the beginning of the conferences, which made the name of their new joint venture, *Loving More*, an easy transition for subscribers.

Expanding the network was of increasing important to Nearing, *PEP* advertising in *CoEvolution Quarterly*, *New Age*, *The Progressive*, and the *Utopian Classroom*. *PEP* also circulated audio and video cassettes, gave presentations at the local Eugene library, sponsored the Keristan series *Utopian Eyes* through the local cable network, and had information booths at the *Eugene Harvest Fair* and the *Future Expo*. The paper pamphlet that Nearing had written, later turned into a book, *The Polyfidelity Primer*, was offered to subscribers for \$2 dollars, along with cassette tapes discussing polyfidelity for \$3 dollars. A *PEP* directory was established after a need for networking outside the local group was desired, later called *PEP* Networking. The directory stemmed from distributing a profile survey to subscribers, and afforded members a

‘personal ad’ like forum to describe their group and what they are seeking. Nearing emphasizes that no sexually explicit material with swinging overtones will be accepted, again, to demarcate the difference between the swinger community and the polyfidelitous community.

From the beginning of the *PEPTalk* newsletters, a column feature called ‘Ask Dr. Pepper’ served as an advice column for those seeking answers to multi-partner relationships. Reader feedback and questions were important to Nearing, as she included subscriber comments in her conference pamphlets,

The *PEP* newsletter is the most sincere and pure effort we have seen in this country to present, education and validate alternative relating and family structures –Oregon

Your appearance on the Sally Jesse Raphael program was a relief for us. We have an experiment form of marriage that is closeted, known only to us. We’ve had no place to turn to with our questions until now –Michigan

I hope you will be able to provide me with information on where I could hear from people in long term group marriages. I have looked in bookstores and cannot find anything to help me –New York.

Nearing also traced media representations of multi-partner relationships and group marriage in her *PEPTalk* newsletter under the feature ‘In Review’, citing movies such as 1982’s *Summer Lovers*, which explores a couple opening up their relationship to a French anthropologist. This feature expanded as the newsletter grew

As Nearing began to appear in the mainstream media she integrated her experiences and intentions for going on talk shows and radio shows in her *PEPTalk* newsletter. In one of the earlier editions of *PEPTalk* she explains her motivation to go on the *Playboy* Channel on the program, *Women on Sex*, where she met Deborah Anapol. She writes,

I have been on other television and radio shows speaking about polyfidelity, but this show will undoubtable reach the largest audience I have done. My motive when talking on this show or any other, when placing ads in magazines and newspapers, or when responding to info requests that come into *PEP*, is always to speak directly to that person who has been looking for polyfidelity as a lifestyle for years (or to plant a seed for that

person who will be ready for it sometime in the future). I know they are out there, because I don't believe I am the only person who wants a stable committed home life within a circle of best friends (Nearing, 1985, 3).

In the Winter Solstice 1984 edition of *PEPTalk*, Anapol writes an article titled “*Say What?*” which outlines the decline of the traditional family, higher divorce rates, rising inflation, decline of effective purchasing power combines, and the failure of the two-adult nuclear family particularly in the amount of care able to be provided to a child. She argues that a possible solution is “the “family of the future” – polyfidelity. Polyfidelity, faithfulness to more than one other partner at the same time, is a family form which allow for the primary family functions – e.g. childrearing, compensation for adult partners, sex, companionship, and financial stability – to be met in more than one possible way” (Nearing, 1984).

Nearing also emphasizes the importance of communication in polyfidelitous relationships, specifically quoting the communication model of ‘sender and receiver,’ and the complication of the receiver interpreting the message as the sender intended. She qualifies this sender/receiver model as being enhanced in polyfidelitous relationships, and asks the reader to consider using all their senses to properly communicate.

Honing in on the expansion of her network, yet the feeling of how slow progress can be, Nearing writes about a 1962 study of consumer response conducted by Everett M. Rogers, at the University of Southern California, grouping people into the now widely used marketing categories of: Innovators, Early Adopters, Early Majority, Late Majority, and Laggards. The article titled, “*Are You A Leader Or A Laggard?*” discusses how Nearing envisions her subscribers as the less than 3% in the Innovator category, calling the polyfidelity movement as being led by pioneers, and a need to develop and blaze the paths and trails for their great grandchildren. *PEPTalk* also featured new books that discussed the future of non-monogamy. In

a 1989 edition, Nearing mentions Shere Hites' book, *Women and Love: A Cultural Revolution in Progress*, citing data from a survey of 4,500 women, in which 75% of respondents married more than five years reported some extramarital affair (Nearing, Spring Solstice, 1989, 4).

In the Summer Solstice 1989 edition of *PEPTalk*, Nearing announces that her book, the *Polyfidelity Primer*, was more legitimately published in May of 1989, due to funding support from *Syntropy Institute*, based out of Palo Alto, California. Seeking to legitimate her efforts, and the lifestyle as orientation, Nearing begins to button up her presentation of polyfidelity in this issue as well, offering an excerpt stylized after a dictionary entry for the word polyfidelity (Nearing, 1989, 2):

POLYFIDELITY (pol'ē fi del'i tē), noun, 1. a multiple adult committed relationship where each partner is primary to all other partners and the relationship is fidelitous, sexually and otherwise. 2. A fidelitous form of group marriage between all primary partners. 3. An exciting way to experience more love and more personal growth challenges than you ever thought possible.

In a column on the following page, the article titled "*Born A Polyfide*," explores the biological imperatives of the same-sex movement, as well as discuss the nature versus nurture argument. Nearing does not necessarily draw a finite position, but she does argue that there is a myth of 'the only and only' and due to the recent statistics surrounding extramarital affairs, feels as though some people were born non-monogamous. She refers to these people as polyfides, specifically as a sexual minority, writing, "as a minority we have a set of unique opportunities and challenges. We can serve our species as examples of diversity, educations for innovation, and models for new and human centered options" (Nearing, 1989, 3). Using the language of species is reminiscent of Foucault's (1980) exploration of the emergence of the homosexual as a species, and thus named as so through circulating discourses in this text in which Nearing seeks to label a group of non-monogamists as polyfides. In the same vein, Nearing could be hitting the

nail on the head, trying to name the sexual orientation of polyfidelity by associating the practices with an identity, the polyfide.

CHAPTER 7: PIONEERS & VOYEURS

The following chapter attempts to frame the early media appearances of seminal leaders in the movement. Because the leaders only used newsletters to reach their internal audiences, they used broadcast media to reach larger external audiences. Unfortunately, during this time the ‘talk show’ circuit had become a space in which the host of the show could be seen as the ringleader in a circus, leading the audience members to gawk and holler at the clowns on stage in the center of the ring. Despite the ‘trashiness’ of talk shows seeking out sensationalism and using ‘shock and awe’ techniques to increase their ratings, many of the early pioneers in the polyamory movement found themselves recipients of viewer letters seeking out more information. Thus this chapter seeks to explore the relationship of television and identity, as well as illuminate the ways in which the medium of television can help or hinder those who choose to appear upon the screen.

Network Television & Polyamory

The Kenneth R. Haslam Polyamory Collection at *The Kinsey Institute* contains a number of VHS, DVD, cassette and reel-to-reel videos as donated by Kenneth R. Haslam and members of the polyamory community. While the collection does not encompass the entirety of non-monogamy and polyamory broadcast appearances, the videos and radio excerpts do provide a cursory view of how polyamory was presented on broadcast television and radio, and the ways in which audiences responded to the guests on these shows. The earliest television appearance made by individuals who are linked to the modern polyamory movement was a series of episodes on the *Phil Donahue Show* interviewing three members of the Kerista Commune, the beginning of a slew of television appearances by the leaders and founders of the movement that we know

today. In the follow chapter are brief excerpts and analyses from these shows, as well as a more thorough textual analysis of Showtime's *Polyamory: Married and Dating*, the most recent full season run of a polyamory television show. Due to the nature of archive research, many of the videos were not dated, and given they aired in the early 90s, record of dates tied to specific episodes are hard to locate on shows that are no longer active, a range of dates of when the program aired is given to situate the presence of polyamory during this timeframe.

In the May 1980 issue of *Psychology Today*, the Kerista Commune received a two-page spread; "*Polyfidelity: The Kerista Village Ideal*" featured within an article on the topic of jealousy. As one of the Kerista villagers, Jud, recalls, after seeing the magazine he jokingly stated, "here comes Phil Donahue" (Kerista.com). Shortly thereafter, the Kerista members did indeed receive a call from the *Phil Donahue Today Show* producers which led to two seven minute segments on the commune. Given the brevity of these segments, Donahue later invited the Kerista members, Eve, Lil, and Ram onto his regular show in Cleveland to cover their lifestyle more in depth on a longer segment which positioned the three members directly in the center of a giant amphitheater akin to an audience viewing a circus ringleader, but the ringleaders were treated more like clowns. Despite the prior *Today Show* appearances, Donahue chose to focus the discourse of the talk show immediately on the sexual behaviors of the group, exclaiming over the mic, "I'm sorry to go right for the - We're all wondering about the sex part, you know" later continuing this emphasis by framing his interpreted discourse as "Lots of people sleeping together?" directly after Eve describes her definitions of polyfidelity as "poly means many, fidelity means loyalty to a group, rather than one person" (Donahue, 1980). The emphasis by the members centers around a program of surplus income sharing, in which living expenses are paid for, but anything beyond those expenses are put into a fund and allocation is then voted

upon by the majority. Laf, one of the Kerista members explains polyfidelity as a, “meaningful alternative to people who have not found other institutions, [such as] monogamy, satisfying, to realize their full potential, to overcome some of their negative characteristics like jealousy, possessiveness and being proprietarian” (Donahue, 1980).

On one of the shorter segment with the Keristans, Gregory White, a social psychologist from the University of Maryland, is brought on the show to explain the rationale behind the polyfidelitous commune,

[they] tried to build a new culture; from a cultural point of view they have changed the way of a culture, which anthropologically is predisposed to jealousy. We know anthropologically that private property exists along with extreme jealousy in different cultures, one thing they have done is to enlarge the concept of property to the whole commune. Part of them is very traditional; part of the reason extended family is broken down has to do with the way economics are today...what they are doing is bucking the economics that has created that, and what they are saying is ‘let’s do something to rebuild that extended family]’ (Donahue, 1980).

The last Donahue segment seems to acknowledge this economic income-sharing aspect, as the intro tag describes Kerista as ‘polyfidelity: egalitarian utopia’, and much of the audience participation is geared around the functionality of the commune, rather than the sexual liaisons. The female host of the show even makes a joke that the women in the community can feign a headache if they don’t want to have sexual relations with the partner they have in their sleep cycle that night, drawing our attention to the commonality their experiences have with traditional monogamous relationships. Later in the segment an audience member comments on keeping the children disciplines, and inquiring as to who is allowed to keep them in line. This seems like a natural reaction from the audience to maintain an understanding of control in the community when they perceive that the loss of monogamy positions these relationships outside the normative realm of control and discipline, thinking of partners as possessions and women as

objects to own. The Keristans are then given an opportunity to promote their community, and discuss the longer range plans for their Storefront Learning Center, “people can walk in either through appointment or off the street to sit down and view films, videotapes, hear lectures, slideshows, which basically are concerning cooperative learning and alternative lifestyles” (Donahue, 1980). This early outreach through communication and media technology really sets the stage for the rest of the modern polyamory movement to utilize these types of tools for networking purposes.

In 1983, one of the earliest video recordings of Ryam Nearing can be located via a documentary on intentional and eco communities. Nearing was living in the Cerro Gordo community, 90 miles outside of Eugene, Oregon in Cottage Grove with her husband and partners; it is here a brief segment about their group and lifestyle was filmed for the Community to Community *Here and Now* newsletter (Community to Community, 1983). This early video illuminated the influential impact the Kerista commune had on Ryam and her partners, easily identifiable by one of the members of the group relationship sporting a t-shirt that said, ‘Ask Me About Polyfidelity.’

Expounding upon the sharing in the group, Nearing discusses the dynamics of the three men and three women partners using language from the Kerista commune to describe the ‘balanced rotational sleeping cycle’ in which partners would move from one room to another each night, not necessarily to have sexual relations with one another, but to mitigate any one individual spending too much time with any given partner in the group. Nearing also discussed the shared values the group subscribes to in their social contract, specifically sharing of parenting, economic responsibilities, and sexuality. To further explain this concept, the viewer is shown a relationship circle, one of the many diagrams to explain polyfidelity/polyamory to come

throughout the history of the movement. In this diagram there are three circles, the first is the self at the center, followed by family, and then lastly the Cerro Gordo community at the outer most circle. Not only is value sharing important within the polyfidelitous group, but as Nearing points out in the video, also amongst the community centering on human relationships, clustering of property and industry on the 900 acre lot, and maintaining a car-free lifestyle. To disseminate these values, Nearing and her partners would travel to Eugene, Oregon to give workshops on polyfidelity at the *Alternative Relationships Center*. Early on we can see the gears turning in Nearing's mind on how to gain larger visibility during the infancy of the polyamory movement.

Around the same time Nearing and her partners, in a triad referred to as 'Syntony' appeared on a local television program (Syntony, nd) in which the roots of the movement are mentioned. The segment specifically references books such as *Group Marriage* and the *Harrad Experiment*, accompanied by the camera panning to Nearing's own manuscript, what would be later published more formally as the *Polyfidelity Primer* in 1992. The word, compersion, as coined by the Kerista commune (Anapol, 2010) was also used by Nearing to describe the happiness felt by one individual when seeing their partner connect with another member of the group, more succinctly as the opposite of feeling jealousy.

Nearing continued working different talk show circuits, and participated in one of *Playboy Channel's* segments called *Women On Sex: Sex Without Jealousy* in 1985, which is where she first met with Deborah Anapol. Both women were featured on the show which opens with one of the interviewers responding to Anapol's definition of non-monogamy as "commitment with freedom" having to compose and collect her thoughts before stating, "I am going to try to be my most confident, open-minded, non-jealous individual, but I have to tell you I am a little skeptical about what commitment with freedom can mean" (*Playboy*, 1985). Nearing

and Anapol explain non-monogamy as a series of multi-lateral relationships, and a group of best friends who have sex with one another. Viki Powell, another guest on the show, states that it is difficult to answer the interviewer's questions because they are reacting negatively as though their lifestyle were something to be grappled with. Powell's reaction is in response to an interviewer asking her if she makes her husband shower or 'cool off' when he comes home after he has had sex with another woman. Powell redirects this stigmatization by asking, "Again, that question is, 'am I going to react in a jealous manner?'" (*Playboy*, 1985) to point out that the hosts are ignoring the actual relationship model that seeks to eliminate jealousy in favor of creating a controversial picture for the audiences at home.

In a 1986 episode of *People are Talking*, a live *WBZ* afternoon talk show in Boston hosted by Tom Bergeron, more famous for his gigs as a host of *America's Funniest Home Videos*, currently the host of *Dancing With The Stars*, a triad called 'Phoenix' was brought on the show and not treated in a particularly favorable manner. It is worth mentioning that Bergeron, in an interview with the *Archive of American Television*, pointed out the nature of the show was being half news and half drama, referring to the show as "nuts and sluts" as called internally by the producers (Television Legends, 2013). The male partner in the male/female/female triad explains he was brought on the show as the producer found out he was non-monogamous from a prior show he had done about being a former lawyer who had done Ecstasy. One of the individuals on the show explains group marriage as more lovers and more growth, to which Bergeron responds, "more problems" pointing to the lack of property and insurance rights for all those involved. The triad explains they had used personal ads to seek each other out, as two of the couples had joined a group dedicated to alternative lifestyles.

Bergeron, continuing this tirade on the problem he has with group marriage says, “the audience is worrying about our morals and where they have gone,” in which another one of the hosts jumps in and says, “their morals have just expanded.” At this point, Bergeron asks viewers to call in, asking if they approve or disapprove, and “would you want to be one of the people to join this group marriage?” The next guest on the show is sex therapist, Dr. Martha Winter-Grove, who states, “certainly an alternative lifestyle...this group is from Los Angeles”. Despite the group not being from LA, the sex therapist does not seek to explore the positive possibilities of non-monogamy, only try to attribute the radicalness of it to the West Coast lifestyle. At this point, Bergeron asks, “Who believes this is the sickest thing ever?.” Despite his attempt to draw in an audience viewer that would agree with him, instead the caller discussed their own group marriage relationship, to which the therapist re-directed the tone from a shared lifestyle to one about sex, inquiring as to which one of his partners was better in bed, and the caller asked the same question of the interviewers, to which the female host responds, “I’ve never been in direct competition with another person in the house” (Bergeron, 1986).

Anapol herself appears on several talk shows during the early 90s, most often shopping around her book, *Love Without Limits*. After being featured on *Phil Donahue* with Stan and Janet Dale, she later appeared on Donahue with her lover Paul Glassco, and with Suzann Robins, a part of the couple’s relationship for a very short time. Her first appearance with Stan and Janet Dale was an eye opening experience, and Anapol received hundreds of viewer letters from people writing in inquiring about non-monogamy, asking for more information, which prompted her to start *IntiNet* as an organization to field these questions. Below are a few of the viewer letters she received:

“Dr. Anapol, I recently watched the Donahue show that you were on and I would be very interested to find out more about the poligamus [sic] person. I couldn’t find it in my dictionary. Im 47 and spend more of my life trying to explain these feelings to others–without any success (you need to get help, etc.)” - Female viewer

“Dear Ms. Anapol,

I am interested in investigating polygamy as an alternative to traditional monogamous marriage. I am hoping that you will be able to be of some assistance in sharing some personal thoughts and directing me to some reading material.

It is understandable that there are obvious positive aspects of a polygamous relationship. The strong family unit security of close friendship and freedom to pursue a career are obvious to me, however I have many questions.

Do you honestly think of the other wives as your sisters? How do you decide who gets weekend time? Is there truly no jealousy? Do you wonder if someone else is a better sexual partner? What are your living arrangements? Do you all eat meals together? If one person is sufficient to satisfy all your needs- does it bother you that you are not able to do the same for your mate? How do you avoid feeling like a groupie? Don’t you mind sleeping alone? Are you ever lonely? What are you feelings when your husband is “falling in love: with a p wife? Do you attend the wedding?

I am seriously interested in the subject of polygamy ad would greatly appreciate any information or assistance in my pursuit of this topic” –Female viewer

“Dear Debra Anapol,

I recently saw you on the Phil Donahue show being shown from New York and became very interested in the topic being discussed.

I am an honest and open person with a wide variety of interest. I have been married once and have had heterosexual relationships that have ended unhappily. More often than not. They were short lived and not very satisfying. I have a lot to give but have to suppress my feelings for fear of rejection.

As I watched you and the other guest, I could feel your freedom and love flowing through the screen and I felt this was the answer I have needed.

I have searched for others who feel as I do but do not know how to go about meeting them

I would appreciate any information and assistance you could give me. I would like to thank you for your help” –Female viewer

“Dear Deborah,

Please forward information regarding extended relationships as discussed during your appearance on the Donahue television program.

Your sustained clear presentation of views, in the face of the hostile reaction of the audience, is to be commended.

Is there written material regarding the relationship shown on the television program, or other similar groups? If so would you please forward references for articles etc.” –Male viewer

“Dear Dr Anapol,

We watched the Phil Donahue show this morning. You were on, and your name and address were given so we presume that is tacit approval to write to you.

We liked your monogamist vs polygamist statements. We also noticed that Mr. Donahue did not bring up, and so there was no opportunity to discuss, intimacy. Overall, we found the dialog very useful.

Two requests, as you see fit: are there any groups down south here, seminar-type organizations perhaps that have the philosophies expounded on today’s program? Secondly, do you or your group there have any literature that you could send us on your programs?

We are a married couple, young sixties, retired, children grown and on their own. We are not professionals, rather interested, mostly intellectually, in current thinking on your specialty and similar such disciplines.

Thanks for any response you wish to convey to use. We might, then, be able to pursue this area further”–
Signed male and female married couple

Many of the respondents were seeking like-minded individuals, more information through their local bookstores, or simply trying to understand the feelings they were having regarding the non-monogamous lifestyle. Anapol used the language of polygamy in her earlier years, before polyfidelity gained larger traction, and then later picked up the word polyamory as it was coined within her network. The sheer volume of letters she received, and kept to donate to the archive, shows how powerful presentations on mainstream television were, particularly for those who felt that they did not have access to these resource through any other available means.

Anapol’s appearance on *Phil Donahue* with her own lovers Paul Glassco and Suzann Robins, was still seen by Donahue and his audiences as a spectator event, despite Donahue hosting Anapol, Stan and Janet Dale, as well as producing several segments on the Kerista Commune. It is evident throughout the repetitive nature of these shows that audience shock value is at peak interest. The opening line that Donahue uses on the 1992 segment featuring Anapol plays into this shock tactic, “they have sex with other people because they see marriage as an institution” to which Anapol and Paul respond, “we’re not interested in recreational sex” and “we want to deregulate marriage; we don’t want marriage to be contrived and bottled up into one possibility” (Donahue, 1992). Suzann Robins, who met Anapol and Glassco at a support group

for the *Expanded Family Network* explains that nothing intimate occurred between the three of them, to which Donahue responds, “Oh, this is boring, what are you doing here?” as a way of breaking the fourth wall to express to the viewers at home that he is specifically looking for dialogue that is exciting. Trying to get some more insight, Donahue pokes at Robins’ appearance and tells her she looks too straight-laced to be involved in this type of relationship.

Several members of the polyamory community, including Robins, found themselves shopped around to multiple talk shows if they happened to reside in a particular geographic area of the country. *Real Personal*, one of these talk show that were featuring the same members of the community, was about human sexuality, hosted by Bob Berkowitz, former Senate and White House correspondent for CNN in the 1980s, as well as the co-author of books, *Why Men Stop Having Sex. And What You Can Do Without It* and *What Men Won't Tell You. But Women Need to Know*. *Real Personal* aired on CNBC from 1990-1996. This episode featuring the non-monogamous triad was also hosted by Sandy Miller, currently the co-anchor of weekdays for Fox 2 News, starting her career off as a journalist in Missouri.

The episode begins by panning in on Suzann Robins, a polyamorist, psychology professor in New York, author of *Exploring Intimacy: Cultivating Healthy Relationships through Insight and Intuition* and co-editor of *Body Psychotherapy* newsletter, and her male partner, Paul Markwell, while playing the song *Roxanne* by *The Police* in the background, a song notably about a red-light district sex worker. Robins initiates the conversation by describing her lifestyle as poly monogamy, using the language of primary, but pointing to the myriad models of relationships. The tag under her name on the screen says ‘non-monogamous.’ Sandy Miller asks the couple is they were planning on getting married, to which the couple replies their intention is to have a lifetime commitment. At this point Miller is visibly upset and references the pre-

interview in which she claims the couple used the language of marriage specifically about their preferred lifestyle. This breaking of the fourth wall destroys the viewer's conception that the interview is happening naturally, rather, it points to the framing that Miller had wanted to use, but no longer is able to use in order to manipulate the story. The couple then corrects Miller and notes they said group marriage. Berkowitz asks the third guest, *Family Tree's* Cynthia Geller, "Would you be satisfied with having sex with, I want to say a man, but I will say one person?" implying that the dominant way of thinking about sexuality is to defer to the opposite sex dyadic partnering, but then correcting himself to include the possibility of sleeping with more than one person from both sexes. The episode then ends with Robins discussing their participation in an intentional community in California, Anapol's *IntiNet* Resource Center, for which Robins wrote an article for the newsletter in 1991, and the *Sex, Love, and Intimacy* workshops that the group gives.

Robins and her male partner, Paul Markwell also appear on the *Jerry Springer Show* on an episode titled "*Non-Monogamous Relationships*" around 1996, along with Nina Hartley and Bobby Lilly, absent the male part of the triad because he was done with all the talk show exposure. Springer referred to their polyamorist lifestyle as a *ménage à trois*, asking whether their configuration was confusing for children, and whether jealousy is involved, three of the most common tropes used when discussing polyamory. The first set of guests, that includes Robins, states that they feel they are "more mission oriented...by seeing us up there they [potential polyamorists in the audience/watching at home] are not alone and that there are other people who find the particular relationships the norm." (Springer, 1996).

Springer begins the commercial break by introducing the next set of guests, "when we come back we will talk with someone who is looking for a third mate, or even a fourth

mate...mate implies biological breeding imperative.” With this outro, Springer is trying to tie sex for procreation with intimacy, suggesting that the triad is looking to breed with multiple partners which is not the case as they even mention they would not bring children into their lives unless they were married. The second set of guests are a swinging couple, and she reiterates the sex as secondary aspect to non-monogamous relationships, “it isn’t so much about sex, but about sharing all of the things with each other to live in community and in a part of larger family.” The third guest, adds little to the conversation is a man who claims he was the leader of a cult sex commune. The addition of this guest highlights the controversial and shock value the *Jerry Springer Show* has become well-known for. Rounding out the guests is a reverend, who refers to the other guests as pleasure seekers who need to find God. As with many of the talk shows in which non-monogamists/polyamorists have appeared on, bringing on some type of expert to vilify those living outside of the heteronormative is a common theme. The last expert on the show is a sex therapist, who believes that people who seek out multiple relationships have intimacy issues. In one of the last intros returning from a commercial break Springer recaps the theme of the show for viewers just tuning in by stating, “we’re talking about swingers...” to which one of the guests corrects him and says, “no, we are talking about committed relationships”.

What is interesting about these talks shows in the early ‘90s is the availability for promotional space for some of the guests at the end of the show. Robins takes this opportunities to discuss the *Expanded Family Network*, *IntiNet* in California, and even another couple that was seeking out a third to complete their triad came on stage at this point with the book *Expanded Family*. Given Robins’ promotion of *IntiNet*, and the *Expanded Family Network*, both organizations directly tied to Deborah Anapol, it seems as no surprise that Anapol’s own

connection to the talk show circuit influenced Robins and her triad to appear on national television.

Once Anapol and Nearing began networking, they also appeared together on the *Joan Rivers Show* in 1992, along with Nearing's partners, Barry Northrop and Alan Jensen. Joan Rivers spares little time for easing into the conversation and shoots off a bunch of questions directed toward Nearing and Northrop, "were you faithful for the first nine years? Did you have other affairs, also? What about jealousy?" Later, when Jensen is introduced, the tag under his name reads 'Feels he is married to both Barry and Ryam' and Northrop's tag is, 'Shares his wife with a live-in lover' (Rivers, 1992). Despite Nearing's polyfidelitous relationship being heterosexual, the show tag implies that Northrop and Jensen are also lovers, when that is not the case. Rivers continues bringing monogamous normative language into the conversation, particularly pointing to monogamy's intertwined relationships with social and regulatory structures in something as simple as a company picnic, "what about company picnics when they say bring your wife, do you stay home?" (Rivers, 1992). Nearing also alludes to these lack of flexible options for individuals outside the dyadic couple, "the hardest thing is generally not having social support... and not getting that support from the culture or television shows. They always show two people; you rarely see something that is the same as our life that we can identify with. So we formed a network to get support from other people who live this way. And they are hidden, a lot of them are doctors or lawyers, but they are afraid of their clients." (Rivers, 1992). This leads to a discussion about serial monogamy, and Rivers brings up Elizabeth Taylor, well-known for her flitting relationships with many men. Because of her reference to a popular culture icon, we can point to the saturation of lived experiences as witnessed through mainstream media informing people's ideas of how the world works, and what possibilities are up for grabs.

Even while appearing on television, Nearing argues for better representations of two+ configurations in mainstream media, and reinforces the need for connecting with like-minded people through her network. Jensen then responds, “the standard family form is a myth started in the ‘50s” (Rivers, 1992).

Anapol and her lover, Paul Glassco are featured on the show next, and Rivers’ treatment of this couple is just the same. She asks, “You have to bring a woman home for him, right?” implying that Anapol is responsible for Glassco’s sexual fulfillment, even if by another woman, or possibly through a bi-sexual threesome. Rivers continues speaking to Anapol and Glassco, “Do you have group sex? Because they [Nearing, Northrop, and Jensen] don’t, so they are much more purer than you” (Rivers, 1992). This elevation of Nearing’s relationship triad, over Anapol’s draws our attention to the competing models of polyamory versus polyfidelity that are still maintained today. Because Nearing solely practiced polyfidelity, meaning she intimately and sexually committed only to those in her triad, whereas Anapol and Glassco has a more open marriage, where they were free to have intimate partners not committed to their group, often times one model is seen as more ethical than the other. Nearing is quick to shoot this assumption down, however, by pointing out that comparison was similar to the unfair practice of comparing one’s child to their other children.

In 1993, Anapol then appears as an expert on the *Sally Jesse Raphael* show, alongside a triad of Marsha, Bob, and Jillian. It is worth noting that Bob is adorned with a fake beard and eyebrows for fear of being outted to his co-workers. Raphael then begins the episode by informing the audience about the type of sexual relationship model the guests have, “This threesome is called a triad”, in which Bob’s tag reads, ‘sleeping with two women in the same house,’ Jillian’s tag, ‘shared her lover bob, with another woman,’ and Marsha’s tag, ‘sharing her

lover with another woman.’ Despite the language of sharing, Raphael asks, “tell me about the house, who owns the house? Who pays the bills? Who does Bob’s laundry?” (Raphael, 1993) again, returning to discourses of ownership and authority, muting the equal distribution of the household and the sharing qualities of being in a multi-partner household. Similar to Joan River’s comment regarding the company picnic, Raphael comments on how she would be uncomfortable with the arrangement at one of her dinner partners, as she only had enough chairs for two people in the couple model.

Anapol is then introduced, Raphael referring to her as Dr. Deborah, despite her holding a Ph.D. in psychology she is still named by her first name. Anapol argues that monogamy is a destructive myth and that not everyone can meet the intimate needs of their partner, in which Bob, from the triad, responds, “it is a lifestyle choice”. The other expert, Stephen Arterburn, founder of *New Life Ministries* treatment center and current host of the Christian counseling talk show *New Life Live*, argues, “[there is a] growing trend to devalue the tradition of marriage...there is no research that says children grow up better with a biological mother or biological father...in your situation there is a 40 times greater chance for child abuse than in a traditional marriage when a person who is not related is living in the home” (Raphael, 1993). Arterburn is brought on as an expert to maintain the traditional Christian values of monogamy, and to rile up the audience by bringing up allegations of higher rates of child-abuse as a fearmongering tactic. Books Arterburn has written since the early 90s are *Every Man's Battle: Winning the War on Sexual Temptation One Victory at a Time*, *Every Young Woman's Battle: Guarding Your Mind, Heart, and Body in a Sex-Saturated World*, and *Every Heart Restored: A Wife's Guide to Healing in the Wake of a Husband's Sexual Sin*. It is not surprise then that this expert would demonize any relationship model outside of the heteronormative given his

Christian background. Anapol argues for the economic benefits of a multi-partner model, in which Arterburn replies, “If you want a really good financial situation, prostitution can make you a lot of money” continuing, “love does need to have limits and boundaries; when we break those boundaries it leads to sexually transmitted diseases” thus pointing to the need for rigid hierarchical relationship models that afford no flexibility otherwise panic and syphilis for everyone.

Anapol also appeared on *Real Personal* in September of 1994, after her book was published. At this point, *IntiNet* had grown exponentially, and Anapol states there are 1,000 members so far. An audience member calls in asking how to find more information about finding a third person for their polyamorous relationship (the word being coined in 1990/1992), to which Anapol replies *IntiNet* was set up for that very reason, to find other people who are interested in that type of agreement. Anapol’s platform on this show was to illustrate the transition from being in two previous monogamous marriages and feeling like her body was the property of her husband, trapped in this possessive cycle. Anapol points to the gender divide, in that men are believed to want more sex than women, and if women were to subscribe to this type of behavior they would be called a slut. This sexualized woman discourse will continue throughout the rest of the polyamory movement, appropriated by Dossie Easton and Janet Hardy in their 1997 book, *The Ethical Slut*, in which a slut is defined as, “a person of any gender who has the courage to lead life according to the radical proposition that sex is nice and pleasure is good for you” (Easton & Hardey, 1997, 4).

Several years earlier, Geraldo produced a show on non-monogamy, featuring pornstar Nina Hartley, and the other members of her triad, Bobby Lilly and David Hartley, who also appeared on the 1996 *Jerry Springer Show*. Geraldo leads into the show with, “the issue is

threesomes, are they just another kind of extended family or an excuse for promiscuous relationships?” and asks the guests if they believe their lives are a fantasy set for the ‘American dream.’ Tina Tessina, an alternative lifestyle counselor and author of the 1987 book, *Love Styles: How to Celebrate Your Differences* is featured on the show, stating, “we have a great myth about monogamy in our country, many of our married people in this country are sharing, they just don’t know it” (Riviera, nd). Later, Geraldo tries to rile up his audience by stating, “I’m sure this conversation is making a lot of you at home angry or furious and I want to get back to the monogamy is a lie...” and “are you advocating swinging in an era of social conservatism?” to which Tessina responds, “call it a myth” as a corrective to Geraldo trying to imply that non-monogamy is seeking to destroy monogamy.

In the unaired 1997 *Geraldo* show, Nearing, and her partners Barry Northrop and Brett Hill, as well as Anapol, also appear on the show. The experts called onto this show were Jack Engelhard, author of the book *Indecent Proposal*, as well as Barbara Edwards, former 1984 ‘Playmate of the Year.’ Engelhard likens the lifestyle to a creative writing style, “you can’t make judgements...its consenting adults...they are living out a fantasy. As a novelist I see where these are three artistic people...two people make a story, three people make drama” (Geraldo, 1997). Edwards then discusses the tendency for women to be perceived as passive, waiting for men to come home, rather than making choices for themselves and having their own desires. The show itself was none too spectacular, Geraldo weaving in clips from *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, where the lead character asks, “What are you doing? Stealing your woman? We are involved” and also clips from the film, the *Indecent Proposal*, in which Demi Moore and Woody Harrelson’s characters are married, and Moore receives a proposal for a one-night stand from Robert Redford’s character for a million dollars. Despite the show not being aired, and a lot of

chatter reasoning that the episode was left off air due to Geraldo not being able to edit the material in a malicious or controversial manner, the clips from popular culture again situate sexuality representation in mainstream media as texts in which the real world is replicated in, thus pointing to the absence of accurate representations of polyamory.

Utilizing the burgeoning dialogue on the alt.polyamory Usenet group, several polyamory members commented on the nature of the talk show and whether it was a good idea to do the show if Geraldo was looking for a negative spin,

I'll bet Geraldo expected the routine Thursday night crucifixion, and what he got was the Sermon on the Mount. They walked into the lion's den, acquitted themselves very well and came out unscratched and the Romans don't want you to see it. (I know, metaphor abuse.)

Brett apparently feels that even if Geraldo edits the show in the meanest, most unflattering way imaginable, some of their meaning will touch enough people to justify it. As I was not there, I defer to his judgment.

But the style of Geraldo's show is such that it simply will not be shown unless they can get a sufficiently gory edit on it. Pressure on them to show it will surely cause them to go over the tape again to see if they can find such an edit (Cipher Goth, 1998).

In 1999, Anapol also appears on the *Leeza* show, along with Sasha and Janet Lessin, founders of *Pali Paths*, a group founded in 1993 dedicated to polyamory discussions in Honolulu, Hawaii, notable for their several talk show appearances in the 90s, as well as radio interviews. Both Nearing and Anapol were connected to *Pali Paths*, Nearing more closely as she moved to Hawaii for a period of time in the late '80s and early '90s. Leeza references the November 1999 *Time* magazine article, "*Henry, Mary, and Janet*" that outlines the court case involving April Divilbiss and a child custody battle after she appeared on television discussing her polyamory relationship. The producers of the *Leeza* show had followed the polyamory group around, and Leeza quickly cuts off the video for fear that it will show the group having sex. At this point, her producer is called out to discuss the filming and a conversation is initiated discussing the differences between pornography and documentary, Leeza calling it pornography

because the sex was in front of a camera. This conversation focuses on the sexual aspects of polyamory, rather than the intimate and shared relationships.

The core of the show centers around giving up on the nuclear family, a tag attributed to Sasha reading, 'says group sex is a healthy lifestyle' followed by a headline on the show, "*Foursomes: the new millennium marriages?*" all trying to situate the polyamory lifestyle into a sexually oriented space, rather than draw on the roots of the movement from a utopic egalitarian model that dismantled traditional marriage arrangements. An audience member comments, "What do the towels say, 'his, hers, ours, theirs' highlighting the need to bring the model back to the dyadic couple relationship, allowing space for only two towels monogrammed with heteronormative language. The show ends with Leeza arguing that in order for society to function there needs to be boundaries and civility, as well as conforming to the normative order, otherwise chaos would ensue, stating, "How far does it go?" implying the slippery slope mantra so often applied to sexual models outside of the norm.

At this point in time there were online discussions regarding the several talk show appearances of polyamory activists. Nearing, commenting on the show mentioning,

I got annoyed, yet again, at how much time I spent with the producers and they didn't reflect any of it or show the *Loving More* magazine they begged us to specially feed ex them for the show. I have to thank all the pioneering brave folks who went on this television show, although I am reminded why I'm never going to again. It's just not worth the circus atmosphere of these pieces for me. (as cited in *Liberated Christians*, 2000).

A few years later Nearing would remove herself completely from the spotlight of the polyamory movement, selling *Loving More* to a close friend, and leaving the community completely.

Since these episodes, there have been a whole host of other shows that featured polyamory and polyamory activists in the community such as *Future Sex*, *Inside Edition*, Oh! Oxygen Network, *Dr. Phil*, *The Morning Show with Mike & Juliet*, *The John Walsh Show*, and

many more. Anapol appearing on *Real Sex* in 1998, her last real appearance on national television advocating for polyamory. In 2005, Tyra Banks doing a show called, “*Is Monogamy Normal*”, Robyn Trask appeared on the *700 Club* on an episode called “*Polygamy in the Media*,” as well as *Montell Williams* in 2007. Williams originally featured notable polyamorous models on a 2007 show, with Nan Wise, Justen M. Bennett-Maccubbin, Founder of *Polyamorous NYC*, and alternative relationship counselors Dawn Davidson and Akien MacIain, many who were also featured on Penn & Teller’s show, *Bullshit* on family values, and more recently on *Our America with Lisa Ling* on the OWN Network in 2013, and in 2016, Steve Harvey hosted a show on the growing trend of polyamory.

Reality Television & Polyamory

In 2012, Showtime released two seasons of their new reality show, *Polyamory: Married and Dating*, centering on the lives of a quad and a triad for the first season. Several of these members were, and still are, activists in the polyamory community. *P:M&D* was not renewed for a third season, yet conversation surrounding the show is still alive and well today. The community has mixed reviews of the show, some suggesting that any publicity is good publicity, and that despite some of the sex scenes, the monotony of the ‘everyday’ was presented well enough to illustrate that polyamorous people are normal just like everyone else; whereas, the other half of the community felt that too much sex overpowered the larger message of honest and ethical intimate relationships, not always predicated on who you are sleeping with, and how often.

From a textual analysis perspective, *P:M&D* falls prey to production and editing techniques so common to slick subscriber paid programming, and the mantra, ‘sex sells.’ In a

previous study (see Hurson, 2013a), *Showtime's P:M&D* was found to have a skilled production, editing, and directorial team, as well as years of experience crafting a particular style that is indicative of the network's 'no-holds-bar' attitude.

The production techniques also allow for a story to unfold, or a story to be told, depending on the way in which the program is directed. In one instance we see Tahl (a member of the quad) sneak into his pod-member's bed and leave his wife and primary partner, Jenn, behind sleeping. The audience then witnesses Tahl being caught in a lie when he pretends he never mentioned to his other secondary lovers that Jenn was still in the house. As a viewer, we have all the evidence, but as a viewer watching the participants, those being filmed are still limited to living out a particular narrative with the available dialogue between the characters in real-time. This 'in-the-know' advantage provides agency to the audience to interpret the situation based on a whole picture, rather than piecemeal information as presented by the characters. As an audience member we are in tune with the editing effects that afford this narrative construction revealing the dishonesty of the characters, undermining the open honesty aspect lauded by polyamory, and reminded that polyamory can also be presented in a particular frame if all the facts and information are also edited to enhance a particular dominant discourse. Lying to his partners for the sake of sex with others privileges the heteronormative naturalization of the relationship by elevating the sexual behaviors over the honesty that is integral to maintain ethical non-monogamous relationships, and also relegates the polyamory lifestyle as a failed monogamous cheating incident.

P:M&D relies on overexposure of sex on the show, often using pornographic camera shots from the ceiling to film sex scenes, showing the actors in multiple shower scenes, which positions sexual behavior not as a secondary role in the lifestyle, as honesty and committed

relationships are privileged in polyamory, but as events that take up a great deal of time in the lifestyle, more closely aligned with the discourses of polyamory as a lifestyle that is only sex with multiple people. *P:M&D*, because it is on *Showtime*, shows explicit sex scenes multiple times throughout each of the episodes. At one point, one of the actors points out that their son, who appears in the series only twice, has been sent to his grandmother's house so the pod can 'play.' Much like the absence of responsibility to working for a living, the absence of child care in lieu of having sex is presented when more than half of the series films the pod members having sex rather than spending time with their expanded family networks.

The first episode of *P:M&D* contrasts the cast's definitions of polyamory with scenes of the partners kissing and having sex with one another. So while one person points out that polyamory is about commitment, trust, and honesty, the viewer is being distracted by a tangle of naked bodies, which emphasizes the sexual behaviors over the identity of polyamory. The emphasis placed on the large quantities of sex is reified by conflicting statements juxtaposed against images of sex such as, "I love the people that I sleep with, that's the difference between polyamory and swinging" or "Fuck her during the day, sleep with me at night."

Disdain for monogamy is illustrated throughout the series when characters in the pod say that "it's [monogamy] a social problem; I think it causes misery and unneeded suffering; polyamory is an advanced way of thinking" and that polyamory is a "healthy alternative to monogamy," but following this statement with a comparison to monogamy— "some freaks who are monogamous" and "monogamy destroys families." While these statements may be true, and offer a positive slant on polyamory, they still present monogamy as inferior and freakish, and simply seek to replace one hegemonic normative with another.

This emphasis on the programming as a non-monogamous space is only reiterated when Jenn's monogamous sister, Michelle, meets up with her and begins to question her lifestyle on camera. Prior to the conversation illuminating the misunderstanding of polyamory by Michelle, on screen we are shown a lower third graphic caption with Michelle's name and the tag, 'Jenn's monogamous sister.' Michelle explains her inability to sanction her sister's behavior saying, "I don't think doing things like that [polyamory] are healthy, I just wouldn't want a man who wants to stick his dick in everything" followed by, "I know that I'm being very judgmental, I just don't get it at all, but I still love you." Whether this conversation is scripted or not still frames the monogamous character as wrong, but grants her a pardon when she still supports her sister. Later in the series a sister of one of the polyamory triad members meets up with her and because the dialogue between them is poly-positive, she is not labeled on the lower third caption as monogamous, despite being so.

Polyamory is also compared to other non-heteronormative lifestyles as a way to produce a sense of solidarity in gaining rights that other classes, races, and sexualities did not have not so long ago. When coming out to her mom, Lindsey prefaces her life choices by saying, "I'm working on my civil liberties, just like being gay, being polyamorous... some of us being left out of the mainstream, it's us, we're polyamorous, we're committed to each other... commitment, friendship, romantic commitment. We are in love with each other." At the end of the last episode of *P:M&D* the triad has a commitment ceremony, referring to themselves as pioneers, saying "It's normal that interracial couples can marry, women can vote, but I think poly people are at that point, and someone's got to do the dirty work". This comparison of a sexual identity to the civil rights progress of racial and gender equality situates the view of polyamory from those on these shows as fighting for similar rights for multiple couples, not just viewing polyamory as a

lifestyle of multiple sexual partners. The visualization of the commitment ceremony solidifies the importance of modeling polyamory relationships in a similar vein to homosexual commitment ceremonies.

Overall, *Showtime*, despite being known for its controversial and norm-pushing series, still panders to a particular presentation by using camera framing and overemphasis on the soft porn sex scenes between the members of the polyamorous pod. On the positive side, the show does try to seek out alliances with other coming out rituals held by the LGBTQ movement, and parallel polyamory as just another relationship model.

Radio & Polyamory

Despite the many radio interviews that Anapol participated in, the availability is limited to one interview in digital format at *The Kinsey Institute* and one interview with Robyn Trask on *The Michael Baisden Show* was also available for review. These radio shows function in the same manner as the television shows, with the exception that radio is less scripted due to its live nature, and can lend a more fair and balanced narrative.

In 1992, after publishing her book, *Love Without Limits*, Anapol was featured on the *KOA/WCCC* radio station. The host, appeared to have an agenda which was made quite clear when he repeated Anapol's stand on multi-partner relationships as not being immoral. He questions her degree, at one point asking what she is a doctor of, as well as her motivation for writing the book, asking, "now Dr., you know this is going to be controversial, maybe that's why you wrote the book....many people might suggest it's bad enough to think that in light of all the STDs that are killing people, but to write about it, and publish it, and say it in press, is something different" (Kenneth R. Haslam Collection). This reference to her book being in press, draws our

attention to the public nature of media texts as taking an idea much farther than the words spoken out of someone's mouth.

The radio host then brings AIDS into the equation, pulling the conversation into a fearmongering direction, but Anapol responds calmly by explaining the research that finds that most heterosexuals do not transmit AIDs as easily as many people are reporting. At this point a caller is brought on air,

“if she cannot see the ramifications of what this type of espousing this is doing with the spread of AIDS, the destruction of our family, and especially the destruction of our black family...and here we have a white woman that is over a black station, that is saying it is ok to go out and do your thing after marriage with other women. Mrs. Anapol, the creator of man and woman said it was immoral” (Kenneth R. Haslam Collection).

Anapol responds,

In traditional African cultures, many of them are not monogamous; many of them allow certain celebrations, and special times have sex be part of the celebration outside of the family. Before their cultures were destroyed by the white invaders, [they] had families had strong families, strong communities and tribes. I am concerned about the fate of the family, too. I think the emphasis on nuclear families and monogamy are destroying families” (Kenneth R. Haslam Collection).

Not directly addressing the comment surrounding her privilege of a white woman appearing on a black radio station, Anapol instead steers the conversation toward the disintegration of tribal communities, and the emphasis on the nuclear family, rather than expanded family.

Robyn Trask, also a white woman, has appeared on over 15 episodes of Michael Baisden's *After Dark* talk show, treated in a much friendlier manner. Trask, herself grew up in the predominately black neighborhood of Park Hill in Denver, CO, so found herself seeing similar issues in the black community surrounding infidelity and partners on the side, thus seeking an opportunity to educate about the option of polyamory. In 2005, she appeared on a segment called, *Love, Lust, and Lies*. Baisden begins the program by stating, “today we are

talking about polyamory relationships- loving and committed relationships not just sex between two or three or more people. Let me make this clear, this is not about sex” (Baisden, 2005). He continues,

I believe that 70% of us are involved in plural relationships. Some people are so caught up emotional, so caught up sexually, or financially that they refuse to acknowledge the other woman. But I think why we are so caught up in this is because they are programmed to believe there is only one way to conduct relationships- one man and one woman. The ideal of monogamy for the majority of people in this society is a joke. With all the mega auditorium churches, all the charismatic television evangelists, with all the holier than now politicians we have the society with the higher rate of divorce and infidelity...acting like it will magically go away if we simply ignore it (Baisden, 2005).

In this segment, we see that hosts recognize a problem amongst the Christian following groups who believe the dyadic relationship style is the only way, and turn a blind eye to the affairs that men have when this relationship model cannot sustain itself. Trask is able to articulate why this blind eye is so prevalent, arguing,

polyamory is a focus on romantic relationship, and swinging is a focus on more casual sexuality. Because society doesn't give us any choice; if we are told there is one way to have a relationship, that's monogamy that is the only model we put out there in movies, in books, that's the only thing out there. A lot of people are afraid to stick their head out and say this is how I am because they are afraid of their experience (Baisden, 2005).

Ultimately, the takeaway from these two segments is the ability for a larger conversation to be had regarding the availability of models outside of the heteronormative in the public sphere, and in popular texts that inform the discourses surrounding sexuality. Radio offers a forum for discussion, where each participant is given airtime to explain their position, and often because there is only one host and one guest, the guest is given more time to provide a thoughtful answer to their response without other guests, or audience members, like in a television studio, shouting answers from the peanut gallery. It is important to note, however, these two instances are very

limited in terms of analysis, a further sampling of other polyamory-related radio appearances would net a more nuanced representation of the medium and the ways conversations take place.

CHAPTER 8: VISIBILITY OF DISPARATE VOICES: THE INTERNET AS A SPACE OF CONNECTIVITY

The following chapter outlines the shift from traditional media networks to non-traditional media networks, in which the pioneers began to increase their presence on the Internet, and more polyamorous media practitioners began to leverage their own skills to create online content such as podcasts, blogs, and videos. Because of the many-to-many nature of online and new media technologies, a shift in the way communication within the polyamory movement took place, and more geographically dispersed networks came together to mark the next era of the modern polyamory movement.

Activist Networks: Linking Ideas

Throughout various issues of the *IRCs Quarterly Progress Report*, as early as 1990, is a header titled, ‘Online Computer Conferencing’ referencing the myriad bulletin boards *IntiNet* was subscribed to on the WELL, Usenet’s Triples exchange, and on PeaceNet; as well as announce IRC’s offering of technical assistance similar to the setup that the Kerista commune had regarding sharing of skillsets through computer technologies.

The Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link (shortened to ‘the *WELL*’) is one of the earliest virtual communities founded in 1985 in the San Francisco Bay area on a platform of public dial-up modem bulletin board systems. Staffed by former commune member of The Farm, the *WELL* was a resource for early computer buffs to build online community congregating around common ideas and the sharing of knowledge (Swiss, 2000). The *IntiNet* report specifically references where to find these discussions in one of the general topics called “conferences”, specifically the message board titled “*Sexuality Conference (g sex)*”, topic #19. And also directs

readers to check out the topic #6, “*Fidelity, Monogamy, and Bisexuality*”. The *Sexuality Conference* was started shortly after the WELL was created, initially hosted by David Hawkins (pseudonym dhawk) with six topics, which soon escalated comments when the seventh topic, “*Is the Sexual Revolution Dead?*” received more than 100 responses within a week (Hafner, 1997). The quarterly report also states, “the WELL would also be an excellent tool for people in different locations to work jointly on a newsletter, or other projects. If you have a computer and a modem, you can easily join us online”. The anonymity of the *WELL* with users opting for pseudonyms helped to maintain the privacy of individuals who were concerned about being outed for their non-traditional views on alternative relationships, the practice of ‘staying in the closet’ still maintained by many individuals in the polyamory community.

A Spring 1991 issue also makes reference to the *WELL* and to *Usenet*, another early ‘80s message board, specifically noting *IntiNet* making contact with the “Triples” email list (triples-owner@hanami.Eng.Sun.com), later renamed in the mid-90s, “*the poly list*”, comprised of approximately 100 individuals at the time. A post on the Usenet group was highlighted on this forum that reviews the ‘Syntony’ triad’s (triad comprised of Ryam Nearing, Barry Northrop, and Allen Jensen— the founders of *PEPTalk* newsletter) appearance on *Sally Jesse Raphael*. *Peacenet*, a subsidy of the Institute of Global Communication, the third message board referenced in the newsletter was also a widely used activist network, dedicated to the “peace, social and economic justice, human rights and the struggle against racism,” particularly used by women activists (Senjen & Guthrey, 1996, 213). By the Fall of 1992, *IRC* had their computer bulletin board, called “*3’s Plus*” on the BBS, DataSpace Prime platform provided by *IRC* member Jay Clark, but Anapol struggled with the setup and called up her readers who were more tech-friendly to write a user’s manual to make communication easier amongst the network. The

idea that the Internet was used as a space for the wider spread of polyamory discourses is ubiquitous throughout the polyamory community. It is no surprise then that the Internet was used by individuals seeking out like-minded people to engage in non-monogamous relationships with and spreading information about the on-going appearances of individuals in the polyamory network in mainstream media. But, it is even less surprising that Anapol and her networks quickly adopted this early technology as a way to reach more individuals beyond the scope of her newsletter subscribers, while also maintaining the quarterly newsletter for those who did not have access to computers at this time. Since Anapol started her organization in the Berkeley/Bay Area, and given the tech-savviness of the Kerista commune, adopting Internet Communication Technologies (ICTs) from the get-go appears a natural next step for reaching individuals beyond the small pockets of existing, yet geographically dispersed, polyamory groups at the time. One point to note, however, is that the WELL required more than an entry-level understanding of computer commands and language. Thus, keeping the physical *Floodtide* newsletter in circulation was important to maintain contacts outside the tech-centered community.

On May 29th, 1992, Jennifer Wesp set up the alt.polyamory Usenet Newsgroup, circulating amongst a handful of news websites, it quickly gained 50 members within a few months of its inception. The group was formed after Wesp, one of the attributed coiners of the word, polyamory, realized that after she gave a name to the identity she was practicing, more and more individuals began talking about their own experiences with the non-monogamous model. The Alt.polyamory Usenet group is still around today, albeit hosted through *Google Groups*.

Critical Visibility: Locating Polyamory in Mainstream Media via Alan M. and the *Polyamory In The Media Blog*

In 1968, at the age of 17, Alan M. received Robert Heinlein's book, *Stranger in a Strange Land*, from his then girlfriend, a text that would change his self-professed boy scout image forever. After this pivotal moment, Alan M. found himself searching for other like-minded non-monogamous oriented people, to little avail. Having several on/again off/again relationships, he stepped out of the larger non-monogamy community in the late 70s, and married and had kids. His wife eventually passed away due to cancer, and for several years he maintained this "middle class normalcy." Around 2005 or so, he noted an increase in activity surrounding polyamory on the Internet, and wanted to become involved in a community that had let the faults of the early non-monogamous groups fall away, as well as get back into the polyamory lifestyle himself.

Noting the evolution of the community beyond the character flaws of the early years, Alan M. also points to the shift in contractual relationships from the early years, to less hierarchical models to date. He recalls when people on the Internet first starting discussing their polyamorous relationship styles, they would post in message boards their long contracts that they would have their partners agree to in order to maintain boundaries within their relationships. The more modern approach, however, seeks to eliminate this contractual relationship, instead valuing that each member in the polyamory relationship should be treated equally, not as primary, secondary, or tertiary, and that their care and love for their partner should create enough desire to respect their personal boundaries without having to reference a contract, and monitor rule-breaking and constant rule-making. Focusing on a pivotal 1998 Tennessee court case involving April Divilbiss, in which she lost custody of her child to its paternal grandmother after appearing on the television series, *Sex in the 90s Part 11* with her two husbands, Alan M. suggests that it

was at this point that polyamory received a much larger outing into public awareness than any time before. The *Loving More* organization had found a lawyer for Divilbiss, and *Time* magazine even wrote a piece about the court case in 1999 titled, “*Henry & Mary & Janet &*”; Divilbiss eventually conceded and pointed to her poor economic situation as a rationale for letting the grandparents keep her child, but never doubting that her lifestyle was endangering the child or setting an immoral imperative, as professed by the judges in the court case.

A few years later is when Alan M. decided he wanted to contribute something to the community, and really devote his energy to learning the who’s who of the movement at the time, and figuring out who was publishing books on the topic, and who the leaders were in the mid-2000s. Observing the failings or loss of interest of particular websites who were attempting to archive media articles that mentioned polyamory, Alan M. decided he wanted to venture into the archival realm and began working for a website called *Poly and Proud*, hosted by science fiction writers, Jack and Carolyn Long. The website quickly became defunct, so Alan M. started his own blogger website to run parallel in idea to this media archive on *Poly and Proud*.

In college, Alan M. had fallen into journalism and writing after doing poorly in the physics classes he was majoring in, later started writing for the school newspaper, and after graduation writing for several alternative newspapers, and eventually settling into science journalism and editing. He had thought about the different strategies that the polyamory movement had used up until this point, and pinpointed this blog as a way to highlight the positive and negative presence of polyamory in mainstream media. For Alan M,

unofficial media channels are crucial for the development of social movements or any kind of social change...and it used to be alternative “underground newspaper” printed on paper. If you scraped up enough money, you could actually get time in newspaper layout shops and tight setting, and you could actually put out your own newspaper. This was crucial in so many ways to what happened in the 60’s and 70’s, and now with the

Internet, it means that anybody can start their own alternative media, and all they have to do is try to attract an audience (personal communication, 2015).

The mission statement behind the blog is to create awareness for people to see that polyamory is a viable and successful relationship model, a mission that Alan M. believes is coming close to fruition as it stands today. He also wanted to create a repository for activists and enthusiasts in the community to follow what was going on in the news, and to highlight what people in the community were doing with media to illustrate that it was possible to use these tools for internal and external awareness.

Online was his chosen medium due to budget constraints, not wanting to fund a small staff like at an alternative newspaper, and the ease of managing the blog from one's home in pajamas if so desired. Material is sourced for the blog by setting up Google keyword alerts on terms such as: polyamory, polyamorists, non-monogamy, group, group marriage, as well as searching through *Yahoo! Groups* and *Facebook* groups to see what is being discussed. When he first began the blog, the polyamory *Live Journal* page, which had roughly 1,000 members, and the *Yahoo! Poly* group with a similar membership level, polyamory.com with over 140,000 members, a sub-reddit on polyamory with approximately 29,000 subscribers, and the polyamory sections in *Fetlife* (a fetish social network lifestyle website) with approximately 40,000 members, all places in which discussions around polyamory were taking place in the online medium.

An advocate for media awareness, Alan M. tries to showcase best practices of polyamory individuals being featured in the media, and educate his readers on the value of a particular medium to achieve a positive result from an interview. He notes that around the same time he started his blog, Robyn Trask from *Loving More* was also sending out press releases to the media, offering representations for the community, and outside the community, to see that polyamory is a possibility and can be undertaken successfully, if media exposure is done well.

Alan M. points to the accrual of a critical mass, or community that builds up enough members to have a pool of wisdom around attempts to be out and about in the public sphere, and how these representations are positive for gaining attention. He argues that by far television is the hardest medium to do, because of the heavy editing and people's lack of know-how in front of an audience. He pinpoints one instance in which Carl and Kenya Stevens, a black polyamorous couple who do relationship writing and counseling within the black community, appeared on Dr. Phil, and they were not given the opportunity to finish their sentences, a big screen behind them was flashing a quote that was taken out of context by Carl Stevens several years prior, and they were in more of a defensive position, rather than informational position due to the production techniques in television shows. For print, Alan M. points to specific strategies of recording the interview and asking to see one's quotes before the article goes to print as ways to combat being misquoted or misconstrued. By and far, and much like many other activists in the community point out, Radio is the easiest medium for more accurate and fair representations as its live, and typically a conversation of equals, as well as a medium starved for material, thus creating a more-friendly environment that can encourage the guest to return at a later date.

After posting polyamory-related articles on his site, Alan M. will very often follow up with the subjects of the pieces to assess the working relationship they had with the media,

I will reach out to, not so much to the writers of the article, but their subjects. How do you think the article came out, how did you – how did this come about? Did you seek them out or did they seek you out? What advice would you give this article, [was it] accurate, or was it screwed up in some ways. I haven't had much to do with professional media people themselves, other than sometimes to make phone calls asking for our contacts or opinions or quotes. But, I have been much more involved with the community rather than with the people covering the community (personal communication, 2015).

Half curiosity, but also strategic, Alan M. uses these results to attempt to mobilize the community and call out journalists on their bad practices and behaviors by encouraging the

community to write letters to the paper, or complain about the treatment of particular subjects on a show or in an article. He also finds these as opportunities for education:

The advice columnist “*Ask Amy*” or “*Dear Ann Landers*” have been very responsive, when they used to treat the whole subject poorly, [such as] ‘Oh, your husbands just cheating on you—[or] are feeding you a line of, ‘no such word ‘polyamory’ exists, not in the dictionary’. If they hear from enough people, and they also need copy and need material, they may print some letters in response, and maybe even come around to recognize that this is the thing, and there are good ways and bad ways of doing it. And that’s one thing I think the community, the poly community, has done a good job on, is educating newspapers advice columnists, and millions of people read them (personal communication, 2015).

Using the blog as a forum of discussion, many readers will comment on the prompts that Alan M. provides when he writes about a particular show or article. In particular, when the *Showtime* show, *P:M&D*, was first airing, Alan M. would do episode recaps, inviting readers to discuss what their views of the show were. While there are mixed reviews in the community about the pros and cons of the show, Alan M. felt that the show was a big step forward for showcasing some positive and successful polyamorous relationships, even if there was a lot of sex scenes, and even if the acting did seem scripted as though the events were being recreated and not experienced for the first time, as is the case in many reality television shows. He specifically noted a level of agency that one of the main characters, Kamala, achieved in the filming of one episode, focusing on the one that did not feature any nudity or sex scenes, at the insistence of Kamala putting pressure on *Showtime* to create an episode that her partner’s conservative practicing Jewish parents could watch. This episode features some meta-discourse that points to this interjection by the actors, when one of the Jewish family members comments on his grandparent’s seeing a nude picture of the male partner on the Internet.

A prominent member in the polyamory community, Alan M. is a founding member of the Polyamory Leadership Network, has given keynote speeches at the *Loving More* conference and Atlanta Poly conference, as well as been heavily featured on Cuning Minx's *Polyamory Weekly* podcast, and has been quoted several times in mainstream newspapers, such as the *Globe and Mail*, a Canadian magazine that mentioned his blog, leading to a spike in website views.

Because his blog ultimately involves him monitoring the movement and the representations of the movement, Alan M. has his finger on the pulse of where precisely polyamory stands in the mainstream. He points to a period of time between 2003 and 2006, in which Stanley Kurtz, notable for his 'slippery slope' tirades, was really trying to push that if gay marriage were legal then polygamy would be next. Around this time, Alan. M, felt that there would be some sort of backlash, fueled by riling up the mainstream, particularly housewives who were afraid their husbands would cheat on them, and that with non-monogamy or polyamory, would want nothing but an open marriage, similar, but much more subdued in the way that there was a mild fear that a woman's husband might come out as gay and leave her for another. But this backlash has never really reared its ugly head in the way that homophobia has persisted throughout a long course of history.

Rather, Alan M. argues that in order for the movement to move, we would have seen a lot more court cases surrounding job discrimination or child custody battles involving polyamory individuals to really rile up the community to push for 'stonewall' moments similar to the gay rights movement. However, like the majority of media practitioners in the polyamory movement, he argues that due to polyamory not mapping onto gay marriage and the traditional dyadic relationship model, plural marriage is far from being achieved, if ever, in his opinion. Rather, he points to creating alternative contracts within the framework of law, noting Diana Adams, a

NYC alternative relationship lawyer who set up her office specifically to cater to the LGBTQ community to generate legal documents outlining their relationship commitment as it pertains to inheritance and other legally binding matters.

Intimacy Between Your Ears: Podcasting with Cunning Minx on *Polyamory Weekly*

Cunning Minx identifies as a sex positive kink educator, founding the Polyamory Weekly podcast in 2005, her mission statement explains the creation for these free podcasts “as a resource for the poly and poly-curious to form a community, share experiences and help guide each other on their journeys of poly exploration. And hopefully, also guide each other away from common relationship land mines—or at least share sympathy when they step on one” (polyweekly.com, 2016). With close to 500 podcasts that span this 11 year initiative, Minx has solidified herself in the polyamory community as an activist and leader, speaking at many poly-related events across the country including the *Poly Living* conferences hosted by *Loving More* magazine, *Open San Francisco*, *Infinity Con*, and *Catalyst Con*, all sex-positive conferences. The podcasts generally cover information regarding “responsible non-monogamy from a kink-friendly, pansexual point of view” (polyweekly.com).

Minx, identifying as polyamorous for slightly longer than her podcast, found herself making all the newbie polyamory mistakes in her first poly relationship, and much like many of the other polyamory media practitioners, wanted to create a resource for others who were stumbling into polyamory to avoid those pitfalls. In 2005, Minx jumped on the Rich Site Summary (RSS or often referred to as real simple syndication) technology bandwagon, a technology that made subscribing to syndicated content much easier, allowing the computer user to receive a summary of updates on their favorite websites via a feed running in the background,

rather than having to check that website itself. Podcasting, downloadable episodic multimedia, utilizes RSS technology as a distribution channel, and made it possible for listeners to subscribe to this content and gain access in one central location, again, without having to seek out each individual episode.

Minx, introduced to podcasting by her then boyfriend who now runs the podcast, “*Ropecast*”, initially wanted to create content on BDSM, but, since a podcast covering that content already existed, she landed on the topic of polyamory as she herself was new to polyamory only a year prior. Minx’s daytime job consisted of speaking engagements through the Fall and Spring, which left her summers pretty sparse and fostered the perfect time to create content for her podcasts. Calling on her network of polyamory friends, Minx would have them ‘come on’ the show and chat about all things polyamory, enough so for her to mess around with the software to get everything smoothly running.

As podcasting was only developed in 2004, listener audiences were limited to those who were hip to this new technology. As Minx notes, when iTunes 4.9 version came out in June of 2005, she was able to harness the value in gathering podcasts within the iTunes format to gain a larger audience. Prior to this, Minx, being a self-proclaimed technology geek points out that very few people knew what a pod catcher was, thus limiting the audience who had the technical know-how to funnel all their favorite podcast feeds into one central location. After this newer version, such a large audience now had access to podcasts that several notable podcasters’ systems crashed due to the heavy traffic of subscribers. Having started her podcast only several months earlier, Minx was in the right place at the right time.

After her second podcast, Minx received her first listener feedback from the author of *Aggie Sez*, also a tech-geek who currently runs a blog about solo poly, wanting to encourage

Cunning Minx for starting a podcast about polyamory. Minx notes that it took her a year's time to realize that the content she was producing meant a lot to the polyamory community due to such high engagement from her subscribers, estimating about 50,000 podcast listeners a month. She notes that poly people love to talk about polyamory and thus she is rarely lacking in user suggestions for issues to cover. Nothing this 'talking back' relationship, Minx leverages her tech skills to market her brand across several platforms. Honing in on the importance of her Klout score, a score between 1 and 100 that notes a user's social media influence, Minx explains that she creates content in Hootsuite, a social media management system that disseminates information across an aggregate of social media sites, and then sees the effect it has on the number of user engagements on her *Facebook* page. Her posts typically engage her user base by asking questions such as, 'What lesson did you learn the hard way?' which average over 3,000 views and roughly 50-60 posts within three hours of her posting on social media.

User engagement is seen as a powerful tool for Minx as it not only bolsters her Klout score, and thus creates a larger audience of listeners, but also provides marketing opportunities for advertisers to be attracted to her blog that accompanies her podcast via banner advertising, or by providing audio advertisements for her podcast, which Minx sees as more valuable and easily trackable by linking to a landing page and counting the click through rates. Minx's Polyamory Weekly blog, gaining approximately 10-20K hits a month, is a searchable space for her podcasts, summarizing topics so that listeners can link back to important information discussed through the podcast in a way that is much friendlier to information gathering. Not new to the blogging scene, however, Minx used to be involved on the LiveJournal polyamory community, blogging about her own trials and tribulations in exploring the kink and polyamory lifestyle. For her, blogging was more personable than email lists as you could see the person's avatar, an image of their face

which make it more intimate, as opposed to just the event listings she would see on the polyamory email lists she subscribed to.

Minx chose podcasting for its intimate nature. Drawing on her own experience in this intimate space, Minx notes:

I listen to *This America Life*, and I am a crazy NPR podcast addict, and I feel like I know Ira Glass, [even though] I've never met him . . . We talked about it [intimacy] a lot in the early days of podcasting, that we would go up to someone and say, 'oh my god, you are so and so,' and I would actually hug them like they were an old friend, and they look at you like, 'why are you hugging me you crazy person that I've never met,' because we feel so connected to that person. If you are listening to that voice . . . and good news, and bad news, making jokes, feeling pain, there is something about the audio format that really enables a much stronger intimate connection than anything written and even the video (personal communication, 2015).

The transition from the written to the spoken word came easily for Minx as her day job centers around marketing and speaking engagements, but she also used to be an actor and do voiceovers which helped her ability to cultivate an engaging personality behind the mic. Interestingly enough, while Minx maintains dual personalities, one for her day job, the other for her podcasts, she is finding it harder and harder to keep those personalities separate due to the increase in polyamory folks being more out. Minx remarked on attending a tech conference and being taken aback by at least half the attendees knowing her from her day tech-job and the other half knowing her from the polyamory kink scene and her stage name, Cunning Minx. Given that Minx resides in one of the largest tech-centers in the country, Seattle, the stereotype of Microsoft/IT folks having a proclivity for alternative sexual lifestyles comes into play again. Minx's own thoughts on the IT/poly cross-over explores the relationship of innovation and paradigm shifts, arguing that in order to be in the tech industry you most often have to think outside of the box, and therefore, this opens the opportunity for other paradigm shifts in one's personal lives to open up to more possibilities as well.

The desire to maintain separate identities, however, is strong and also a bit of an internal struggle for Minx. She points to the necessity of many polyamorous folks need to maintain anonymity for fear of the repercussions, specifically loss of employment. Not so much in her case, but for others, the loss of housing or child custody, a problem that is so frequently faced by polyamorous individuals there are several lawyers who participate in the national conferences and are listed on several polyamory resource lists that deal specifically with legal issues that arise from being a part of this particular community. For Minx, she maintains discretion as she doesn't want investors from her day job to be turned off by her lifestyle, in turn effecting the business that she works so hard to maintain a career to afford to do the podcasts on the side. Recognizing the immense energy and time that goes into maintaining a living wage by being a full-time sex or polyamory educator, Minx chooses to continually use her stage name to preserve the benefits her full-time job provides so she can take days off of work and go around the country for speaking engagements about polyamory without worrying about the funds to support these endeavors. Because she actively experiences many of the issues that are of concern for her subscribers navigating polyamory, Minx sees herself as servicing the community within, rather than working as an advocate to be placed in the media spotlight for the movement at large.

While Minx hasn't done too much formal PR, she has received attention from mainstream media journalists searching through podcasts that are labeled explicit, an identifier used for Polyamory Weekly to cover guests who have a tendency to swear like a sailor, but Minx turned them down as soon as she realized they were looking for something salacious about polyamory relationships. Regarding accurate media representations of Polyamory, Minx was invited to be a keynote speaker at the *Poly Living* conference and provided a presentation that highlighted the progress of positive stories in the media tending to be more common than when

her podcast started. Minx noted that when she initially started Polyamory Weekly many of the stories coming out about polyamory were framed negatively in a fearmongering “What are you neighbors doing next door? They might be polyamorists” tone, one that did not promote polyamory positively but as something people do behind closed doors, and certainly something to disapprove of. However, in later years, Minx tracked the media coverage from Alan M.’s blog, *Polyamory In The Media*, and noted that a lot more personal essays were gaining exposure, where poly-identifying individuals came out to discuss their relationship styles in a sex positive frame. Interestingly, Minx points to anecdotal confessional-style stories in which the subject of the article discusses having ‘done’ polyamory, but finding that multi-relationships did not work for them. She chalked this up to the evolution of the movement, that rather than solely stories that demonized polyamory, or stories that were told from the perspective of the polyamory individual, these ‘been there, done that’ narratives which seems to present polyamory as a viable option, just not necessarily for everyone.

Minx’s media timeline also points to the traits that certain formats afford for positive or negative reactions. She discusses the initial salacious talk show blitz based on the conflict of norm model in which a producer may lie to the polyamorous participants and they end up on a show called “*Hot Bi Poly Biker Babes*” like the one produced by *Montel Williams* in 1994, most of these talk shows becoming an arena for bashing polyamory folk by both the audience and the host. However, Minx noted that a more recent *Montel Williams* show featured poly folk where the audience felt almost obligated to demonize the subjects, but Williams stepped in and prevented the segment from getting away from the real core of ethical non-monogamy being presented.

This shift from super trashy shock style talk shows follows the evolution of many talk show hosts, Williams taking a more serious tone in later years, trying to sustain more diverse audiences that are bored of the *Jerry Springer* spectacle of the 90s. She goes on to then discuss fictional shows like *Big Love*, while being a polygamist-based premise, many of the negotiations between the sister wives could be applied to relationship and contract negotiation within polyamory. Pointing to reality television, specifically referencing *P:M&D* on *Showtime* as being a show that emphasizes the real-world every day mundane activities of poly people. Despite the constructed nature of reality television, and the focus on sex rather than the other aspects of polyamory relationships, Minx points out that at least there are options for presenting some semblance of relationship negotiations.

Lastly, the evolution leaves us in a space where television shows that aren't centered on a specific topic related to polyamory feature characters who participate in multi-partner relationships. Minx references *The Glades*, a 'cop procedural' show which typically centers around a murder, in this case one of the individuals in the polyamory group was murdered, but she was taken aback on how the show portrayed polyamory pretty accurately and felt that this presentation depicted a subset of the polyamory community that had yet to be accurately portrayed on television. This transition into fictional characters portraying real life models provides more opportunities for people to explore these types of relationships styles, perhaps first being introduced to them in a space that doesn't centralize around just sex or the state of monogamy, but making the characters seem like the everyday ordinary. Minx is able to keep her podcast subscribers/blog readers up-to-date on the media evolution of the polyamory movement through a section on her site sources from Alan M.'s *Polyamory In The Media*. She recognizes that most of her audience is not comprised of activists or people avidly following the

representations in mainstream media, but are individuals seeking out advice on how to navigate different moments in their polyamorous relationships. By adding a media component she is bridging the gap between those activities who are really tracking the progress and those who are able to benefit from seeing these types of gains to feel more secure and see the possibilities that more visibility provides.

Additional marketing opportunities are afforded when donors provide income for Minx to support her podcasting endeavors. Minx set up a PayPal account for donations, now aptly named ‘*The Tip Jar*’ for her subscribers to become patrons enabling her to continue producing her content. The money she earns from her podcast is in no way livable, receiving \$20 here and there, and the occasional \$100 donation. But for Minx, knowing early on that she wanted to produce *Polyamory Weekly* as a ‘labor of love,’ her day-job pays the bills. A few years ago, however, taking the cue of other podcasters, Minx decided to offer subscriptions where her fans could choose to donate not just once, but \$1.99/month or \$4.99/month or \$9.99/month until they didn’t want to donate anymore. The month Minx had a steady income of \$150 just from those subscriptions. After the realization that her content was valued by her fans she recognized the power in just asking and reaching out to the community that had followed her voice for so long.

Given the length of her podcast, Minx found herself running out of her own personal anecdotes and realized there was a certain power in providing a platform for individuals in the community that did not fit the scenarios or identify in the same way that her and her friends do:

I realized that a few years in when I was running out of my life lessons to share, I realized this was not about me, but this was about bringing together the different voices in the community. So I worked really hard to bring people on the show, people who really weren’t like me; people who were maybe part of a couple, or people who were in a triad, or people who had tried poly and then decided not to do it; people who were swingers, people who are different social economic class, or a different race than I was. I really wanted people who had different ideas to come on the podcast so everyone would feel safe and would feel like they had a voice (personal communication, 2015).

Because her day job allows her opportunities to travel around the country and speak with people at polyamory conferences, Minx is able to crowdsource the thoughts and concerns of individuals she encounters and integrate them into her show. More recently, her initiatives have centered on the elephant in the polyamory community, specifically intersectionality. Given her feedback centralizes around the conversations she has at conventions, as well as online via listener feedback and her podcast, this still limits the population that Minx is exposed to as those who can afford to attend these conferences, or those who have the time to listen to and follow podcasts, something that is not easily available for individuals who don't fit that white, affluent stereotype that polyamory research is known to centralize around.

While acknowledging that the community is aware of the efforts to have the 'race' conversation, just the tip of the iceberg when exploring intersectional identities, Minx has covered conversations about disability in one of her podcasts co-hosted by Shanna Katz, a sex educator focusing on disability, as Minx suffers from arthritis that impedes her ability to stay out late which could affect the type of polyamory partners she finds herself involved with. Arthritis is not a visible disability, thus it is important to cover a greater scope of disabilities within the community, specifically as to how they are represented, portrayed, or even acknowledged when setting up conferences or community events. She has also brought Dr. Kenneth Haslam, the curator of the polyamory collection at *The Kinsey Institute*, onto her show to talk about polyamory for those over the age of 60, Dr. Haslam who is into his 80s, which provides a whole host of insight into different models or ways of doing polyamory for people who may also struggle with aging bodies and bringing up ways to navigate legal concerns about one's estate when involved in multiple relationships.

Because of the success of her podcast, her instructional background, foray into speaking consultation, as well as trying to situate herself more in the local community, Minx was able to leverage her online personality at local community centers such as the *Center For Sex Positive Culture* to give workshops around polyamory, a venture that gains more and more attendees the more Minx offers them. An e-book, *Eight Things I Wish I Knew About Polyamory: Before I Tried and Frakked It Up*, was created using Amazon Create Space based on her workshop, and she also produced paperbacks of the same book when she goes to conferences or gives workshops. One of her partners acts as her booking manager, and also happens to have a MBA degree. He is looking into analyzing the success of the offline and online sales to maximize the exposure that Minx gets, while considering the economic benefits (profits) versus the energy that Minx has to put in to get to those wider audiences. Her workshops require quite a bit of preparation which in effect limit the number and quality of podcasts she is able to produce in any given month. Offering online courses then adds to the value in syndicated content as it allows on-demand access for her listeners/viewers of the courses, but also doesn't command the level of attention needed from Minx when she delivers a workshop in person.

Bite-sized Lovestyles: Tikva Wolf's *Kimchi Cuddles* Comic

Kimchi Cuddles is the name of the feature character in Tikva Wolf's polyamory comic strip, self-titled after the main character, and described as "a webcomic spreading awareness about poly, queer, and genderqueer issues in the most hilarious way possible" created in early May of 2013 (Kimchicuddles.com). Birthed from her own therapeutic endeavors, Wolf has historically utilized comic strips as a way to deal with interpersonal relationships, specifically as a way to process and communicate the everyday on-goings of her relationships with her partners.

When she started to add more than one partner into the mix, her comics began to evolve and include advice and the processing of anecdotal situations to help her and her partners navigate the ups and downs of their multi-partner relationships. After sharing her comics with one of her ex's, he encouraged her to publish the comic online for other polyamory people. After some hesitation, mostly fearing little interest in her work, Wolf began publishing on *Tumblr*, and after a great deal of reader feedback, particularly seeking advice from Wolf in very particular circumstances, *Kimchi Cuddles* took off from there as a sort of guidebook for those navigating the every-day communication processes that are necessary for polyamory relationship styles. The name *Kimchi Cuddles* was borrowed from a friend, Kimchi Tennessee, at Twin Oaks, an intentional income sharing community in Virginia. Combining that name with kimchi, a side dish that Wolf was obsessing over during the inception of the comic, *Kimchi Cuddles* was born because cuddles seemed like a catch name to add on. The main character named after her comic, *Kimchi Cuddles*, has pink hair because of all the beets she put in the recipe, and is the embodiment of the on-goings events in Wolf's own life.

Wolf sees her role in the polyamory community as a source of easily accessible advice for those who are seeking out a network of support, as she did when she was first integrated multiple partners into her life. Because she had felt her own failings in monogamous relationships were an indicator that something was wrong with her personally, and she didn't have the word polyamory, or the support systems that are in place for the polyamory community today, she felt that being a positive source of information for her audience in a whole host of day-to-day situations was an important role or "mission" of spreading this information along to those seeking it out. For Wolf, she sees the polyamory community, or any sexuality that perceives itself as an inherent sexuality that finds itself in a minority position, as needing a

support system with information that can alleviate the nervousness or alienation that comes along with not seeing models of your relationship style in the mainstream.

Due to the increase in people incorporating non-monogamy into their lives, Wolf feels that communication is key, she states, “creating these useful dialogues is very important for people to figure out how to make their own relationships, even if they don’t have a strong poly identity. A lot of people I know who are in polyamorous relationships identify as monogamous, but they happen to be in polyamorous relationships probably because they exist somewhere more in the middle of that spectrum, than being actually monogamous. So when they run into problems, they want to also reach out to this polyamorous support network and find out what they should do” (personal communication, 2015). Because of the shared experiences in polyamory people’s lives, Wolf sees her comic as a space of self-help and discovery, in which people who may be seeking out concrete solutions to their polyamory relationship problems can find particular solutions as navigated by the characters in her comics.

Due to the nature of the comic strip having a finite number of panels to convey the situation, Wolf sees the visual component as necessary to speak volumes when the text is confined to a character limit. She feels as though communicating these poly-centric scenarios is best told through storytelling, including the reactions on each characters face, rather than providing a descriptive list of this happens first, then you should mention this, and so on and so forth. Because the comics unfold as a story, her readers can easily share the comics with their partners to explain a situation, and the possible reaction from the many people in the scenario, rather than just passing a long a prescriptive self-help book that lists the steps you should take to reach relationship bliss.

Despite the non-traditional format, Wolf does see herself as a quasi-‘*Dear Abby*’, in the sense that her readers send in very personal information about their relationships problems, requesting advice from Wolf, as somewhat of an expert. Wolf reluctantly took on this role for fear of providing advice to the community that was based on her own ego, in a guru-like character, but has instead tried to gain the support of the community through a constant loop of reader feedback which helps her ground her advice through a continued dialogue rather than an expert preaching to their laypeople. However, she is able to take the scenarios described by her audience members and incorporate their lived experiences through the addition and subtraction of secondary characters in the comic. Wolf tries to bring the reader into her comic as much as possible, even breaking the fourth wall by sketching her main character, Kimchi, receiving a letter from a reader and writing out the answer on a piece of paper in the comic to acknowledge that she is responding directly to a reader problem.

As it stands, Wolf creates three comics a week, posted to *Facebook* and her *Tumblr*-hosted website on Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays. *Facebook*, her current group page currently trending at over 15,000 likes, and housing well over 500 comics, however, is the most popular medium for readership, particularly as it fosters two-way communication, a feature that social media are well-known for. As Wolf herself is more of a visual storyteller, she takes a back seat to the conversations that happen on *Facebook* comment feeds, but every once in a while will jump in to clarify what point she was trying to convey in the comic. If she feels her response requires a more elaborate explanation than is feasibly readable on *Facebook* as a comment reply, Wolf will often create a new comic, posted the next day, to address an issue that came up, thus continuing the dialogue of her fan base.

Because her comic characters are based on people in real life, Wolf finds herself often at odds with how much her readership already knows about her relationships (there is a character map on her website called a polycule (a visual molecular network model representation combining the words polyamory and molecule) representing how each character is related to one another, similar to the polycule used in linking polyamory networks, thus blurring the public and private aspect. Commenting on the uncanny feeling she gets when one of her readers meets her in real life and comments on the comic, but really is commenting on her life, Wolf, parallels this to the feeling of intimacy one has when reading any author's books and the intimacy and connection they feel to that author for being privy to their inner thoughts. She has felt the power of celebrity herself when meeting polyamory leaders, Franklin Veaux and Eve Rickert, the authors of *More Than Two* and the owners of the *Thorntree* publishing house. After a while, however, she noted that the divide between these leaders and herself was just a construction. Having done interviews after her fashion shows in Florida, Wolf found herself feeling awkward and nervous in these types of situations, but as time went on, and she herself was featured on the Poly Role Models blogs, and gave more and more interviews about her comic, she sees herself as just another passionate leader in the polyamory community, no different than anyone else trying to create content for the larger support network.

Wolf finds herself in other leadership roles, particularly co-managing the Asheville, North Carolina polyamory meetup group with her partner, as well as recently being invited to speak for a second time at *Endless Poly Summer*, a convention for 'a network for a new culture' that travels across the country educating people about connecting with each other beyond romantic relationships. Her second foray at the convention afforded her very own panel on

therapeutic comic drawing, and gave her the skills to start her own polyamory convention in North Carolina with other community members.

Her skills as an artist, coupled with networking with other polyamory community leaders has led to collaborative relationships, including drawing artwork for *Thorntree Press*, the publishing house that agreed to take on a ‘best of’ *Kimchi Cuddles* coffee table book, as crowdfunded on Indiegogo by Wolf’s ‘Cuddlers,’ the names she gives to her *Kimchi Cuddles* fan network. For Wolf, crowdfunding is an opportunity to harness the power of her comic book fans without having to wait on the presence of a larger company to take interest in her work. Harnessing this large network of Cuddlers, Wolf was able to raise the funds needed for publishing her book, \$8,585, and even exceed that goal with a total of \$13,712 raised by over 219 patrons in roughly 22 days. One of the most compelling features on her Indiegogo campaign page was a fundraiser video produced by Derek Alan Rowe of *Doctrine Creative*. The opening scene of the video shows historical depictions of monogamous relationships through a handful of television and films. The following dialogue is juxtaposed with these images: “so many things in our lives are constantly being reinvented, and yet we treat our relationships like we still live in the Victorian era. Most stories in books and films have a hetero-monogamous couple at the center and the main storyline is the inevitable choice between two love interests, but life and love are capable of holding so much more than that simple story” then cue a shot to the polyamory triad that features Terisa Greenan and her partners from the *Family* webisodes series, followed by the main pitch for funding her coffee book.

Despite this narrative highlighting the lack of alternative relationship models, Wolf stands on neutral ground when it comes to mainstream representations of non-monogamy, particularly when people who are watching these popular culture shows, shows that incorporate

non-monogamy into their scripts in ways that might not be accurate to the ways poly people actually live their lives, make assumptions about her lifestyle. She likens the experience of watching the television shows to someone's morbid curiosity and voyeuristic attitudes about shows like hoarders. While she notes an increase in interest around non-monogamy in the past ten years, that increase is typically driven by these one-dimensional representations, but Wolf at least sees the positive aspect of the concepts of non-monogamy gaining a larger household understanding, even if they are sourced from poorly constructed models. But that is where *Kimchi Cuddles* fits in, as a source of healthy information including solutions to problems that are faced by real polyamorous people, rather than constructed for the sake of gaining gawkers or voyeurs on mainstream television— "a lot of people have found it very helpful to read about the situations that they have experienced, and seeing solutions written out, and I think that a lot of people appreciate the format that it is in because it's a comic format, it's easier to digest a lot of information in a sort of a bite sized piece" (personal communication, 2015).

When the comic was initially started, Wolf found herself, as an artist, thrown into her work, spending any spare time she had as a stay-at-home-mom, working on the comic. It was not until one of her readers introduced her to Patreon, that she was able to really tap into the wealth of her networks to help fund her creative endeavors. Patreon is a crowdfunded income-contribution website that allows artists, creators, or anyone who has something to offer to an audience, a way to become patrons of their work, providing consistent monthly capital to keep their projects up and running. The tradeoff, much like the incentives found in other crowd-funded sites like Kickstarter, Indiegogo, or GoFundMe, is for patrons to receive special content that free users can't gain access to. Wolf provides her patrons with a variety of little 'gifts' for their continued support. Averaging approximately \$900 a month in patron funding, (currently

\$1,200 from 319 patrons as of April 2016), Wolf is able to devote a larger chunk of her time to the comic, as well as take on commissioned art pieces, a role that relates back to her primary job as an artist. When she initially offered incentives, a handful of opportunities for patrons to be featured in the comic were available, as was the case with her Indiegogo campaign as well, but quickly became too time consuming as the patrons wanted a larger share of the control over the content that was being created. For now, Wolf, provides her patrons with funding based incentives, starting from outtakes that never make it into the comic, to stickers, personal notes, original sketches, and limited artwork. Currently, Wolf is seeking to increase her monthly patron income to \$1,600 which will afford her fan base opportunities to get dolls, graphic novels, t-shirts, and posters. For those looking to make a one-time donation, several of these incentives are available for purchase, including comic-styled portraits and glossy one sheeters of the buyers favorite comic strip, signed and kissed (lipstick style and all) by Wolf, herself.

With the tangible coffee table book that Wolf published, to be released in the Fall of 2016, she hopes to reach audiences who don't necessarily follow her comics online. Particularly she feels that there is a different interaction with paper books linking the ability to transport the book offline to a polyamory individual to hand the book to one of their parents when they are explaining their relationship model. This helps Wolf expand her audience base, a goal she is intentionally working on by creating longer-content comics, the eventual addition of graphic novels to her repertoire, as well as expand the conversation beyond just polyamory and queer relationships to include ethical non-monogamy that shifts from the ownership paradigm of relationship hierarchy to a more egalitarian and equal relationship model. Highlighting the high velocity of information dissemination from the online medium, to the community-building action of meetup.com groups, and the intimacy available in paperback books, Wolf sees the value in

integrating valuable information into all types of media to bolster these support networks, and provide valuable resources for those seeking to find the correct information on the polyamory relationship style when they read about it in a quick blurb or two minutes plotline in mainstream media.

Laughter Is The Best Medicine: Terisa Greenan and ‘*Family*’ Webisodes

Terisa Greenan, a filmmaker and actress from Seattle, in late 2008 found herself in a fundraising rut. Bored by the monotony of raising money for her second feature film, in need of a creative outlet, Greenan took inspiration from Jonathan Coulton, a singer songwriter who came up with the concept of ‘a thing a week,’ his project of writing and releasing a song-a-week for a year to keep the creative juices flowing. Following suit, Greenan brainstormed what types of projects she could realistically create on such a stringent timeline and settled on creating a webisode series as, at the time, webisodes were trending and she envisioned the web series as a short set of films, similar to her current craft, but in shorter snippets. Paring down the project to producing two episodes a month, as video editing takes longer than editing a song, Greenan set out to work on the bi-monthly series for a year starting in November of 2008. As most artists tend to draw on their own lives, Greenan opted for a series based on polyamory as she was living a polyamorous life with two male partners since 2000. All episodes were written by Greenan, and some co-written by friend and polyamory advocate Matt Bullen.

Having pursued the acting lifestyle for 25 years, Greenan decided that taking on the role of director was her next foray in the film industry, and so she hired actors to play the characters on her new web series, *Family*. The *Family* web series was created under *3 Dog Pictures LLC*, Greenan’s episodic production company under her larger production company *Petal Films*. As

influenced by Rich McKee, co-founder of the *RJProductions* movie studio, an actor and short film producer who actively posted his shorts on *YouTube*, the medium seemed to be technically easy for Greenan and thus was released on the *3DogPictures YouTube* channel twice a month, as well as on the Family *Facebook* page, and the *3DogPictures* website. Very little funding was available to Greenan, so she worked pro-bono on the project, encouraging her fan base to make purchases of promotional t-shirts as well as make small donations to the *3 Dog Pictures* production company.

Despite *YouTube* providing free-hosting, the limitations became clear when several of the episodes were taken down, and later when the account was suspended and allegedly terminated due to an indecency complaint on several of their episodes, episode 12 in particular in which a woman is featured in a bath tub, surrounded by bubbles, as a scene deemed too close for comfort on the nudity scale, a policy that *YouTube* strictly prohibits. After receiving a termination letter from *YouTube* in April of 2009, less than 24 hours later, after complaints by Greenan and her fan base, the *YouTube* channel was back up and running, without any further communication from the *YouTube* admins. To get around this creative censorship, R rated cuts of the webisodes were hosted on *Daily Motion*, a French video sharing website established in 2005, and later on the website *NorthWest Live*, a video portal featuring alternative content from the North Western part of the U.S. as sponsored by *Sierra Media*. Featuring actors, Amber Rack, Eric Smiley and Ernie Joseph, and comprised of 21 episodes, the web series centers around the every-day situations of a polyamory V configuration, loosely based on Greenan's own V formation, but quickly taking a life of its own. With nods to the uncanny number of Microsoft employees that also happen to be polyamorous, as well as the get-togethers called poly potlucks, the series provided a comedic look into the normalcy of a polyamory household.

Greenan didn't see herself as a role model of advocate as a polyamory filmmaker when she was envisioning her web series project, rather, with the increase in viewers and followers of family, as well as the almost immediate attention to gained from inside the polyamory community the advocacy button was activated. Hindsight is always 20/20, and Greenan refers to her optimism about being a leader as being a bit naïve when she first encountered media exposure,

I thought I could really do some good, I could really actually change people's perceptions. I could really educate people; and people seemed to like that, people seemed to be interested in this topic . . . I was very very naïve, and what I mean by that is I thought, at the time, that all the media that were coming to us were interested in being educated about polyamory, and what they were actually interested in doing was exploiting a very salacious topic. And so I learned my lesson; but there was a time where I thought I could be an advocate; I could be a spokesperson for the new sexual revolution. I can teach people that it's not a sensational lifestyle, 'there's nothing to see here', you know. I can teach people move right along, there is nothing to see here, it's just People living their lives in an honest and responsible way, and we're just normal people just like everyone else (personal communication, 2015).

The series rapidly gained momentum and was included in *The Kinsey Institute* Kenneth R. Haslam Polyamory archive in December of 2008, only two episodes into the series, as well as started to gain traction within the polyamory community as featured on Cuning Minx's *Polyamory Weekly* podcast, during several of *Mistress Matisse's* blog posts, and mentioned on the *Polyamory In the Media* blog that same year. As Greenan was trying to actively promote and gain funding for her next project, she would send out press releases to the local television stations and Seattle papers like *The Stranger*. Soon after, in March of 2009, *Seattle Times* contacted Greenan for a local feature story about the series, "Seattle-based "Family" webisodes no ordinary sexy sitcom," which opened the floodgates for a larger national presence. Shortly after the *Seattle Times* article, *Newsweek* author, Jessica Bennet wrote a feature in July originally titled, "*Only You. And You. And You*", but later changed to "*Polyamory: The Next Sexual*

Revolution?” which changed the game for Greenan and her web series. Despite blogging about the experience of being interviewed as positive, and wholeheartedly feeling the article would be written in their favor, Greenan and her partners quickly realized the ill effect two-way communication, particularly all the negative commenters on online articles, can have on one’s outlook on their projects, and their role in the polyamory community. Some of the online comments that span over seven pages on the article are as follows (Kenneth R. Haslam Collection):

Hey, Mommy! Which litter did I come from? –doltbest

This is sad and pathetic. The destruction of the human race can’t be far away. –Boka

Usually, older (35+) or uglier women have more boyfriends. Guys will do a lot of things for easy sexual pleasure. So polyamory is favorable for all involved. Younger, prettier women are able to leverage their femininity for a greater material exchange and eventually, a monopolized paternal investment. –Ian Blokesworth

Hmm. Will incest be the next sexual revolution, if between consenting adults? What about paedophilia. [sic] It was around during Plato’s time wasn’t it? Besides, Nero’s young lover DID consent. –Sonn

There is nothing ethical about nonmonogamy. It is nothing more than a group of shallow, vapid morons to [sic] insecure an immature [sic] to pursue a normal relationship with just one member of the opposite sex. –burbank

Greenan describes this period of her life as really eye-opening and all the negativity she received from her exposure in the *Newsweek* article has taken her years to get over, a very sore spot that she doesn’t really want to remember these days. Negative publicity also ran its course when one of the actors on the web series was fired from a gig that was set to lead to a recurrent position as the face of the *OliVaylle*, an Australian olive oil advertising campaign after the production company, *Black Squirrel Productions* based in Seattle, received word from the advertising company that they had been sent links to the *Family* web series.

For Greenan, the zenith of the potentially positive publicity run was when the *Oprah Winfrey Show* called after one of the producers had read the *Newsweek* article. Giving a lot of thought to appearing on television, her and her partners felt that *Oprah* was a classier medium and a responsible outlet on the talk show circuit, thus ruling out shows like *Jerry Springer* or reality shows where things could get out of hand. She had very mixed feelings about talk shows where she had seen polyamorous people featured like *Maury Povich* or *Tyra Banks*, in which the guests were always pitted against the audience and a feeling of judgment on the guests was always looming. Greenan still felt that being an advocate for the community is really where she ended up due to the success of the show. Unfortunately, the *Oprah* show appearance fell through, but the *Family* series was not yet done with its publicity foray.

Due to this negative experience of *Newsweek*, Greenan and her partners decided very quickly to vet media opportunities with a tooth and nail approach, researching the articles the authors had written prior to glean which way the tone may go, either in an educational manner or sensationalistic manner. *Family* was then featured on local Seattle news station, *KOMO News*, a story later picked up by *ABC News*, as well as making appearances on *The BJ Shea Morning Experience*, and an interview on *CNN* in October of 2009. Wanting to spare their families any more criticism after all the negativity she received, Greenan then conducted interviews outside of the U.S., specifically for French television, South African television, and Canadian interviews; even turning down a media opportunity in the UK as she felt the magazine had too much of a tabloid bent that would be bad for the show. The series has since gone up for sale on DVD format, and has appeared at the *NorthWest Film Forum* in the summer of 2009, screened at *The Center For Sex Positive Culture* in December of 2009 and at *GritCity Fest Film Festival* in Tacoma, Washington in June of 2010. Since the series died down, Greenan has virtually severed

all mainstream media relationships, no longer seeing herself as an advocate for the community, but rather a spokesperson in time who helped jumpstart larger household penetration of the word polyamory outside of the community. As she notes, many of the current polyamory advocates are inward facing for the community, or as she states, ‘preaching to the choir,’ whereas her series, and the subsequent mainstream recognition she received from it, helped externalize the education project to those who didn’t know about polyamory.

The medium of comedy is very important for Greenan and she had many sit down conversations with production companies on greenlighting the *Family* series to cable television as a 30 minute sitcom series, but those talks quickly deteriorated when the only viable format that these companies were interested in was reality television. Greenan chalks this interest up to a need for networks to have control of the content, in which the venue of reality television provides very little to no agency to its subjects or characters. As she points out, it took over a year to find the families to appear on *Showtime*’s, *P:M&D*, and she herself has to date still received over 25 calls from producers looking to get her V formation on a reality television show, all of which she has obviously declined. Jessica Bennett, the author of the *Newsweek* article that lead to national coverage of the *Family* series, even opted to try to collaborate with polyamory individuals on a reality television documentary series. She released the following press release that was circulated amongst the polyamory community (as quoted from *Polyamory In The News*, 2010):

Call for Participants: Poly Documentary

Hi there,

I’m the writer of the *Newsweek* piece on polyamory that appeared a few months back. I’m working with a New York-based production company, Myriad Entertainment, on developing a documentary television program based on polyamory, and am in search of poly families to profile. What we’re looking for are families with 3+ partners, between the ages of 20s-50s, who are committed to the lifestyle and may help debunk the stereotype of the poly community as an outlier.

Geography is flexible (within the U.S.), though a group whose partners live together or within driving distance is preferable. The biggest requirement, of course, is that the group be out and open, willing to talk honestly about their relationship, and is comfortable putting themselves out there for what could potentially be a large audience. We would film on location in the your home/city, and there would be compensation for the project.

As somebody who has written on polyamory in the past, I'm well aware of the sensationalist portrayal the community has often suffered at the hands of the media, and hope the Newsweek story speaks to the kind of open and fair portrayal we hope to present. To tell you a little bit about us, I'm an award-winning journalist (originally from Seattle) covering cultural trends, LGBT issues, women and sexuality. My co-producer is Jennifer Molina, an Emmy-nominated documentary filmmaker with more than a decade of experience, at the Sundance Channel, the United Nations and Newsweek. (Jenn produced the two videos that were featured with the Newsweek article, about the lovely Greenan family.) Together, we are working Veronique Bernard and Lisa Zeff, two highly regarded industry vets who recently teamed up to launch Myriad. Zeff was the former GM of ABC News Productions, and Bernard is a former production and development executive who's worked everywhere from National Geographic to the New York Times.

If you're interested in participating, or know anybody who might be, we'd love to hear more about your family and setup. We can be reached directly at polydocu@gmail.com, and you can check out mine and Jenn's portfolios and reels at www.jessbennett.net and www.rinkdproductions.com, respectively. The Newsweek story, if you haven't seen it, is viewable at <http://www.newsweek.com/id/209164>. Please note that this project is not affiliated with Newsweek in any way.

Thanks for reading.

Jessica Bennett
Writer/Producer
www.jessbennett.net

Television is any other format than fiction does not seem a suitable medium for polyamory education. As Greenan states, “fiction is good...because we need to be able to control the message, not so we can lie about anything, but so we can make sure people understand there’s a reality; and fiction is frequently used to explain reality. I think the things that *Will and Grace* did for the gay community, they did through comedy and through fictional characters, and I think that same kind of thing would be useful for the poly community” (personal communication, 2015). Drawing on the comedic form, Greenan sees a sitcom as a way to explore serious issues in a non-threatening way, pointing to the tension relieving moments that typically occur at the end of a plotline where the serious issue at hand is coupled with a one-liner to ease the audience’s reception in bite-sized quantities— “they want to get that message in a way that they can swallow, in a way that can be swallowed” (personal communication, 2015).

In one study (Hurson, 2013, unpublished manuscript), the *Family* series is analyzed via textual analysis to explore the ways in which the series has freedom to explore polyamory within the realm of daily life offering a more writerly or oppositional (Williams, 1991) text for audiences to consume. *Family* as a comedy/drama allows the viewer to engage with the production techniques by using double entendres and puns, as well as allows a greater freedom to recognize the irony in some of the presentations, which I believe offers a strong positive message. *Family* also appears as a producerly text, a concept that builds upon Williams' writerly concept (Fiske, 2010), in that it utilizes the formulaic pattern of a comedy, yet relies on representations controlled by polyamorous individuals within the context of a DIY *YouTube* production. Because of the limitations of the medium on *YouTube*, advanced angle shots are not available, and the plot stands in isolation of any secondary juxtaposition. This, however, is to the advantage of the audience, and the polyamory discourse as the emphasis is then on the examination of polyamory living rather than the sexualized escapades of the characters heightened by fancy camera shots.

According to the study, the series *Family* uses the aspect of showing moreover than telling as they do not present the webisodes as reality television, despite the emphasis of each episode focusing on a particular theme as inspired by polyamory people's lives. Using the example of audience as all-knowing, one episode in the series films a straight monogamous television reporter covering the firing of a polyamorous individual from her teaching job. What the audience is privy to is that this reporter, Jim, has actually been dating the lead character, Gemma, the later identifying as polyamorous, and thus proscribing to multi-partner relationships in which everyone involved is aware of every additional partner, an honesty model that Jim does not adhere to. The reporter scene quickly cuts to another prior to this where Jim is working out

with his friend laughing about cheating on his wife with his new polyamorous girl, who he ironically is unwilling to share with his friend because of his own self-restriction to monogamy, despite his involvement with her as cheating and Gemma's polyamorous relationship style. The ability of the program to juxtapose a 'fake' polyamorist (Jim) against the real discrimination (the teacher being fired for being polyamorous) offers the audience insight into this particular binary of concealment versus outing. The commentary within the television report touches upon a morality clause in the school's bylaws as rationale for the dismissal, but to the audience, this clause is more revealing and symbolic of the double-standard of cheating in monogamy versus commitment and honesty in non-monogamous styles as the narrative is presented by a monogamous person who had been cheating on his wife with no repercussions. Hurson (2013), quoting Roof (1996) writes "as a cultural, psychological, ideological dynamic, narrative aligns disparate forces and elements into productive configurations of difference and opposition" (xv). This juxtaposition not only changes the narrative to point to the issues of cheating within monogamous relationships, but neutralizes polyamory as an immoral behavior to the audience, by emphasizing the honesty aspect of polyamory, even at the cost of one's financial well-being through loss of employment.

When watching *Family*, it is clear that the show is able to use double entendres to emphasize particular aspects that are important toward recreating a polyamory narrative. As Fiske (2010) points out, "the pun allows the "vulgar" meaning to be seen as "more true" and so more powerful than the official one" (86). When finally confronted with a scene that will reveal the cheating behavior of the reporter, Jim, the character diverts his wife into believing the reason he knows Gemma is because of an interview he conducted, but which never aired. The absence of the report not being on air is referred to as, "never getting it on." Jim's wife responds with

“it’s good you never got it on” to which Jim replies, “yes, it was diverting, but never really satisfying.” In this scene it is clear that Jim is not referring to the interview, but the audience is invoked at this instance into reading this pun more closely as the audience knows what he is really speaking about. This performance is indicative of television as a medium. As Hill (2009), drawing on Erving Goffman points out, “we are all performing all of the time on various different stages, such as work or home, to various different audiences” and that “the process of communication between the performer and the audience is an “information game” where performers will reveal and conceal their behavior to others” (460, as cited in Hurson, 2013a).

Lastly, what the *YouTube* comedy-based production offers is the recognition of the program as a piece of film scripted from reality. A few of the episodes in *Family* touch upon a documentary filmmaker’s role in filming the triad and their fears that they will be ‘grossly misrepresented.’ One of the characters asks, “what would we be teaching everybody?” to which another quickly responds with, “that there are options to monogamy, to live and love; tolerance.” The blurring of reality with constructed reality, by bringing in the webisode series’ usage of a documentarian as an intermediary between the two, allows the polyamory narrative to be presented without the actors breaking scene and directly speaking into the camera.

Hurson (2013a) quotes Biressi & Nunn (2004) pointing out that “the success of film realism...lies partly in the ideological realism that masks its naturalizing and mythical function by avoiding drawing any attention to its technological construction through features such as camera-work, sound and editing (39). Further, the authors point to the naturalization of scripted reality, yet *Family*, bringing in the documentary-within-a-series that is reality-based drama, ruptures this scripted feature and makes the narrative more real, rather than just a representation of the real. This draws our attention to a meta-discourse of the webisode series writer concerned about

proper representation by those documenting polyamory lives, as well as calls into her own positionality as to whether her representations are also true to the nature of positive polyamory narratives.

The documentary aspect and attempts to accurately represent the realness of polyamory models is drawn out even further when an entire episode is presented from the point-of-view of the documentarian, Eliza. Eliza narrates the episode, talking to the audience about how she has constructed and manipulated the lives of the polyamorous triad. At the end of the episode she is seen snooping in Gemma's email where she finds an email from Jim mentioning he will be at his favorite restaurant with his wife. In response to this email, Eliza explicitly states that she needs to make a restaurant recommendation to stir up controversy and construct a scene where confrontation is inevitable. Despite her cameraman pointing out they would have already left the country and would no longer be filming the triad, Eliza exclaims that just knowing that there is drama makes her feel like she has captured something. Again, the viewer is invited into the construction of the programming, and the construction of a particular narrative by someone who clearly does not have the triad's best interests in mind. Later, Gemma and Ben decide to get married and jokingly suggest inviting Eliza to document the wedding, furthering the absurdity of construction by suggesting they might as well hold a press conference, to which Gemma replies, "Shall I call *HBO*?"

From this brief analysis, (see Hurson, 2013a for a more thorough analysis) we can see the concerns that Greenan and her partners have had in their own lives throughout the series as becoming fodder for the script. Given the series was episodic and written throughout the course of a year, the plotlines are able to incorporate real-life scenarios, particularly as it pertains to the documentarian skewing the perception of the triad, and Greenan's real life experiences with the

sensationalization of the *Family* series by mainstream media outlets, as well as the series being shot down for continuation in favor of a reality television series, which would later take the form of *Showtime's Polyamory: Married And Dating* produced in 2012, three years after the *Family* series had finished.

CHAPTER 9: CURATING THE MESSAGE

Throughout the following chapter investigation is undertaken into the organizations and institutions that coalesce their networks to utilize the different types of capital available in the polyamory community. The movement does not simply exist by way of having a mass collectivity of people solely identify as polyamorous; rather it exists by the actions of these organizations, and the effect, impact, and calls-to-action they have upon the community at large. Because of the need in social movements for a homogenizing discourse as suggested necessary for social movement mobilization, each institution and organization seeks to develop their own discourses and best practices to implement the actions necessary to achieve their desired goals. These goals are explored below.

Press Releases, Media Appearances, and Conferences: *Loving More*'s Mainstream Initiatives

When thinking about identity politics through collective identity making in the polyamory community, at its center is the *Loving More* magazine/non-profit organization, one of the most robust centralizing organizations present in the polyamory community. Thus, the joining of *PEP* and the *IntiNet* Resource Center in 1993 between Ryam Nearing and Deborah Anapol, combining roughly 1,500 newsletter subscribers at the time, forged these political actors into a new space constructed by the momentum of the polyamory community, still maintained today by the organizing efforts of the *Loving More* non-profit organization.

Loving More magazine started as a small published newsletter format initially published by *PEP*, and grew into a glossy magazine with circulation of over 10,000 as of 2001 (Singh,

2001). In 2006, the magazine found itself sending subscriptions to all 50 states in the U.S. as well as 27 international countries. With increasing production costs, and the increase in postage rates, *Loving More* slowly transitioned in 2009 from a print magazine to an online digital magazine where it is maintained as so today.

Coming Out To the Public

There are three central phases of the *Loving More* organization, all of which share a distinct phase in the polyamory movement. The first phase of the namesake began in 1991, the year Ryam Nearing renamed her *PEP* organization and *PEPTalk* newsletters to *Loving More: a Group Marriage Journal & Network* (Lovemore.org). Several *PEPCon* conferences were held under this name, and Nearing made great efforts to inform her community readers about the changes that were happening. Nearing continued self-publishing this colorful print newsletter under the *PEPTalk/Loving More* moniker until joining forces with Deborah Anapol in 1994 in which they both began publishing the *Loving More* magazine under *PEP* Publishing, established in Boulder, Colorado. *PEP* Publishing was created by Nearing and Anapol as they were not interested in waiting on a mainstream publisher to get the magazine started, despite efforts to reach out to already established publishers.

Providing credibility to the new venture, a board of directors was featured on one of the first press releases for the *Loving More* institute in 1994, comprised of many notable and influential figures within the non-monogamy movement, all of whom also previously resided on the board of directors for *IntiNet*, as follows: Matt Bullock, Jr. author of *A Guide to Open Relationships*; Stan Dale, founder of *The Human Awareness Institute*; Stephen and Heide Davis, representing the *Center for Experimental Cultural Design*; Lori Grace, founder of *Celebrations of Love*; Loraine Hutchins, national coordinator of *BiNet USA* and author of *Bi Any Other Name*;

Geoph Kozeny, director of the *Community Catalyst Project*; Dr. Hal Minor, director of *Family Forum of Richmond*; James Ramey, retired professor and author of *Intimate Friendships*; and Robert Rimmer, author of the *Harrad Experiment*, *Proposition 31*, and other books that are often referenced as being the most influential to the polyamory movement. It is on this board of directors that we can see the networks of the community really started to take hold in this centralizing organization.

Framing the potential subscriber base for the magazine, Nearing and Anapol discuss in the press release being influenced by Robert Rimmer's *Harrad Experiment*, Robert Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land*, and Thea Alexander's *2150 AD*, as well as addressing reader's potential negative reaction from a recent *Time* magazine article about infidelity, all mentioned as motivating factors to become a member of *Loving More*. As a subscriber one would receive a year of the quarterly magazine; 50% discount on copies of Nearing and Anapol's books, *The Polyfidelity Primer* and *Love Without Limits*, respectively; discounts on their workshops and conferences; online computer conferencing and referrals via the 'Internet;' use of the lending library; technical assistance in starting and maintaining local area support groups, access to the member network and a free personal ad in the magazine; and reduced rates for personal consultations.

Drawing on the synergy of their partnership, the press release describes the growth of the polyamory movement, and explores Nearing and Anapol's shared vision for the magazine: "to increase public awareness and acceptance of responsible alternative to monogamy and the nuclear family and to provide information on new paradigms for sexuallove" (emphasis in original text, Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, 2015). This external visibility is supported by the remarks regarding Nearing and Anapol's appearance on national talk shows, their presence

online through the WELL, giving presentations, workshops, and continuing the conferences established by Nearing through *PEP*. Additionally, references to a *New York Times* article covering the ‘InterNet newsgroup,’ as well as magazine coverage in publications such as *Esquire*, *Redbook*, and *Cosmo* are made to underscore the caliber of the national movement. After much outreach to harness old, and garner new subscribers, the first magazine-style edition was dated Winter 1995¹ (lovemore.org), a yearly subscription costing only \$24, with other options to support the venture by becoming a member, a supporter, a patron, or a lifetime subscriber for a donation of \$1,000. This collaborative effort of two seminal founders of the polyamory movement set in motion the second phase of *Loving More*, in which the magazine upped its ante by producing quarterly issues in a glossy cover magazine format featuring articles written by many members of the active polyamory community. Early editions of the magazine were printed on recycled paper with soybean ink, and asked for user submissions to be sent to Ryam or Brett’s lovemore.org email address, or through a text file on a PC disk. To cover in detail all the issues discussed in the *Loving More* magazine over the course of 21 years of its production (since the magazine’s official edition in 1995) would encompass an entire book in itself. Several notable articles have passed its way through the magazine, changing the nature of the magazine over the course of its publication, as well as through three main executive directors.

The list of contributing writers of the newly formed *Loving More* enterprise incorporates the joining of both Anapol and Nearing’s networks, comprised of Deborah Anapol, Mercedes de Badani, Ricard Badani, Terry Brussel Gibbons, Brett Hill Lisa Kirsten, Scott LaMont, Shana

¹ Several of the early editions of *Loving More* were missing from The Kenneth R. Haslam Collection. Dating the magazine back from the available Winter 1996 8th edition, following the solstice cycle on which they were produced, would put the first edition in the Spring of 1995

Lynn, Barry Northrop, Ryam Nearing, Maeqyn Rati, Joy Singer, Morning Glory Zell and Oberon Zell. In its early years, the *Loving More* magazine featured sections called departments such as a reader's forum, news from around the world, reviews, personal ads, resources and regional contacts, a calendar of events, lists of pro-polyamorous professional services, and information about the annual conferences, books, and more media material that was being produced within the community. The magazine effectively mobilized its reader networks through a few conferences on the East and West Coast, predominately in upstate New York, and in California outside San Francisco.

On the inside of the front cover of # 8 edition Winter of 1996, (the first edition available through back issues), the statement of purpose of the magazine is as follows:

Loving More Magazine is a quarterly publication whose mission is to support, explore, and enhance the many beautiful forms which families and sexualoving relationships can take. We intend to provide information and inspiration for people who are interested in evolving new relationship options, including group marriage, open dyads, intimate networks, expanded families, and intentional community.

We affirm that *Loving More* than one can be a natural expression of health, exuberance, joy, and intimacy. We value diversity as the basis for a healthy ecology of love, and respect that right of all people to choose lovestyles which are appropriate for them. We view the shift from enforced monogamy and nuclear families to polyamory and intentional families or tribes in the context of a larger shift toward a more balanced, peaceful and sustainable way of life.

In this early edition we are able to take note of the continuing thread of discourse surrounding the disruption of the nuclear family, the expansion of intentional networks of intimacy, and the acknowledgment that monogamy is an enforced institution, but maintaining a level of respect for relationship choice as proffered over proselytization. What is notable about the mission statement is the myriad language (intimate networks, expanded families, intentional communities, polyamory) that described multi-partner relationships that Anapol, Nearing, and

Morning Glory Zell & Jennifer Wesp coined to describe what is known as modern day polyamory. Not until later in the movement do we see a more uniform discourse forming to present ‘polyamory’ as one distinct segment of non-monogamy to external publics in the public sphere, most ardently as ‘ethical non-monogamy.’ All of these relationship styles still fall under the polyamory umbrella, but there is a larger discourse that resonates with most of the polyamory media practitioners that follows suit with the more popularized OED definition of polyamory to maintain continuity, as well as separate, and at times, elevate, polyamory from other non-monogamies.

The articles throughout the course of the magazine hold true to these continued discourses, educating members on the myth of monogamy, and providing anecdotes and experiences from the authors outlining their own struggles with overcoming monogamy. Brett Hill authors an article in the #12 edition, titled, “*The Myth of Monogamy*,” in which he draws upon biological, cross-cultural, and religious histories to examine the ways in which monogamy is constructed as the normative in our culture. Later articles by Anapol, outline “*The Marriage Game*,” in which the construction of monogamous marriage offers us socially a sense of security and protection, to which Anapol argues is an illusion. Very similar to Marx’s ‘false consciousness,’ Anapol points out that the new lovestyle paradigm is spiritually enlightening, and is able to reveal the socially constructed nature of single-person commitment. Throughout the remaining print issues topics such as coming out, adding in new partners, poly advice columns, book reviews, arguments for the biological imperative using the Bonobo apes, personal ads, media reviews, and more continue to inform the *Loving More* members of the on-goings of the modern polyamory movement.

Seeking to drum up interested for a political right's movement, the very first article in the #8 edition is by Joy Singer, an attorney from a top ten law school, and an activist in the California poly community, using a pseudonym to protect her identity. The article titled, "*For Better or For Worse: How the Law and Politics of Gay Marriage Affect Poly's*" outlines the beginning of the polyamory movement being paralleled with the same right's movement that the LGBTQ community was seeking at the time, particularly the ways in which the debates were framed in mass media polling where over 58% of those polled believed that being homosexual was fine, but only 64%-70% believing that gays should not marry (Singer, 1996).

Furthering the connection of networks, in 1996, the *Loving More* website was also listed as up and running, manned by Brett Hill. The issue noted their website received 150,000 hits since its inception (date unknown), and features a message board, chat room, email discussion list for people to share their trials and tribulations, mailing list, calendar, personal ads and articles all to connect the polyamory network of individuals practicing multi-partner relationships. Nearing's other partner, Barry Northrop, maintained the 'Polybites' section of the magazine, a compilation of worldly news surrounding non-monogamy and the on-going political actions of these like-minded groups across the world, as a means to connect the local to the global.

Honing in on the importance of community, Nearing sent out letters to new members encouraging them to submit their own stories, write in about their relationship concerns, and most importantly, step up to be a leader in their own local communities by starting local grassroots groups. The *Loving More* organization offered pamphlets on how to manage local "mailings, materials, agendas, advice and support," emphasizing the need for individuals to step up, as Nearing wrote, "it's more than a magazine, it's a movement" (Nearing, *Loving More* New Member Letter, nd). Each edition of the magazine also had a 'letter to the editor' section, where

members would write in offering their thoughts on the former issue, and what content they found to be the most valuable, thus creating a constant dialogue of preferences within the community.

Six months after *PEP* and *IntiNet* became the monolith of *Loving More*, however, Anapol bowed out for financial reasons, leaving Ryam Nearing to buy her out and to co-edit the magazine with her partner, Brett Hill. Nearing continued to run the *Loving More* magazine and conferences well into the early 2000s, at which time she sold the magazine to Mary Wolf in 2002. Wolf was a longtime friend of Nearing, and was even dating one of Nearing's partners, but she quickly realized that *Loving More* was a venture kept afloat by Nearing's persistence, and soon found herself treading water looking to sell the magazine one more time. At this juncture in 2004, Robyn Trask, a close friend of Mary Wolf's, as well as an activist in the polyamory community having organized her own polyamory groups since 1998, felt she had to keep the momentum of the *Loving More* magazine alive for the sake of the community, and she became the managing editor to date. This shift in hands marks the third transition in the *Loving More* journals iterative stages.

Loving More Today

As *Loving More* works in a position of advocacy, the organization, continuing the database functionality that was setup by Nearing and Anapol, has a list of individuals who are willing to be the frontrunners for poly-discourse when liaising with the media or any public inquiry. As stated on the website, "*Loving More* nonprofit works to raise media awareness through press releases and media outreach. We respond to issues in the news, maintain a list of polyamorous people willing to talk to the press, and are available for interviews answering questions from the press on an ongoing basis" (Lovemore.com). Trask had very little experience with media when she came on board, but knew that it was important to get the message out there

for awareness and education. Introduced to media technologies and given a list of over 400 media contacts from a close friend at one of the *Loving More* conferences, Trask began her foray into the vast world of media and publicity. Her role has only increased significantly over the years as the gatekeeper for media contacts gaining access to polyamory individuals.

The *Loving More* organization has four particular strategies that are prevalent: media coverage, press releases, digital magazine, and annual regional conferences. As addressed above, the *Loving More* organization, when taken over by Trask in 2004, had reorganized itself as the front-runner for poly information, particularly as a liaison between poly people in the community and the mainstream media. Trask herself has appeared on *Our America with Lisa Ling*, the *Montel Williams* show, the *700 Club*, and has been interviewed for the *Denver Post* and *Baltimore Sun*, as well as appeared over fifteen times on the Michael Baisden radio talk show. One of the first press releases gained her attention by the *Baltimore Sun*, an article written about the *Ramblewood Poly Living East* conference, which then snowballed and led to the *Chicago Sun Times* doing a story, *Columbia News Service*, *The Philadelphia Examiner* and eventually public appearances on *Montel Williams*. Maintaining the *Loving More* media initiatives, she keeps an archive of all the press releases she sends to the mainstream media when anything poly-related comes up (personal communication, 2014). Trask even mentioned that her handle as a media personality is quite refined in that she maintains a working list of ‘out’ polyamory individuals to speak to the press, and ensures whenever the mainstream media calls upon poly folk that the framing of the show/article is fair to the reality of polyamory and not misconstrued. She pointed out her refusal to offer poly contacts to the *Tyra Banks* show and *Oprah* when they were going to present polyamory in a negative light. Trask will typically speak to the television

producer at length, look on their website to determine what angle they might be taking, and then pair the appropriate members with the story that is being sought.

Trask has also found that media typically seek out the married couple who have opened their relationship up to another person, or the male-female-female triad in their early 20s with children, where only the women are bisexual, rare models in the polyamory community. Tracing the marriage preference all the way back to the Oneida community's leaders getting married to seem more legitimate in the public sphere, she argues that people who are married are taken more seriously, and she married her partner, Jesus, just so she could participate in more mainstream media casting calls. Her own experiences on the *Montel Williams* show has taught her to be wary of mainstream television. Initially called in on a show about raising children in non-traditional families, when her family arrived at the show, the segment was really called "X-Rated Family Values", and Trask and her partner were featured alongside a woman featured on *HBO's Cathouse*, and a family that ran a nudist resort. Very often Trask will place herself in these positions, and despite having an organization that is nationally represented, she has been taken off of shows once the producers find out she has established credibility beyond her own local community as the executive director of *Loving More*.

Always keeping her eye on ongoing events surrounding alternative relationships models, when the University of Colorado held the 2010 *Conference On World Affairs*, a panel titled, "From Monogamy to Polyamory and Everything in Between" was held, but no one in the polyamory community leadership network was invited, Trask headed down to Boulder to find out just what was being said about polyamory. Trask noted that because she does not have any initials behind her name, due to the legitimation that degrees bring, she was not invited to this panel of experts. Because this event was so well attended, and the audience members' inquiries

were predominately about polyamory to a table of panelists who knew so little about polyamory.

Trask wrote to her *Loving More* audience:

It is really up to us, *Loving More* and the greater polyamory community to educate and speak up especially when experts who are not experts marginalize open relationships; perhaps even writing in to Oprah or Hollywood producers who misrepresent polyamory, swinging and other choices beyond monogamy. If you hear something on the radio or television that is misinformation, let us know. Become aware of what is being said around you and don't be afraid to speak up or if you can't safely find someone who can (Trask, 2010).

At the encouragement of Bob McGary, author of *Polyamory Communication Survival Guide* in 2006, Trask began the journey to turn the *Loving More* organization into a non-profit. She knew it would be almost impossible to seek out grants to support the venture, mainly because she felt that related funding through alternative sexualities, such as the LGBTQ movement would be frowned upon since polyamory was discursively known as the next step in the slippery slope. As of 2010 (retroactively from 2006), *Loving More* became a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicating its work toward polyamory education, advocacy, and support. Currently housed in Loveland, Colorado, the mission is “to educate people about and support polyamory as a valid choice in loving relationships and family lifestyle” (Lovemore.com). Trask, is the figurehead for the organization, maintaining a position on the board of directors, comprised of four other polyamorous individuals across the country. There are also staff writers who contribute to the digital magazine. The website is rather thorough in resources both internal and external, including a polyamory overview with FAQ, terms, and a variety of media-related interviews with polyamory individuals. There is also a listing of polyamory professionals throughout the country that connect users to professionals in fields such as hypnotherapy, relationship therapy, coaching, law, birthing couches/midwives, and sex-related therapists. In addition to the text resources, there are links to Cunning Minx's weekly podcast, *Polyamory*

Weekly; monthly one hour polyamory webinar series, and opportunities for relationship seminars, *Loving Choices*, across the country educating poly communities on polyamory and alternative relationship choices.

The *Loving More* organization has historically been prolific in its attempt to profile the polyamory lifestyle among all its constituents. In its formative years, Nearing wanted to build a database of members, which funneled information she gathered by distributing surveys to her membership base. As early as July of 1989 she began collecting and presenting data in order to conceptualize the demographic breakdown of her readers and those participating in the non-monogamous lifestyle. These first survey results found that the majority of her subscribers, 60% were currently in, or had been in multi-partner relationships, 33% of these were in a committed group marriage, and 80% of those were in closed multi-partner relationships, comprised of 3 of 4 adults; there were relatively low numbers of children in these families, 75% having zero to one children; 20% were an open couple, 30% monogamous, 10% open single, and 20% celibate and looking. Nearing notes that the reason that prevents the majority of them from being in a committed group marriage is difficulty finding people. In terms of demographics, the median age was 38, living on the West coast, earning \$26K, with an undergraduate degree, parenting one child, raised a Protestant, and politically affiliated as a democrat. Ages of the respondents varied from 23-55, and spanned religious backgrounds such as Catholic, Baptist, Jew, Christian Scientist, or Atheist. Most interestingly, respondents ranked their desire for multi-partner relationships as follows: companionship, intimacy, personal growth, financial security, spirituality, shared parenting, and anything but monogamy (Nearing, 1989).

In the Winter 1996 edition, polling their audience, the *Loving More* magazine sought to analyze the political leanings of their readers, netting results from 200 surveys such as 57% of

members practicing polyamory, 33% monogamous, but open to polyamory, and 9% as solely monogamous; 29% were Democrats, 24% Libertarians, 10% Republicans, 9% Green party and Independent, respectively. Roughly 68% favored state approval of group marriage, with many more hoping for a separation of government sanctioning of marriage. The priority of issues were healthcare for polyamory individuals, followed by nondiscrimination in employment, and lastly, zoning which allows for co-habitation among non-relatives. Despite the majority wanting government sanctioned plural marriages, many members wanted to take a back seat to gay marriage, and also take time to figure out their own movement before charging ahead with lobbyists before fully articulating their desires. Most notable, is one reader's comments regarding multi-partner relationships as a possibility for their children, particularly noting that children's beliefs are handed down by their parents, but also learned through the media. A write-in suggestion contributed was made of influencing a writer or producer to create stories about polyamory couples, or even add in 'fairy tales' that include the main female character being swept off her feet by two princes, rather than just one.

Transitioning survey distribution through the membership website, in the Winter 1997/98 #12 edition of *Loving More*, Bret Hill summarizes the qualitative write-in portion of the survey from 3000 respondents. The results were a mixed bag of people describing the relief they found when they knew they were not alone, to people asking that monogamy not be knocked, and polyamory be elevated as the best relationship model. Others pointed to the 'unicorn' aspect of polyamory, in which a male/female couple would, the majority of the time, seek out that perfect bisexual female to complete the triad, yet infrequently would a second male be sought out, or in which those professing to be polyamorists were most interested in the 'sexual diversity' it reaped, rather than the commitment to multiple persons. The right rail column of the survey

results is titled, “*Fame & Fidelity*”, in which celebrity women from the likes of Tina Turner, Susan Sarandon, Cybil Shepherd, Goldie Hawn, etc. are quoted regarding non-monogamy and their opinion on extra marital affairs. Dolly Parton, who even today is speculated to be polyamorous is quoted as saying, “As for monogamy, I believe in whatever is right for an individual at the time, as long as you’re not hurting other people and you’re enhancing your own life, which in turn enhances the lives of others” and Shirley MacLaine saying “the idea that being married precludes relationships with others is a fallacy. I’ve had a lot of relationships and enjoyed every one. When you marry somebody you don’t shut yourself off from the world. I think people should be allowed to do what they want, married or not” (*Loving More*, edition #12). This column brings discourses from the public sphere into the privacy of relationship choices, and illustrates our connection to visible celebrity personalities as a way to inform our own personal ideas of the ways in which the world works, much in the same way survey results inform our understanding of a phenomenon being observed. This sentiment is bolstered by Nearing’s article, Poly Active in the #13 1998 edition of *Loving More*, in which she points to President Clinton’s affair, and the outing of Colorado governor Roy Romer, as having had a 16 year affair with his aide, while being married to his wife for 45 years. Nearing argues that public celebrity figures are the momentum the movement needs as talking heads or spokespeople to get the movement moving.

The year 2003² marked the reporting of the lengthiest survey that Nearing had conducted across the *Loving More* constituency, with over 1,000 respondents, reporting on 4,000 more people via questions about their partners, and comparing data to the U.S. 2000 Census. Nearing

² The results were reported in the 2003 edition of the *Loving More* magazine, but the *Loving More* organization’s 2012 survey compared the results to a 2000 *LM* survey, presumably the same survey, with results reported in the magazine at a much later date.

estimated based on these responses that roughly 2% of the population is practicing some form of polyamory, or 1 in 500 people. The survey results found that 40% of the polyamory population had a graduate or post graduate degree, compared to only 8% of the general population; 30% of the poly population were Pagans, followed by Atheists/Agnostics at 29%, and Christians at 28%, respectively; the majority of respondents, 51% identified in the LGBTQ spectrum, with 44% identifying as straight; half the respondents felt there was little sense of community, but those who did identify with community placed family first, followed by those on the Internet, and local groups coming in last; 49% of individual incomes were above \$32K, whereas 78% of polyamorous respondents reported household income above the 2000 Census median of \$42K, and 28% households at over \$100K; 20% have never been married, 20% divorced; and 28% have children under 18, and 14% identifying as guardians; 69% of respondents with children were single parent households, 8% with three parents, and 2% with four parents.

The last survey, conducted in 2012, with endorsement from the *National Coalition for Sexual Freedom*, an internet based research survey was conducted amongst 4,000 polyamorous participants who received the survey invite through email communication and circulated on relevant polyamory-related listservs (the *PolyResearchers list*, the *Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality's* (IASHS) student and alumni lists, and the *American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors and Therapists'* (AASECT) *AltSex* list. This survey was analyzed by researchers, Jim Fleckenstein, Dr. Curtis Bergstrand, Ph.D., and Derrell Cox II, M.A. The breakdown of the survey is presented on the website with the caveat that future research shall be conducted based on the feedback received from the participants and poly community. The initial survey asked questions modeled from the General Social Survey (GSS) survey to compare polyamorous individuals to the general population. Half the population

identified as female, 35% of male, and 15% did not respond, but 4.2% of the 15% identified as gender queer, fluid, or transsexual, two-spirited, questioning, or other. The later identification was categorized through a write-in section of the survey, as the GSS does not offer gender beyond the male/female binary. The same goes for sexual orientation, in which the *Loving More* organization explained the caveat that sexual partners (behaviors) determined sexual orientation through this survey question, not necessarily sexual orientation/identity. Over 27% held a graduate degree, followed by 30% with a bachelor's degree, again describing higher education in those who identify as polyamorous, as compared to the GSS results, whereby 49% of the population had a high school diploma, and only 10% held a graduate degree. While the GSS does not ask about plural marriage, the *Loving More* survey did, with over 65% of respondents agreeing that they would be open to plural marriage if it were legal, 91% of respondents agreed that plural marriage deserves the same governmental rights as two-person marriage, and 67% of respondents agreeing that no model of relationship should be given rights over another.

With spaces for user submission, and a plethora of contributing writers, the organization offers a multitude of information on subjects that are both macro and micro to the poly community, not making grand statements about a specific way to 'do polyamory,' but offering resources to build skills and educate oneself about the different 'faces' of the ethical non-monogamy movement, models which are explored at their various gatherings throughout the country.

There are two polyamory conferences, called *Poly Living*, one in Philadelphia in its 9th year, and a west coast conference started in San Francisco in 2009, Seattle in 2010, and now held in Denver since 2014. These conferences are not too cost prohibitive, approximately \$140/member, and include workshops, presentations, and opportunities for socializing and networking. More recent workshops include information about polyamory and religion, families,

online dating, jealousy issues, communication, creating poly-families with children, and an open discussion on pursuing legal recognition, the latter subject being a contested issue within the community, where recent survey data has shown 2/3 would participate in the legalization of polygamy, but where the majority of the concern lies around health benefit coverage for alternative partner relationships (Lovemore.com). There is also a *Loving More* annual polyamory retreat in upstate New York, in its 27th year of activity. This retreat is a three day immersion in activities similar to the conferences, but in a much more camp-like retreat environment, and at a higher cost of registration.

The continuation of the annual conferences is probably the most involved strategic piece in the polyamory movement. Hosting nine conferences in Philadelphia, and now four on the west coast, the Poly Living conferences offer a space for poly folk to find community, take workshops, listen to presentations from polyamorous academics and poly activists, and receive legal advice on how to manage their estate and material belongings when involved in non-legal partnerships or civil union partnerships. There is also a listing of national and local polyamory resources to ensure that those attending the conference are well-informed of alternative educational resources.

These conferences offer the opportunity for poly individuals to speak about their own ways of connecting, meeting with one another on sites like *OKCupid* or the poly personals on the *Loving More* or alt.polyamory Usenet websites. Many of those who attend these conference fly from all over the country to rub elbows with the keynote speakers, and meet other prominent poly activists. The conferences have a range of expert speakers that cover a multitude of constituents within the overlapping communities found in the polyamory movement from religion, sexuality, spirituality, legality, sexual orientation exploration, and more.

The most important aspect of the conference attended in the Denver in the spring of 2014, however, was the workshop on the poly political agenda. Brainstormed ideas were brought in from the same workshop hosted at February's *Philadelphia Poly Living* conference and a running list of ideas generated at the *Rocky Mountain* conference were included. This particular workshop offered a space for poly individuals to work through ideas that they feel are important to the movement beyond the four issues outlined above from the Polyamory Leadership Network summit. The most visible political concern was not on the legality of multi-partner marriage, but about discrimination from the workplace, from housing, and from legal divorce custody proceedings. All of the latter concerns were felt by many of the polyamorous individuals in that workshop and in other workshops on polyamory and the law. The conference allowed a networking on individuals to put their concerns at ease, to receive real-time advice, and simply relate to other's who are going through the same experiences they are. Some of the individuals at the conference had to remain in the underground, having lost their jobs from being 'outed' as polyamorous in the past, or having businesses in which the relationship with their clients would be jeopardized. The poly conference is a space for them to be open without fear of looming eyes and ears.

Loving More has recently encouraged the co-creation of polyamory chapters across the country. There currently are four chapters, one in Schenectady, NY, one in Santa Fe, one in Northern, CO, and the other in Longmont, CO, where they have over 180 members that meet for monthly discussion groups. There is also a link to the *MeetUp.com* page, where one can find other regional and national polyamory related groups. The organization offers membership opportunities, primarily for support of the organization, but also to compile a database of polyamorous individuals to help with the mission and dissemination of the poly discourse to

media outlets. In addition to membership opportunities, there are sponsors that range from individuals to businesses that contribute financially and through volunteer opportunities.

Keeping in touch with their subscriber base, *Loving More* proactively updates on the polyamory movement via articles online as well as press releases sent to a listserv and media outlets. There is also a listing of poly-related articles that crop up from news outlets outside of the organization, listings of television programs, blogs, books, international scope of poly living, documentaries and more; a Polyamory-*Loving More Facebook* page with close to 7,000 likes; a *Yahoo! Group* with over 3,000 members, originally a discussion board hosted on the *Loving More* website; a Twitter handle with close to 500 followers; and the *Loving More* organization claims to have over 30,000 registered member emails. The website and respective content is to provide resources to polyamorous individuals as the central goal, with offering poly-related individuals and information for media related interviews as secondary awareness and education. The *Loving More* magazine also offers a space for education and support. Back issues are available of the magazine for newcomers, and the *Loving More* organization headquarters acts as an educational space for individuals new to the movement, offering a space to learn and become involved.

Trask sees the *Loving More* organization as continue to fill the void and as a clearinghouse for polyamory education. Many years ago when she lived in a rural town in Texas, she found herself wanting to get married with no other institutions available other than the church to conduct the ceremony. Filling the gap, she opened her own wedding chapel, and the *Loving More* organization functions to fill that gap today for the modern poly movement. With her background in photography and food design, she had to harness a whole host of new skills to pick the organization back off the ground when it petered out after Mary Wolf's exodus, but she

has managed to create a stronger organization that has continued the efforts of Nearing and Anapol, with conferences and connectivity all over the country.

Uniting A Movement: Formation of the Polyamory Leadership Network

In October of 2008, 34 polyamorous leaders congregated to discuss the polyamory agenda after the organization of Polyamorous NYC's Poly Pride Weekend drew a large number of poly activists to the area, and thus the first Polyamory Leadership summit was held. Leaders from all over the country came to this summit to participate in one the largest activist meetings for polyamory to date. As of 2016, the Polyamory Leadership Network (*PLN*) consists of approximately 180 poly activists, and does not maintain any particular hierarchy of roles, rather defines leadership as “people who organize cool things without waiting for permission” (PolyamoryLeadershipNetwork.org). As the *Loving More* website states, “both organizations have adopted in their mission statements promotion of the acceptance of *relationship choice* – in recognition that polyamory is right for some people and monogamy is right for others; and that an informed, ethical choice for one or the other as a relationship develops is a matter for personal examination and discussion” (Lovemore.org).

Members are added by filling out a form identifying the role they wish to take on, self-identifying as polyamory leaders or activists in their communities, and are most often added to the group by invitation (PolyamoryLeadershipNetwork.org). As the website states, value is placed on sponsorship by other members of the *PLN*, but not restricted to this. At the second summit meeting a policy on adding new members to the *PLN* was drafted consisting of terms of participation in the group, maintaining cordial relationships with other members, a required application survey, the creation and maintenance of a 3-5 person ‘Membership Team’ that will

review membership applications and ensure the applicant is acting in ‘good faith’, as well as call on the *PLN Google Group* as a whole if a decision cannot be made on an applicant, and that the biography of the new member will be made available to everyone else in the *PLN*, with privacy protection via the use of a pseudonym in place (PolyamoryLeadershipNetwork.org)

The first summit meeting functioned as a brainstorming session of the polyamory activists centralized around organizing efforts that would be productive for movement at large. Per the notes on this session (Kenneth R. Haslam Collection), the following topics were discussed as a way to move forward:

- Educational outreach about polyamory and sex-positivism in higher education and professional fields
 - Particularly college campus education, including a goal of a five year plan for all U.S. college students to know the word polyamory
- Outreach to disenfranchised members of the community; creation of an international online community via social media
- PolyWiki
- Centralizing polyamory interactive website
- National and regional working online calendar
- Support for personal-ad websites to screen out the bad sites
- Development of legal research and information, including poly-friendly lawyers
- Develop and share effective ways on how to deal with the media
- Create a central clearinghouse with trained spokespeople to liaise with the media
- Creation of a speaker’s bureau comprised of public figures to be the face of the movement
- Create a press kit/FAQ for media
- Active agenda of media outreach, not waiting to be approached by media with their own frames; send out press releases
- Creation and dissemination of informational packets for professionals- lawyers, marriage counselors, social workers, therapists, sex educators etc.
- Preparation for negative backlash
- Regional development in other metro areas
- Creation of a downloadable guidebook on organizing local groups, with a how-to kit
- Encourage an increase in academic publishing
- Identify and collaborate with allies
 - -Bring in monogamous people
- Vision and initial goals/strategies for the movement, including discussion regarding the self-identity of the movement and a diverse definition of polyamory

- Create a clearinghouse for polyamory research, resources, and education both national and internationally
- Create and maintain a list of national/local polyamory groups; organize pre-existing groups
- Inventory efforts amongst the community
- Fundraising discussions; collaboration on fundraising; create list of grants/funding sources; find funding for clearinghouse
- Continuation of poly summits
- Found a new national non-profit organization
- Create a list of professional knowledge, skills, and expertise community members and leaders can provide

The activists then summarized the efforts already underway such as a the up-and-coming national and regional calendar on the *Loving More* website, education seminars, *Yahoo! Group* of “PolyLeaders”, list of polyamory professionals on the openingup.net website, and the continuation of the *Poly Living* conferences with summit meetings to follow; as well as agreed to specific efforts for the future such as updating the *Loving More* website, invite other activists to the next summit meeting, find volunteers to contribute resources to the *Loving More* website as the stand-in clearinghouse of resources, transition the *PolyLeaders Yahoo* group into the list for the *PLN*, and to post a list of their own personal skills to the listserv for review.

Several months later, in February of 2009, after *Loving More*’s annual *Poly Living* conference in Philadelphia, the leaders came together again in Port Washington, this time drawing up to 62 poly activists in which project ideas began to circulate (Polyamory Leadership Network.org), and in which extensive notes were taken outlining what the leaders envisioned for the future of the movement. Afterward, the leadership community informally named itself the Polyamory Leadership Network comprised of individuals who were willing to volunteer to spearhead the ‘moving’ of the polyamory movement, and preserve the organization and progress of these projects in an online *Google Group* that is still used today.

The second summit meeting netted goals similar to the first, but with a greater emphasis on actionable points on how to achieve these goals and why they are necessary for the movement. While the members chose not to definitely outline what the goals of the movement were, they still pinpointed a number of efforts that they saw were important to gaining more exposure: continuation of polyamory education in schools and places of worship, positive images of polyamory in the media, reaching out to influential figureheads to support polyamory, and supporting a liberal government.

Two of the members, Pepper Mint and Airica Love provided a cursory presentation of ‘lessons learned’ from other social change movements such as the environmental, New Age, LGBTQ, civil rights, and women’s movements. Most notable was the written remark made about a plurality of leaders in the movement, thus having spokespeople from a spectrum rather than a dichotomous radical on one side and mainstream lifestyles on the other. Love outlined ten specific components necessary for social change: personal politics, local grassroots organizing, dissent and protest, public leaders, private individuals who come out as public models, marketing to the masses, wealthy benefactors, influential advocates, research, and landmark legislation. Love also highlighted the importance of framing a story with a compelling narrative that evokes interest and relatability from the audience.

Mint contributed to the conversation by conveying the importance of inclusivity and sustainability to continue the momentum of a movement, particularly by harnessing the youth involved in polyamory by cultivating a ‘next generation’ of polyamory activists; through outreach that transcends racial and cultural differences, particularly noting how white the polyamory community is, especially its organizers, and ways in which to acknowledge

individuals who are practicing polyamory, but who do not align themselves with the movement at large.

Workshopping the deficiencies in the movement at the time of the summit, members were able to pinpoint a lack of coordinated efforts amongst the myriad polyamory groups, a lack of solidarity with queer allies, a lack of youth activism, and a lack of resources for those outside of the larger metro areas in more rural and suburban spaces. Key strategies were developed to address best practices and the next steps for the movement as follows:

- Internal organization to coordinate existing groups, particularly for resource and information sharing;
 - How-to packets for poly group creation
 - National non-profit with local affiliations and assistance of technical and Internet support to external organizations
 - Possible organization of funds through Sexual Freedom Legal Defense and Education Fund
 - Poly leader conferences
 - Coming out campaign as modeled on lessons learned from other coming out experiences; centered around a website with resources and personal experiences
 - Diversity training for leaders and speakers
 - GLAAD/NCSF/NGLTF media training
 - Alliances with Principle Voices, a religious polygamist group
- Outreach and education to minority communities and religious communities, as well as to influencers, professionals, educators, doctors, and lawyers;
 - Appropriate message framing for different audiences
 - Polyamory as a number of valid choices
 - Presenting as role models from personal to political level
 - Creation of a college speakers bureau
 - Find research references to polyamory in academic textbooks and reach out to editors as needed
 - Creation of brochure on polyamory for lawyers
 - Outreach to affluent influential people, ex: Warren Buffet, only after central organization established
- Financial and Legal concerns to obtain non-profit status, find co-sponsors for fundraising, and work toward legal action to protect the rights of polyamorous people;
 - Create publicly available list of grants and

- Online resources for training and creation of polyamory research
 - Creation of PolyWiki
 - Education videos about polyamory from poly-centered events
 - Interactive website with national and regional events
 - Collaboration with Community-Academic Consortium for Research on Alternative Sexualities (CARAS)
- Media outreach by providing a spectrum of activism style to gain media interest. Inclusive and integrated communication strategy that allows different poly subgroups to speak to appropriate allied groups
 - Compilation of polyamory-centered songs
 - Central speaker's bureau with diverse representation
 - Online list of polyamory artists and poly-related art
 - Press kit & FAQ
 - Collection of public domain polyamory images to make available for public use
 - Creation of Polyamory Media Association with training material for media contacts

The third summit meeting took place again in Fort Washington in March of 2010 with 35 attendees, and the fourth and final official summit in October of 2010 held in Seattle, again following the *Loving More* Poly Living conference. With the increase in press releases and event invites from the *Loving More* organization, a newsletter e-blast was sent out encouraging members to attend the fourth summit meeting, facilitated by Reid Mihalko of ReidAboutSex.com, at a cost of \$60-\$75 per attendee. Per the newsletter (*Loving More*, Leadership Summit Newsletter, 2010), the goals of this summit were to:

- To build on the success and momentum we've generated at the last three summits.
- To rejuvenate ourselves as community leaders, educators and activists.
- To deepen our connections and bonds with other poly leaders.
- To tweak the implementation and execution of existing projects.
- To brainstorm ideas and processes that will help the poly and poly-curious find support and resources

Despite these meetings, and additional low-key regional meetings taking place, the *PLN* insists that the Internet is the space in which most active organization takes place as many of the next

steps and project ideas coming out of the summits have fallen to the wayside. However, the *PLN* works well for proactively communicating through the *Google Group* in an asynchronous environment. The first summit meeting saw some drop-off when the original founder of Poly NYC, Justen Bennett-Maccubbin, and Diana Adams and Leon Fiengold, founders of *Open Love New York*, disbanded their groups in different directions after *Poly Pride NYC* in 2009. Bennett-Maccubbin felt the mass of new volunteers, predominately heterosexual, wanted to take the group in a new direction by being quoted in the mainstream media, a strategy that Bennett-Maccubbin did not want to undertake, but rather keep the event focused on gay and queer people.

There are ebbs and flow in the media of when polyamory-related websites get larger hits. Most notably, one of the founders of the *Polyamory Media Association*, and active and founding member of the *PLN*, Anita Wagner Illig, noticed a 30% spike on her website, *Modernpoly.com*, when Newt Gingrich and his former wife, Marianne Gingrich made public comments regarding their supposed open relationship (Williams, 2012). Another instance of leadership discussion took place as the *PLN* has proactively worked together to get polyamory education out in the mainstream from its very beginnings. In a blog post in July of 2009, Alan M. wrote on his blog, *Polyamory In The News*, about South Carolina Governor Mark Sanford's affair with an Argentinian woman, particularly highlighting the ways in which Sanford appeared and disappeared in media coverage. Seeing this as an educational opportunity, Alan M. commented in the *PLN*'s group that someone should draft a press release about the honest aspects of the polyamory relationship model as an alternative to cheating, to which Robyn Trask, editor of *Loving More* took up this call for action and sent out a press release to that affect to her 150 media contacts (*Polyamory In The News*, 2009).

The press release is as follows (as quoted from *Polyamory In The News*, 2009):

LOVING MORE® non-profit is all too familiar with Governor Mark Sanford's challenging situation. We are an organization that helps and supports people in finding ethical, mutually agreed-upon ways for *Loving More* than one person in honest multi-partnered relationships. We help partners consciously negotiate their relationship styles and agreements, whether monogamy or polyamory, with ethics and integrity.

Loving More Executive Director Robyn Trask issued the following statement.

"My heart goes out to Mr. Sanford, his wife and kids, and to his lover in Argentina. In my job I am contacted by people from all walks of life going through similar challenges of *Loving More* than one.... We live in a culture that is in denial of the fact that many people are capable of, and do find themselves, *Loving More* than one person, and we laden them with guilt for loving. People are calling Gov. Sanford's case a "sex scandal," but if you listen to Mr. Sanford and read his words, it is obvious this not about sex but about love and connection; it would be better described as a love scandal. Is he a hypocrite? Yes, but he is also human. The real scandal is denying the impossibility for some of monogamy. What would happen if in our culture, ethical, agreed-upon polyamory were as acceptable as monogamy?

Politics aside, this is a man in crisis because we as a society have decided there is only one right way to have a loving relationship....

Loving More is aware of one politician who did just that, Colorado Governor Roy Romer in 1998. When questioned about his relationship with former aide B. J. Thornberry, he admitted to a 16-year relationship. Denying that it was an affair, Governor Romer explained that he had a close and complex relationship with Thornberry, and he further clarified that his family and wife were aware of the relationship all along and that it would continue. Romer defined to the press that marital fidelity was about "openness" and "trust". Although there was some shock at his statements, it is interesting to note that when he acknowledged the relationship openly the press quickly lost interest.

With these latest developments involving a high-level politician who has a longstanding rhetoric of "traditional family values", *Loving More* is even further committed to educating people from all walks of life about open, honest loving alternatives to monogamy. There is no one-size-fits-all model of relationship.

Because the *PLN* transmits communication and discussion through *Google Groups*, it is very easy to post a link to a news article and have others in the leadership ask for advice, whether it be about an interview inquiry, or for others to put on the spokesperson hat if need be.

Many polyamorous activists are constantly called upon by the media to comment on polyamory, typically when same-sex legislation is passed, or when any type of scandal that involves a third person emerges. In June of 2013, after the Supreme Court ruled on gay marriage, Anita Wagner Illig found herself at the center of a media call, most alarmingly from the conservative radio talk show hosted by Glenn Beck. After weighing the pros and cons of doing the interview, Wagner Illig opted out for fear of being tripped up and not providing an articulate positive presentation on behalf of the community. Michael Rios, a poly activist and organizer of

Network For A New Culture, however, wanted to face the conservative media head on, and reached out to the radio show, which had by that time moved on (*Polyamory In The News*, 2013). However, he then sought out *The Mike McConnell* show, comparable in political conservatism, to try to set the record straight on polyamory and was lauded for his ability to keep up by the *PLN*.

Often casting calls find their way onto the *PLN* as the members keep a close eye on the attempts to thwart newbies to the lifestyle into the lion's lair. The following call from *Fox* was circulated on the *PLN Google Group*:

Fox's Utopia program casting call

I'm casting a documentary series on a major television network that will air in the fall featuring 15 Americans from all different walks of life coming together to form a new society. They are still looking for the last cast member and this is who they would like:

1. A single woman in her 20s who is polyamorous.
2. They would like a woman who can break down the negative stereotypes about women and polyamory (for example: "a man who sleep with many is a stud, a woman is considered a slut").
3. There is compensation for being on the show.
4. This is a major network show with a lot of credibility and they are looking for the right person to fit this description, not an actress.

Sarah Taub, a member of the *PLN*, and organizer of *Network For A New Culture*, has experience with intentional communities and was able to outline the pitfalls of a show like *Utopia* for drawing viewers in on the promise of voyeurism and drama, two things most polyamorous folks tend to avoid like the plague. As Alan M. notes, (2014), the character they were able to find that fit this casting call perfectly, Dedeker Winston, was a 26-year-old belly dancer and nude model from L.A., but with one hitch, she was already media-savvy. He points out that she already has a podcast called *Multiamory*, in which the first episode outlines myths about polyamory. With her media-ready personality, Winston was able to avoid some of the show's drama and not play into

the archetype the producers had set her up for from the get go. Because of the experience of intentional community building, as well as active sharing of these casting calls, members of the *PLN* are able to create a dialogue among the community leaders as to the advantages and disadvantages appearing on shows or in media interviews may have on the community. This is just one of the many casting calls the community receives, and dialogue about the pros and cons are constantly being shared so as to maintain the ‘best foot forward’ for community representations and visibility.

Aside from all the networking that happens, and the poly community leaders having one another’s backs when it comes to media inquiries or trying to create positive press around polyamory, the *PLN*, itself in its early iterations and summit meetings found itself mapping out a future for the polyamory movement, not waiting until mainstream media decided it for them. As Alan M. from the *Polyamory In The News* blog so aptly points out, the polyamory movement differs greatly from the gay rights movement because most people didn’t already have a preconceived notion of what polyamory or ethical multi-person relationships looked like, whereas in the late 60s, when the gay rights movement started to take off, the image of the depraved mentally ill homosexual had already substantiated itself in sexuality discourses making it harder for alternative representations to break through all the dominant clutter. Thus the *PLN* was more important than ever or creating a vision of what milestones they saw the movement making from the very beginnings of multi-person relationships and the changing landscape of sexual discourse.

Working on a large piece of paper, deemed the polyamory history scroll, members at the second summit meeting outlined the timeline of influential moments that impacted the polyamory movement within their own lives, the group, the polyamory movement, and cultural

at large. Beginning in 620 BC with group orgies and group marriages, continuing into the 18th century with women's rights activists such as Margaret Sanger, Emma Goldman, and Victoria Woodhall, to the more modern origins of polyamory in 1848 at the start of the Oneida community, and gaining much more traction in the early 20th century with publication of books such as *The Children's House* by Lillian Hellman, Cuckor and Coward writing *Design For A Living*, *Julies et Jim* by Jeanne Moreau, the play, *A Taste of Honey* by Shalgar Delaney, Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex*, and *The Body Heals the Mind* by Wilhelm Reich. Coupled with the changing attitude around sex with the flappers of the 1920s, the Kinsey Report on male sexual behavior in 1948, and female sexual behavior in 1953, respectively, as well as the introduction of the birth control pill in 1959, contributed greatly to the changing dialogue around sexuality in the United States.

Members and attendees at the second summit marked their own first polyamory relationship styles, as well as the burgeoning communes that featured polyamory relationships such as the Sandstone Community in 1969, a polyamory commune called "The Community" in Arlington, Virginia in 1965, and the founding of *The Church of All Worlds* by Morning-glory and Oberon Zell in 1962. Several other notable books are mentioned like *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan, *Toward a Quaker View of Sex*, Robert Heinlein's *Stranger In A Strange Land*, and the *Harrad Experiment* by Robert Rimmer published in 1962.

Moving into the 70s, sex positive groups started cropping up, such as *Family Synergy*, the *Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality* based in San Francisco, a conference held in Boston on bi-sexuality that was attended by many non-monogamous individuals, the creation of *Delaware Valley Synergy*, a polyamory group on the East Coast, the forming of *Family Tree* in

Boston in 1979, and several other organizations that centered around non-monogamous relationships at the time.

Nearing and Anapol come into play on the timeline at this point in the early 1980s with the founding of *PEP* and *IntiNet*. In 1987, a notation is made in which Stan, Helen, and Janet Dale appear on several major television talk shows such as *Oprah*, *Phil Donahue*, and *Joan Rivers*. Marking the 90s with the coining of the word polyamory, more popular media texts such as *The Ethical Slut*, *Breaking the Barriers to Desire: New Approaches to Multiple Relationships*, *With Open Hands*, and *Our Whole Lives* show up, as well as the beginning of the *Loving More* magazine, the first PolyPages going live on Xeromag.com in 1999, Nan and John Wise (Nan the co-author of *The Ethical Slut*), both poly activists being featured in *Esquire* magazine, and the *Unitarian Universalists* email list established in 1999. In 1998, the event of April DeVibiss' appearance on television leading to the loss of her child to its grandparent took place. Support groups were also gaining members in the early 2000s, with a Poly-Mono and CPN Poly-Mono *Yahoo! Group* in 2002, the *RochNYpoly Yahoo! Group*, as well as the formation of Tribe.net's Polyamory forum founded in 2003, and the noting of the first U.S. documentary, *When Two Won't Do*, released in 2002. After Robyn Trask took over *Loving More*, more media appearances appeared on the timeline with her shopping the organization around on the Michael Baisden radio show, Alan Colmes radio show, and a stint on *CBN 700 club* and *Montell Williams*. In 2005, *WE Network* profiled Birgitte P., a *PLN* member, on a show called *The Secret Lives of Women* regarding her open relationships, and in 2005, Ted Turner also is mentioned as publically declaring he will never be monogamous again. In 2006, the *Yahoo! Group* for poly researchers was established, which remains an active list and group where those actively conducting research

on polyamory circulate their work and workshop their ideas with other fellow polyamory researchers.

Media appearances garner more space on the scroll as technologies such as *YouTube* afford Miss Polyamory a venue for visibility, later to be taken up as a podcast, the *Family* web series in 2008, as well as more prominent mainstream shows like *Big Love* premiering on *HBO* in 2007, Penelope Cruz winning an Oscar for her portrayal of polyamorous character Vicky Christina Barcelona in 2008, Oprah Winfrey's show on open relationships in 2008, and the *Washington Post's* 2008 article on the Poly Living conferences. In 2009, MTV's "*True Life: I'm Polyamorous*" reaches over 10MM viewers, thus pushing polyamory more and more into mainstream media every day.

After 2009, the future of the polyamory movement is predicted by the attendees at the *PLN* summit, including future events and outreach such as public education courses on multiple relationships, schools in which people learn about bisexuality and polyamory skills and best practices, the change in marriage legislation that allows contractual marriages based on choice across all sexuality orientations. By 2012, the *PLN* predicted that a major reality or fictional Televisio show brought the word polyamory into wider cultural awareness, that the slippery slope theory was debunked and same-sex marriage led to polyamory marriage, which subsequently deconstructed marriage relegating it to the religious realm held to the laws of separation of church and state. Due to the increase in plural marriage, by 2018 the *PLN* envisioned a statistical analysis of polyamory divorce rates being portrayed, by 2016 youth would begin dating conversations with the one liner, 'Poly or Mono?', and that by 2025 civil unions would be available for all relationship configurations. By 2050, the members of the *PLN*

saw themselves as being inducted into history books and a statue resurrected of Dr. Kenneth R. Haslam, the curator of the Polyamory Collection at *The Kinsey Institute*.

Within social movements there is a need to homogenize, and create unified goals and language to present to external publics. In a Google doc that circulated on the *PLN Google Group*, members were reluctant to pin down the language of polyamory to present as just one model, one member of the *PLN* arguing that “This [the debate about what polyamory is] is such a ridiculously problematic and privileged position to be taking. Excluding swaths of people in the interests of “clarity” does nothing to actually create clarity? All it does is perpetuate the idea that what is normative is the only stuff that counts” (Kenneth R. Haslam Collection). The debate about whether polyamory is an adjective, describing a lifestyle choice, or a noun, describing a sexual orientation also comes into play, as well as what forms of non-monogamy to include, whether it be romantic, which could potentially exclude asexual polyamory identifying folks, as well as some swingers. Another member points out that the primary objective of this conversation is to provide a baseline definition of polyamory for clarity to the outside world, rather than maintain a politically correct conversation. Ultimately, what the members agree upon is that polyamory should be presented to promote relationship choice, which does not label or privilege any particular style of ‘doing’ polyamory. To date, there has not been any change to the promotion of relationship choice, nor any public dialogue surrounding polyamory as a cohesive one-liner definition for the community at large.

Training Media Personalities: The *Polyamory Media Association*

Because not all polyamory identifying individuals are members of the *PLN*, or are reading the messages from the board if they are, the need to reach beyond the informal network

to ensure polyamory individuals who are going to be speaking with the media was seen as an important endeavor to the community from its early stages. One of the projects directly stemming from the PLN at the summit was the further implementation of the *Polyamory Media Association (PMA)*.

Developing from a conversation at a Florida polyamory retreat about an increase in media exposure, particularly as most national media were writing articles about polyamory stemming from central Florida at the time, Joreth met Anita Wagner Illig, a notable polyamory activist who works on polyamory outreach, and had heeded Wagner Illig's call for organization to protect the community's image at large (Joreth, personal communication, 2015). The *PMA* was then formally established in 2008, launched in March of 2010, and spearheaded by Shara "Joreth InnKeeper" Smith, a community activist and leader. As she states,

I worked in entertainment and so I offered to just handle technical stuff; to build a database where we can have sort of a central call center of activists who were willing to talk to the media. That way we wouldn't have any more of these reporters going undercover to poly groups. We would have actual people who were trained and interested in being approached by the media. And nobody else was willing to do any of the other work, so I had this database built and nothing to do with it. And I would talk to other activists and say, 'I just need this thing,' and they would say, 'oh great, glad that you're doing that.' And so eventually I accepted that nobody else was going to help me and I built the poly media association (personal communication, 2015).

Initially the *PMA* was membership only, thus limiting access to the training materials and the online course as member's-only, incentivizing those who wanted to join to properly fill out the form Joreth required to facilitate a larger searching process. This searchable database was the underlying feature of the *PMA* as it allowed Joreth to find individuals that fit the casting call or interview subjects that media requests were inquiring about. The online course focused on the behaviors and communication of polyamory individuals who were trying to be more media

savvy, complete with a recorded mock interview that Joreth would conduct with the member, and step-by-step consultation on how to improve the respondent's media performance.

Joreth has a long history of involvement with the entertainment industry, particularly in front of a camera and on stage as an actor and performer. Additionally, she began her involvement in activism from a young age participating on her town's city council where she developed public speaking skills, as well as honed those skills as a tour guide, and through sales and product demonstrations. Another of her paid jobs was working back stage as a camera operator and lighting technician for live events in broadcast media. Coupling her experience in the front and back of a camera, with her public speaking skills, Joreth understood the technical difficulties of creating the image one would want when being interviewed, down to minor details such as the types of clothes to wear, how to move on stage to maintain audience attention, and she cultivated these skills and applied them in her consultations so the members seeking out media attention knew how the audience would response and how their image would aesthetically and technically appear.

Her project was spearheaded by the community noticing the increase in media attention around polyamory, particularly from shock jocks and talk shows on national television. She says:

They [media hosts] were looking for something sexy and shocking, for ratings on television, or to have a radio interview that would enrage their listeners. And so these people are very savvy; they're very slick; their technique is down, and they are the most difficult media representatives to deal with, but those were who the poly community, that was our first contact with media which is the worst possible way we could have gotten into the media. So they were just getting ripped to shreds by DJs, and television hosts, and news anchors who knew how to work the microphone, who knew how to work their audience, and who knew how to guide the conversation. Poly people were just used to talking about polyamory.

After building quasi-celebrity status online through the few polyamory websites and message boards that were active at the time, Joreth was able to use her personality saturation to gain

awareness for her training and online courses. Trying to network with other polyamory folks to gain other volunteers, and realizing no one was able to effectively coordinate their efforts and time, Joreth created the website herself, took the idea back to the *PLN* and asked them to promote the *PMA*. Leveraging the reach that Alan M.'s *Polyamory In The News* blog had at the time, several press releases were circulated to his audience, and the word started to spread via word-of-mouth online. The following press release was circulated two years after the start of the *PMA* amongst the polyamory community, inviting them to check their media performances and the subsequent representations that followed, specifically offering training in order to become more media savvy (Press Release as quoted from *Polyamory In The News*, 2010):

Calling all Polyamorous Spokespeople, Activists, Community Leaders, and Out & Proud Polys!

March 1, 2010

Ever more news reports, articles, and television shows are highlighting poly families, and a surprisingly large number of them are showing us very favorably!

Have you ever wondered how those people got chosen -- when, perhaps, your family would have been perfect?

Have you ever been interviewed yourself, and watched or read it later and thought, "Hey, that's not what I said/meant!"?

Have you ever seen Terisa Greenan or Jenny Block on television and wished you could sound and look that polished, and that you could get your message across that clearly?

Introducing the Polyamory Media Association! We're a volunteer project of the Polyamory Leadership Network, collaborating with *Loving More*. Our goal is to bridge the gulf between the media and the polyamorous community. We offer media training to help you polish your own message and develop those skills necessary for navigating the waters of the media and entertainment industry.

We will not tell you what to say. You create your own message; we'll teach you how to say it. Our training is good for radio, television, and print interviews, for public speaking, for letter-writing, and for other proactive polyactivism.

Plus, we offer our free services as media screeners. We can help you vet reporters and shows so you can avoid problematic ones, negotiate with the rest on a more even basis, and make sure you're treated fairly. But the final decision is left up to you -- we will not filter or make decisions for you.

The Polyamory Media Association will also seek out the media to help them find you if you wish. By bringing together the polyamorous community and the media, we hope to foster a mutually beneficial relationship between the two parties -- when they share common goals.

So sign up today at www.PolyMediaAssociation.com and take advantage of the training materials and experience collected by those trailblazing polyamorists before you! Shortly after you sign up (completely free, and all information will remain confidential), you'll be given access to the Members portion of the website with all the benefits we have to offer.

We look forward to seeing you at the Polyamory Media Association!

Joreth InnKeeper
Director, PMA
Info@polymediaassociation.com

Joreth would actively reach out to local polyamory groups when she came across notices for casting calls or media requests. She would make the groups aware of these calls and refer them to the PMA to ensure they were aware that going on television, or doing a radio talk show, interview, etc. was not a simple task. Because the polyamory community has varied ways in which 'to do' polyamory, there was no set criteria in which Joreth approached every member seeking a media consultation, rather, she asked them what their goals with the media were, and offered advice on the most effective way to obtain those goals in their chosen medium.

Maintaining a working relationship with the media was also important for Joreth, as she was not only building a database of polyamorists that were trained for media interviews, but she also maintained a database of reporters that had written favorable pieces about polyamory in the past, thus creating a list of trusted media sources to reach out to when she felt certain news about the community was notable and worth the attention of audiences outside of the community. These reporters would also reach out to Joreth on other alternative relationship or lifestyle pieces, creating positive networking opportunities for positive media representations.

When media contacts would approach her, she had them fill out a media request via the *PMA* website with a list of screening questions such as what their goals were, what kind of people they were relooking for, if they were looking for local polyamorists and what structure they wanted their story to use. Joreth saw the opportunity for educating media professionals within

this media request form by providing lists of different types of polyamory for the contacts to check off. Rather than media professionals dictating the type of person they were looking for, based on a shallow understanding of what polyamory actually was, Joreth would list things such as triads, quads, single people, open networks, and a whole host of polyamory configurations up for consideration, thus opening up the possibility of the news article or media interview beyond a myopic range of polyamory that people outside of the community were not as familiar.

These requests would then be reviewed, followed up for clarification, and if the reporters were seeking out some form of polyamory that was not necessarily representative of the community, she would point them in a better direction, thus educating them on the rarity of the viewpoint they were hoping to seek out, and to avoid that “primary couple that has a couple of sexual side partners” that so often cropped up in news articles up until that point. If Joreth felt that the media request was genuine and would not hurt the image of the polyamory community, she would type up notes summarizing the intentions of the request, search through the polyamory individual’s database and send her report to anyone that fit that profile.

Joreth found that the majority of polyamorists that were signing up for the training had already experienced a plethora of ways of ‘doing’ polyamory, and thus their relationship style was more open and involved a larger network of relationship arrangements. Therefore, those who were new to the community, did not necessarily feel like they could be the face of polyamory, as well as typically had relationship models that were much smaller, such as a triad, or relied on primary couples with one outside partner. Directly relating these more traditional and restrictive relationship models with inexperience, she notes that the longer you have been polyamorous the more you “discover that rigidity and polyamory are very uncomfortable bed

fellows” (personal communication, 2015). Her database then already contained a more diversified set of polyamorists to vet to media professionals.

As *Showtime's P:M&D* is one of the larger television shows with a huge presence in the polyamory community, Joreth found herself as the media liaison turning down the producers of the show in aiding them through the *PMA*. She even refused to circulate their casting call among her database members because she felt the production was not sincere and authentic, but more interested in being a sensationalistic showing of polyamory. She notes that after the two seasons had aired, her assessment was fairly accurate, and even points to the staged ‘reality’ of the show, as blogged about by the cast members. Trying to find a medium that presents polyamory in a more accurate light is not necessarily the next step, as Joreth points out that a true representation of polyamory is actually quite boring because “Polyamorous people are incredibly diverse and they live incredibly diverse normal lives, and that's boring; there is not much of interest to see, three people standing around in the kitchen making dinner. And they will usually show that in any segment on polyamory; they'll show a handful of adults all making dinner together like it's some revolutionary thing, but then they'll quickly touch on questions about sex and scandals and arguments” (personal communication, 2015).

To date, the *PMA* is no longer as active as it once was. As the website states, in 2013, the community felt that polyamorists and the media had developed a solid working relationship, particularly with several of the leader’s actively sourcing polyamory individuals to media requests, and that the need for a full-functioning manager of these media requests was no longer necessary. There was also enough awareness of the *PMA* among community leaders that newbies to polyamory could easily be directed to these resources if they felt more training was necessary.

Describing the momentum of polyamory gaining heavy media attention, Joreth points to the era of *Facebook* groups, and the increased penetration of Alan M's *Polyamory In The News* blog gaining national attention, attributing these as a few factors influencing the massive increase in exposure in mainstream media, herself interviewed by *CNN* and *The New York Times*, as polyamory gained larger momentum in the public sphere. As she was highly active in the polyamory community at the time, she noticed a lot of unfamiliar names of people featured in these articles, and thus noticed less of a need for a central clearing house such as the *PMA* as a place for the media to contact to gain access to polyamory people willing to speak to the media. Joreth points out that media contacts could easily conduct a *Facebook* search for 'polyamory' and yield a vast array of groups in which to post a call for interview subjects.

The training resources created for the community are still available and links to the other lead community media liaisons are listed on the bottom of the page for media contacts to reach out to. Currently, Joreth runs her own website, *TheInnBetween.net*, an avid resource for polyamory information including presentations she has given at Universities, polyamory conferences, and non-polyamory events on 'Poly 101;' she networks with the *Relationship Equality Foundation*; manages one of the largest Solo poly *Facebook* groups; as well as runs the *PolyishMovieReviews.com* website, dedicated to reviewing films that feature polyamory.

More Than Two Publishing Houses: Franklin Veaux and *Thorntree Press*

Franklin Veaux and his partner Eve Rickert set out on an adventure to publish a new book on polyamory that encompassed a wider variety of polyamorous relationship styles and sought to rid the mainstream polyamory discourse of hierarchical relationship styles. Speaking specifically to individuals who were already interested in polyamory, rather than proselytizing an

audience who knew nothing about polyamory, Veaux sought to provide a tangible ‘how to’ book that concretized the abstract concepts of polyamory he had been discussing on his website, morethantwo.com since the early 90s. Veaux had been blogging about polyamory from the viewpoints of the trials and tribulations one goes through when committing to ethical relationships with more than two people, writing from the perspective of an individual schooling their former selves on what not to do in a polyamorous relationship for optimal success. As prior literature on polyamory professed, most polyamorous relationships were couple-centric, and those respective partners were each other’s primaries, meaning they might be married and seeking to add more partners to their group, or they prioritize that particular person in some hierarchical scheme whether it be economic via sharing a household and resources, emotional via a closer bond spending several years in a relationship, or a vast array of other couple-centric styles. Any additional people added to the group would be secondary or tertiary, and so on and so forth. These traditional schemes of triads, quads, etc. would include other partners in a whole host of other ways of describing and visualizing the networks or ‘polycules’.

This was the traditional way of seeing polyamory as outlined in the several of the 42 nonfiction polyamory books on the market for the majority of the history of the movement. However, Franklin Veaux felt that these schematics fell prey to couple privilege and that a different wave of polyamory had shifted this way of thinking to a new paradigm that is situated much more closely to a fluid or queer way of relating. This new paradigm includes a larger population of individuals who come from a monogamous background and are getting their toes wet with polyamorous relationships, what Veaux refers to as the “second-wave” of polyamory, specifically influencing individuals via the more prominent featuring of polyamory awareness in the mass media (Veaux, 2014). Due to their inexperience in alternative relationships, Veaux

argues these newcomers are making a lot of mistakes about polyamory that can be avoided if their approach to polyamory is not in the traditional hierarchical sense, but rather adjusts for individual agency.

What is most notable about his book, *More Than Two*, however, is the use of the crowdfunding site Indiegogo to initiate a campaign for its production. With roughly 455 funders, Veaux and his partner/co-author Eve Rickert were able to raise close to \$23K in just a month for this project. Two of the largest donors were notable figures in the polyamory movement, Alan M. from the Polyamory in the Media blog, and Dr. Kenneth Haslam, who is responsible for the curation of the polyamory collection at the Kinsey Institute. Both of these backers agreed to mutually match the first \$6,000 the campaign raised. Leveraging the networking aspect of the polyamory community, the Indiegogo campaign offered incentives to its backers from other notable polyamory folks such as Dr. Elizabeth Sheff, writer of *The Polyamorists Next Door*, Christopher Ryan & Cacilda Jethá, authors of the book *Sex at Dawn*, Louisa Leontiades, author of *The Husband Swap*, as well as a host of other polyamorous-related paraphernalia such as charms, t-shirts, hats and more.

The success of the campaign provided Veaux with an opportunity to open his own sex-positive publishing house, *Thorntree Press*, located in Portland, Oregon emphasizing “relationships, love and sexuality, with a particular focus on non-traditional relationship models” (Indiegogo, 2015). *Thorntree Press* utilized Indiegogo once again to publish three more books in 2015, *Stories from the Polycule: Real Life in Polyamorous Families*, *The Husband Swap: A Memoir (second edition)*, and *The Game Changer: A Memoir*, the latter written by Veaux. Crowdfunding was opportune for this small publishing company to maintain a more creator-friendly contract and to provide higher royalties to its authors as the money for production costs,

editing, design, proofreading, printing and advertising is offset by the donations. Continuing this trend, Tikva Wolf, another prominent polyamory activist was able to crowdfund for publishing through *Thorntree* Press a coffee table book of her comic, *Kimchi Cuddles*, popular on *Facebook* as well as hosted on a blog. Wolf was able to raise approximately \$14,000 through 291 backers mid-2015.

For Veaux, however, crowdfunding doesn't work for just everyone. He points out that if you don't already have an established base of fans it doesn't work, and that success in raising funds is also contingent on having an established foundation of fans who will support what you are willing to do. Most notably, Veaux uses the crowdfunding site as an opportunity to gauge reader interest, and how many copies would potentially be sold based on the backers of the campaign, a "combination of market validation and funding in one" (Veaux, 2015) He aptly points out that traditional publishers don't pay their authors oftentimes beyond the advance, as the cost of for production and printing is initially covered by the publishing house, but those costs later coming out of royalties, leading the author down a non-profitable road if the book never sells. Thus the crowdfunding provides an opportunity for these costs to be paid upfront, and for the authors to receive proper compensation for their creative endeavors.

Veaux himself has a long history of being involved in the underground publishing scene, first gaining interest in college from his college roommate's involvement in Zines, and later finding himself publishing and/or co-publishing several small press magazines. In 2005, Veaux set out to navigate non-fiction publishing by purchasing a 'how to' book on how to publish a non-fiction book. He followed all the steps to a t, sending out a query letter, a proposed chapter outline, and writing sample chapters only to receive a huge pile of rejection letters from publishers, strangely enough, not wanting to publish a 'how to' book, but more interested in

publishing personal memoirs. Rather than sacrifice his creativity, Veaux tabled the project until he began seeing his partner, Eve Rickert, who also expressed interest in publishing on polyamory, and who also just happened to own her own science publishing company, Talk Science To Me. Thus, starting a small imprint to publish books without sacrificing authors' creativity, *Thorntree Press* was established to publish their first co-authored book, *More Than Two*, which has sold roughly 10-12k copies since 2015.

One of the seminal books of the polyamory movement, *The Ethical Slut*, also found itself in a similar predicament when trying to publish books related to alternative sexuality. One of the authors of the book, Janet Hardy, founded what is known today as *Greenery Press* in 1991 as there was difficulty in securing a printer for non-mainstream books. Hardy's partner, Jay Wiseman, was self-publishing a resource guide in the Bay Area called, *Bay Area Sexuality Resources Guidebook* and thus was able to steer distribution efforts in the right direction (Highlyman, 1997). At the time, perfect-bound books required a print run of 2,000 books and Hardy found difficulty in upgrading her spiral-bound quick-printed books as banks scoffed at her when seeking a loan for this venture. Instead, Hardy old school crowdfunded by reaching out to her newsletter subscribers to fund five perfect-bind books which afforded the press to become self-funding (Highlyman, 1997). *Greenery Press* to date has published over 100 books by top authors in the alternative sexuality circle; their mission statement emphasizing "publishing the best in responsible, sexy information about all kinds of consensual non-mainstream sexualities, including BDSM, crossdressing, polyamory, sex work and more" (Greenerypress.com).

The goal of *Thorntree* tells a similar story, their mission to not "just focus on polyamory, [but] to publish books about a wide range on non-traditional relationships, [seeing] a need for books that not a lot of people are interested in writing [such as] books about the intersection of

non-conventional relationships with the LGBTQ community, or the trans community” (personal communication, 2015). While Veaux reached out to *Greenery Press* with his own query letter, prior to starting *Thorn tree*, he still received a rejection letter. Despite his failed attempt, Veaux ventured on and now determines potentially successful authors as those who also have already established fan bases, who write well and who are also, more importantly, qualified to write on the subjects at hand— “we want to see that the writer has the reach to be able to engage people; that people are going to want to read their writing” (personal communication, 2015).

Continuing the Continuum of Sexuality: The Curation of the Dr. Kenneth Haslam, MD Polyamory Collection at *The Kinsey Institute*

Dr. Kenneth Haslam, a retired anesthesiologist, refers to himself as a ‘poly geezer,’ a term he invented to describe someone who identifies as polyamorous over the age of seventy. Given his age, he is an established figure in the polyamory community, having produced many workshops, lecture, and educational speaking engagements to create a larger awareness about multi-partner relationships. Haslam is a founding member, and former Vice President of *Unitarian Universalists for Polyamory Awareness*, as well as served as a board member on the *Institute for 21st Century Relationships*. He is also the author of *The Twelve Pillars of Polyamory*, is an active member of the *PLN*, and has been featured across many of the notable media venues mentioned in this project, as well as given several radio show interviews over the years.

Heavily active in the community, Haslam noted an increase in activity, which would ultimately lead to larger national recognition of the polyamory community as a social movement. In 2005 he created the Kenneth R. Haslam, MD Polyamory Archive Collection at *The Kinsey*

Institute, at Indiana University to preserve polyamory history for future historians. Inspired by Alfred Kinsey, and a talk he gave when Haslam was 17, at the *California Junior College* in Sacramento, California, in 1953. When Haslam accrued an estate large enough to consider donation after his passing, he wanted to support *The Kinsey Institute* because of Kinsey's contribution to sexuality discourse in the larger public sphere without guilt or shame. At the urging of the director of library archives at *The Kinsey Institute*, Liana Zhou, Haslam began collecting materials to be donate to the archive about polyamory. Since then he has been proactively working on collecting polyamory ephemera in order to digitize and document the history of polyamory, particularly as the pioneers of the movement are approaching their '70s and '80s. Since he was so active for so long, he reached out to many of the notable figures in the movement and in many cases, flew to their homes on the West Coast and dug through their basements and garages to acquire the raw paper materials of the early years.

Haslam's collection primarily includes material that dates pre-2000s, as he attributes the widespread availability of the Internet as fostering a larger movement than he can keep track of. Citing the earlier methods of connecting with polyamory folks through posted advertisements or word-of-mouth, Haslam points to the connectivity of the Internet as allowing more and more people to find each other in a medium other than something akin to a personal want ad. As the Internet is digitized, archiving material is a much easier endeavor, and once a year, beginning in the mid-2000s, Haslam would send a file to *The Kinsey Institute* of material he had saved from websites that he thought would be useful to archive. Since the explosion of polyamory, however, shortly thereafter, he has since stopped documenting these online materials, but still reaches out to activists and polyamory community leaders to submit their materials. For Haslam, preserving this history is important because of how fleeting someone's interest may be. He provides the

example of someone running a larger polyamory website for a few years, as in the early days of the Internet, and then losing interest, and subsequently letting all of the material on the website be deleted when the domains are not maintained. There are quite a few early Internet websites that center around polyamory that have been defunct for many years. In a similar fashion, Haslam, approaching his mid-80s, also has material in his filing cabinets that has not been A documented, and fears that some of the early leaders do as well, thus making these materials vulnerable to being trashed when their estate is cleaned out after their passing.

Because the archive is limited to material that has been donated by volunteers, mostly through channels of networks that Haslam is himself involved in, this limits this historical archive to the voices who have physical materials from the early years. As Haslam points out, many of the early leaders were highly educated, upper-class, and associated with alterative religious lifestyles, such as atheism and sacred sexuality. If the movement was inclusive of such a small segment of people who ran in these circles, then by proxy the material that represents the earlier years, particularly pre-2000, is only representative of those who had access to resources to create this type of content, or had the tools and skillsets to generate a larger network to reach out to. Conversations around time and commitment are important to add as participation in an alternative lifestyles most definitely segregates a large portion of the population who were simply working to get by, and not necessarily devoting much time to side projects for these organizations, or developing their sexualities by learning about anything beyond the traditional model offered in heteronormative discourses.

CHAPTER 10:
**INTIMATE PRIVILEGE: AT THE INTERSECTION OF RACE, CLASS, GENDER,
ABILITY AND SEXUALITIES AMONGST POLYAMORY MEDIA**

As mainstream media are dominated by white voices, and ownership of said media also heavily dominated by white cis males, it is no surprise then that alternative media, and the circulation of particular voices even in alternative non-mainstream channels, is often dominated by white voices. Despite polyamory being a subordinated and peripheral sexuality in contrast to mononormative relationship styles and heteronormative sexuality, the majority of poly media practitioners have certain opportunities, skillsets, and networks that privilege their ability to speak to a larger mass of people and, more importantly, be recognized and visible in these mainstream, yet peripheral, networks. Per previous academic research (Rust, 2003; Keener, 2004; Sheff & Hammers, 2011), polyamorous individuals tend to skew white, upper class, and have more academic degrees than average.

Expanding the digital divide conversation beyond just access to new media technologies, particularly as polyamory communities tend to mass on the Internet, a new thread of conversation needs to be discussed regarding the intersection of race, class, gender, ability, and sexualities as it pertains to visibility in these alternative networks. There is a tendency for individuals to conflate the radical and alternative possibilities of new media as compared to traditional mass media, yet underscore the visibility given to those who do not have the know-how or funds/patronage from their networks to create blogs, podcasts, e-books, etc. that can gain enough traction to be considered a larger part of the activist network. Well-known polyamory practitioners tend to link to particular individual websites and organizations that are already well solidified in the polyamory network, as is evidenced from a simple scrolling through of each respective sites resources pages. What is not visible, however, are the smaller alternative media

outlets that rarely see any diversity of subjects, or minimally touch on the subject of intersectionality in the polyamory community. Certainly there are links to articles that discuss this disparity amongst the collections on these websites; and perhaps a podcast or blog post will mention the need for more awareness and conversation surrounding intersectional identities in the polyamory community, yet for a movement that has been around for roughly 32 years, and has been covered in both modern/traditional and postmodern/alternative media there is still an overwhelming presence of white, highly educated, and affluent individuals who dominate these spaces.

Nathan Rambukkana, author of *Fraught Intimacies: Non/Monogamy in the Public Sphere* outlines the discursive limitations that circulate amongst non-monogamy discourses that either one, create a normative framing of ‘non/monogamy’, and/or two, that create a utopian enlightenment discourse of the possibilities of polyamory as a radical relationship model over other types of non-monogamies. The latter discourse lacking reflexivity that such a utopia might not be a possibility for all those identifying under the non-monogamy/polyamory umbrella (Rambukkana, 2015). Specifically harnessing spatial discourses that draw our attention to boundaries and occupation of privileges Rambukkana (2015) draws on Habermas’ public sphere theory as a battleground in which,

the notion of the public sphere has this pride of place because it’s a way to conceptualize space and discourse together – a way to discuss the politics of space and the poetics of discourse at one and the same time – and because it offers a nuanced approach to unpacking the role of publics with respect to intimacy generally and non/monogamy specifically (26).

In this contested arena, Rambukkana argues that privilege itself takes up space, so much so that it provides those who are in subordinated positions– particularly in this study as it pertains to cultural resources such as access to media, resources, skillsets, etc. to produce

polyamory discourses through polyamory produced alternative media– with very limited or no space to be visible; this invisibility simultaneously bolstering the visibility of those who do hold these privileges, an act that Rambukkana identifies as an “artificially inflated advantage” (29). He furthers his argument by drawing on the implications that heteronormativity as a concept has on exploring the roots of these advantages by pointing to three specific attributes: the systemic and structural aspects of oppression, rather than the reduction of oppression on the individual level; by addressing the dialectical relationship in which normative subjects are produced by these systems; and lastly, by identifying the ways in which oppression may be carried out by these normative subjects unbeknownst to them via circulation and reification of particular normativities (e.g. polynormative discourses and elevated sexualities) (Rambukkana, 2015, 34).

Visibility is extended into this conversation as Rambukkana points to the intimate logic of marriage occupying the total space of marriage discourse (e.g. “the married couple”), and illuminating the exclusionary language of just two people in the “husband and wife dyad,” and the relational aspect of marriage as “the traditional family” (37). He specifically points to the absence, or lack (Fuss, 1991) of space to occupy in this normative configuration by other sexual relationship models. Simply put, traditional marriage is no longer traditional when there are more than two husbands or more than two wives, as exhibited in fundamental Mormonism’s models of polyandry and polygyny, respectively. Thus, polygamy is not legally or symbolically recognized through discourse by the state due to the privilege that traditional marriage discourse occupies in the intimate public sphere. However, despite the subordination or lack of sanctioning of polygamy in the United States, there are still layers of privilege to be found in polygamy, most obvious the subjugation and objectification of woman, as polygyny is most often practiced by white, able bodied, cis males who are bound by the laws of their faith first and foremost .

Therefore, despite “the lack” (Fuss, 1991) in the larger public sphere by way of legal recognition, intimate privilege is still at play and affords an analytical opportunity by describing the complex relationships found in intersecting identities. More importantly, this draws our attention to the ability of these privileged identities to mobilize particular resources ala Bourdieu’s differing forms of capital—social, cultural, and economic, which then in effect oppress those who do not have access to or the ability to accrue these types of resources.

In an article discussing activism and new media, Kahn & Kellner (2004) point out that while online spaces do provide opportunities for a diversity of voices to gain traction, the authors are apt to discuss the responsibility of critical scholars to educate individuals on “the cultural and subcultural literacies that ultimately amount to the skills that will enable them to participate in the ongoing struggle inherent in cultural politics;” ‘them’ referring to those individuals who are seeking visibility, but may not gain substantial recognition even in alternative political spheres due to their sparse capital as mentioned above.

An alternative sphere, not excluded from the larger intimate sphere, but on the periphery is argued by Fraser (1992) as a space for multiple subaltern publics or counterpublics to congregate. Applying an intersectional lens, as well as considering the intimate privileges of those doing the speaking through dominated spaces in polyamory media discourses would bring front and center the negotiation and possible hierarchizing and privileging of one’s overlapping identities, specifically in instances in which these identities literally intersect in an almost Venn Diagram. Further, trying to conceptualize how populated or occupying these places may be for these intersectional counter discourses to gain visibility within the larger, more homogenous polyamory spherical, complicates the strides for inclusivity within the community. The logic of intimacy, as Rambukkana (2015) argues, has to exclude these voices to maintain its dominance

in the subaltern spheres throughout “physical/concrete, social/cultural/, and symbolic/conceptual” spaces (37). All three of these spaces are useful for application to the analysis of the tenets of new social or lifestyle movement characteristics found in the media produced by the polyamory community in order to conceptualize the ways in which identities intersect not just with monogamy or non-monogamy, but in a term Rambukkana coins as non/monogamy to illustrate the dialectical relationship of occupier and occupied.

Much like the @ symbol that is added by Sandra Soto (2010) to the political identifiers Chicano & Chicana to form Chican@, a way to draw our attention to the relationship between race and sexuality, by demarcating non/monogamy with a backslash we can gain a greater understanding of the boundaries, fluidity, and confines identities are held captive to, as well as are able to make visible their constructions. To suggest that any identity is thought of as a monolith ignores the intersectional aspects given to any polyamorous individual who does not fit the preconceived mold of straight, cis, able bodied and affluent that is so often portrayed in academic polyamory research, and in mainstream media representations.

Other influential figure heads should also heed the dialectical relationship that non/monogamy has with intimate privileges, however, mainstream discourses surrounding the diversity in the polyamory community both in the mainstream media, alternative polyamory media, as well as at poly-related conferences is still at a minimum. The *Showtime* show, *P:M&D*'s producer, Natalia Garcia is a person of color, however, her efforts and public justification for casting the all-white cast flattens the dimensions of intersectionality present in the polyamory community. In the casting call for the second season Garcia makes a very specific request for a certain type of polyamorous person: “I'm looking for polyamorous families that are charismatic, healthy, active; can be unmarried but practicing poly (don't all have to live

together); bisexuality is welcome in both male and female partners; and are open to sharing all aspects of their love lives. Families in Canada are welcome as well.” (*Polyamory In The News*, 2012). The language of charisma, health, and activity all place limitations on the lived realities of polyamory identities. If one suffers from any mental health issues, obesity or overweight issues, lacks the resources to purchase healthy foods or join a gym, then they are automatically excluded from the casting from the get go. Garcia received criticism from within the community due to this flattening; commenters pointing out that despite her efforts to reach out to people of color to be included on the show, Garcia glosses over these individual’s reasons for not wanting ‘to come forward’ as simply not wanting the public exposure. She fails to address intimate privilege in this instance by ignoring the systemic and intersectional oppressions faced by people of color in the public sphere.

At a recent conference on non-monogamies attended by notable non-monogamy academics and community activists, when giving a presentation regarding the most visible polyamorous practitioners, the inevitable intersectional conversation arose from the audience regarding methods of reaching research subjects that don’t have access to traditional or online media, or have the mass to gain a greater visibility to be viable projectable subjects in social science research. Some of the attendees interjected to ‘correct’ the statements regarding the marked lack of diversity in the movement by suggesting that diversity is covered by Robyn Trask, editor of the *Loving More* magazine, a white cis female, due to her growing up in a ‘black’ neighborhood, and having appeared on a few black viewer-oriented radio programs. There is a great tendency for statements like these to be made that somehow alleviate the uncomfortable space that race conversations place white individuals in, thus obscuring the actual representation and lived experiences of people of color in the polyamory movement by moving

toward a conversation about stigmatization and fear of fetishization, rather than addressing the actual systemic issues intersectional identities are burdened with on a daily basis.

Social Media Communities: Ron Young & *The Black and Poly Facebook Group*

Ron Young, hailing from California, runs the *Black and Poly (B&P) Facebook* group founded by himself and Kato Cook. The *B&P* group leads those seeking out other black and polyamorous individuals into a lively community, plentiful in communication and conversation, but more importantly, as a resource for navigating the polyamory landscape in a sex-positive, ethical and intersectional space. The group's mission statement is as follows: "*B&P* is a blog where we ask the questions and share the stories that too often go unexamined because of fear, or shame. Our goal is to provide an eclectic, culturally rich environment, where people can come together to socialize, learn, and share common interests related to polyamorous living" can be found on a corresponding blog, as well as within the pages of the group. As Young states "Our organization is one that supports and educates people who are entering into the lovestyle, and those that love them; it's not restricted to those of black people or people of color, we do this in an egalitarian style with fairness and equality for everyone" (personal communication, 2015). The egalitarian aspect centers around non-hierarchical models, specifically the organization not supporting polygamy or swinging, and some BDSM relationship styles as in those models there is a privileging of a dominant person, the objectification of an individual(s), or as with polygyny, a male who views his partners as property, or vice versa with a female in polyandry. While Young acknowledges that polyfidelitous relationships do fall under the polyamory umbrella, he is more apt to refer to these as monogamous +1 relationships due to the fidelitous nature of the bounded group. He likens this to the relationship falling to pieces if anyone had intimate

relationships with any of those out of the group, similar to someone cheating in a monogamous relationship. Because the *B&P* group supports individuals of color coming into the polyamorous lifestyle, Young and the members in the group seek out relationships of mutual respect specifically regarding the absence of control in any form.

The group is private, that is until you request to be added, a process that is not as simple as one of the members clicking approve. There is a vetting process, in which a select few are voted into administrative roles to determine entrance into the group to ensure the safety of those in the group from trolls or bots. Copying information from the threads, including pictures of members is strictly forbidden as outlined by the confidentiality agreement, and the group subscribes to the standards of *Facebook's* policies and terms regarding pornographic or salacious material. After you are approved, the admins request that you read the welcome letter, fill out the membership survey, and post about yourself within 24 hours of joining the group. The membership survey consists of only five questions– 1) Who are you (Age, Gender & Orientation)? 2) What is polyamory to you? 3) What brought you to polyamory? 4) What is your relationship dynamic/mapping (GF/BF, Married, Single)? 5) How did you hear about this group? –and maintains a working thread file so individuals can peruse this information about other members of the group. Additional resources are found within the group files such as Poly 101, terminology, geographical meetup locations, resources to find representations of polyamory in film and in books, professional resource lists, and a black polyamorous business directory, to name a few. The welcome letter addresses rules of conduct, specifically pointing out that the group is not a dating site, polygamy or swinger group, but allows posts at certain times in specific threads throughout the week for individuals to post information akin to a personal ad: Photo Fridays, The Hot Seat, The Water Cooler, 3-4-Thursday, Talk To Me.

The *B&P* group seeks connections offline as well, encouraging members to join other's offline through the Meetup.com groups. Because of the importance of solidifying connections 'in real life,' there is an initiative and orientation to train individuals interested in starting their own Meetup.com groups by harnessing the success of the already established *B&P* Meetup groups. A section of the *Facebook* group offers a thread for individuals to volunteer for these coordinator positions, which aids those in charge of training the coordinators in contacting prospective volunteers.

Due to the limited visibility of groups/organizations/media produced or created by polyamorous people of color, Young, is careful in setting the parameters for the organization with regards to both internal and external publics. Internally, the mission surrounds community. Young points to the *B&P Facebook* group as a place for a 'soft landing' for those who are transitioning into the new lifestyle. He found himself around four years ago at San Francisco Pride and noticed some individuals walking around with t-shirts that said polyamory on them. This elicited a conversation between him and his then partner about whether polyamory was something only white people did, despite himself identifying as polyamorous at the time. Seeking an answer to this larger question, Young posted on a prominent Polyamory *Facebook* group and received unhelpful, yet typical responses such as 'we don't see color' which fails to address the lived experience he had just encountered at Pride. Ignoring intersectional identities within the post-racial framework is something that is often encountered in spaces of alternative lifestyles, which solidifies the further need to consider intimate privilege even in safe spaces of perceived tolerance and acceptance. His initiatives in the *B&P* group are to build this sense of place for those who feel ashamed, fearful, or closeted, and to dispel the myth that only white

people 'do' poly by harnessing the community aspect of the black and other people of color membership.

After receiving non-self-reflective and less than critical answers from the larger polyamory community, Young faced backlash when starting the *B&P* group by those who felt that the separation of polyamory into racial groups was keeping white people out of the conversation. Again, this backlash points to the occupier's power positioning even in the counterpublic (Fraser, 1992) space. Maintaining the security of those, and visibly recognizing that the experiences of people of color in the poly community are variably different than those in the white community was not seen as a justifiable position and a lot of this discourse regarding the separation from the black and white polyamory community is still maintained today.

Young has tried his hand at *Indiegogo* crowdfunding efforts to raise funds for a *B&P* website, and during this fundraising efforts has received offers of help from the white polyamory community. However, because Young understands his role as the unofficially appointed leader of the black and poly community he felt that he needed to pass on some of these opportunities as it felt like a handout or some welfare assistance. Young holds true to the desires of the black and polyamory community to be solely responsible for building their community, and the narratives/discourses surrounding their community from within, rather than from occupiers in these spaces. As a member of the *PLN*, Young is one of few people of color who are a part of this activist network so while maintaining a separate counterpublic community with the *B&P Facebook* group, he still maintains connections with the external publics of other polyamory activists. Invited by the organizers of *Atlanta Poly Weekend*, a weekend conference held in Atlanta known for its large African American population, recommended Young to apply to be a part of the organization. Because of this notable position in the polyamory community as a voice

of the black and poly group, Young has been invited to sit on boards that make decisions regarding organizing events and conferences, but is apt to only agree to these opportunities if he is able to sit down at the table as equals, rather than as someone on the fringe. As he points out, being polyamorous without any other identity qualifiers already places you on the fringe, once you add another identity such as race, and then on top of that perhaps you identify in the LGBTQ spectrum you may find yourself in a position on the fringe of the fringe of a larger fringe group.

For Young, asking permission to do anything is qualification for his exit from participating in certain events, particularly as he feels the black community has always been placed to be in a position of asking instead of being able to just do. As the organizer and voice of the black and poly movement, Young asserts that he always has to be cognizant of what his community is saying, but also how he portrays that to the rest of the world outside of his poly network. He uses the example of Chris Rock as the face of black entertainment, and any action that Chris Rock may do in the public eye is then projected onto the whole black entertainment community, whereas a white individual is able to conduct their affairs in the public eye with scrutiny very often only coming down on themselves, not the white population as a whole. This places Young in a very precarious position of trying to speak on behalf of black polyamorous people, but also recognizing that his beliefs and the community's beliefs might not always align, but it is up to him to set the better example as his behavior will reflect on them.

Initially, Young was faced with a lot of people of color in the swinging lifestyle congregating in the *Facebook* group and having these “sexual sinful chocolate Sundays” where people were convening outside of the group to gain new sexual partners. Not wanting *B&P* to be associated with orgy meetups, Young set out to create *B&P* sanctioned meetings, organized via Meetup.com, that were more akin to PTA meetings and Church conferences, spaces where

family was welcome and the chastity of the church space meant that commitment, honesty, and ethical relationships were at the forefront of the conversation. Harnessing the symbolism found in attending church on Sundays, Young chose to organize the meetup groups as chapters that met at the same time every Saturday, with a select topic of the month that would eliminate the ambiguity of attending a meetup that was disorganized for newcomers. So far there are chapters across the country in most major cities, one opening in the London and Toronto last summer.

The format of the meeting is the same in all chapters with informal introductions from those attending, followed by the leaders, and then an introduction to the community coordinator is made with the topic of the month. Community coordinators across the country are responsible for maintaining consistency throughout all the *B&P* meetups. Coordinators are either nominated or volunteer for the position and are trained by Young and his colleagues on proper procedure, even signing liability contracts in case absolving the *B&P* organization from any hiccups that may occur outside of the standard meeting agendas. Leveraging the community aspect and the ease of event planning via Meetup.com, the *B&P* meetup groups organize camping trips, board game nights, and will even come together to support school car washes bolstering the connectivity of the community. Meetup.com was chosen as a way to ‘bring’ polyamory to the black community by honing in on events that were accessible to those who may be on limited incomes and are not able to fly *out* to larger national polyamory conferences or retreats.

Young differentiates the organization of the *B&P* community from a cultural perspective, pointing to the need to recognize cultural differences among the different identities present in the polyamory community at large. One specific example provided centers around interracial couples where one member of the polyamorous triad might not have as much disposable income as the others so might not be able to participate in all the extracurricular activities as their more

affluent partners. Another scenario that Young tries to address in conversation with the group is with regards to coming out to friends, co-workers, and family members and the intimate privilege that spaces like coming out of the closet inhibit those whose housing may depend on conservative religious family member, or a boss that might not feel comfortable knowing the relationship orientation of his employee. If the other members of these pods or triads ‘out’ the person of color because they don’t want to carry the burden of shame in their relationships they are overlooking their own occupier status in the lives of those who are disenfranchised from the normal every day lived experiences. Grassroots efforts and advertising for the local meetups at community centers and church basements reaches people of color in an environment that is part of the community, instead of a place that is unfamiliar and far away. Young does not see the *B&P* group and community needing PR opportunities or promotion from other polyamory organizations as he is more interested in harnessing the growth of the community from inside, rather than trying to educate the external publics about polyamory, and even further, about being a person of color who is also polyamorous.

Outside of the community, Young points to the struggle that people of color have had to face when trying to come together with the larger polyamory movement. He finds that even in past interviews questions are posed to him which position the *B&P* community in a space of asking permission to join the polyamory community at large. Because of this framing, the space of the *B&P* community is already occupied by the larger discourses circulating about polyamory individuals, and thus protecting the venues in which *B&P* people can gather independently is of utmost importance. Young points to the cultural and community differences, specifically as it pertains to the African American community and polyamory. He explains,

We’re not in a bubble. The whole idea between *B&P* supporting individuals coming into polyamory [is situated] a lot of times [where] members of the black community, and

people of color, they live and work and interact with each other in their own communities, so there are so few in our community, or I thought, that live in this lovestyle of polyamorous. So the idea of wanting to explore this lovestyle always brought up this place where we thought we had to get on a bus or plane to drive somewhere outside the community, and we thought when we get there to some polyamorous event are there going to be people of color? (personal communication, 2015).

Very often the larger polyamory conferences and retreats are not held in cities with populations comprised of people of color, or even accessible from an economic standpoint for people of color to take time off from work, spend money on a plane ticket, a hotel, a car rental, on top of the conference fees and eating. As Young notes in an analogy, if people from the white community only had the opportunity to get money from a job in Detroit, find a partner in Detroit, and have to go to work every day to Detroit because that was their only option it would become frustrating. Detroit used as an example based on the larger demographics of people of color residing there, and the alienation himself and others in the black community have felt leaving their own communities to find a common lifestyle in spaces they are not comfortable in.

Furthering this uncomfortability, Young points to his own experiences attending the larger conferences, breaking down the interactions a person of color may experience at a conference attended by mostly white polyamorists. One example is the misperception that if one may be open to alternative sexual lifestyles they are accepting of other identities as well, specifically acceptance of other races. Thus a polyamorous person of color may face individuals at conventions who discriminate against people of color; another experience is the fetishization by some individuals as the 'Nubian Princess' or the 'Mandingo Warrior,' and being approached by these individuals at a conference to be thought of as play partners. Young notes, however, then when it comes time to form deeper relationships with these individuals, they are no longer interested in their company, only when they are available as sexual play partners are they viewed as exotic and worth spending time with. Certainly this is not the polyamory community as a

whole, however, when spending the capital to attend these events, and traveling outside of your community and subsequent comfort zone, having a good time is minimized by these negative interactions, and speaking up at a conference that is enjoyed by the greater white poly community who do not face these struggles is perceived as being a complainer (personal communication, 2015).

These disjointed experiences from the larger discourses that circulate about inclusivity at polyamory conferences and retreats can be illuminated by tracing the history of the black and polyamory movement. Unlike the leaders of the larger polyamory movement who were involved in resource sharing communes, and had opportunities to experiment with multiple lovestyles in the 60s and 70s, the black and poly movement has a much shorter history than this. During this time of ‘free love’ black individuals were fighting for their basic civil rights, trying to land jobs that could pay for more than the minimum, and had very little time to think about opening up their relationship to include others. Young really only started to notice the black and poly community coming together a few years ago, and once he started the *Facebook* group saw an influx of individuals who knew what needed to get done, and knew how to fill those roles to create a space of connecting. This is evidenced by the creation of a black and poly flag that fly the colors, red, black and green to signify the connectivity to the black community at large. There are dozens of polyamory-related symbols that exist in the poly community, and the flag is just another symbol to represent the diversity of voices that actually exist but may not be heard.

Because of this constant battle to be recognized, Young points to the black community having strong matriarchal heads of households who fight tooth and nail to keep their young sons on the right path toward success and demonize the women their sons are interested in for fear they will be taken advantage of, and tell their daughters they don’t need to depend on a man to

get them through life. The same can be said for black fathers and daughters, where the daughter is taught to stay away from young black men. As Young points out, in the black community there is a prominent, 'don't ask, don't tell' narrative that only provides two relationship models based on this one-person head-of-household provider role— one of a fidelitous monogamous married couple, backed by the influence of the church, and the other as someone who is cheating on their partner. The third opportunity that polyamory provides the black community extends these options and creates a different environment for learning and shifting one's sexual paradigm to a more egalitarian ideology that harnesses the resources from several heads-of-household so that those in the community do not need to struggle as hard to get by, to get access to the resources that can help them survive and succeed.

As incarceration rates of black men are on the rise, and fatality rates for young black men are alarmingly high, the number of available men for church-going women to marry decreases exponentially, and some woman are told by their preachers that they may never marry. Polyamory then becomes a growing movement amongst the black community as it provides an alternative to this one man/one woman relationship model. De facto polygamy (Wing, 2000) is increasing in these communities where one man has many girlfriends to satisfy the low male to female ratio. For Young, creating a space for polyamorists of color creates a secure environment for vulnerability, something that is a long time coming for the black community. He seeks not segregation from the larger polyamory movement, but acceptance of a safe space, a space where they don't have to ask permission and can sort out models that work best for them in an ethical, responsible and egalitarian manner.

Platform for a Plurality of Voices: Kevin Patterson and *Poly Role Models* Blog

Kevin Patterson, an avid attendee of the *Poly Living* conferences in Philadelphia, and practice of polyamory since 2002, is the creator of *Poly Role Models*, a *Tumblr* blog initiated in April of 2015 that features polyamorous individuals who are leaders in the community. The product of a personal screw-up in his own polyamorous relationship, Patterson got the idea to create the blog when his friends pointed out that despite having been working at polyamory for quite some time, he was still able to learn from his mistakes. Seeing the silver living, Patterson felt that showcasing the screw-ups of other polyamorous people, and the ways in which they were able to overcome these problems made them, in a sense, role models for others to follow in living and learning from their own mistakes. He defines role models as the following: ‘somebody who is practicing successful polyamory, despite, and sometimes because of the mistakes they’ve made... being free to fail, and being free to get better.’

Taking influence from the popular *Facebook* group, *Humans of New York*, Patterson modeled his blog after the diversity of voices in the polyamory community, specifically as he saw that most mainstream representations of polyamory that are readily circulating typically feature that same configuration— cis gender, heterosexual white male, with two bisexual white females, all traditionally attractive, all in a closed triad. The *Poly Role Model* blog is described as a blog that is “spotlighting the perfectly-flawed, wonderfully unique people and relationships that make up polyamory!” (Polyrolemodels.*Tumblr.com*, 2016). His former girlfriend, Frisky Fairy, suggested he use *Tumblr* as a platform, a website/blog well-known for advocating for social justice issues. For Patterson, online is a safe space for people of color who are polyamorists do have a sense of privacy and anonymity, especially when they are not out to their family members. He points out that many of these groups and subgroups are closed to non-

members, or privatized through invite only, which allows key communications to take place online for people who do not live in the same neighborhood, or attend the same meetups, to talk about their experiences without having to do it in a public forum like a message board or public group *Facebook* feed.

Honing on the technological aspect of website analytics, Patterson posts a new role model every Wednesday at 8pm Eastern standard time to generate as many viewers as possible for the sight. His main career is as a technical writer and instructional designer, and his role in the community continues to grow as more and more polyamorous individuals are featured on the site, gaining him more visibility in the community. Whenever a role model is relevant to a particular polyamory community, Patterson will post a link to the interview in several polyamory *Facebook* groups, such as *Black and Poly*, *Polyamory*, *Poly with Children*, *Intersectional Monogamy*, or *Polydelphia*, a *Facebook* group specific to the local Philadelphia region of which Patterson is a member. Patterson finds himself straying toward one of the main polyamory groups over the *Intersectional Polyamory* group because of his own personal politics. He points out that his personality and passion for diversity compels him to ‘school’ someone if they post something that is distasteful or racially charged, as a way of educating that individual on certain issues he finds important. The *Intersectional Non-Monogamy Facebook* group, for Patterson, is a highly moderated safe-space, where proper pronoun usage is monitored, and little discussion happens around experiential polyamory, rather it functions as a place for people to discuss the political aspects of identity in the abstract. Patterson points out that if he would comment on some of the discussions in the way he typically responds he would immediately be expelled from the group. He points out, however, that these types of spaces are important for certain members off the community to have, and to have ownership of, which also affords a respect across the

spectrum of the ways in which people conduct themselves in conversations about polyamory online.

Given the marked lack of diversity in the community, Patterson makes an effort to feature a multiplicity of polyamorous individuals, and encourages people to nominate role models for the blog if they feel there a certain voice that is missing from the conversation. Because his template is the same for all of the role models, Patterson simply sends the questionnaire via email to his interviewee, they return the information at their leisure which is then posted on the *Tumblr* blog. The eight questions cover the basics, what does your model of polyamory look like, what have you struggled with in polyamory and how have you overcome it, but also includes a question at the end that allows the interviewee to self-promote any groups, projects, websites, blogs or projects they are working on. After about four or five interviews Patterson made some adjustments to the blog, including an anonymous ‘Cautionary Poly’ column, that allows users to post about their most horrific screw-up in their polyamory relationships, but more importantly, the question, “What self-identities are important to you? How do you feel like being polyamorous intersects with or affects these identities?” was added to address the impact that intersectional identities have on their relationship model.

However, intersectionality is also a subjective term, and not everyone showcases every slice of their identity under this umbrella. As Patterson found out, after one of his readers emailed him asking about any role models that struggle with Autism, he posted publicly on the site asking if there was anyone who would want to discuss their experiences in this manner. As it turned out, one individual that had agreed to the interview, a person name Andrea, had posted on their own blog about their struggles with polyamory and Autism, almost immediately after sending off their interview responses to Patterson, but never mentioning Autism directly in the

Poly Role Models interview. Because Patterson encourages cross-promotion of his blog with all the interview subject's own personal projects which he in turn promotes, *Poly Role Models* was re-blogged by Andrea on their own *Tumblr* site, with a personal post about Autism and polyamory. Patterson felt that this helped generate a larger conversation about identity, as well as was able to provide an experience and story for the audience member who had asked about polyamory and Autism, bridging that gap in representation. While he does reach out to some members of the community, or through the networks of notable figures in the community, often times people will send him contacts to feature, such as Eve Rickert, co-author of *More Than Two*, who sent him a list of approximately seven people who would fit his blog. When the content for the blog is reliant upon people returning these interviews, that is where control of who is featured is less consistent, mostly because email inboxes get full, or people forget to contribute to something that is outside their paying jobs. So while not perfect, attempts at including a multitude of voices are made, but limited by technological and personal constraints. Patterson also allows interview subjects to use an anonymous avatar if they are concerned about the publicity they might receive or being outed to publics they are not interested in them knowing about their lives.

Because Patterson has made a concerted effort to showcase the diversity of not only people in the polyamory community, but also the diversity of ways of 'doing' polyamory from varied model styles, he has recently found himself on a brief speaking tour, giving a workshop on diversity, intersectionality, inclusion, and representation in the polyamory community. Hailing from the East Coast, Patterson has spoken in New Haven, Connecticut, which gained attention from the organizers of *CatalystCon* (CCON) Midwest, a sex-positive convention seeking to change the way that we talk about and treat sexuality in our society, held in Illinois, as

well as the *Poly Living* conferences in Philadelphia and Denver, respectively. He is currently in talks with speaking at Poly Toronto, a Canadian polyamory non-profit, community-run, community led group. The workshop description is as follows:

The people who make up polyamory are often loud and proud when it comes to feminism. They have lots to say when it comes to issues within the queer communities. Unfortunately, we're woefully silent on issues of race...to the point where some of our local communities are all but devoid of people of color. This discussion is about the importance of diversifying polyamory in the mainstream, within our own communities, and especially within our hearts and minds. The goal is to discover why diversity matters, construct ways to foster it, and brainstorm what to do when you encounter it.

While race is just one of the factors discussed in Patterson's workshop, he also covers disability, sexuality, gender, and nationality as contributing factors in one's identity formation. Patterson himself identifies as African American and has firsthand experiences due to the lack of awareness in the polyamory community of the stigmatization that is placed on the non-white minority in the community. While he notes that there is an increase in people of color at the *Poly Living Philadelphia* conference this year—possibly due to the self-promotion of his intersectionality workshop in spaces in which polyamory people of color visit online—there are still instances in which people in the community are not aware of the ways race impacts someone's experiences on a daily basis. When discussing the *Black and Poly Facebook* group at this conference, Patterson noted that a white individual in the audience felt quite uncomfortable with this separate space from the larger community, asking why there wasn't a 'White and Poly' group. He replied to this person that they were currently attending the white and poly group, they had paid a significant fee to attend this conference. He argues, "if you're not actively trying to be inclusive, you're passively trying to be exclusive, and unfortunately not a lot of people really accept that" (personal communication, 2016). For Patterson, inviting people of color to attend a conference is not enough, instead, he points out that actually going to talk to people of color

about their experiences, including them in conversations, and having joint events is a priority to increased diversity and representation in the community. Discussing *Showtime's P:M&D* reality television show, Patterson does not point to the actor's on the show to fix the problem of a lack of diversity, rather he posits that it is the job of the producers or casting directors to find people of color to portray on the show. He notes, however, the job of more accurate and diverse representation is up to everyone. While he himself might not be a misogynist, he feels that as his role in a group of men who might be making misogynist comments that he needs to step up and correct their comments until a woman who has had those misogynist experiences can step in, or join the conversation and manage what is being said; similarly, he feels that it is up to white polyamorists to also jump into conversations about inclusion and diversity in spaces where people of color are absent and also take note of how white the voices in that space are, and why there are not more inclusive conversations taking place. For Patterson, while he cannot be at every conversation that meeting or conference organizers have, he feels that the results of these conferences, and the continued small attendance and representation of people of color is indicative that something more needs to be done.

As an African American, Patterson has found himself being the token black guy out of 30-40 people at many polyamory functions, despite Philadelphia having a large presence of African Americans in the city (44.1% black, 26.3% other people of color, per the 2014 Census). Very often he will find that his wife, and the two people he has invited make up the racial minority population at events that he has attended. When Patterson first began dating women outside of his primary relationship, he found himself dating a lot of monogamous women of color; after deciding to make the switch to only dating people who were practicing ethical non-monogamy, he found that the pool of women available that he would date were predominately

white women, because of the lack of diversity in the community. He points to mainstream media representations of white individuals participating in activities such as mountain climbing or surfing, and notes that if he only sees white individuals represented as doing these things he doesn't feel that those activities are then opportunities for him to participate in. Paralleling this with polyamory, he argues that if representations and the voices heard in the polyamory community are only of a white population, then there is this belief that that is only something white people do, and he himself is thus excluded. He discusses the value of the role model blog in increasing these representations,

So I'm able to put it out there, this is stuff that people of color do, this is something that trans people, do this something that gender non-conforming people on the autism spectrum do....if I can shed the light on a handful of people who felt like this [polyamory] is how I feel, but that it wasn't something that black folks did, but then [they] saw Rob and Renee's profile, or Ron Young and Dirty Lola's profile and said, 'okay, well they're doing it, maybe I can do it, too' (personal communication, 2016).

His own preparation for the workshop included reaching out to other people of color in the polyamory community, attending black and poly meetings in Washington, D.C., and taking note of the creative process of other presenters at conferences he attended. Thus including the experiences of myriad polyamorous people of color was important to discuss their relationship to fetishization, 'othering', tokenism, and how they have been a stamp on someone's 'ethnicity passport'. Patterson also brings geography and space into his conversations, noting the number of people of color in a room, where everyone sits, and how someone contributes to a conversation based on this positionality. His workshops encourage interaction from audiences to articulate their own experiences to the group, and he has even found a few workshops ending with some attendees crying because they hadn't realized the impact their taken-for-granted positionality may have on someone else in the community. He noted, "with racism, with misogyny, homophobia, and transphobia, people want to believe the myth of the big bad. People

want to believe that because they're not wearing a Klan hood and burning crosses on peoples lawn that racism is someone else's problem" (personal communication, 2015). Drawing on his own experiences as the only black person at the party, he notes that many of the people these were only interested in engaging him in conversation about his blackness, or how they dated the same black girl, or how they had a black co-worker. In this example he says that while they have felt they were welcoming, their conversation was solely around the part of him that marked his difference, in this case his race, which kept him at arm's length.

Patterson points to the efforts of Ron Young in creating safe spaces that allow polyamory people of color to talk about experiences that affect them differently than the community at large. He posits that him and Young are different sides of the same coin, and he is trying to then connect those people in that safe space to people in the larger community, in a platform that highlights not just people of color, but differences across a larger spectrum, in a more outward facing direction for representation to the whole community, and to provide narratives that those outside those communities can learn about.

Intersectional Polyamory Representations

A previous study (Hurson, 2013b, unpublished manuscript) looks at intersectionality among two of the most prominent polyamory-related series, *Showtime's P:M&D*, and *YouTube* web series, *Family*. There is slightly more diversity on *Family*, and we are first introduced to individuals of different races at A 'poly potluck' meetup. Attending this meeting, the only individuals in minority races are an African American woman, an Asian woman, and an Indian man. The Indian man does have a one-liner in the group discussion, but no other non-White

characters do. The diversity diminishes as the rest of the series continues, and none of the people in the triad have non-White partners.

In one episode in the series there is an Asian character that shows up as a potential lover for the main character Ben. She has very little screen time, shown at the triad's home, kissing Ben in another scene, and giving multiple people haircuts. Later, it is revealed that the character was actually hired by Eliza, the woman producing the polyamory family documentary, as a way to make the main woman character, Gemma, jealous. In this instance, the minority character could be viewed as the deviant and undermining character, trying to lure Ben away from his polyamorous relationship (Hurson, 2013b). This is supported when the Asian character tells Ben she thinks she is falling in love with him and wants him all to herself, pointing to the fact that Gemma has so many other boyfriends that she doesn't need him. Further demonizing her, the character asks, "So this poly-multi free-love thing is like forever? Don't you think you're ever going to find the one?" At one point, the Asian character expresses how she had to take the job to pay her bills, and before leaving, Ben takes out his wallet and hands her a wad of cash. Her reply to this gesture is, "Now this really is White guilt"... I accept your dollars White man." This dialogue is interesting as it highlights her as the only long-standing minority character in the series, but relies heavily on her outsider status, not only as a monogamous person, but also as a non-White character (Hurson, 2013b).

Class

On both shows it is very evident that all persons work high-paying jobs, or come from affluent backgrounds. There is only one episode on *Family* where Stuart, one of the members of the triad, is shown sifting through his storage area filled with records which he professionally

sells on eBay. There are brief mentions of the character's professions, but only when it adds to the plot. For instance, when being introduced to other characters, one member of the pod on *P:M&D* points out that she is a sex and relationship therapist and often performs commitment ceremonies, which she later does for the members of the triad.

In the beginning of *P:M&D* we are introduced to the characters and what jobs they hold. In the poly triad, Anthony is a graduate student at the University of California, and teaches Italian there as well. Lindsey is also a graduate student at *Berkley*, getting a degree in English. Lastly, Vanessa, introduces herself as a writer and a grad student at the University of Southern California. Later, we see Anthony and Lindsey visiting her at a strip club, where Vanessa's voice narrates the scene and mentions how she loves being a bikini dancer.

In the pod, Michael vaguely describes his job as working for a company involved with lighting, Kamala points out her profession as a sex and relationship coach, exclaiming, "who better to learn about relationships from than someone in like 12 relationships." Jenn mentions that she works in her husband Tahl's parent's jewelry store, but there is no mention as to whether he works there. He does point out that he is also a graduate student, studying acupuncture.

On the webisode series, *Family*, Gemma works as a choreographer, Brian is briefly mentioned as working for Microsoft, only when the aforementioned Asian characters points out his 'wads of Microsoft cash,' and Stuart sells classical records on eBay. During one of the earlier episodes, at the 'poly potluck' a joke is made about how many poly individuals work for Microsoft, where only a handful raise their hands to indicate they have other professions. As mentioned in an article reviewing the series, apparently there is a hotbed of polyamorists in Seattle who work in the IT/Microsoft industry.

The houses that the characters on *P:M&D* live in are quite lavish, as well as the décor, and their personal choice of attire. When visiting parents, all of the families also have large homes. No one is ever seen working, instead they are often depicted as hanging out on the beach, in their backyards, having sex, visiting other affluent neighborhoods, or hanging out in downtown LA. The characters on *Family* have a more modest house, comparatively, but it is still far above middle-class living, and they too are shown hosting parties, babysitting children, or simply hanging out in the living room having discussions.

While both shows take place on the West Coast, the representations of diversity are miniscule and there are no conversations about the varied types of people that have polyamorous lives. Even in scenes where the characters are visiting restaurants or attending a concert, none of the surrounding cast members are from other races.

Gender & Sexualities

The presentations of gender and sexuality are much more limited than one would expect coming from texts that are predominantly polyamory focused. The series *Family* has a triad comprised of two men and one woman. All of the characters are straight, and no male bisexual representation is shown throughout the course of the series. There are two characters in the ‘poly potluck’ episode who are gay men and are explaining that they are looking for a third, preferably a transgendered male polyamorous individual. Later in the series we see a gay couple that are neighbors of the triad, whom are invited over for dinner. The one gay character throughout the series is shown giving sideways glances toward the lead female in the triad, Gemma. Later, at a dinner party, after much grumbling and unapprovingly looks, the gay character loudly exclaims “I don’t approve of your whole little harem; I can’t even tell anymore who is sleeping with

whom.” Later we are shown a scene that confirms that the couple has broken up and Jared, the gay male who doesn’t have a problem with polyamory states, “I didn’t realize such a gay man could be such a bigot.” Brickell (2006) points to this perceived anomaly, arguing “while heteronormativity accurately describes the exclusion of homosexuality from the realm of the socially normative it does not account for the power relations within or between ‘gay’ and ‘lesbian’” (99, as cited in Hurson, 2013b). This juxtaposition breaks down the typical thought that just because one individual is of a minority identity does not mean all minority identities get along (Hurson, 2013b).

Despite all the threesomes and foursomes that occur on *P:M&D* there is minimal dialogue that directly relates to the bisexuality of the women in the triad and pod. None of the men on either program are bisexual (although Tahl reveals his bisexual curiosity in the second season), and they never kiss or have sex with one another despite having sex with their respective wives and lovers in the same bed. There are two women who directly bring up their bisexuality, both of whom are singled out as Others. Vanessa is particularly vocal about being a marginalized character, saying “I have to fight every day to be legitimized as a partner. If they get invited to a wedding, I don’t get to go. I think I am going to propose to them. A queer woman proposing to her poly couple; I want the legitimacy, I’m ready for a commitment a symbol, I want that.”

Kamala, who openly discusses her bisexuality, is urged by her husband throughout multiple episodes to share her lover, Roxanne. Under the “rules” of polyamory, her husband Michael points out that her lack of sharing is indicative of monogamous behavior and is like a “little wounded girl who sometimes doesn’t want to share her toys.” Kamala, fighting off the labeling of monogamy, despite her resistant feelings, asks Roxanne if she would be willing to

have a tea and chat with Michael, in hopes they get to know each other, and Roxanne can be added to the pod (meaning Michael can have sex with her). She says to her husband Michael that she is giving him the ‘gift’ of Roxanne, as though Roxanne is an object. Hurson (2013b), drawing on Robinson (1997) points out institutional monogamy “privileges the interests of both men and capitalism, operating as it does through the mechanisms of exclusivity, possessiveness and jealousy, all filtered through the rose-tinted lens of romance” (144). Much like institutional monogamy, the non-monogamous behaviors between the men and woman on this show still shows a separation from the men wanting to claim ownership of other women, and the women, wanting to maintain their own exclusivity (Hurson, 2013b). Kamala is challenged multiple times to ‘give up’ her exclusivity with Roxanne, pointing to her wanting to keep Roxanne all to herself to maintain those special feelings, saying, “being with Roxanne is like the ultimate lesbian hot fantasy for me.” This statement places Kamala outside of a bisexual poly relationship with Michael and into a lesbian relationship with Roxanne (Hurson, 2013b). McLean’s (2004) research provides some insight into this shift of identity and why the poly pod, particularly the straight White male, urges her to come share. McLean (2004) suggests that “relationships falling outside of the (hetero)normative ‘coupled’ arrangement are rendered invisible, and in turn, delegitimized” (85). Because bisexuality falls outside of the straight/gay, male/female binaries, the representations of bisexuality are not legitimated in the same ways as other sexualities.

Throughout both series there is an overemphasis on the women having sex. Perhaps this is due to only the women being bisexual, but there are numerous shower scenes that only show women engaging sexually with one another, and occasionally another male will join. During one opening scene, we see the two women showering together in front of the male character, shaving his face, to which one of them proclaims, “we are twice the man you are in here.” This feminist

attitude is presented throughout multiple episodes, offering dialogue that upholds a feminist perspective, such as when the triad is discussing their commitment ceremony, Anthony says, “I don’t want the traditional wedding crap, the part about ‘I take you as my wife,’ let’s share each other, I don’t want any of the gendered male obey crap.” This statement is undermined, however, when the next thing shown on screen is the females in the triad having sex on the picnic blanket they laid out in the sun (Hurson, 2013b). The only sharing going on is between the two female characters; somehow despite his attempts at feminism, Anthony is pushed to the side, only to watch the performance rather than share in it (Hurson, 2013b). His secondary role to the women having sex is reiterated when Vanessa, the girlfriend in the triad, narrates the roles each of them play in the threesome, saying that “I’m the initiator, the director; Lindsey is like the doll; and Anthony is the totally unpredictable improv actor.” The switching back and forth between gendered roles doesn’t create a solid narrative that defines the representations within the triad as one way or another, which weakens their overall message of feminism, and also objectifies the ‘doll’ member, subscribing to the male gaze even under the guise of gender fluidity (Hurson, 2013b).

Lastly, women take on traditional roles as presented in their dialogue responding to conflicts between the traditional and non-traditional, the heteronormative and non-heteronormative. For example, near the end of the *Family* series, one of the couples in the triad, Gemma and Ben, are going to get married, despite resistance from Gemma’s other lover, Stuart (who finally concedes by the end of the episode). Gemma’s desire for a white wedding dress is manifested in a ‘thought bubble’ of her in a traditional white wedding gown. While returning from her daydreaming she agrees with Ben on having an intimate affair by saying, “You’re right, something small, but you still have to buy me a new dress, all of that money waddling around in

your wallet like a big fat penguin,” following this statement up with, “I want to look pretty for you.” Ben is still maintaining the traditional breadwinner role, and Gemma still remains as the object of the male gaze, presenting her pretty self in her white wedding gown. Brickell (2006) sums up these power struggles quite well suggesting that within “‘queer’ theories heterosexuality usually appears as a force that disciplines homosexuality” but that it is important to understand heterosexuality in terms of hierarchies between women and men, and not simply as the normative form of sexuality (99). Again, despite attempts to do sexual relationships outside of the norm, they still subscribe to typical gender roles which undermines the message of equality and non-heteronormativity.

Day-to-day activities like hosting a dinner party, caring for the neighbor’s young child when the husband is in the hospital, and being the supportive party when some of the poly individuals come out to their parents, are all positions held by women, and the presence of men in these scenarios is very absent. As Jackson (2006) argues, “it is not only a key site of intersection between gender and sexuality, but also one that reveals the interconnections between sexual and non-sexual aspects of social life. Heterosexuality is, by definition, a gender relationship, ordering not only sexual life but also domestic and extra-domestic divisions of labor and resources (107).

Disability

Disability is rarely touched upon in the polyamory community, and race tends to be featured more prominently in conversations about what is missing from polyamory discourses. Cunning Minx, in one of her weekly podcasts attempts to cover these issues during a conversation about disability on her podcast, featuring Shanna Katz, a sex educator, where she

talks about her own disability, arthritis, as an issue when dating partners who want to stay out and party all night. The conversation is pretty standard when it comes to disabilities, trying to ensure sensitivities are met, while focusing on events where all partners can attend and participate. Mostly the conversation centers around invisible disability, rather than those most commonly thought of such as being in a wheelchair or having MS. Patterson, has featured someone on the autism spectrum on his blog, *Poly Role Models*, but as previously mentioned, the intersection of autism and polyamory was not featured on his website, but on the interviewee's blog post shortly after their feature on *Poly Role Models*.

CHAPTER 11: DISCUSSION

From the beginning of the coalescing of the polyamory community, traditional media were used as a way to create awareness from a group of individuals who felt that polyfidelity and responsible non-monogamy was the only relationship choice viable to meet their needs. Using newsletters and hosting conferences, Anapol and Nearing were able to connect their ideas about polyamory to larger and larger networks, outlining in detail their goals for the polyamory community, and surveying their audiences to learn more about the reasons why they chose their personal lifestyles. These pioneering and trailblazing women recognized the power of media, both traditional and alternative, as a way to disseminate more accurate representations, and to reach those who felt the same way, but never knew how to express it, or never knew there were others just like them. By encouraging their readers to ‘write in’ to traditional media programming, and to pen letters to the editor, they saw the value in educating via media as the mouthpieces of polyamory discourses that centered around sexuality.

By actively appearing on television shows, and persistently maintaining a dialogue that was sex positive, both Nearing and Anapol were able to leverage their ‘celebrity’ by joining forces and creating a subscription-based glossy magazine, *Loving More*. It is no coincidence that Anapol increased her presence on talk shows when her book was released in 1992 to solidify this celebrity identity. At this time, however, Nearing, and a handful of other polyamory activists were shopping themselves, and their lifestyle, across a multitude of talk shows such as the *Phil Donahue Show*, *Leeza*, *Sally Jesse Raphael*, *Montel*, and so on. Certainly word of mouth, leading to the snowball effect, was used by talk show producers to gain more polyamory folks in the media arena. Just as quickly as polyamorous folks appeared on television did the media training

efforts arise from those within the community, concerned about the messages presented in mainstream media, or the attacks of those who were naïve enough to appear in these venues. Articles in their respective newsletters recounted their experiences, as well as lessons learned, after their appearances on these shows may not have gone the way they had intended.

These talk shows relied heavily on a pre-determined format that pitted the polyfidelitists/polyamorists against, not only the audience members, but also the ‘experts’ that were picked for the show to represent the institutions that reflect and uphold the compulsory institution of monogamy— reverends, relationship counselors, reformed sex workers (porn star), just to name a few. As Hardt (2008) states, “what emerges is the realization, if ever so vague, that an ideologically constructed democratic system of communication rests on concrete ideas of individual control over what is being said, or where and how, as well as to whom” (21). Recognizing the importance of who says what, the polyamory community was able to begin efforts to train these individuals, and maintain a certain sense of what discourses were floating around about the community via talked about non-monogamous models.

Hardt (2008) also points to the ebbs and flows of expert knowledge dominating available conversation and muting dialogues in lieu of monologues by these experts. Drawing on Lippman, Hardt (2008) argues that industrialization had altered the traditional conversation and instead has more heavily relied upon expert and authoritative voices who speak to underrepresented populations as “consumers of information rather than as partners in a public conversation” (23). Thus the dominance of those who possess credentials relegates those who are not into a separate sphere of private conversation. While Anapol held a doctorate in psychology, and even appeared on various talk shows as an expert, the privilege of her education was overshadowed by the morality inherent in those who wished to uphold the mononormative

discourses of traditional monogamous relationships. She was used as a commodity to fill the 'expert' void as a way to pander to the viewers to evoke a sense of balance, yet, the consistent responses from the audiences and the insistence by the hosts that polyamory was 'just not right' created an environment in which the commodity (Anapol as expert) was easily disposed.

The one-to-many model that traditional mass communication such as television, radio, and newspapers were functioning upon was now coupled with expert knowledges conversing in a similar manner— as a preacher would flock to his disciples at the pulpit, so would these experts function in the spaces of a particular mass medium. Marshall McLuhan draws our attention the medium as the message, and at the beginning of the movement, the utilization of traditional media did not do the polyamory community as many favors of positive representations as the later non-traditional alternative media have now. That is not to say that alternative media do not fall prey to these same expert knowledges, but in a way, the celebrity of Anapol and Nearing created competing discourses, and opportunities for visibility, no matter how often they had to keep fighting against objections from the mainstream as evidenced by the viewer letters and polyamory community support.

In an age where those who were practicing the polyamorous lifestyle without giving themselves a name felt lost, as indicated by the numerous snail mail letters that were sent to those speaking on these talk shows, the constitution of sexual identity functioned in these spaces of conversation and dialogue. Hardt (2008) argues that “conversation means dialogue, and dialogue is the path to the self. To become human relies on being made human by others, and to recognize the self means being in the presence of others. Thus communication constitutes relatedness, and relatedness ultimately constitutes society” (24). Emphasizing the homogeneity of identities across mass media, Hardt reiterates that mass media are always on, and operate as a

system that fills in the gaps of conversation, not with negotiated and fluid conversation, but with “the specter of a pseudo-dialogue to the anxious individual...the result...an assertion of “facts” or “truths,” which produces uniformity or standardization” (24). Thus, in moments in which those outside the authoritative public media sphere do not have access to, not only the tools of communication, but also the audience that is attracted to dominant mass media, identity development is paused or halted, while the maintenance of the heteronormative is upheld. The lack of access, know-how, credibility or authority, favors the traditional homogenized speech, a tactic of post industrialist society.

All was not lost, however, as demonstrated by the many stories published in *Floodtide* and the *IRC* newsletters after the television appearances that Anapol and her partners made. The *IRC* and *PEP* immediately received phone calls from viewers looking to learn more about the non-monogamous lifestyle. The letters Anapol received after her first appearance on the *Phil Donahue* show prompted her to start *IntiNet*, similarly to Nearing receiving letters and calls from viewers asking for advice, thus leading to the creation of *PEP*. Later, as major print magazines began to pick up stories about the changing family landscape, and specifically referencing family models that expanded upon the traditional monogamous dyad, *IRC* also would receive media attention from other outlets in this trickle-down effect. The individual actions of viewers reaching out comments on the ‘lack’ (Fuss, 1991) presented in heteronormative relationship models, whereby viewers seeking more information were validating their own experiences outside the context of the mononormative.

This effect of ‘unconcealment’ and revealing seems to go in waves as the movement’s different leaders rear their heads, particularly via notable moments with the *Family* webisode series, and the Supreme Court’s 2013 ruling on gay marriage leading to Anita Wagner Illig’s

presence in multiple magazines commenting on whether polyamory would next seek the legalization of plural marriage. After her takeover of *Loving More*, Robyn Trask sought to create a working relationship with the media, sending out press releases when important events took place, thus causing her to gain more media exposure as she went on talk shows and radio shows, leading to more mainstream media inquiring about polyamory people to feature on their shows. Lastly, with the creation of the *PLN* and the *PMA*, as well as the production of *P:M&D* on *Showtime*, polyamory has been featured as an alternative relationship paradigm in mainstream media for external awareness and education.

In the archive materials submitted by Anapol, the *Public Vision* newsletter, written for *Choosing Our Future*, contains articles titled, “*The Challenge to Television and Democracy*”, and “*Building a “Communication Rights” Movement*” which outline the usage of broadcast television as 90% entertainment and 10% informational. The newsletter called for a reform of mainstream media, and instead a move toward more socially relevant television including: global news broadcasts, viewer feedback forums, international dialogues, alternative images of the future, national “town-meetings,” and others” (Public Vision, 1983). This organization was calling for a two-way communication model that social media would afford in the early 21st century, as a means of fostering a more democratic society that offered a multitude of representations on television. Anapol cites *Choosing Our Future* in her *Floodtide* newsletter, specifically in a call-to-action to her subscribers to write in to television shows to educate producers on non-monogamy and polyamory, and to demand representations of these lifestyles.

Anapol continues these call-to-action requests through the duration of her newsletter produced by the *IRC*, specifically pointing to the efficacy of ‘Letters to the Editor’ and calling out producers as ways to change the landscape and awareness of alternative sexualities. Given

that *Choosing Our Future* was based in California, and Anapol herself began the *IRC* in the Bay Area, it is no surprise that she was exposed to the newsletter and its focus on changing mainstream media representations. Perhaps this is a ‘right time and right place’ moment in which Anapol crossed paths with this organization, but it certainly influenced the way she created goals for the *IRC* and the non-monogamy community.

So how did this larger community discourse come to fruition? What was the turning point that created mass awareness and solidarity? According to Taylor & Whittier (2009) there are three elements that function together to build this collective identity as follows: creating a group ‘we’ in which “awareness of how the group’s interests conflict with the interests of its adversaries, the adoption of a critical picture of the culture as a whole” are created; secondly, as a consciousness that includes “political consciousness and relational networks” and “goals, means, and environment[s] of action;” and lastly, the observation of the group in opposition to the hegemonic group ideology (175). Through a combination of this collective observance and daily practices, social movements start to form collective identities through “submerged networks” (Taylor & Whittier, 175). Their framework, focusing on boundaries, consciousness, and negotiation when recognizing the naturalization of gender hierarchies in the heteronormative culture, helps inform the ways in which the polyamory community, as a fluid identity, and as a fluid movement, was able to create opportunities to turn the media on its head and provide representations that were more accurately portrayed by combatting these and making their subscribers, members, and readers aware of the power of mass media, but also the power of alternative media to connect disparate voices.

These three models are helpful in illustrating the collective identity-making that occurs within the polyamory community, specifically with the *Loving More* organization, as the

community was able to create the awareness necessary to harness the power of their networks in geographically dispersed locations, and to present their relationship model in opposition to monogamy by drawing attention to the constructed nature of monogamy and heteronormativity. The Internet, and the respective media practitioners using alternative media outlets, also expand these networks to those outside of the initial closed group that functioned primarily in spaces of face-to-face communication such as the conferences and retreats.

As Taylor & Whittier (1999) posit, “for any subordinate group, the construction of positive identity requires both a withdrawal from the values and structures of the dominant, oppressive society and the creation of new self-affirming values and structures” (176). They situate consciousness as a working process “imparted through a formal body of writings, speeches, and documents” (179). They also argue that political consciousness is more encompassing than class consciousness as it allows “collective actors [to] attribute their discontent to structural, cultural, or systemic causes rather than to personal failings or individual deviance” (179). Through these structures is where they argue oppositional consciousness is formed, and that “only when a group develops an account that challenges dominant understandings” that oppositional consciousness can be used (179). The culmination of these organizations, through the documents and awareness produced in the early years of the modern polyamory community, created a baseline to connect individuals and support the foundation of a community moving toward a movement.

In the Winter 2001 #24 edition of *Loving More*, Anapol authors an article titled, “*Unity in Diversity*,” in which she recounts the evolution of the modern poly movement based on her experiences and involvement in the community. Drawing on her psychology background, she points to the polyamory movement in its ‘infancy’ stage, where one has feeling of being the only

one, but transitioning into ‘childhood’ in which there is the recognition that there are others out there just like you. But, as she so aptly describes it, “kids freak out if the peas touch the mashed potatoes” pointing to the common discourses insisting that polyamory be rigidly defined, offering one “correct” way of ‘doing’ it. In the ‘adolescent’ stage, an identity is created, a multitude of models are present, all united in the ‘us versus them’ stance against mainstream monogamy. For Anapol, noting she is writing this article ten years after her book, *Love Without Limits* was published, polyamory was now perceived as the same type of social construct as monogamy, and she argues that labeling and not recognizing the fluidity of the sexuality is constraining, limiting in its attempts to be deconstructive, but constituting a particular set of behaviors in its presentation. Her final remarks highlight the external nature of the community up until this moment, pointing to the media misconstruing polyamory for swinging, or the efforts of the early ‘70s wars of the free love movement against the burgeoning polyfidelity community. Rather, she suggests we look inward to resolve these issues, rather than place emphasis on what we are doing looking out. This marks a crucial point in the modern polyamory community, as it demarcates the old versus new regimes of the polyamory movement, with Nearing herself dropping out of the venture only two years later, and the new face of the movement network rearing its head. One could argue that this next phase breached the adolescent/adulthood divide, and engendered a sense of maturation in the movement within the public sphere.

The early part of the movement focused heavily on providing an alternative to the nuclear family. Many articles, even up until the *Loving More* journal exchanged hands in 2004, focused on rising divorce rates, the increase in a one parent household, and the failing of one individual meeting the needs of the other in the traditional government and religiously sanctioned dyadic monogamous couple. Anapol’s position relies heavily on this shift in a new family model. In the

IntiNet welcome letter she points to the shift of relationships styles moving from tribe, to clan, to extended family, to nuclear family, and now “to single individual as “family,” writing, “we cannot go back to the old tribal society, however much we may want to, but we can go ahead to the new cellular family” (Kenneth Haslam Collection). With the language of ‘cellular family’ she is outlining the transition from a community-centric movement and identity to an individual centric community and movement, the latter which would become increasingly more valid as information networks and the move toward a more neoliberal consumerist society enveloped most identity politics in the late ‘90s and so on. Anapol writes, “the “traditional” nuclear family isn’t all that traditional itself, having become popular in this country mainly in response to the need for small, mobile worker/consumer units in a vast, growing industrial age. But as all the futurists tell us, we’ve now entered the Information Age, so it isn’t surprising that new family structures are evolving to meet the needs of our time” (Anapol, 1985a). In the October 1986 *Floodtide* newsletter, Anapol points to the *Pacific News Service* carrying an article by Fran Schurmann titled “*Families and the Future of Society.*” Anapol draws our attention to conversations on the alarming breakdown of the American Family, and a ‘return to traditional sex roles’ to solve it. Schurmann argues against this, stating “unless we give up our middle-class lifestyles, which now require at least two breadwinners in the family that will be impossible.” She continues quoting Schurmann, “it is natural that as one kind of family system declines, other kinds will arise to replace it. . .” (as cited in Anapol, 1986).

Anapol also cites a *Mother Jones* article, arguing that adding more than one husband to a unit would aid in the country’s poverty problems, thus looking at marriage from an economic egalitarian perspective. It is also evident by the type of articles written in Nearing’s *PEPTalk* newsletters that she also saw polyfidelity as not a lifestyle choice, but as something innate in the

individual. Because polyfidelity was viewed as a sexual orientation, Nearing paralleled the protection that was gained in Oregon for the gay community, against gay bashing, with the need for protection by the law for polyfidelity, as well. Another article in her Winter Solstice 1989 *PEPTalk* newsletter outlines the failure rate of AIDS testing, and the spread of AIDS when not detected in individuals having unprotected sex. For Nearing, she saw the polyfidelity movement, particularly using the language of group marriage, as a closed subset of non-monogamy, for fear of spreading AIDS, and to maintain the commitment to all her partners in a non-hierarchical manner. In the early editions of her book, *The Polyfidelity Primer*, she illustrates four relationship models: monogamy, polyfidelity, open marriage, and open group marriages. She then writes, “polyfidelity fills a niche between the comfortability and stability of monogamy, and the diversity and complexity of a more promiscuous lifestyle. By bridging this gap with a very understandable and workable structure it makes available for many the best of both worlds – intimacy without nuclear couple isolation, multiplicity without shallowness (Anapol, 1989, 1).

Closely linked to monogamy, as a safe form of relationship style in a closed group marriage, but far enough away to try to deconstruct the nuclear family model, polyfidelity maintains the old rooted language of monogamy and commitment through fidelity, but acknowledges the need to expand upon the dyadic two-person model, for more economic and enriching contributions. The use of the language ‘promiscuity’ to describe the latter two models, open marriage, and open group marriage, situates polyamory within the more modern day discourse of ‘ethical non-monogamy,’ coupled with the insistence of both Nearing and Anapol in their writings that non-monogamy/polyamory/multipartner/polyfidelity is not associated with swinging, and not associated with casual sex. Their version of polyamory, ethical non-monogamy, sat atop the abyss of all other non-monogamous relationship models, explicitly

differentiating themselves from the swinging lifestyle time and time again. This privileging of a certain model of polyamory created a movement that was reliant on boundaries, rules, and ongoing conversations about the right way to ‘do’ polyamory, a conversation that still persists today. Because the utopic version of egalitarian relationship models never fully came to be recognized publicly, the polyamory movement sunk slightly back into the private realm, particularly when its earliest members removed themselves from the initiatives of the movement. Hardt (2008), however, optimistically points to a shift in trajectory from once passive audiences who lacked tools, to now the creation of conversations using new technologies, with the traditional form of conversation pre-dating industrialized mass communication. He writes, “encouraged by older traditions and newer technologies, individuals will seek recognition and distinction in the practice of talk as a form of re-invented conversation, which conforms to the conditions of contemporary social communication” (25). The many-to-many functionality of new media, particularly the Internet, blogs, social media, etc. as utilized by the more recent ventures of the polyamory media practitioners heading the current movement, favors a more fluid dialogue, even if it initially stems from an expert monologue. There is a sense that the yearning for a return to community had been reconstituted with ICTs and the formation of geographically dispersed communities online.

Traditional formations of modern conversation, however, still have a place in community-building, and can be witnessed in the advent of the robust polyamory meetup.com community, in which displaced individuals feel compelled to reconnect in physical spaces to dialogue rather than consume information presented to them in mass mediated formats. Additional spaces are afforded offline in more traditional community-orientated spaces when the *Black and Poly* group meets offline, or when the *Poly Living* conferences unite individuals from

all over the country who follow the magazine and movement at large. The polyamory activist network is harnessed into these offline spaces by bringing the larger well-known members to speak at these conferences, creating a larger pool of experts based on their ability to engage audiences and speak on behalf of the community and its progression as a movement.

The most important and compelling features of the polyamory movement, however, are the spaces carved out by postmodern polyamory practitioners, specifically as it pertains to online media like the blogs, webisodes, podcasts and numerous *Facebook* groups catering to specific intersections of polyamory identity with other identities. From this shift of one-to-many, as used in the early newsletters and magazines, to a more balanced many-to-many model in new media, the individual acts as the center of the community, and each individual is mapped out in their networks as the connecting node. As Atton (2001) points out, “alternative media are important because they reveal the structuredness of media discourse and show how the world might be represented differently by different media actors “(2). This constitutes Touraine’s ‘Subject’ as the center of the movement (Vahabzadeh, 2003), via the nodes in the network as the core of the movement. They are the connectivity, the creators of the discourses, the moderators of dialogue, and the producers of the media publications that reach both internal and external audiences.

Also functioning as gatekeepers, time and time again the *Polyamory in the Media* blog, as well as the *Loving More* organization have reached out to the community to warn against being blindly contacted by the mass media, particularly media that use the one-to-many forum which eliminates and diminishes opportunities for a continuum of dialogue regarding polyamory, and fixates itself on the shock and awe factor, further stigmatizing the individuals. The structure of the television talk show, particularly those who wish to feature non-normative lifestyles/behaviors/etc. is notoriously known to mislead guests and to bombard them with a

framing they did not agree to. Individual practitioners in the information age, however, add to Anapol's recognition of socially constructed discourses, and the flexibility of a particular medium to lend itself to a two-way conversation. Each practitioner harnessing their own skillset and experiences to provide tools and resource to the community at large, while also listening closely to the feedback they receive from those in their networks— the support beams that keep their structure's strong.

Given her presence in the polyamory community since 1998, Joreth has developed a nuanced understanding of the media, and the changing landscape that uses and loses certain media skills. Having honed in on the shift in the way that media are used in the polyamory community, particularly as it pertains to any given chosen medium, she points to journalism's shift away from staffing a large array of people to cover topics in a broad way, but rather now covering topics in very specific feature stories. Fragmentation in the postmodern era contributes to niche marketing and niche markets, further commodifying identity and lifestyle.

Additionally, since more and more journalists are not getting the same type of training as those who have worked for legacy media have had, she sees them as much more apt to having blogs, thus alleviating the reliance on advertiser pressures to frame a story in a particular way. Because of this ease of technology, there is an increase in clutter in the news marketplace, and having your story picked up, trend, or going viral is much more of an ephemeral experience. Because of this fleeting moment, Joreth argues that there is less detail to the ways in which to frame a story, and more interest in the technical details, in what makes the story compelling, and how you are reaching out to more fragmented audiences through particular channels. She states that newer media training should involve, "how to handle having thousands of followers, how to apologize on the Internet. . . maybe those things need to start being included in media training

because we didn't have a need for those, when all you had was one television show on a cable network” (personal communication, 2015).

The Internet in this sense has become a tool to extend the polyamory community. Joreth points to the shift in the way polyamory was presented when it began as a more dominant spiritual lifestyle within the circulating discourses in the early newsletters, mailing lists, and the *Loving More* organization— particularly the offline component of the retreats, conferences, and meeting face-to-face for these intimate connections. She specifically points to greater access of information, and the ability for people seeking out information about polyamory to be of greater availability; she notes in the earlier days you needed to know someone in the community, or in the early days of Internet message boards and archaic search engines, one would have to know specific keywords to search for in order to locate information around polyamory, or non-monogamy before the word ‘polyamory’ was coined.

Even after the *Loving More* organization was taken over by Trask in 2004 with a specific media agenda, the first to pave the way for the polyamory community’s proactive externally facing relationship with the media, as well as becoming a digital-only organization, her efforts to connect her database with the PMA’s media efforts failed due to Joreth being accessible predominately via digital communication, and Trask being more available through a traditional LAN line. At the height of the PMA, however, Joreth worked with other organizations such as *the National Coalition for Sexual Freedom*, *Sex Workers Awareness* organization that already had a solid media relationship, and *Manifest Positivity*. Joreth posits,

I am in favor of a more proactive approach toward using the tools of the media to further social change. And with the Internet culture, more and more people are taking control of how they are presented through journals blogs, *YouTube* videos, personal podcasts, and the past methods of distributing media are losing their strangle hold on the public so I think this is a great time in our history for grabbing the reigns of the media for ourselves

to show the diversity of our culture, and through that to change our society of a more tolerant society and welcoming that diversity (as quoted in Berman, 2010).

This is why the modern polyamory community discourse shifted when the Internet became the dominant source of information for those seeking polyamory relationship information.

Concomitantly, the ego age of the individual at the center, and all their networks spanning outward, illustrated in the *Facebook* model, began to dominate the ways individuals interacted with media. In this vastly fragmented media landscape, the polyamory community has just shifted their efforts to those who were able to harness the skills necessary for navigating new technologies, which subsequently created a different kind of collectivity, and a different type of polyamory model in the postmodern age. Whereas the first polyamory paradigm focused on transitioning from a monogamous relationship model to including a multi-person group marriage, it did not steer far away from the closed group model. Because people found themselves trying to hang on to their partners, newly freed from the monogamous closed relationship, boundaries and rules were still established, sometimes via lengthy physical contracts to keep everyone involved in the group in line.

As queer relationship models, predicated on fluidity and non-gender conforming discourses began circulating and becoming a lived possibility for many people, polyamory once again morphed into a deconstructionist model, and thus required a new set of narratives to abide by. Today, polyamory places emphasis on the individual, and the people they seek to add to their network, rather than starting from a couple and opening up their relationship to individuals outside, as had been the dominant way of 'doing' polyamory under the language of polyfidelity. There are even more people speaking and blogging about solo polyamory, in which someone does not have a primary partner, or does not live with the partners in their networks. These new types of identities needed new discourses to generate a different type of network that represented

the new non-hierarchical relationship models, as well as allowed discourses to speak from the point of the individual, rather than from a centralizing organization.

These new networks, in the information age, are comprised more of performances by the actors in these networks, particularly the media practitioners who are often linked to one another as major ‘celebrity’ nodes in the larger polyamory media network. Very often these ‘celebrities’ are linked on each other’s pages, involve collaborative efforts, or are held up as exemplars to the community as those who have successfully achieved a public presence and public visibility. Many media personalities in the community note that they are constantly approached by their supporters, in a way that is reminiscent of an old friend coming into town. The constant rotation of the same individuals on the early talk shows, as well as the latter community leaders rotation of presentations at the *Poly Living* conferences, and other sex-positive-related conferences throughout the country, provides not only community visibility, but also a larger public sphere visibility, as they are able to link up their networks to keep media outlets who do not have the community’s best interests in mind when attempting to access individuals for interviews or appearances. The contribution of funding to these practitioners privileges their personalities, moving them further away from the membership base, embodying their leadership roles. Membership in the *Polyamory Leadership Network* also creates this distancing of those that make up the networks and the nodes that connect them as the centralizing connectors of the free-floating and fluid postmodern individuals.

According to Taylor & Whittier (1999), “collective identity is the shared definition of a group that derives its members, common interests, experiences, and solidarity” (170). Drawing on Buechler’s understanding of a social movement community, Taylor & Whittier (1999) expand upon the importance of community activities “underscore[ing] the importance to mobilization of

informational networks, decentralized structures, and alternative institutions” and include “a network of individuals and groups loosely linked through an institutional base, multiple goals and actions, and a collective identity that affirms members’ common interests in opposition to dominant groups” (171-172) as being just as important to mobilization. As NSMs are often referred to as social constructionist paradigms Taylor & Whittier argue that the political actors do not just rely on shared geographical structures, or solely membership, but the actors are rather “created in the course of social movement activity” (174). The course of the polyamory movement led to more interaction on the Internet in online forums than those signing up for snail mail subscription to physical newsletters or magazines; even the *Loving More* organization began hosting conversations on their website through a message board, which eventually led to the formation of *Yahoo! Groups* and other online chat rooms. It is when the discourses of counterpublics moves from the privacy of the subaltern domain, and subsequently into the public arena that public visibility begins to take effect. As Warner writes,

the meaning of gender and sexuality in dominant culture is only partly determined in domestic and familial life. It is also constantly being shaped across a range of social relations, and perhaps especially in the mass media, with their visual language of incorporation and desire. The public sphere as an environment, then, is not just a place where one could rationally debate a set of gender or sexual relations that can in turn be equated with private life; the public sphere is a principal interest of the forms of embodiment and social relations that are themselves at issue (2002, 54).

Thus, mobilizing a larger centralizing organization, like *Loving More*, as well as having opportunities for those in less organized and more dispersed yet overlapping networks online are used to maintain several diversified visible public discourses and repositions the polyamory community into a larger polyamory discourse movement seeking public visibility, while bolstered by the networks through internal awareness and support systems. The efforts of the

Loving More organization continue to gain momentum today by building a collective identity that is readily and easily available toward public presentation, while on the other hand each individual polyamory media practitioner seeks to leverage their audiences and networks, sustaining their projects through Indiegogo campaigns, Patreon accounts, or tip jars to economically justify their efforts in the movement and energy as media producers.

The latter group comprises these disparate networks, and the experiences of those participating in the two-way conversations by calling in to the podcasts, commenting in the *Facebook* groups, writing in for advice to be featured in the comics, supporting members by donating material, and voicing their concerns for a different type of publishing venue other than the mainstream by ‘voting with their dollars’ thus creating this expanding network. The tools of new media afford these types of conversations, as well as shape the polyamory community away from one centralizing organization, to a much wider collective based on national and international solidarity. One does not have to be an ‘official’ member to be part of the movement.

Given the continuous financial struggles that the early leaders also faced, as well as the *Loving More* journal’s switch from print to digital due to the rising costs of print and postage, there are advantages to having disparate networks, where funding does not have to be funneled to one centralizing organization. The podcasts, *Facebook* groups, blogs, and comics are more a labor of love, and can be because as mentioned before, they require time and energy—very little economic resources are needed to maintain these efforts.

Privilege on the periphery is a difficult subject to bridge, because of the multiple layers that individuals embody in their unique identities. Very often resources are limited, most notably economic resources, followed by time, and access. Within the polyamory movement there are

discourses that position the movement as a minority, encouraging those involved to step up to the plate and find other members to join the cause. But joining the cause is not as simple as signing up for a newsletters, rather it is about finding the time and resources to socialize with like-minded individuals to create a larger community that encompasses all voices, and not just those who find themselves in positions where choice between recreation and sustenance is never placed on an empty plate on the table.

In one of Anapol's *Floodtide* newsletters, she points to the scarcity of resources, particular the resource of time. As a solution to freeing up more time away from work, she goes as far to suggest that individuals in multipartner relationships try to become financially independent to free up more time for their partners. Drawing on Joe Dominguez of the *UV Family*, who had a successful career on Wall Street in the late 60s, Anapol suggests purchasing the 6-hour cassette tapes and 80 page workshop for a cost of \$60, or possibly starting their own Financial Independent workshops in order to educate themselves on the ways to become more independent. Not only did the conferences take time and money, something that individuals who are disenfranchised have little of, but they required a constant subscription to these magazines to stay up to date on the on-goings of the community. Thus, the Internet, with its less expensive entry level costs, creates these types of dialogue, and fosters asynchronous participation that does not constrain the individual's time to being a member of the group, or necessarily privilege access to the resource necessary to sustain a larger organization or magazine.

As intersectional conversations are just beginning to make a small dent in the polyamory discourses at conferences and online, there is still a big road that needs to be paved to allow these minority voices an opportunity to be heard, and their needs to be met that take into account the structural and systemic oppressions they face on a day-to-day basis. Racial barriers create

animosity among the community, and dismissing conversation about racial diversity only turns a blind eye to the problem. While Patterson and Young attempt to forge safe spaces, and spaces of visibility for these voices, they do so on platforms that do not cost anything more than time and energy, whereas other individuals in the polyamory community already have the skills to podcast, draw comics, initiate their own publishing house, or create and direct webisodes, all the while leveraging the funds from their networks to supply more than adequate monthly incomes in addition to their primary income from their day jobs.

Other issues arise in the community that divert the larger coalescing of the movement. Robyn Trask noted that even across *Poly Pride* events, there is a tendency for the group to split between those who want to have a mainstream presence, and those who want to maintain the alternative aspect of the lifestyle. Referencing the notorious breakdown of the groups at the *Poly NYC Poly Pride* event, she notes that when Birgitta Philippides, who was more media savvy, joined the group she was putting more palatable and user-friendly versions of polyamory people in the spotlight, being interviewed in newspaper articles. The original founder, Justen M. Bennett-Maccubbin, became upset at this transition and wanted to continue featuring individuals in drag and transvestites as the face of the movement to maintain its queer sensibilities. Trask knows there is a more easily accessible and digestible model of polyamory to present to the mainstream media, and she specifically places these individuals when getting calls for articles or interviews. Although polyamory models are varied in the community, and comprised of a diversity of individuals, Trask will critically think about the appearance of those she places in the mainstream, often putting individuals who may have non-traditional styles such as piercings on their foreheads, on radio rather than television, because the language is still there, but Trask sees the visual format of television as very unforgiving of the non-normative. Therefore, if the

attempt by the largest organization in the movement is to only put images of soccer moms and feature the ‘poster child’ of the polyamory movement, efforts to increase awareness of the diversity of individuals in the community are further placed on the backburner in the prioritization of public visibility over private recognition. From the early narratives, this larger external awareness campaign was in effect.

Utilizing Fraser’s (1992) examination of counterpublics as substantial publics and not just enclaves, we can understand the merging of Anapol and Nearing’s enterprises as not only finding spaces away from dominant supervision, but also producing discourses that emerge from this subaltern public to be accessed by the wider public at hand (124). Warner (2002) also points out that “movements around gender and sexuality seek to transform fundamental styles of embodiment, identity, and social relations– including their unconscious manifestations, the vision of the good life embodied in them, and the habitus by which people continue to understand their selves or bodies as public or private’ (51).

Therefore, providing a space of education and learning, such as the physical location of the *Loving More* organization, as it stands today, as a resource for those seeking out polyamory material, as well as the virtual space of the organization online, the community is able to situate themselves in a movement that seeks no real center, but instead offers centralizing networks of resources across the polyamory activist domains. There is tension here, however, as even those in peripheral networks still embody privileged positions, and still are the ones receiving the public visibility. In this sense, the modern polyamory movement, on the majority, functions externally, while trying to maintain a constituency through internal and educational awareness, if ever the need to leverage a mass petitioning for polyamory rights or plural marriage was needed.

Given the prior research of polyamory texts that argues much of the literature is predominately experiential—relying heavily on the everyday restructuring and renegotiating of relationship structures and boundaries—these lived experiences fall closer to the lifestyle movement than toward a solely collective political ideology found in traditional social movement theory. This meta-discourse would then seem constructed on a limited set of principles of what polyamory looks like and how one should do polyamory, predicated on the presentation provided by those speaking on behalf of the polyamory movement. Trask from *Loving More* discusses the clutter of more diversified models that the organization tries to harness for greater reach. She points to the Internet as a saving grace for reinvigorating the energy of the movement, but also as a fragmented landscape, in which everyone is writing a blog on polyamory and not coming to the organization, which gets 100,000 hits a month, to siphon their content through. This fragmentation is part of what is keeping the movement from gathering a consensus of necessary actions to gain larger visibility.

However, if there is an attempt to create a larger discourse that can then be more easily mobilized, following social movement strategies of traditional social movements, the dominant narratives in polyamory media discourses should seek to coalesce a mass collectivity for political mobilization. Naples (2010) appropriately points out this tension between a stable political subject that is argued necessary for a “viable political subject” and the fluidity and indeterminate subjectivities put forth through queer theory (5-6). Using critical discourse analysis, van Dijk (1993) argues, when studying sociopolitical discourse, the focus is “on the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance” (249). Consequently, motivation behind this collective discourse could be for direct contrast to disrupting mainstream hegemonic narratives that position polyamory into a deviant “other” to the standard compulsory monogamy, which

would not be relegated to just the day-to-day practices, but the larger issues of the community discourses through publicly visible venues as the face of the movement, rather than the individual faces that comprise the movement.

So what is the future of the movement? And is there a 'social' in the polyamory movement without a homogenized discourse and a set of simple concrete and attainable goals? While it is evident that the polyamory community has developed the structural and cultural spheres necessary to mobilize for legal recognition, by way of either plural marriage or individual rights, the community itself fails to be recognized as a social movement rather than as a cultural movement predicated on identity politics because of this lack of legal recognition.

Fraser argues in her work, 'From Redistribution to Recognition? Dilemmas of Justice in a 'Post-Socialist' Age', that,

the "struggle for recognition" is fast becoming the paradigmatic form of political conflict in the late twentieth century. Demands for "recognition of difference" fuel struggles of groups mobilised under the banners of nationality, ethnicity, "race," gender, and sexuality. In these "postsocialist" conflicts, group identity supplants class interest as the chief medium of political mobilisation. Cultural domination supplants exploitation as the fundamental injustice. And cultural recognition displaces socioeconomic redistribution as the remedy for injustice and the goal of political struggle (1995, 68).

What Fraser is arguing is that there are politics of injustices of distribution, as we would see in traditional social movements seeking an increase in wages per the current \$15/hour wage adjustment discourses, as well as injustices of recognition, whereas the latter is faced in movements more identity-centric, whereas there is a sense of with misrecognition, and the movement seeks to amend this mis-recognition through visibility via movement activity. Fraser argues that redistribution and recognition are often intimately intertwined, but distinct in that the politics of redistribution required a socio-economic and structural change, whereas, the politics of recognition require a cultural and symbolic change.

While the networks in the polyamory movement exist, and the resources and organizations exist, the polyamory community has yet to move the movement forward into the political arena that social movements would be recognized as taking place. Because there has been no move toward legal recognition of polyamory as a sexual orientation, and thus given protected status the same way sexual orientation of the GLBTQ community has been afforded the 'movement' does not require a systemic change in the political arena.

Rather, the community and its networking have situated it in a politics of recognition rather than change. How does cultural or symbolic change take place in an arena in which most social practices of tolerance are implemented through political reform? As Fraser (1995) points out, the 'good life,' or what constitutes legitimation through recognition of one's preferred identity, is not applicable to the whole of a society, and thus is not able to be fully rectified the way that justice is achieved through minimum wage laws or voter's rights.

While the foundation for a social movement in the symbolic sphere has been finely curated by the polyamory movement, specifically as polyamory reaches more cultural salience and is legitimated as an alternative relationship model, the movement has yet to file legal documents requesting recognition by way of legal means as it would be characterized as a social movement affirmed by this legal recourse. As it stands, the public does not have to recognize polyamory for polyamory to continue to exist. While there are laws against polygamy, or multi-person marriage, there are no laws that are strictly against multi-person relationships. The only law that would directly affect the polyamory community is co-habitation laws. While the polyamory community, and individuals identifying as polyamorous, do face housing, job, and custody discrimination, as well as do not receive government benefits for all their partners,

without this identity being a protected class, these discriminatory practices cannot be remedied without legal protection.

For many of the polyamory practitioners who have observed the differences, and continually evolving face of the polyamory movement, achievement is their own dissolution. Thus movement toward a social movement becomes stagnated by this continual ebb and flow of leaders in and out of the larger community visibility. These practitioners argue that when there is no longer an audience to speak to, or one that writes in, they can gracefully bow out of the public sphere as activists because they feel, at this point, polyamory would have reached the necessary saturation in popular culture and the public sphere to no longer warrant their educational and awareness efforts. As Tikva Wolf states, “ I appreciate that so many people have found value in it, I imagine that that sort of thing will become less necessary as polyamory becomes more understood. . . the main reason it [*Kimchi Cuddles comic*] exists is because there is a lot of people following it. I don’t think I’d be interested in it really as much if there weren’t a lot of people following it” (personal communication, 2015); and Cuning Minx comments on the evolution of polyamory as presented in popular culture, “the way the characters described poly, and how it was set up, and how they do it really resonated with me. And I thought it was representational of a large part of the poly community that had not been represented on television to date, so I thought ‘hey, are we here? I guess we’re here, we are actually being represented accurately once in a fictional context’” (personal communication, 2015); and Joreth also comments, “any movement that finds itself on the Internet gains steam very rapidly, and it might possibly burnout because of how quickly it goes, or it might solidify itself in the culture” and even finds herself today taking a more peripheral role, “for all of the things that I’m an activist

about, I believe that an activist is most successful when they make themselves irrelevant. So I would like to see myself taking a few more steps back” (personal communication, 2015).

All of these comments point to the constitution of the social imaginary, and thus the dissipation of the movement at a point when it potentially would reach its social apex in a political and legal sphere. As Vahabzadeh (2003) argues, once an experience is articulated, the identity itself no longer remains. If polyamory is properly gaining momentum in the public sphere, by way of the vast increase of coverage and accurate representations in popular culture, then we might be closer to achieving tolerance of the lifestyle as just another option on the spectrum of sexuality choices. Because of the ever-evolving language in the movement, beginning with polyfidelity in the Kerista commune, shifting to responsible non-monogamy and multi partner lovestyles, in the era of Nearing and Anapol, later coined polyamory and disseminated widely over the Internet and indoctrinated with legitimacy by the OED in 2006, and now morphing even further with ethical non-monogamy which sought to open up the model even further, the movement had felt and harnessed several moments in which the experiences of its members were articulated in moments of unconcealment (Vahabzadeh, 2003). It comes as no surprise then that founding members have taken a back seat, not just because of physically growing older, but from recognizing that their utopic social imaginary had either been fully articulated, or could no longer sustain itself in its current state. As Vahabzadeh, drawing on Klaus Eder’s locating a new type of class between class and action found, the visibility of culture is the context in which agency is found; and the structural outcome of the action that has taken place in the cultural field, by way of popular cultural references, increased media coverage, and technological recognition (*Facebook, OKCupid, Poly Living* app). Agency, and thus visibility, is increased by the newly named and constituted ‘polyamorist’ in these public spaces, found online

through a need to articulate what one is versus one is not through early message boards and the coining of the word, ‘polyamory’, as well as the structural outcome of creating ethical non-monogamists as a way to queer the space of the normative, and the space of polyamory as a distinct identity within the non-monogamy subject. This visibility thus reveals the “antagonistic norms, interests and values” of the dominant class (Vahabzadeh, 2003, 27). By creating ethical non-monogamy, the movement is able to reveal the lack in the heteronormative, and reclaim their identity outside the parameters of mainstream cheating discourses as a viable alternative, rather than subordinate.

The goals of the movement as a whole also sustain the movement by remaining the same as evidenced throughout the goals outlined in *PEPTalk* and *Floodtide* and through the movement today maintaining a similar trajectory as outlined by the goals of the *PLN*. In Summer 1991 Anapol writes,

things IRC would like to do someday: publish a newsletter, create an umbrella organization for sexual freedom groups, network between groups, set up a speakers bureau, do outreach on university campuses to college students, create and distribute audio and video tapes, buy and operate a hot springs resort, create new language for multiple relationships, develop referral network for groups, individuals, and professionals, organize a conference, edit an anthology, develop a political analysis, fund raising, start a lending library of books and tapes, place articles on non-traditional families in the mainstream media, discover mechanisms for forming expanded families, and edit a book of people’s positive experiences with non-monogamy (Anapol, 1991, 2-3).

Most of these, if not all, were reiterated at the first and second *PLN* summit meetings, again, leading to the reproduction of more projects for the community, but still not gaining the type of collectivity necessary to go after a larger polyamory rights movement in the public sphere. These are the articulated experiences through media discourses that define their identities, pointing to the historically specific conditions that unfolded to constitute these identities. As Vahabzadeh

(2003) states, language is a marker of an era, a shift in a paradigm– the language of polyamory, the constitution of experiences within this identity, and the point in which polyamory challenges the normative institute of state-sanctioned marriage embodies the historical shift from the naturalization of heteronormative relationship styles to reveal their construction, and thus make visible the epochal unconcealment of sexuality and relationship constructionism. History, indeed, does repeat itself.

CHAPTER 12: CONCLUSION

Anapol and Nearing, the two co-founders of the modern polyamory movement, were free-love activists in the 1960s, living in communes and seeking out alternative family models. Using the tools available to them— newsletters, mailing lists to reach out to larger audiences, and the printed word via their numerous books and magazine publications, they were able to jump start a movement within the confines of modernity. The nuclear family model was not a viable option for these women, nor were they interested in maintaining monogamous relationships to subscribe to the heteronormative standard.

After an abundance of outreach to both of these women from their public and network television experiences, organizations were fashioned— the centralizing hubs of which communication and media would be produced and disseminated— to initiate efforts of connectivity across a country where access to information about non-monogamous relationships was highly limited.

Teetering on the cusp of the Internet age, polyamory saw an increase in interest while information was able to spread quickly over geographically dispersed locations to reach individuals in the comfort of their own home. Providing literature and accompanying conferences helped solidify a leadership network with the burgeoning polyamory community. While shows like *P:M&D* still utilize the medium of television, the emphasis on sex over identity has not furthered the ability of the medium to provide more accurate representations, but rather, has generated more awareness and the household use of the word ‘polyamory,’ thus leading those who want to learn more to these online networks through Google searches and *Facebook* communities.

Is a leadership necessary if people can continue to have their polyamorous relationships? If co-habitation is the only legal means of discriminating against polyamory people from a relationship model standpoint, polyamory people can continue to have a multi-partner relationship without falling prey to these legal ramifications. The magazine like *Loving More* is not necessary to continue to foster the larger movement dialogue unless people are seeking out equal rights for the individual or plural marriage. Very few polyamory cases have been in the court system, but many more cases pertaining to polygamy have, particularly when associated with Mormonism and co-habitation laws in Utah.

Because the Internet has created a space in which people are much more easily connected, and due to the efforts of folks putting together meetup groups and face-to-face communication, unless there is movement to move the movement toward plural marriage, the community will remain fragmented in its efforts. The shift in initiatives of the *Loving More* magazine in which the director, Robyn Trask, is consistently sending out press releases, vetting polyamorous individuals to talk to the media, and going on shows and interviewing to provide a pro-poly narrative, suggests there is a definitive need for an organized leadership structure to maintain external public visibility. The 'loose' network of the *PLN* speaks volumes to this notion, particularly as their agenda at the first few summit meetings sought out to move the polyamory movement toward awareness and education, but quickly many of the projects that were planned fell to the wayside. This disorganization points to a lack of a clear agenda that the majority of the community wants to get behind.

More importantly, however, is the observation that despite similar threads continuing to weave themselves through the ethical non-monogamy/polyamory discourses, movements are moved in the direction of their leaders, held to the motivations of particular ideologies. When

competing ideologies function in more equally distributed networks, such as through new media, the fragmented landscape does illustrate a more diversified set of voices, but is it enough to get these plurality of voices to ban together for a polyamory rights movement? Can these counter publics form a larger cohort, harnessing the power of many to fight for equal rights? Since there appears to be quite a bit of speculation on just how many people in the community want plural marriage, the momentum of the movement seems better served to seek out individual rights, and as much of the mainstream media have reported on and speculated, the full dismantling of government sanctioned marriage as a better model suited for these postmodern relationship anarchists.

REFERENCES

- Anapol, D. (1985a). IntiNet Resource Center September newsletter. Retrieved from: Kenneth Haslam Collection, Kinsey Institute, 2015.
- Anapol, D. (1985b), IntiNet Resource Center November newsletter. Retrieved from: Kenneth Haslam Collection, Kinsey Institute, 2015.
- Anapol, D. (1985c), IntiNet Resource Center December newsletter. Retrieved from: Kenneth Haslam Collection, Kinsey Institute, 2015
- Anapol, D. (1992). Floodtide Winter newsletter. Retrieved from: Kenneth Haslam Collection, Kinsey Institute, 2015.
- Anapol, D. (1989a). IntiNet Resource Center newsletter. Retrieved from: Kenneth Haslam Collection, Kinsey Institute, 2015.
- Anapol, D. (1989b). *A Resource Guide For The Responsible Non-Monogamous*. Retrieved from: Kenneth Haslam Collection, Kinsey Institute, 2015.
- Anapol, D. (1990). IntiNet Resource Center Fall newsletter. Retrieved from: Kenneth Haslam Collection, Kinsey Institute, 2015.
- Anapol, D. (1994). IntiNet Resource Center newsletter. Retrieved from: Kenneth Haslam Collection, Kinsey Institute, 2015.
- Anapol, D. (1997). *Love without limits: the quest for sustainable intimate relationships: responsible nonmonogamy*. Intinet Resource Center.
- Anapol, D. (1997b) IntiNet Resource Center Love Without Limits Press Release. Retrieved from: Kenneth Haslam Collection, Kinsey Institute, 2015.
- Anapol, D. (2010). *Polyamory in the 21st century: Love and intimacy with multiple partners*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Antalffy, N. (2011). Polyamory and the media. *Scan/ Journal of Media Arts Culture*, 8(1).
- Archive of American Television. (2013). Tom Bergeron Emmy Legends Interview. Retrieved from: <http://emmytvlegends.org/interviews/people/tom-bergeron>
- Atton, C. (2001). *Alternative media*. Sage.
- Baisden, M. (2005). *Love, Lust, and Lies* segment. Michael Baisden *After Dark*. [Radio Program]. Westwood One, TV One. Cummulus Media.
- Barker, M. (2005). This is my partner, and this is my...partner's partner: Constructing a polyamorous identity in a monogamous world. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, 18(1), 75-88.

- Barnard, B.Q. (2007). The utopia of sharing in Oneida. *New York Times*. NY. As quoted in Anapol (2010). *Polyamory in the 21st century: Love and intimacy with multiple partners*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Bennion, J. (2012). *Polygamy in primetime: Media, gender, and politics in Mormon fundamentalism*. UPNE.
- Benson, P. J. (2008). *The polyamory handbook*. Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse.
- Berger, A. A. (2000). *Media and communication research methods: An introduction to qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Sage Publications.
- Bergeron, T. (Host) (1986). *People Are Talking*. [Television series]. Unidentified video source. Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.
- Berman, D. [Dave Berman] (2010, May 21). Polyamory Explained By The Polyamory Media Association. YouTube video. [video file]. Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIhGh6P-f6M&index=1&list=PL6558800F178B86EA>
- Beyond Monogamy pamphlet (nd). Unidentified pamphlet. Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.
- Black, D. M. (2006). Beyond child bride polygamy: Polyamory, unique familial constructions, and the law. *JL & Fam. Stud.*, 8, 497.
- Borland, K. (1991). *That's not what I said: Interpretive conflict in oral narrative research*. Routledge.
- Buechler, S. M. (1993). Beyond resource mobilization?. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 34(2), 217-235.
- Breitman, R. (2007, October 25). When three's no crowd. *Gay City News*. Retrieved from <http://polyinthemedia.blogspot.com/2007/10/when-threes-no-crowd.html>
- Brickell, C. (2006). The sociological construction of gender and sexuality. *The Sociological Review*, 54(1), 87-113
- Butler, J. (1992). Contingent foundations: Feminism and the question of 'Postmodernism.' in *Feminists Theorize the Political*, ed by Butler, J. and Scott, J.W. New York: Routledge
- Castells, M. (2010). *The rise of the network society: The information age: Economy, society, and culture* (Vol. 1). John Wiley & Sons.
- Castells, M. (2012). *Networks of outrage and hope: Social movements in the Internet age*. John Wiley & Sons.

- Chapman, M. (2010). *What does polyamory look like?: Polydiverse patterns of loving and living in modern polyamorous relationships*. IUiverse.
- Cipher Goth. (1998). Re: Geraldo refuses to show Loving More episode. Retrieved from: <http://www.ciphergoth.org/writing/postings/news-278.txt>
- Community to Community. (1983). *Here and Now*. Unidentified video recording. Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.
- Conley, T. D., Ziegler, A., Moors, A. C., Matsick, J. L., & Valentine, B. (2012). A critical examination of popular assumptions about the benefits and outcomes of monogamous relationships. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*
- D'emilio, J., & Freedman, E. B. (1988). *Intimate matters: A history of sexuality in America*. University of Chicago Press.
- Delaware Valley Synergy newsletter. (1984). Unidentified newsletter. Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.
- Diani, M. (2002). Network analysis. *Methods of social movement research*, 173-200.
- Diani, M., & McAdam, D. (Eds.). (2003). *Social movements and networks: Relational approaches to collective action: Relational approaches to collective action*. OUP Oxford.
- Dobbs, M. (Writer), Davies, A. (Writer), Willimon, B. (Writer), Jun Gu, T. (Writer), Eason, L. (Writer), Kennedy, B. (Writer), & Skogland, L. (Director) (2016) Chapter 50 [Television series episode]. In Brunetti, D. (Executive Producer), *House of Cards*, Sony Pictures Home Entertainment.
- Donahue, P. (1980). *Polyfidelity: Sex in the Kerista Commune and Other Related Theories on How to Solve the World's Problems*. WEWS-TV, Cleveland, Ohio.
- Donahue, P. (1992). Stan & Janet Dale, Deborah Anapol. Unidentified video source. Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.
- Easton, D., & Hardy, J. (1997). *The ethical slut: A guide to infinite sexual possibilities*. Berkeley.
- Emens, E. F. (2004). Monogamy's law: Compulsory monogamy and polyamorous existence. *U of Chicago, Public Law Working Paper*, (58), 277.
- Fairclough, N. L. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Harlow, UK: Longman.
- Family Synergy pamphlet. (nd). Unidentified pamphlet. Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

- Fiske, J. (2010). *Understanding popular culture*. Taylor & Francis.
- Flick, U. (2004). Triangulation in qualitative research. *A companion to qualitative research*, 178-183.
- Foucault, M. (1980 [1978]). *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*. New York, NY: Random House
- Fraser, N. (1992) Rethinking the public sphere: A contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy. *Social text* 25/26: 56-80.
- Fraser, N. (1995). From redistribution to recognition? Dilemmas of justice in a 'post-socialist' age. *New left review*, (212), 68.
- Fuss, D. (1991). *Inside/out: Lesbian theories, gay theories*. Routledge.
- Gamson, W. A., Croteau, D., Hoynes, W., & Sasson, T. (1992). Media images and the social construction of reality. *Annual review of sociology*, 373-393.
- Geiger, S. (1990). What's so feminist about women's oral history? *Journal of Women's History*, 2(1), 169-182.
- George, R. (2015). Is Polyamory Next? *The American Interest*. Retrieved: <http://www.the-american-interest.com/2015/08/25/is-polyamory-next/>
- Riviera, G. (nd). Unidentified video source. Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN
- Goodwin, J., & Jasper, J. M. (1999, March). Caught in a winding, snarling vine: The structural bias of political process theory. In *Sociological forum* 14(1), 27-54. Kluwer Academic Publishers-Plenum Publishers.
- Habermas, J. (1991) *The structural transformation of the public sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*. MIT press.
- Haenfler, R., Johnson, B., & Jones, E. (2012). Lifestyle movements: Exploring the intersection of lifestyle and social movements. *Social Movement Studies*, 11(1), 1-20.
- Hafner, K. (1997). The Epic Saga of the WELL. *Wired Magazine*. Retrieved March 9th 2016: <http://www.wired.com/1997/05/ff-well/>
- Halberstam, J. (2005). *In a queer time and place: Transgender bodies, subcultural lives*. NYU Press.
- Hall, S. (1980). Encoding/decoding. *Culture, media, language*.

- Hall, S. & du Gay, P. (Eds.). (1996). *Questions of Cultural Identity* SAGE Publications. Sage.
- Hardt, H. (2008). Talk, or the Decline of Conversation in the Age of Mass Communication. V *Mojca Pajnik in John DH Downing (ur.), Alternative Media and the Politics of Resistance: Perspectives and Challenges*, 17-30.
- Haritaworn, J., Lin, C. J., & Klesse, C. (2006). Poly/logue: A critical introduction to polyamory. *Sexualities*, 9(5), 515.
- Heckert, J. (2010). Love without borders? Intimacy, identity and the state of compulsory monogamy. *Understanding non-monogamies*, 255-266. New York, NY: Routledge
- Highleyman, L. (1997). Small Pervert Presses Fill the Gap. *CUIR Underground*, Summer, 3.6. Retrieved March 2016: <http://www.black-rose.com/cuiru/archive/3-6/press.html>
- Hunt, S., Benford, R., & Snow, D. (1994). 'Identity fields: Framing processes and the social construction of movement identities (pp. 185–208) in *New Social Movements: From Ideology To Identity* edited by Laran, E., Johnston, H. & Gusfield, J.R.. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Hurson, M. (2013a). *Constructing Reality: Reality TV and Production*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Hurson, M. (2013b). *Constructing Reality: Reality TV and Intersectional Narratives*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Indiegogo Campaign (2015). Thorntree Press: Three new Polyamory Books in 2015. Retrieved from: https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/thorntree-press-three-new-polyamory-books-in-2015#
- IntiNet Resource Center pamphlet. (nd). Unidentified pamphlet. Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.
- Jenson, J. (1991). All the world's a stage: Ideas, Spaces and Times in Canadian Political Economy. *Studies in political economy*, 36.
- Johnston, H. (2014). *Social movements and culture*. Routledge.
- Johnston, H., Larana, E., & Gusfield, J. R. (1994). Identities, grievances, and new social movements. *New social movements: From ideology to identity*, 3-35.
- Kahney, L. (2002). Free love and selling Macs. *Wired Magazine*. Retrieved March 10th: <http://www.wired.com/2002/04/free-love-and-selling-macs/>
- Keener, M. C. (2004). *A phenomenology of polyamorous persons* (Doctoral dissertation, *The University of Utah*).

- Khazan, O. (2016). OKCupid Adds a Feature for the Polyamorous. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved: <http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2016/01/ok-cupid-is-opening-up-to-polyamorous-relationships/423162/>
- Khazan, O. (2014). Multiple Lovers, Without Jealousy. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from: <http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/07/multiple-lovers-no-jealousy/374697/>
- Kirsch, G. (1999). *Ethical dilemmas in feminist research: The politics of location, interpretation, and publication*. SUNY Press.
- Kirkman, L. (2010). Poly Is The New Gay. *La Trobe University News*. Retrieved: <https://www.latrobe.edu.au/news/articles/2010/opinion/poly-is-the-new-gay>
- Klesse, C. (2011). Notions of Love in Polyamory—Elements in a Discourse on Multiple Loving. *Laboratorium. Журнал социальных исследований*, (2), 4.
- Klesse, C. (2006). Polyamory and its ‘others’: Contesting the terms of non-monogamy. *Sexualities*, 9(5), 565-583.
- Klesse, C. (2014). Polyamory: Intimate practice, identity or sexual orientation? *Sexualities*, 17(1-2), 81-99.
- Knottnerus, J. D. (1983). The Melanesian Cargo Cults: A Test of the Value-Added Theory of Collective Behavior. *Sociological Inquiry*, 53(4), 389-403.
- Kornhauser, W. (2013). *Politics of Mass Society* (Vol. 49). Routledge.
- Kurtz, S. (2003). Beyond Gay Marriage: The Road to Polyamory. *The Weekly Standard*. Retrieved from: <http://www.weeklystandard.com/beyond-gay-marriage/article/4186>
- Le Bon, G. (1897). *The crowd: A study of the popular mind*. Fischer.
- Lee, S. H. (2007). *Debating new social movements: Culture, identity, and social fragmentation*. University Press of America.
- Liberated Christians. (2000). Leeza show on polyamory-some lessons to be learned. *Liberated Christians*. Retrieved from: <http://www.libchrist.com/poly/leezashow.html>
- Lievrouw, L. (2011). *Alternative and activist new media*. Polity.
- Lindlof, T., & Taylor, B. (2002). *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*. (Second Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Loving Alternatives pamphlet. (nd). Unidentified pamphlet. Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.
- Loving More. (2010). Polyamory Leadership Summit 2010. Newsletter. Retrieved from: <http://www.mynewsletterbuilder.com/email/newsletter/1410538939>

- Mahoney, J., & Rueschemeyer, D. (2003). *Comparative historical analysis in the social sciences*. Cambridge University Press.
- McCarthy, J. D., & Zald, M. N. (1977). Resource mobilization and social movements: A partial theory. *American journal of sociology*, 1212-1241.
- McKee, A. (1999). Resistance in hopeless: Assimilating queer theory. *Social Semiotics*, 9(2), 235-249.
- McKee, A. (2003). *Textual analysis: A beginner's guide*. Sage.
- Melucci, A. (1996). *Challenging codes: Collective action in the information age*. Cambridge University Press.
- Mint, Pepper. (nd) The maintenance of compulsory monogamy. Unpublished manuscript. Retrieved: <http://www.pepperminty.com/writing/maintenance-of-compulsory-monogamy.pdf>
- Morris, A. (2014). Tales From the Millenials' Sexual Revolution. *Rolling Stone Magazine*. Retrieved from: <http://www.rollingstone.com/feature/millennial-sexual-revolution-relationships-marriage>
- Murphy, D. J. (2005). The rhetoric of "unprincipled" philosophy. A critical notice of articulated experiences: Towards a radical phenomenology of contemporary social movements. *The European Legacy*, 10(4), 389-395.
- Namaste, K. (1994). The politics of inside/out: Queer theory, poststructuralism, and a sociological approach to sexuality. *Sociological theory*, 12, 220-220.
- Nash, C. J., & Browne, K. (2012). *Queer methods and methodologies: Intersecting queer theories and social science research*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd..
- Nearing, R. (nd). Loving More New Member Letter. Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.
- Nearing, R. (1984). Winter Solstice *PEPTalk newsletter*. Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.
- Nearing, R. (1985). *PEPTalk newsletter*. Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.
- Nearing, R. (1989, Spring Solstice). Who are we anyway? *PEPTalk newsletter*, 6(2), 1-5. Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.
- Nearing, R. (1989, Summer Solstice). *PEPTalk newsletter*. Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

- Nelson, S. (2015). Polyamorous Rights Advocates See Marriage Equality Coming for Them. *U.S. News Report*. Retrieved from: <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2015/06/29/polyamorous-rights-advocates-see-marriage-equality-coming-for-them>
- Nichols, J. (2016). Is It Time For Facebook to Recognize Polyamorous Relationships? *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/faceboom-polyamorous-relationships_us_56fe9485e4b0a06d5805813d
- Noel, M.J. (2006). Progressive polyamory: Considering issues of diversity. *Sexualities*, 9(5), 602-620.
- Newman, F. (2004). *The whole lesbian sex book*. San Francisco, CA: Cleis Press.
- Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Pallotta-Chiarolli, M. (2004). Bi Books: Take Four Pioneering Poly Women: A Review of Three Classical Texts on Polyamory. *Journal of bisexuality*, 4(3-4), 227-234.
- Playboy Channel (1985). *Women On Sex: Sex Without Jealousy*. Unidentified video recording. Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.
- Polyfidelitous Education Production pamphlet. (nd). Unidentified pamphlet. Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.
- Peters, W. (2005). Queer identities: Rupturing identity categories and negotiating meanings of queer. *Canadian Woman Studies*, 24(2).
- Polyamory In The News (2007). "Polyamory" enters the Oxford English Dictionary, and tracking the word's origins. *Polyamory In The News*. Retrieved: March 9th: <http://polyinthemedia.blogspot.com/2007/01/polyamory-enters-oxford-english.html>
- Polyamory In The News (2009). The Governor Mark Sanford affair. *Polyamory In The News* Retrieved from: <http://polyinthemedia.blogspot.com/2009/07/governor-mark-sanford-affair.html>
- Polyamory In The News (2010). The PLN, The Polyamory Media Association, and some ideal TV. *Polyamory In The News*. Retrieved from: <http://polyinthemedia.blogspot.com/2010/03/pln-polyamory-media-association-and.html>
- Polyamory In The News (2012). Casting call for possible 2nd season of Showtime's *Polyamory: Married and Dating*. *Polyamory In The News*. Retrieved March 2016: <http://polyinthemedia.blogspot.com/2012/09/casting-call-for-possible-2nd-season-of.html>

- Polyamory In The News (2013). Should You Take Poly Onto Conservative Talk Radio? *Polyamory In The News*. Retrieved from: <http://polyinthemedia.blogspot.com/2013/07/should-you-take-poly-onto-conservative.html>
- Polyamory In The News (2014). Dedeker Winston, the poly character on Fox's "Utopia" reality series. *Polyamory In The News*. Retrieved from: <http://polyinthemedia.blogspot.com/2014/09/dedeker-winston-poly-character-on-foxs.html>
- Public Vision. (1983). Newsletter of *Choosing Our Future*. Volume 1(2). Retrieved from: Kenneth Haslam Collection at the Kinsey Institute
- Rambukkana, N. (2015). *Fraught intimacies: Non/monogamy in the public sphere*. UBC Press.
- Raphael, S.J. (1993). Anapol expert appearance. *Sally Jesse Raphael Show*. [Television Show]. Unidentified video source. Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN
- Ravenhearts (2009). Frequently Asked Questions re: Polyamory. *Order of the Mithril Star*. Retrieved March 9th: <http://web.archive.org/web/20090908152231/http://www.mithrilstar.org/Polyamory-FAQ-Ravenhearts.htm>
- Rimmer, R. (1993). Letter addressed to unknown recipient. Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.
- Ritchie, A. (2010). Discursive constructions of polyamory in mono-normative media culture. *Understanding non-monogamies*, 46-50.
- Ritchie, A., & Barker, M. (2006). 'There aren't words for what we do or how we feel so we have to make them up': Constructing polyamorous languages in a culture of compulsory monogamy. *Sexualities*, 9(5), 584-601.
- Rivers, J. (1992). Anapol & Nearing appearance. *Joan Rivers Show*. [Television Show]. Unidentified video source. Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN
- Robinson, M. A. (2009). *Turning points in identity and theology: Bisexual women choosing between monogamous and polyamorous relationships* (Doctoral dissertation, University of St. Michael's College Toronto).
- Robinson, M. (2013). Polyamory and monogamy as strategic identities. *Journal of Bisexuality*, 13(1), 21-38.
- Rubin, R. H. (2001). Alternative lifestyles revisited, or whatever happened to swingers, group marriages, and communes?. *Journal of Family Issues*, 22(6), 711-726.

- Ruffin, H. II. (2016). Black Lives Matter: The Growth of a New Social Justice Movement. Retrieved from <http://www.blackpast.org/perspectives/black-lives-matter-growth-new-social-justice-movement#sthash.jnjsiMRY.dpuf>
- Rust, P. C. (2003). Monogamy and Polyamory: Relationship Issues for Bisexuals. *Psychological perspectives on lesbian, gay, and bisexual experiences*, 475.
- Salih, S. (2007). On Judith Butler and Performativity. *Sexualities and communication in everyday life: A reader*, 55-68.
- Sexuality and Spirituality Conference flyer (1993). Unidentified conference flyer. Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.
- Sexuality and Spirituality Conference workshop itinerary (1993). Unidentified conference itinerary. Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.
- Sheff, E. (2005). Polyamorous women, sexual subjectivity and power. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 34(3), 251-283.
- Sheff, E. (2006). Poly-hegemonic masculinities. *Sexualities*, 9(5), 621-642
- Sheff, E. (2007, March). An introduction to polyamory: Definitions, terminology, and details. In *SSTAR*, 32nd Annual Meeting (p. 60).
- Sheff, E. (2012). Three Waves of Non-Monogamy: A Select History of Polyamory in the United States. *Elizabeth Sheff*. Retrieve from: <https://elisabethsheff.com/2012/09/09/three-waves-of-polyamory-a-select-history-of-non-monogamy/>
- Sheff, E., & Hammers, C. (2011). The privilege of perversities: race, class and education among polyamorists and kinksters. *Psychology & Sexuality*, 2(3), 198-223.
- Singer, J. (1996). For Better or For Worse: How the Law and Politics of Gay Marriage Affect Poly's. *Loving More*, ed. 8.
- Singh, A. (2001). When 3 (or more) Is Not A Crowd. *The New York Times*. Retrieved: <http://articles.latimes.com/2001/may/17/news/cl-64527>
- Soto, S. K. (2010). *Reading Chican@ like a queer: The de-mastery of desire*. University of Texas Press.
- Springer, J. (1996). Non-Monogamous Relationships. *Jerry Springer Show*. [Television Show]. Unidentified video source. Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

- Star Trek: The Next Generation script. (1992). Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.
- Strassberg, M. I. (2003). Challenge of post-modern polygamy: Considering polyamory, *The Cap. UL Rev.*, 31, 439.
- Stryker, K. (2016). Has Polyamory Reached The Tipping Point? *Harlot Media*. Retrieved: <http://harlot.media/articles/2079/has-polyamory-hit-the-tipping-point>
- Sullivan, N. (2003). *A critical introduction to queer theory*. NYU Press.
- Swartz, D. (2012). *Culture and power: The sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*. University of Chicago Press.
- Swiss, T. (2000). *Unspun: key concepts for understanding the World Wide Web*. NYU Press.
- Syntony. (nd). Unidentified video recording. Kenneth R. Haslam Collection, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.
- Senjen, R., & Guthrey, J. (1996). *The Internet for women*. Spinifex Press.
- Smelser, N. J. (2011). *Theory of collective behavior*. Quid Pro Books.
- Tilly, C. (1978). *From mobilization to revolution*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Toffler, A. (1981). *The third wave*. New York: Bantam books.
- Trask, R. (2010). The Marginalizing of Polyamory by Mainstream Media and Academia. *Loving More*. Retrieved from: <http://www.lovemore.com/mediareact/the-marginalizing-of-polyamory-by-mainstream-media-and-academia/>
- Turner, R. H., & Killian, L. M. (1957). *Collective behavior*.
- Tweedy, A. E. (2011). Polyamory as a sexual orientation. *University of Cincinnati Law Review*, 79, 1461.
- Vahabzadeh, P. (2003). *Articulated experiences: Toward a radical phenomenology of contemporary social movements*. SUNY Press.
- van Dijk, T. A. (1993). Principles of critical discourse analysis. *Discourse & society*, 4(2), 249-283.
- van Dijk, T. A. (2001) Critical discourse analysis. In Schiffrin, D., Tannen, D. and Hamilton, H. E. (eds) *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. Blackwell Publishers, Malden, MA, pp. 352-371

- Wagner, A. (2009). "Family" Poly web series actor fired. Practical Polyamory. Retrieved from: <http://practicalpolyamory.blogspot.com/2009/02/poly-family-web-series-actor-fired.html?zx=585110f0f011fe7d>
- Walston, J (2001). The Polyamory Movement. Unpublished manuscript. Retrieved March 9th 2016: <http://uupa.org/PortlandOR/article1.htm>
- Warner, M. (2002). Publics and counterpublics. *Public culture*, 14(1), 49-90.
- Weeks, J. (1987). Questions of identity (31-51) in *The cultural construction of sexuality*. (2013) (Eds.) Caplan, P. Routledge.
- Wilkinson, E. (2010). What's queer about non-monogamy now. *Understanding non-monogamies*, 243-254.
- Williams, A. (2012). Open Marriages New 15 Minutes. *New York Times*. New York.
- Williams, R. (1973). Base and superstructure in Marxist cultural theory. *Schooling & Capitalism: A Sociological Reader*, 82, 202.
- Wing, A. K. (2000). Polygamy from Southern Africa to Black Britannia to Black America: Global critical race feminism as legal reform for the twenty-first century. *J. Contemp. Legal Issues*, 11, 811.
- Wong, C. (2015). Facebook Introduced Gender-Free Form For Facebook Users. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/02/26/facebook-gender-free-form-field-_n_6762458.html
- Williams, R. (1973). Base and superstructure in Marxist cultural theory. *Media and cultural studies: keywords*, 130-143.

APPENDIX

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Compersion: A state of happiness and joy experienced when an individual's current or former romantic partner experiences happiness and joy through another romantic interest

Dyad: Something that consists of two elements or parts

Ethical non-monogamy: A non-monogamous relationship with agreement and consent from all involved, one can explore love and sex with multiple people

Heteronormative: Denoting or relating to a world view that promotes heterosexuality as the normal or preferred sexual orientation.

Mononormative: Denoting or relating to a world view that promotes monogamy as the normal or preferred sexual behavior.

Non-monogamy: A relationship in which sexual exclusivity is not held as the primary fundamental premise of the relationship

Polyamory: the state or practice of having more than one open romantic relationship at a time

Polyandry: the state or practice of having more than one husband or male mate at one time

Polycule: Complex inter-connected polyamory relationships involving primaries and secondaries. The relationships may or may not link through different people.

Polyfide: Someone who practices polyfidelity

Polyfidelity: all partners are primary to other partners within the group and sex is shared only among the group. More partners can be added with everyone's consent or it can be closed, where partners choose not to have any more partners

Polygamy: marriage in which a spouse of either sex may have more than one mate at the same time

Polygyny: the state or practice of having more than one wife or female mate at a time

Polynormative: Denoting or relating to a world view that promotes polyamory as a privileged and enlightened form of a non-monogamous sexual relationship.

Primary Partner: An anthropological term that describes the partner(s) given priority in time and energy in a relationship. Includes sex and emotional support and may include long term commitments and plans.

Quad: A four partner relationship

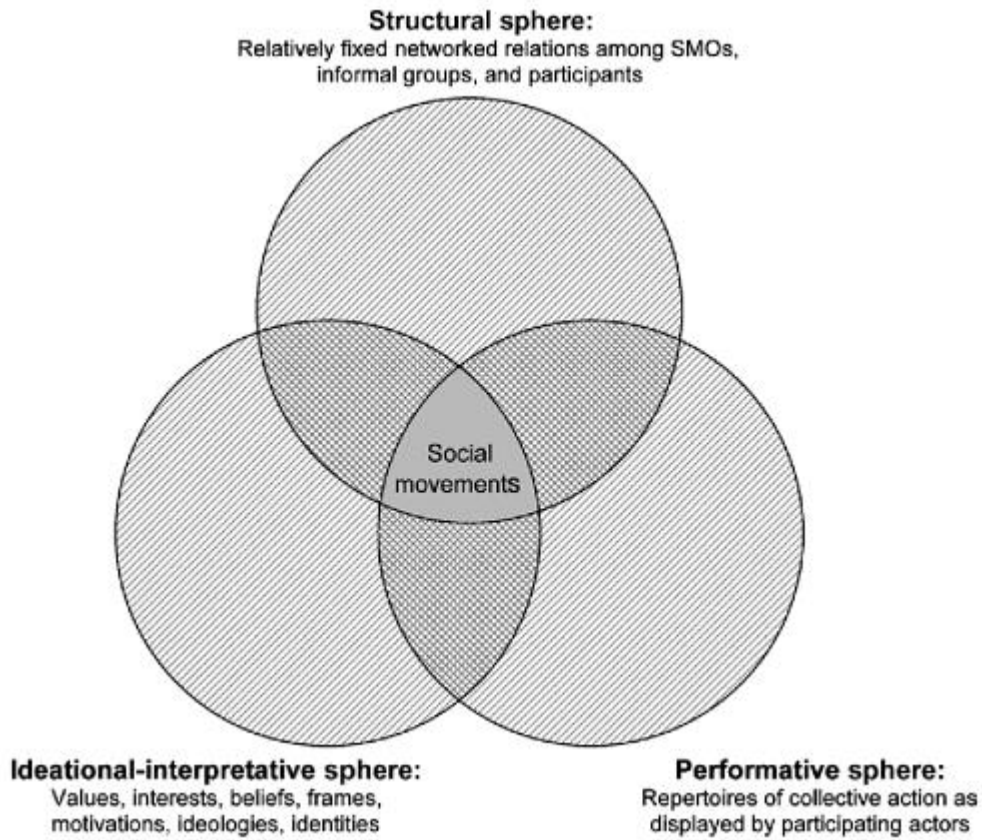
Serial Monogamy: a succession of monogamous partners over time, overlapping sexuality only in the transition from the current monogamous partner to next

Swinging: Romantic partners who switch partners with another couple or group for casual sex. Emotional connections are avoided with sex partners though they may be friends

Triad: A relationship that involves three people that have a romantic relationship with each other.

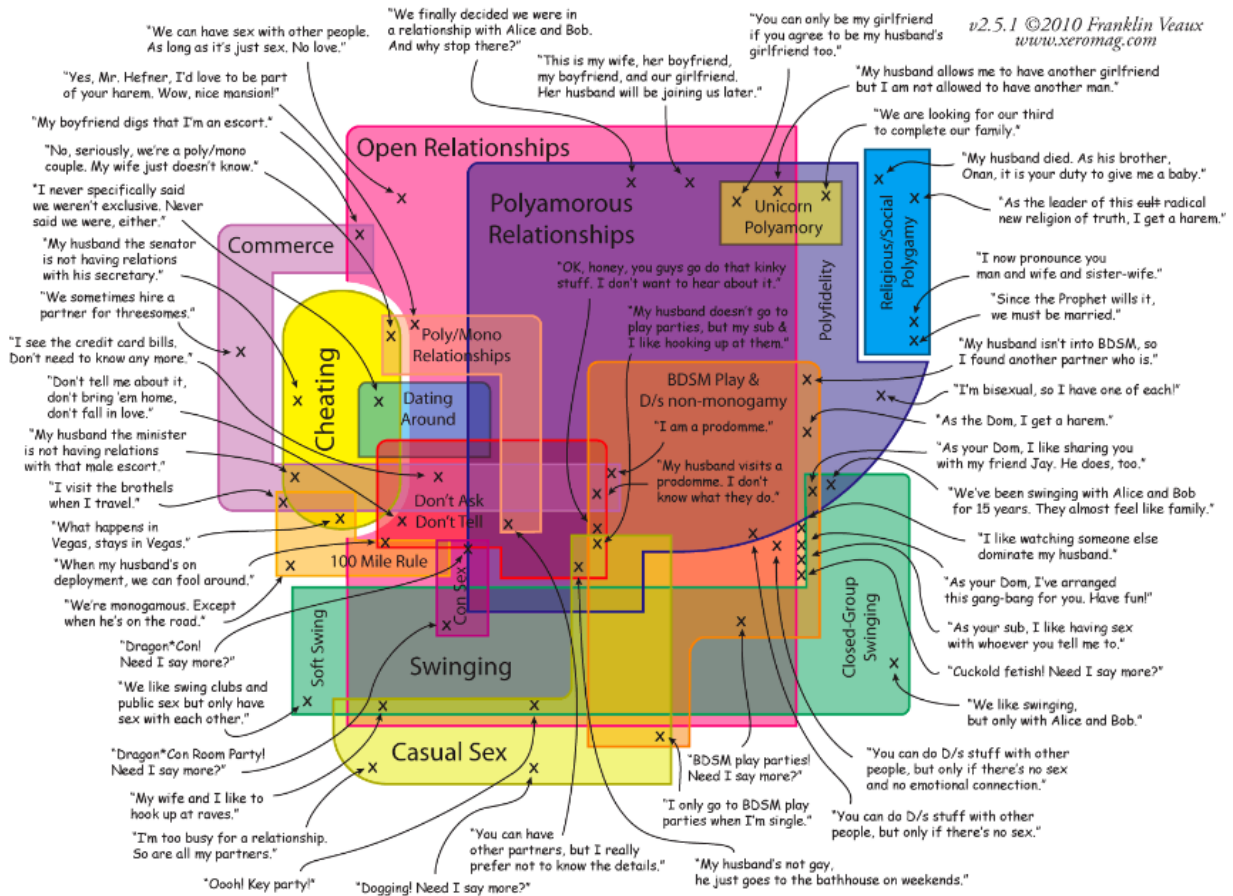
FIGURES

Figure 1.



Source: Dimensions of Social Movement Analysis, Johnston (2014)

Figure 2.



Source: Franklin Veaux, Xeromag.com (2010)