released in 1984, it was done so under the name "Lightnin' Rod" and Nurriddin recorded several other songs as "Lightnin' Rod." However, both David Henderson and Shapiro and Glebbeek credit the track to Alafia Pudim.

65. McDermott, *Hendrix: Setting the Record Straight*, 234.

66. Henderson, *'Scuse Me While I Kiss the Sky: The Life of Jimi Hendrix* , 295.

67. For a thorough account of the Band of Gypsys, including interviews with Cox, Miles, the Allen Twins, and Hendrix's producer Eddie Kramer, as well as live footage from their Fillmore East shows, see *Jimi Hendrix: Band of Gypsys*, Bob Smeaton, director (MCA Music Video, MCAV-11931, 1999).

68. Roger Steffens argues that Hendrix appealed to black and white soldiers alike in Vietnam, because he "gave us the melody of war, raw and off-key, the ragged guys who'd been shot in the field." Roger Steffens, "Nine Meditations on Jimi and Nam," in *The Ultimate Experience*, ed. Adrian Boot and Chris Salewicz (New York: Macmillan, 1995), 113.

69. In addition to his powerful influence on rock guitar players, Hendrix's work has also made its mark on hip-hop. DJs like Q-Bert modeled their early deejay battles on Hendrix's performances as they scratched needles across rather than within the grooves of a record. Hendrix has been sampled extensively by artists such as Ice-T, Chuck D, Digital Underground, A Tribe Called Quest, the Beastie Boys, and Monie Love. In "Jimmi Diggin' Cats," the New York hip-hop/jazz band the Digable Planets imagine that Hendrix would have given them his blessing: "Yo, everybody's goin' retro, right? Word/ And I was thinking that if the 60s and 70s were now, Isaac Hayes would have his own 900 number/ I know, and MC Hammer would have been a pimp, right? /And Jimi? Jimi would have dug us, right? Word."

70. Hollingworth, "Hendrix Today," 36.

Eight

Gay Gatherings

Reimagining the Counterculture

Robert McRuer

Everything seemed to come alive for me then, like it had never been before. I was gay! Gay! With ribbons streaming and bells ringing. It was not just the sexual awakening; I was still very shy about that. Rather it was the experience of self-validation that so excited me. As I continued to go to GLF meetings and meet gay people, I listened to what they said and saw a viable way to live as a gay person. I accepted my new identity. I had come out in the movement.

—John Knoebel, "Somewhere in the Right Direction: Testimony of My Experience in a Gay Male Living Collective" (1972)

In 1972, John Knoebel wrote of his experiences living as part of the 95th Street Collective. This group of five gay men in New York City was, apparently, the first gay male living collective in the United States. The group's decision to experiment with an alternative, communal living arrangement fit well within larger understandings of what it meant to "come out" in the early 1970s—indeed, Knoebel's story (titled, after all, "Somewhere in the Right Direction") would almost suggest that, for him, the trajectory from coming out to collective living was inevitable. Knoebel first detailed the individual isolation he experienced growing up in the Midwest and attending religious schools, but then wrote of a transformation that was much more than individual: "I was gay! Gay! With ribbons streaming and bells ringing. . . . I had come out in the

movement."[1] For Knoebel and many others at the time, the coming-out experience was fundamentally a collective experience: one came *out* of the closet, certainly, but even more important, one came out *to* a community or movement (in Knoebel's case, the Gay Liberation Front, or GLF) involved in the process of reimagining and reshaping the world.[2] The burgeoning gay movement made possible the formation of new identities, individual and collective, and because of this, communal living could indeed be seen as a natural part of some people's coming-out process in the early 1970s. Although the standard, bourgeois American dream offered an extremely limited repertoire of identities (the dominant culture's image of success was the white and middle-class heterosexual couple, living a private existence with their children in the suburbs), both coming out and functioning as part of a collective marked a refusal to live according to those terms set by straight society.

The men involved in the 95th Street Collective were committed to shaping ways of being sexual together, even though the actual sexual experimentation within this particular group during its existence was quite limited. Virtually every other aspect of the men's lives, however, was collective: they made decisions about finances and meals together, took care of the apartment, worked out conflicts through regular group discussions, organized activism within the larger gay liberation movement (including staffing a telephone and providing space where GLF men could hold meetings), and even walked together holding hands in Riverside Park. Like other gay men of the period, they were strongly influenced by feminism and attended several consciousness-raising (CR) groups in the community in addition to their regular discussions within the collective. The CR groups in the community helped them develop an analysis of their own oppression that they subsequently brought back to the collective: for instance, they were critical of, and struggled against, both individualism (which they understood as supporting competitive, patriarchal ways of relating that limited the possibilities of emotional, sensual, and sexual bonds between men) and the couple form (which they understood as supporting sexist and heterosexist ideas of possessiveness and hierarchy).

Of course, as this description of their experiment should underscore, the "straight" society that Knoebel and his friends were refusing was not simply "heterosexual" society. It was, more broadly, the same "straight" society that various facets of the counterculture had been critiquing and rejecting throughout the 1960s. Indeed, the "ribbons streaming and bells ringing" that Knoebel associated with coming out and being gay are directly reminiscent of the colorful alternatives proffered by the counterculture more generally to what they perceived as a gray and lifeless American society (the gray flannel suit of the "organization man" had come to represent the homogeneity and emptiness of white middle-class corporate life).[3] During the famous "Human Be-In" in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park in January 1967, thousands of hippies with streamers, flamboyant costumes, music, and drugs held a festival celebrating their vision of a peace and love they believed could transform the world. Through this event and other colorful "happenings" in the 1960s, the counterculture imagined and performed alternatives to middle-class conformity and materialism.

Although the counterculture was extremely varied, in general the young people involved, like the men in the 95th Street Collective, valued community over individualism and peace and harmony over competition and dissension. Members of the counterculture encouraged young men and women to "drop out" of, or reject, a society focused on greed and the exploitation of others and to explore the different, heightened kinds of consciousness that music, drugs, and sexual experimentation could bring. And although the counterculture as represented by hippies and by events like the Human Be-In flourished for only a short time (roughly the last half of the 1960s), its impact on youth cultures extended far beyond that period. Countercultural values, for instance, were clearly helping to shape the 95th Street Collective and similar gay and lesbian communities.

The counterculture had a complicated and often problematic relationship to race, gender, and sexuality, however, and because of this, other factors were equally decisive in shaping the new gay and lesbian communities. Timothy Miller contends that "Black radicals (Malcolm X, W. E. B. Du Bois) were countercultural heroes because they refused to compromise with the white and prosperous Establishment."[4] Nonetheless, despite a supposed affinity with African American cultures (or, more properly, white ideas or fantasies about African American cultures), the counterculture was predominantly white and male. It was often, indeed, not only predominantly male but openly sexist; as Miller explains, "women were commonly 'chicks'; when they were in relationships with men, they were 'old ladies.'"[5] The historian Terry H. Anderson recounts that "sales of underground papers soared when they began publishing 'personal' columns in which men would advertise for 'groovy chicks who like to smoke weed and ball.'"[6] Hippies, due to their long hair and more "feminine" appearance, may have been conflated with gay men in the popular imagination, but this conflation did not necessarily mean that the counterculture explicitly endorsed or participated in homosexual activity. On the contrary: despite the abstract rhetoric of love and sexual freedom that dominated the movement, the privileging of masculinity through an emphasis on "groovy" heterosexual performance meant that the counterculture was often homophobic as well as sexist. This homophobia undoubtedly qualified the

degree to which the counterculture could have a direct influence on living experiments like the 95th Street Collective. The influence the counterculture had on such experiments was consequently always mediated through other factors: feminism, as I have already suggested, but also other political movements connected to the New Left, such as the antiwar, student, or Civil Rights movements.

The counterculture and the New Left in some ways represented opposing tendencies during the period. As the historian Theodore Roszak famously put it,

> To one side, there is the mind-blown bohemianism of the beats and the hippies; to the other, the hard-headed political activism of the student New Left. Are these not in reality two separate and antithetical developments: the one (tracing back to Ginsberg, Kerouac, & Co.) seeking to "cop out" of American society, the other (tracing back to C. Wright Mills and remnants of the old socialist left) seeking to penetrate and revolutionize our political life?[7]

However, almost all of the new gay and lesbian communities—communities that were both imagined and actualized in the 1970s—descended in some way from both varieties of youth culture. Roszak himself went on to suggest that the counterculture and the New Left were, in fact, deeply connected; as Todd Gitlin puts it, "there was a direct line from the expressive politics of the New Left to the counterculture's let-it-all-hang-out way of life."[8] For gay liberationists, this connection between the counterculture and the New Left was undoubtedly particularly pronounced. In his account of the 95th Street Collective, Knoebel highlights how his participation in it resulted from his prior participation in the New York Gay Liberation Front. Like the collective, the GLF itself emerged from the confluence of countercultural values and the radical political values animating the various other movements of the 1960s.[9]

In this chapter, I want to look more closely at a selection of "gay gatherings" in order to trace this confluence. After briefly surveying the meanings of "gathering" and community more generally, I first consider, as a type of gathering, the very anthology in which Knoebel's description of the 95th Street Collective first appeared. *Out of the Closets: Voices of Gay Liberation*, edited in 1972 by Karla Jay and Allen Young, was one of the first publications of its kind and was itself, like the communal experiment Knoebel wrote about, a gathering of politicized voices influenced by both the counterculture and the New Left.[10] Second, I examine the emerging women's cultures of the 1970s, taking as my particular example the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival was founded in 1975 and initially drew about 2,000 women; the event was designed to provide a space where women could experience a new kind of freedom, openness, and creativity. Alice Echols, in *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967–1975*, labels such events "cultural feminism"; Echols's contention is that cultural feminism diluted an earlier and more political "radical feminism."[11] Although I will not wholly dispute this argument, I will qualify it by considering the complex (and somewhat contradictory) mix of radical and countercultural impulses that contributed to the establishment of annual gatherings such as the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival.

Third, and perhaps more unexpected, I consider the successful campaign for a seat on San Francisco's Board of City Supervisors waged by Harvey Milk in 1977. A political campaign like Milk's would appear to be a more traditional and liberal "gay gathering," but I argue that the campaign's commitments to communities coming together and ties to events such as the annual gay pride parade (known in San Francisco at the time as "Gay Freedom Day") connect even such a seemingly liberal gathering to both radical and countercultural roots. Finally, I briefly examine the emergence of disco. Commentators often position disco cultures of the 1970s, like the counterculture of the 1960s, at odds with the more radical liberationist politics of the period. I challenge this by suggesting that the fluid, communal identities that emerged from the dance floors (identities that represented, significantly, new ways of being both black and gay) were precisely the kinds of identities that were needed to face the political crises, including the AIDS epidemic, of the 1980s and beyond.

Coming Together: Communities and Gatherings

In *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Raymond Williams writes that from the nineteenth century, "*Community* was the word normally chosen for experiments in an alternative kind of group-living." This sense of the term, as Williams understands it, marks a contrast between "the more direct, more total and therefore more significant relationships of *community* and the more formal, more abstract and more instrumental relationships of *state*, or of *society* in its modern sense."[12] The sharp contrast between *community* and *state* or *society*, as well as the more alternative or experimental sense of the former, has been lost somewhat in the last few decades. Jan Zita Grover, for instance, discusses the ways in which the term has been appropriated during the AIDS epidemic: when heterosexuals began describing themselves (or were described by the mainstream media) as "the heterosexual community," the more critical sense of *community* was lost. As Grover puts it, "Particularly since the mid-1960s in the U.S., the term *community* has been most frequently invoked in

oppositional terms to identify a local, ethnic, racial, or political variant to the mainstream. To find the mainstream defining itself as a variant is therefore surprising."[13] What is missing from conservative deployments of *community* is the sense of directness and totality that political and countercultural movements in the 1960s and 1970s sought—for those movements, shaping community specifically entailed forging the more focused "significant relationships" Williams describes.

The forging of significant relationships occurred through a process of *gathering*, which the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines as "A bringing together or coming together of people."[14] Members of the counterculture understood straight society as reproducing mindless conformity, a conformity which they believed was responsible for the isolation and alienation that was endemic to American life. If the priorities of mainstream society ultimately did nothing but pull people apart and dull their ability to think and feel deeply, the counterculture would bring people together, offering them rich sensory experiences and alternative ways of living and relating. The Human Be-In, the 95th Street Collective, and other communities shaped in opposition to the dominant culture were gatherings in the sense that they created spaces where people could come together in new relations of nurturance and interdependency.

Out of the Closets

Such new relations were precisely what the contributors to *Out of the Closets: Voices of Gay Liberation* offered readers in 1972. In language that directly evoked countercultural values, Karla Jay wrote in the introduction to the first edition of *Out of the Closets*, "This book is written for gay brothers and sisters by gay brothers and sisters as an act of love and communion."[15] The closet, as the contributors to *Out of the Closets* understood it, was a space that separated people from each other by refusing or denying them community, and thus it was a space that served the needs of an individualistic and competitive culture. *Out of the Closets* was compiled to provide evidence of gay and lesbian alternatives to the culture that had created the closet.

Jay named the struggle that lesbians and gay men faced "a class struggle" and identified the "oppressor" as "white, middle-class, male-dominated heterosexual society."[16] In the rest of the collection, numerous other contributors extended her critique and identified capitalism, patriarchy, and imperialism as the systems gay men and lesbians opposed. Through their denial of community and "communion" more generally, these systems sought to negate the very existence of the cultures gay men, lesbians, women, people of color, and the working class had shaped. The negation of the existence of these thriving cultures made more possible and efficient the exploitation of individuals within them. *Out of the Closets*, however, as an unprecedented gathering of lesbian and gay voices that was both affirmative and creative, resisted this negation. Jay wrote:

> If we do share one idea . . . it is that *gay is good*. We affirm our uniqueness. We are proud to be lesbians and homosexuals, and we offer no apologies or explanations of why we are what we are. We will not give in, consider ourselves sick in any way, or conform to "straight" standards of dress or behavior. If homosexuals are your worst fear, then you have a problem. Our self-love and our love for our gay sisters and brothers are the core of our revolution, and this love ultimately binds us together no matter what our exterior differences or opinions.[17]

The refusal to conform in dress and behavior, the rhetoric of revolution through love, and the idea that love can bring different kinds of people together in unexpected ways were all signs that these "voices of gay liberation" were simultaneously voices of the counterculture.

Out of the Closets was divided into ten sections, focused on such topics as "Gay People vs. the Media," "The Man's Law" (on the police and the prison system), "Gay People vs. the Professionals" (on medicine, psychotherapy, and health care systems generally), and "Lesbians and the Women's Liberation Movement." The idea that a patriarchal society imposed rigid roles on both men and women was threaded throughout the collection; writers were generally united in opposition to imperialism, racism, and class oppression, but they understood sexism to be at the root of homophobia. Despite a burgeoning separatist sensibility in some of the essays by women, many of the essays also shared a commitment to coalition between women and men (and, of course, the collection as a whole, with its mix of male and female contributors, was also evidence of that commitment). Coalition with other revolutionary movements was also stressed: an entire section, for instance, was given over to the Cuban Revolution, and although the writers in the section expressed ambivalence over what they understood (and experienced) as the extreme homophobia and machismo of the Cuban revolutionaries and their allies on the left in the United States, the general commitment in the movement was to solidarity with the anticapitalist and anti-imperialist struggle in Cuba. Writers also affirmed alliances with groups such as the Black Panthers, Students for a Democratic Society, and the Yippies, even as they criticized these groups' ongoing homophobia. Throughout the anthology, the influence of feminism and the New Left was perhaps most evident in the consistency with which writers identified gay oppression as systemic, rooted in patriarchy and capital-

ism, and expressed in institutions such as the mass media, government, the legal system, organized religion, or the health care system. The homophile movement that preceded gay liberation—a movement that was, from the mid-1950s on, more likely to stress accommodation with such institutions—was seen by the contributors to *Out of the Closets* as increasingly outmoded.[18]

Although there was not absolute uniformity on the meanings of gay or lesbian identity, in general the contributors to *Out of the Closets* understood being gay as expansive and coming out as transformative. Indeed, gay identity was so expansive to gay liberationists that it was not necessarily limited to "homosexuals." Just as the countercultural call to "drop out" theoretically went out to everybody, so did the gay liberationist call to "come out." In his own contribution to the collection, "Out of the Closets, Into the Streets," Young wrote, "Gay is good for all of us. The artificial categories 'heterosexual' and 'homosexual' have been laid on us by a sexist society. . . . Straights who are threatened by us like to accuse us of separatism—but our understanding of sexism is premised on the idea that in a free society everyone will be gay."[19] In her essay "Gay Is Good," Martha Shelley likewise wrote, "And now I will tell you what we want, we radical homosexuals: not for you to tolerate us, or to accept us, but to understand us. And this you can do only by becoming one of us. We want to reach the homosexuals entombed in you, to liberate our brothers and sisters, locked in the prisons of your skulls. . . . We will never go straight until you go gay."[20] Some commentators have since suggested that gay liberationists in the 1970s were tied to a naive notion of an "essential" identity that preexisted the act of coming out; this identity simply needed to be "liberated," brought out into the open. Contributions to *Out of the Closets* like those by Young, Shelley, and others, however, indicate that gay liberationists had a much more complicated understanding of identity. Gay identity was more a creative *act* than an inert, preexistenting *substance*—that is to say, for gay liberationists, gay identity could be best understood as something one collectively *did* rather than something one already *had*. Given this understanding of identity, it was not clear in advance what gay identity would become—only that it would be something creative and communal.[21]

Carl Wittman's "A Gay Manifesto," one of the major essays not only of *Out of the Closets* but of gay liberation more generally, made explicit the ways in which this idea of an expansive and transformative gay identity was tied to, and emerged from, not only feminism and the New Left but also the broader counterculture:

> A major dynamic of rising gay liberation sentiment is the hip revolution within the gay community. Emphasis on love, dropping out, being honest, expressing yourself through hair and clothes, and smoking dope are all attributes of this. The gays who are the least vulnerable to attack by the establishment have been the freest to express themselves on gay liberation. . . . The hip/street culture has led people into a lot of freeing activities: encounter/sensitivity, the quest for reality, freeing territory for the people, ecological consciousness, communes. These are real points of agreement and probably will make it easier for them to get their heads straight about homosexuality, too.[22]

Through his overview of the "hip revolution," Wittman made it clear that in many ways, the counterculture had laid the groundwork for the expansive understanding of gay identity that other contributors emphasized and extended. His concluding "Outline of Imperatives for Gay Liberation" only underscored this link: "Free the homosexual in everyone: we'll be getting a good bit of shit from threatened latents: be gentle, and keep talking and acting free."[23] The gathering that Wittman and others imagined in *Out of the Closets* both resisted the capitalist and patriarchal "establishment" that isolated people from each other and emphasized new ways of living that would bring people together.

Women's Culture, Women's Music

The emerging lesbian separatist sensibility that was evident in some of the essays in *Out of the Closets* could itself be understood as a countercultural impulse. As the 1970s continued, more and more women were publishing work—with titles such as "Leaving the Gay Men Behind" or "Goodbye, My Alienated Brothers"—that expressed frustration with the gay male movement.[24] As the counterculture more generally had been urging both men and women for almost a decade, so too were these writers urging readers to "drop out" of the dominant culture—only this time the audience was specifically women and the "dominant culture" was often the gay movement itself. Increasingly arguing that their primary alliance was with feminism and not with gay liberation, lesbians in the 1970s began to break with gay men. Given the ways in which feminism was providing women with critical tools for analyzing and challenging patriarchy, this split should not be surprising. As John D'Emilio writes in his foreword to the 1992 reissue of *Out of the Closets*, "When the anger of lesbians . . . who were beginning to see the many forms of sexism all around them collided with the ingrained habits of gay men socialized into dominance, the simplest interactions became a minefield."[25] At the same time, just as gay liberation more generally resisted the negation of gay community with creativity and affirmation, so did lesbian

feminists in the 1970s resist the marginalization or diminishment of their experiences within the gay movement by shaping vibrant alternative cultures for women.

In 1972, Judy Dlugacz and nine other women formed Olivia Records. This record label would feature women's music and focus on women at the level of both production and consumption, first employing women as engineers and producers and then distributing the music to the growing networks of women's communities throughout the country.[26] As Urvashi Vaid explains, "Olivia was a conscious political strategy aimed at building a lesbian movement and at promoting a lesbian political analysis: if we could not find images of ourselves in the mainstream, we would make them ourselves."[27] Many of the performers who recorded with Olivia Records went on to perform at the outdoor women's music festivals that, by the mid-1970s, had sprung up from coast to coast, and many of the performers at the festivals, in turn, went on to record with Olivia Records. The record label and the music festivals were just part of the new lesbian culture that was attracting women everywhere; what the women involved began to refer to as "Lesbian Nation" also included discussion and CR groups, coffeehouses, athletic teams, bookstores, and—of course—communes and other living collectives.

Lillian Faderman explicitly highlights the connection that Lesbian Nation generally and the music festivals in particular had to the counterculture: "The festivals were modelled on the hippie be-ins of the 1960s, in which counter-culture crowds, in various stages of undress, would dance, get high on LSD or pot, and listen to the music."[28] The most famous festival of all was the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, which was founded in 1975 by Lisa Vogel, her sister Kristie Vogel, and their friend Mary Kindig. Although the Vogels and Kindig had no prior experience in organizing such an event, they were determined to make it possible for those who attended to hear women's music and participate in women's culture and community. The weekend-long event, on eighty acres of rented land near Mount Pleasant, Michigan, was designated "women-only"—the organizers wanted to provide a safe space where women could remove themselves from men and interact with each other as they chose. Professionalism and other values that might have driven the male-dominated music industry more generally were eschewed; as Lisa Vogel remembers, "It was a radical time in feminist politics, and creating and defining women's culture was a primary focus. It happened as a lark, not as a professional undertaking."[29] Indeed, the performers most popular at the festival were not those who perpetuated a slick, professional image, removing themselves from the audience, but those who presented themselves as part of the community, suggesting to the audience that all the women gathered there were engaged in "creating and defining women's culture" together. Just as those involved in the countercultural gatherings that preceded the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival were aiming for harmony and (theoretically) a leveling of the hierarchies that structured the world outside, so too did the women involved in this event hope it would provide a space where alternatives to patriarchy could be imagined and shaped.[30]

As D'Emilio and other commentators have noted, the new lesbian cultures being shaped at festivals and elsewhere became increasingly utopian in the second half of the 1970s. In fact, one of the only book-length overviews of the music festival phenomenon is titled *Eden Built by Eves*. In that study, Bonnie J. Morris quotes one of the performers, Jean Fineberg, to underscore the utopian sentiment that came to prevail in Michigan:

> Imagine a city where women rule. Where all the roads, all the buildings, the plumbing, the hospitals, the restaurants, the stores are run by women. Imagine a city where all the arts and all the crafts, the dance, the movies, the theatre, the poetry are created by women. Imagine a city where women and children feel free to walk anywhere, day or night, in total safety. Imagine a city where it doesn't matter what we wear, where we're not judged by our clothes, where clothing is optional and our bodies are sacred. Imagine a city of thousands of women, where there's no violence and no weapons, no criminals and no jails, no oppression and no fear. This city has existed in only one place in the history of the earth. We are in that city now. Welcome to Michigan![31]

Utopian ideas like this meant that the emphasis for many lesbian feminists had shifted from engagement with, or transformation of, the outside world, to removal from that world and the structures of patriarchy and capitalism that sustained it. The spatial orientation that gay liberationists attempted to forge encouraged people to move *outward*: from the imagined (isolated, confined) space of the closet to the streets or the world. In contrast, despite the fact that it was an outdoor event, the spatial orientation at women's music festivals was *inward*: Fineberg imagined not a transformed *world* where there would be no oppression and fear, but simply a city. Of course, a city could be understood as an extremely public place, but for Fineberg and others, it was clearly a place to which women could escape. Fineberg's comments pointedly welcomed festivalgoers to Michigan as a private place set apart from the rest of the world.

Ironically, this was precisely the split Roszak identified among youth cultures more broadly—between a bohemianism seeking to "cop out" of American life (or, we might say in this case, patriarchal culture) and a leftist

politics seeking to revolutionize American (patriarchal) society. And, in fact, such a reading of lesbian separatism, or "cultural feminism" more generally, is standard at this point, in large part due to Alice Echols's argument that a politicized radical feminism gave way in the mid-1970s to a simple celebration of women's culture and essentialized female differences. Echols writes, in language that in some ways parallels Roszak's,

> Radical feminism was a political movement dedicated to eliminating the sex-class system, whereas cultural feminism was a countercultural movement aimed at reversing the cultural valuation of the male and the devaluation of the female. . . . Thus, we find radical feminists mobilizing women on the basis of their similarity to men and cultural feminists organizing women around the principle of female difference. Moreover, in contrast to radical feminists who believed that feminism entailed an expansion of the left analysis, cultural feminists conceived of feminism as an antidote to the left.[32]

Echols goes on to suggest that a more radical feminist politics was stifled because of the way in which cultural feminists "succumbed to counterculture."[33] As Echols would see it, with their utopian emphasis on escape from the world outside, events like the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival were retreats in several senses of the word.

Echols's analysis has been extremely influential, in large part because it is an accurate and convincing portrayal of the political shifts that occurred in feminism in the 1970s. Saralyn Chesnut and Amanda C. Gable point out, however, that attacks on cultural feminism like Echols's "fail to consider the relationship between cultural production and social change [and] overlook what is arguably the most significant legacy of the lesbian-feminist movement: its creation of a new lesbian subject."[34] Just as the hip/street culture Wittman described had provided spaces where a gay liberationist identity could be forged, so did Lesbian Nation, in Chesnut and Gable's analysis, provide a space where new lesbian identities could be constructed. These new lesbian identities, in turn, made further political engagement and cultural transformation possible. Additionally, Chesnut and Gable argue, critics and historians "have tended to focus on what lesbian feminists wrote rather than on what they did—on theory to the exclusion of practice."[35] This focus has made it difficult to see the ways in which individuals and communities were negotiating, in complex ways, the abstract and increasingly utopian ideas emerging from what Echols calls cultural feminism.

To consider the daily realities of at least one women's community in the 1970s, Chesnut and Gable sketch the history of Charis Books and More, a women's bookstore in Atlanta's Little Five Points neighborhood. They argue that women's movement through new countercultural spaces like Charis Books and More allowed for the development of identities and politics that women could then carry to other locations: "Feminist bookstores . . . served as meeting places and resource centers for the community as well as locations to sell books and journals. Rather than short-circuiting the social-change agenda of radical feminists, in many ways the rise of feminist bookstores and presses allowed feminist ideas, including those of radical feminism, to continue to be developed and disseminated."[36] In other words, the ideas of radical feminism were not simply supplanted by cultural feminism; they were put into print and circulated, and in some cases extended, because of the existence of cultural institutions, like bookstores, that women developed in the mid-1970s. Women's music festivals, similarly, performed a complex function for lesbians in the 1970s. They were spaces of escape, but they were not where women lived their day-to-day lives. The identities and politics that developed from "dropping out" at women's music festivals were put into circulation, as it were, in local communities around the country.

The critique of the male left and of gay liberation notwithstanding, lesbian feminism throughout the 1970s was at least partially connected to both. Gatherings such as the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival allowed women to disengage from mainstream (straight and gay) society and retreat to a city set apart from the dominant patriarchal culture, but many participants simultaneously continued to imagine reshaping the institutions of that culture, not least academic institutions where, as the decade concluded, feminism increasingly gained a foothold. To position women's countercultures as diametrically opposed to political engagement obscures the ways in which many lesbians themselves imagined cultural production and struggle as linked to radical politics. The festivals and other cultural feminist sites were without question limited in what they achieved (and indeed they should be understood as more limited than the radical feminism that preceded them), but—as with countercultural happenings more generally—they nonetheless helped to generate new ideas, identities, and communities.

Neighborhood Building: Harvey Milk and the Castro District

The next "gay gathering" I will consider is the one that would seem to be the least tied to the counterculture and the most tied to more traditional liberal politics. Harvey Milk's campaign for a seat on San Francisco's Board of City Supervisors would not seem to be about "dropping out" of mainstream society at all, but instead about working to secure a place on the inside. If the counterculture had effectively come into existence by *rejecting* the status quo,

San Francisco's Harvey Milk, the "Mayor of Castro Street," ca. 1978, greeting an admirer who's sporting what appears to be a real boa, probably during the annual Gay Pride parade (known in San Francisco at the time as "Gay Freedom Day"). The previous year Milk had become the first openly gay candidate to be elected to the city's board of supervisors. He represented District 5, which included the Castro neighborhood, with its sizable gay population, as well as the hippie enclaves of Noe Valley and the Haight. Milk's tenure in office was tragically cut short when he and Mayor George Moscone were shot to death in November 1978 by a political rival, former supervisor Dan White. Courtesy of Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Historical Society of Northern California/Robert Pruzan.

then a campaign like Milk's, with its explicit *support* for the already existent political system, would by definition not qualify as a countercultural event. Yet Milk's brief tenure on the board of supervisors (which ended when he and Mayor George Moscone were assassinated by Dan White in November 1978) was generative of culture and community in ways that link his campaign and the events that followed it to the other countercultural gatherings I am considering in this chapter. Or, perhaps more accurately, gay countercultures and communities in San Francisco in the 1970s were generative of Harvey Milk.[37]

Moscone was elected mayor in 1976. He was a liberal Democrat who appealed to many diverse groups in San Francisco, mainly because he stood for the interests of local communities and neighborhoods and against the interests of the wealthy, especially wealthy developers. These commitments were evident in his support for Proposition T, a measure that changed the elections for the board of supervisors from citywide to district, effectively giving neighborhoods the right to elect one of their own. Proposition T passed,

and in 1977 Harvey Milk was elected to the board of supervisors from District 5, which included the Castro neighborhood, with its large gay population, as well as the Noe Valley and the Haight (which had earlier been one of the prime sites for the development of the Sixties counterculture more generally). The new emphasis on community leadership changed the face of city government in San Francisco: Proposition T also made it possible for the first acknowledged feminist, the first Chinese American, and the first African American woman to sit on the board.

In a televised local interview following the election, a reporter asked Milk, "What's it like being a so-called 'in-person,' as opposed to having been an 'out-person' for a number of years?" With tears in his eyes, Milk responded, "Being one of 'them'? . . . Incredible. The establishment . . . the white, power establishment, non-gay, very wealthy establishment, have to deal with me. It's an incredible position." With characteristic affect that set his performance apart from the slick performances of "establishment" politicians, Milk voiced his commitments: he stood not for the system as it was, but for his community, which had traditionally been shut out of the system.

The boundaries of Milk's community, however, were not fixed; increasingly, he came to be a voice not simply for gay men and lesbians but for all the disenfranchised. In fact, the idea that lesbians and gay men should work at building community across differences was evident in many of Milk's talks or speeches. In a speech that resisted (and reversed) attempts by the dominant culture to cast gays and other marginalized groups as "others," for instance, Milk insisted, "without hope, not only gays, but those blacks, and the Asians, and the disabled, and the seniors—the 'us-es,' the 'us-es'—without hope, the us-es give up. I know that you cannot live on hope alone, but without it, life is not worth living, and you and you and you, gotta give 'em hope." Milk's rhetoric in this speech was clearly influenced by the counterculture that had flourished in San Francisco for more than a decade: what Milk called his "people positions" emphasized groups coming together, positioned "us" against "them" (where "they" represented the "establishment," that ubiquitous target of the counterculture), and worked to build a sense of solidarity in communities and neighborhoods.

The successful campaign against the Briggs Initiative—a statewide bill sponsored by Senator John Briggs that would have prohibited openly lesbian or gay people from teaching in California's public schools—gave Milk more visibility on the level of state, and even national, politics. The commitment to coalition politics that developed through this and other struggles solidified Milk's connection not only to the counterculture but also to the more radical, New Left–influenced politics of gay liberation that had preceded him. As John D'Emilio writes,

> Milk's record during his one year in office indicates that he . . . was moving beyond liberalism. He worked hard to cement a coalition among gays, racial minorities, and the elderly. He became a strong advocate of rent control and measures to restrict real estate speculation, he opposed the redevelopment plans being pushed by downtown corporate interests; and he introduced a resolution to have the South African consulate in San Francisco closed. During 1978 he helped to push Moscone away from mainstream liberalism and toward a populist-style coalition politics.[38]

In the same television interview I quoted earlier, Milk himself brought together the New Left emphasis on coalition and the countercultural desire for harmony: "There's tremendous harmony developing. . . . I think it's vital that the minorities, the traditional ethnic minorities, and the gays, and the feminists, link together. And possibly the rank-and-file unions, not the union leaders, [but] the rank-and-file, link together, to form a very solid, strong coalition." To Milk, coalition meant working together across divides of race, gender, sexuality, and class (and, in numerous other speeches, age and ability) in order to forge a harmonious community that was not beholden to the powerful establishment and the discord and division it perpetuated.

Without question, positions such as these generated new coalitions and new kinds of community in San Francisco in the 1970s. As I suggested, however, it is as accurate to suggest that the influence was in the opposite direction—to suggest, that is, that the gay counterculture in San Francisco generated Harvey Milk. Before moving from New York to San Francisco, Milk had already established himself as antiestablishment, participating in antiwar protests and burning his Bank America card. But San Francisco in the 1970s was a place where gay and lesbian people migrated to find the freedom that eluded them elsewhere—the annual Gay Pride Parade, in fact (in which Milk himself participated), was called "Gay Freedom Day." In their 1984 film *The Times of Harvey Milk*, Robert Epstein and Richard Schmiechen highlight this freedom by positioning Milk's arrival in the city and the development of his campaign against a backdrop of countercultural images: hippies marching in jean jackets and colorful beads and buttons; shirtless men with their arms wrapped around each other; streamers, balloons, and people on the rooftops and window ledges; streets packed with women and men dancing to music. To the strains of disco star Sylvester singing "You make me feel mighty real," Epstein and Schmiechen effectively place Milk's campaign in the context of the expansive sense of gay freedom that many men and women were discovering in San Francisco.

The gathering of communities and individuals around Harvey Milk was not as radical as *Out of the Closets*, with its more explicit rejection of capitalism, patriarchy, and imperialism, nor as countercultural as the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, with its removal to a nonpatriarchal space set apart from the rest of society. Still, Milk's campaign resisted the establishment, especially corporate and development interests that would impede the building of communities and neighborhoods, and in this sense, the campaign was connected to the kind of affirmative and communal gay consciousness usually not afforded by traditional liberal politics. Indeed, Milk's assassination itself could be interpreted as a sign that the alternative community and culture he stood for were in fact threatening to the status quo.

Disco Nights: Gay and Proud, Black and Beautiful

Following his death from complications due to HIV/AIDS, Sylvester's obituary in *Jet* magazine in January 1989 described him as "the flamboyant homosexual singer whose high-pitched voice and dramatic on-stage costumes propelled him to the height of stardom on the disco music scene during the late 1970s."[39] Expanding on *Jet*'s assessment, Phillip Brian Harper suggests that Sylvester actively worked to shape the disco music scene, and was not simply propelled to the heights within it: "Sylvester was able to help create a disco culture—comprising elements from both black and gay contexts—in which he and others could thrive as openly gay men."[40] As Harper and other queer commentators understand it, Sylvester's performance was about more than the homosexual "flamboyance" *Jet* reported; it was about shaping a space where the very meanings of "black" and "gay" could be expanded. Walter Hughes, for example, writes that "'You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real)' performs the representative hypostatization of [Sylvester's] gay identity. His impassioned repetition becomes as orgasmic as Donna Summer's in 'I Feel Love,' insisting that, for the gay black man, the realization of self can have the ecstatic force of a revelation."[41]

For Hughes and most historians of disco, however, the "realization of self" was in many ways a loss of self: the dance floor was a place where one's individual identity could disintegrate and be absorbed into the larger mass of writhing bodies. The music and lights, as well as the sexual experimentation and drugs that were so much a part of disco cultures, facilitated this disintegration of self and absorption into others. A dominant strand of American individualism from Ralph Waldo Emerson on had celebrated autonomy, self-possession, self-control, and transcendence of the body (Emerson's famous image of a transparent eyeball, located nowhere but seeing everything, was of course unencumbered by embodiment). Just as surely as it inverted the pri-

macy of day over night, disco turned these principles of American individualism upside down and inside out; as Hughes points out, many popular disco songs were precisely about a *loss* of autonomy, about giving possession or control of oneself to larger forces: "The destruction and re-creation of the self must be performed not, tautologically, by the self itself but by some power above and beyond it. . . . Gay men, at the irresistible prompting of a disco diva such as Grace Jones, cropped their hair, dressed alike, and became what she calls 'slaves to the rhythm.'"[42] Disco certainly offered transcendence, but it was transcendence of precisely the disembodied (detached and impenetrable) individual identity Emerson celebrated. Through a refusal of detachment and impenetrability, through an openness to others and to a range of bodily pleasures, the self could be remade.

The "others" involved in this process were invariably gay, black, or both. As Peter Braunstein and others have noted, "For the first half of the 1970s, disco was an extended conversation between black musicians and gay dancers."[43] Disco had developed earlier in the century, but it was in the immediate post-Stonewall era that gay people made it their own. Several factors contributed to the gay transformation of disco culture: the "search for continuous, danceable rhythms," the new popularity of drugs such as poppers, innovations such as an expanded dance floor in gay clubs such as the Sanctuary (formerly a German Baptist church), and an emphasis on "rampant promiscuity and public sex."[44]

Although the metaphor of a conversation might suggest that two separate and fully formed identities met on the dance floor, the conversation between black musicians (often black divas such as Donna Summer or Gloria Gaynor) and gay dancers that Braunstein notes was unique. The collective remaking of the self that disco culture encouraged meant that the "mighty real" black and gay identities suddenly visible on the dance floor came into existence *through* the conversation. Moreover, they were available to a range of people who may not have identified as "black" or "gay" in advance. As Hughes points out,

> Implicit in early disco is the assumption that only a black woman can openly vocalize her sexuality, and that only a gay man would join her in a free-fall from rational self-mastery. But . . . the negotiation between usually straight black women and usually white gay men seemed to open up and make visible all the various subject positions between these previously polarized identities. Since the actual author and audience of any disco song are both indeterminate, disco's racial, sexual and gender identity cannot be finally fixed as "black music," "women's music," or "gay music." The violence . . . [disco] does to fixed identity results in a doubling, slippage and transference of black and white, male and female, gay and straight subject positions.[45]

To exemplify this doubling and slippage, Hughes notes that "Grace Jones can sing of 'feeling like a woman' and 'looking like a man'; Donna Summer can plead with her lover (or her audience) to 'turn my brown body white.'"[46] And, of course, just as a Baptist church could become the hedonistic gay Sanctuary, so too could Sylvester use his origins in the black church and gospel music (sites where homosexuality might be accepted but only on the condition that it remain silent) to generate a gay and proud, black and beautiful identity that refused to be silenced and that could be performed and offered to others.[47]

Disco would seem to be less political than the other gay gatherings I have examined in this chapter, and is perhaps the gathering that most bears out Roszak's interpretation of a split between a politicized New Left and a counterculture seeking escape. And, in fact, Andrew Holleran's *Dancer from the Dance*, one of the premier gay literary works to emerge from the era, positions the gay men involved in the disco scene as completely uninterested in gay politics. Despite an awareness of that split, *Dancer from the Dance* could be read as a fairly loving tribute to the men involved in the disco scene.[48] Other assessments of disco in the 1970s, however, were not so kind. As the decade continued, bumper stickers emerged that declared "DISCO SUCKS," and even less hostile judgments understood it as having nothing to do with meaningful political activity. "Disco," as Hughes explains in a summary of the critiques that were offered of it, "is 'mindless,' 'repetitive,' 'synthetic,' 'technological' and 'commercial,' just as the men who dance to it with each other are 'unnatural,' 'trivial,' 'decadent,' 'artificial' and 'indistinguishable' 'clones.'"[49]

In defense of disco, however (to borrow a phrase from Richard Dyer), I would argue that here too the confluence of the counterculture and the more radical politics of the early 1970s can be seen.[50] As I indicated earlier in this chapter, after all, for many contributors to the gay liberationist anthology *Out of the Closets*, it was not clear in advance what gay identity could become; it was only clear that a truly free society would *encourage* the development and expansion of gay identity. With the foundational understanding that gay identity would be collective and imaginative, anything was possible. Despite the charge of "mindless conformity," then, the disco music scene shared many characteristics with other countercultural phenomena that were about *resisting* the mindless conformity of straight society more generally. For many black and white gay men, and for some women, especially black female performers,

expansive gay (and black) identities that were about freedom and about creatively coming together with others came into being on the dance floor.

As I suggested earlier, for many other women, the free society where everyone would be *lesbian* and where (initially) it was not always clear what lesbian identity might become was shaped at music festivals. Of course, neither the stage at Mount Pleasant, Michigan, nor the dance floor at the Sanctuary wholly fulfilled gay liberationist calls for a transformed world, and in many ways, both locations compromised such calls (mainly through a dilution of an analysis of the *systemic* nature of oppression). At the same time, these lesbian and gay sites nonetheless allowed women and men to resist the demands of straight society and reimagine their individual and collective identities.

Back to the Future: Reimagining the Counterculture

I want to conclude by positing a continuity between the variety of gay liberationist countercultures of the 1970s and the queer cultures of the 1980s and 1990s that effectively responded to political crises such as AIDS and Reaganism. By positing such a continuity, I intend to resist current ideological understandings of what happened in the decade. A cultural myth is now being consolidated about the 1970s. This myth has gained prominence because of stories told not only by conservatives like Marilyn Quayle (who proclaimed at the 1992 Republican National Convention that despite some of the good that came out of the 1960s, not everyone dropped out, toked up, or dodged the draft) but even by some highly visible gay writers like Bruce Bawer or Gabriel Rotello.[51] To these commentators, the decade was a period of collective childhood or adolescence, but in the 1980s and 1990s, we grew up (as a culture or as a movement). AIDS is, of course, offered by such storytellers as the proof of their narrative—we went wild in the seventies, so the story goes, but paid the price (and learned from it) in the 1980s.

As I have demonstrated, however, the gay gatherings of the 1970s, despite limitations, provided spaces where lesbians and gay men learned to reinvent themselves and their communities in opposition to the dominant culture. This capacity for reinventing identity and community, which was perhaps best exemplified in the 1980s and '90s through the reclamation of "queerness," made resistance possible (or even inevitable).[52] Not long after many groups began to call themselves "queer," Jeffrey Escoffier wrote that "queers are constructing a new culture by combining elements that usually don't go together. They may be the first wave of activists to embrace the retrofuture/classic contemporary styles of postmodernism. They are building their own identity from old and new elements—borrowing styles and tactics from popular culture, communities of color, hippies, AIDS activists, the antinuclear movement, MTV, feminists, and early gay liberationists."[53] The cultural generativity Escoffier identified with queerness clearly had strong roots in the 1970s, given the larger history of most of the "old and new elements" on his list. Even a "new" element such as AIDS activism arguably drew on earlier, countercultural movements: the feminist health movement of the 1970s, the disability rights movement that blossomed in Berkeley and elsewhere, gay liberation.

In a consideration of the specific ways in which gay communities forged new sexual practices in the 1980s, Douglas Crimp identifies a pattern that could, I think, be extended to describe the range of cultural practices lesbians and gay men developed in the 1970s. Crimp writes:

> Our promiscuity taught us many things, not only about the pleasures of sex, but about the great multiplicity of those pleasures. It is that psychic preparation, that experimentation, that conscious work on our own sexualities that has allowed many of us to change our sexual behaviors—something that brutal "behavioral therapies" tried unsuccessfully for over a century to force us to do—very quickly and very dramatically.[54]

The gay gatherings I surveyed in this chapter similarly produced dramatic transformation, effectively laying the groundwork for the challenging decades that were to come. If psychic preparation, experimentation, and conscious work on our sexualities (and identities more generally) are all part of what Crimp calls "promiscuity," then promiscuity could easily describe the "love for gay sisters and brothers" that was at the core of the revolution imagined by the contributors to *Out of the Closets*, the creativity that resulted from women collectively producing music, dance, and art at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, the harmony that developed from the "us-es" coming together in an alternative political campaign such as Harvey Milk's, or the communal eroticism performed and explored in the disco music scene. Safe sex and AIDS activism more generally are not the only legacies of these gay gatherings. In the 1980s and 1990s, lesbian and gay curricula in colleges and universities, cultural forms such as vogueing or queer poetry slams, art deemed "obscene" by the right wing as well as communal responses to right-wing attacks, progressive political campaigns such as Tammy Baldwin's for the U.S. House of Representatives (from Madison, Wisconsin) or Tom Ammiano's for mayor of San Francisco, and candlelight marches and vigils protesting governmental responses to AIDS or violence against gay men and lesbians could all be understood as descending, in some way, from such countercultural promiscuity.

This expansive promiscuity has recently been under attack. In part because of the prominence of writers like Bawer and Rotello (but also because of the policies pursued by national organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign), the lesbian and gay movement has been striving for "normalcy," putting forward as overnight "leaders" of the movement celebrity spokespersons such as Ellen DeGeneres or Melissa Etheridge, courting corporate sponsorship for events such as the April 30, 2000, Millennium March on Washington for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights, and emphasizing issues such as marriage rights or the right to serve in the military instead of emphasizing more sweeping calls for social justice and the reshaping of dominant cultural values.[55]

The current "normalizing" of the movement, I would argue, entails forgetting (or even consciously rejecting) the countercultural (and revolutionary) roots of gay liberation. Current trends in the gay movement are also arguably in line with the "normalization" and commodification of the counterculture more generally. The quintessential countercultural "reunion," for instance, is probably Woodstock 1999, which—with its clear connections to corporate sponsorship—diluted the sharp critique of American society and commodified the alternative lifestyles and worldviews celebrated at the original Woodstock in 1969. Woodstock 1999 would seem to represent a nostalgic desire to reimagine the counterculture, but it does so through forgetting the elements of it that made it an attractive alternative to straight society, thereby eliminating what was most promising about the counterculture in the first place.

Each of the gay gatherings I have examined here have, in some ways, convened similar forgetful "reunions" in the 1990s. In their introduction to the 1992 reissue of *Out of the Closets: Voices of Gay Liberation*, Jay and Young literally apologize for what they label "extremism," disavowing in particular the anthology's rhetoric of revolution and its argument that gay identities were theoretically available to everyone.[56] Over the years, the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival has become famous not for being a site of possibility where new understandings of identity and community could be generated across differences but for being a site where identity is policed. The policy of admitting "only women born women" was developed specifically to exclude transsexual women from participation in the event. Harvey Milk's story has now been produced as an opera, but even more problematic than that is the extreme commodification that currently plagues Castro Street and other historically gay neighborhoods. Far from being sites where the development interests that Milk and Moscone challenged are resisted, such neighborhoods are often the center of urban development. Finally, in films such as *54* and *The Last Days of Disco*, the definitive black and gay music scene of the 1970s has been whitewashed and heterosexualized.[57]

At the turn of this century, however, there are hopeful signs of a renewed convergence of revolutionary and countercultural values as extremely diverse groups of activists have come together in colorful festivals/protests reminiscent of the countercultural/political gatherings of the 1960s and 1970s. These activists, some of whom have explicitly identified as queer, gay, or lesbian, have shut down the streets of cities like Seattle and Washington, D.C., to protest globalization and the greed and unchecked power and exploitation of multinational corporations. Specifically targeting the policies of organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), protesters have articulated a systemic analysis of the ways in which globalization policies that encourage privatization and benefit multinational corporations are detrimental to non-Western nations and regions, women, the poor and working class, people of color, people with disabilities, and people with HIV/AIDS. The tactics activists have deployed include not only barricades in the streets but also demonstrations by groups such as the Lesbian Avengers, who have bared their breasts and swallowed fire, or impromptu puppet shows in the parks, with IMF and World Bank officials represented as pigs feeding off of the people. The coalitions that are imagined and the communities that are actualized through these protests are similar to the communities imagined and actualized by countercultures and the New Left in the 1970s.

I want to conclude by offering my arguments about the gay liberationist past in the interest of a desirable (and queer) future where the lesbian and gay movement would not forget its countercultural history but reimagine and extend it as a vital and ongoing part of these larger movements. In the early 1970s, John Knoebel, the men of the 95th Street Collective, the Gay Liberation Front, and other individuals and groups imagined "coming out in the movement" as presenting the most "viable way to live as a gay person." The locations generating the radical and countercultural movements Knoebel had in mind have shifted, but the transformative sense of coming out and not knowing in advance what gay identity might become need not be forgotten.

Notes

1. John Knoebel, "Somewhere in the Right Direction: Testimony of My Experience in a Gay Male Living Collective," in *Out of the Closets: Voices of Gay Liberation*, ed. Karla Jay and Allen Young (New York: New York University Press, 1992 [1972]), 301–15 at 302.

2. For a discussion of the various meanings of "coming out," see John D'Emilio's *Making Trouble: Essays on Gay History, Politics, and the University* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 244–45, and his foreword to the twentieth-anniversary edition of *Out of the Closets*, ed. Jay and Young xx-xxiv, xxviii-xxix. See also the first chapter of my own *The Queer Renaissance: Contemporary*

American Literature and the Reinvention of Lesbian and Gay Identities (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 32–68, especially 32–39.

3. The most famous literary examination of the middle-class "organization man" was Sloan Wilson's novel *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1955).

4. Timothy Miller, *The Hippies and American Values* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 6.

5. Ibid., 16.

6. Terry H. Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 261.

7. Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995 [1969]), 56.

8. Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam, 1987), 213.

9. David Savran cites Roszak's famous passage and overviews the connections and conflicts between the New Left and the counterculture in *Taking It Like a Man: White Masculinity, Masochism, and Contemporary American Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 109–22. Throughout his work, D'Emilio consistently argues that gay liberation emerged from the range of radical and countercultural movements impacting young people in the late 1960s and early 1970s. See D'Emilio, *Making Trouble,* 241, and his foreword to *Out of the Closets,* ed. Jay and Young xvii-xix.

10. Cited in note 1.

11. Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967–1975* (Minneapolis: Univeristy of Minnesota Press, 1989).

12. Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society,* rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 75, 76.

13. Jan Zita Grover, "AIDS: Keywords," in *AIDS: Cultural Analysis, Cultural Activism,* ed. Douglas Crimp (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987), 17–30 at 24.

14. This is the fourth definition given for the term in *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary,* vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 1121.

15. Karla Jay, "Introduction to the First Edition," in *Out of the Closets,* ed. Jay and Young, lxi–lxii at lxii.

16. Ibid., lxi.

17. Ibid., lxii.

18. On the homophile movement that preceded the Stonewall riots, see D'Emilio, *Making Trouble,* 17–56, 237–39.

19. Allen Young, "Out of the Closets, Into the Streets," in *Out of the Closets,* ed. Jay and Young, 6–31 at 29.

20. Martha Shelley, "Gay Is Good," in *Out of the Closets,* ed. Jay and Young, 31–34 at 34.

21. Simon Watney writes, "Gay culture in the 1970s offered the grounds for the emergence of a social identity defined not by notions of sexual 'essence,' but in oppositional relation to the institutions and discourses of medicine, the law, education, housing and welfare policy, and so on." Quoted in David Halperin, *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 209 n. 114. See also David Halperin's discussion of Michel Foucault's notion of gay identity as a "state of becoming" in *Saint Foucault,* 67–81.

22. Carl Wittman, "A Gay Manifesto," in *Out of the Closets,* ed. Jay and Young, 330–342 at 341.

23. Ibid.

24. Radicalesbians [*sic*], "Leaving the Gay Men Behind," in *Out of the Closets,* ed. Jay and Young, 290–93; Del Martin, "Goodbye, My Alienated Brothers," in *Long Road to Freedom: The Advocate History of the Gay and Lesbian Movement,* ed. Mark Thompson (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 41–42.

25. D'Emilio, foreword to *Out of the Closets,* ed. Jay and Young, xxi.

26. Thompson, ed., *Long Road to Freedom,* 106.

27. Urvashi Vaid, *Virtual Equality: The Mainstreaming of Gay and Lesbian Liberation* (New York: Anchor-Doubleday, 1995), 65.

28. Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Penguin, 1991), 221.

29. Lisa Vogel, quoted in Kara Fox, "An Unexpected Anniversary: Michigan Festival Surprises Its Founder by Lasting 25 Years," *Washington Blade,* (16 August 2000), 26–27 at 26.

30. On Lesbian Nation and the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival see Bonnie J. Morris, *Eden Built by Eves: The Culture of Women's Music Festivals* (Los Angeles: Alyson, 1999).

31. Jean Fineberg, quoted in ibid., 59.

32. Echols, *Daring to Be Bad,* 6.

33. Ibid., 7.

34. Saralyn Chesnut and Amanda C. Gable, "'Women Ran It': Charis Books and More and Atlanta's Lesbian Feminist Community, 1971–1981," in *Carryin' On in the Lesbian and Gay South,* ed. John Howard (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 241–84 at 252.

35. Ibid., 246.

36. Ibid., 251–52.

37. All quotations from Harvey Milk's speeches in this section are drawn from Robert Epstein and Richard Schmiechen's film *The Times of Harvey Milk* (Black Sand Productions, 1984). I have also found D'Emilio's "Gay Politics, Gay Community: San Francisco's Experience," in his book *Making Trouble,* 74–95, helpful in compiling this account.

38. D'Emilio, *Making Trouble,* 90.

39. Phillip Brian Harper, *Are We Not Men? Masculine Anxiety and the Problem of African-American Identification* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 12.

40. Ibid., 13–14.

41. Walter Hughes, "In the Empire of the Beat: Discipline and Disco," in *Microphone Fiends: Youth Music and Youth Culture,* ed. Andrew Ross and Tricia Rose (New York: Routledge, 1994), 147–57 at 154.

42. Ibid., 150.

43. Peter Braunstein, "Disco," *American Heritage* 50, no. 7 (November 1999): 43–57 at 55.

44. Ibid., 52–53.

45. Hughes, "In the Empire of the Beat," 153.

46. Ibid.

47. For a consideration of black gay identity and the black church, see my analysis of the work of Randall Kenan in *The Queer Renaissance,* 69–115.

48. Andrew Holleran, *Dancer from the Dance* (New York: New American Library, 1978).

49. Hughes, "In the Empire of the Beat," 147.

50. Richard Dyer, "In Defense of Disco," in *On Record: Rock, Pop, and the Written Word,* ed. Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin (New York: Pantheon, 1989), 410–18.

51. Marilyn Quayle's references to smoking marijuana and draft dodging were made to discredit Bill Clinton in his 1992 campaign for the presidency (since he had been accused of both). Both Bruce Bawer's *A Place at the Table: The Gay Individual in American Society* (New York: Touchstone/Simon & Schuster, 1993) and Gabriel Rotello's *Sexual Ecology: AIDS and the Destiny of Gay Men* (New York: Dutton, 1997) imply that the supposed "excesses" of the 1970s somehow "caused" AIDS and that the gay movement needs to "grow up" in the 1990s and focus on issues such as marriage rights.

52. I discuss redeployments of "queerness" in the late 1980s and early 1990s in my introduction to *The Queer Renaissance,* 1–31.

53. Jeffrey Escoffier, quoted in Lisa Duggan and Nan D. Hunter, *Sex Wars: Sexual Dissent and Political Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 171–72.

54. Douglas Crimp in Crimp, ed., *AIDS,* 253.

55. The "normalization" of the gay movement is discussed most thoroughly by Michael Warner in *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Life* (New York: Free Press, 1999), 88–89. Warner explicitly notes that the normalizing trends he analyzes are antithetical to gay liberationist/queer thought from the 1970s.

56. Jay and Young, "Introduction to the Twentieth Anniversary Edition," in Jay and Young, eds., *Out of the Closets,* xxxix.

57. It is important to stress that every aspect of *Out of the Closets* that Jay and Young disavow in their 1992 introduction is affirmed as positive by D'Emilio in his foreword to the same volume. For instance, D'Emilio writes on p. xx: "The failure of a revolution to materialize should not cause us to dismiss the seriousness with which it was pursued or the depth of political conviction that made many subscribe to it. . . . The revolutionary aspirations of these young lesbian and gay radicals are directly responsible for their signal achievement: their willingness to burst out of the closet and to come out in a public, uncompromising way." The best source on the current commodification of gay identity and community is Alexandra Chasin's *Selling Out: The Lesbian and Gay Movement Goes to Market* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000). For a critique of the late 1990s disco revival in the films *The Last Days of Disco* and *54,* see Peter Braunstein, "The Last Days of Gay Disco," *Village Voice,* (30 June 1998), 54–55, 58.

Section Four

Pop Culture and Mass Media

Introduction

Of all the dividing lines superimposed on the 1960s cultural landscape, perhaps none has been more persistent than the demarcation between a "mainstream" culture and the "counterculture." Yet binarisms of this sort, as much as they are grounded in a certain reality, often obscure more than they clarify. Not only do "counterculture" and "mainstream" tend to acquire a more monolithic quality as categories when they are arrayed against one another, but this either/or thinking also overlooks the fact that the two formations shared much the same culture. Indeed, what characterizes "counterculture" and "mainstream" during the 1960s and '70s is the astounding, persistent, and rapid cross-fertilization of ideas, sensibilities, and styles between the two worlds. Nowhere is this process of exchange and assimilation more evident than in the remarkable pop culture and mass media of the era.

A pervasive mentality shared by both mainstream and counterculture was what Peter Braunstein in his essay "Forever Young" dubs the "culture of rejuvenation." Sampling 1960s pop culture ranging from fashion to film, discotheque dance culture to Yippie! theatrics, Braunstein argues that mainstream and counterculture alike shared a common mentality that prized "being young again" by reclaiming the psychic vitality of childhood. The porous boundaries between radical and mainstream appear again in David James's essay "'The Movies Are a Revolution': Film and the Counterculture." James explores experimental, underground, and radical documentary filmmakers, but finds that, as much as independent filmmakers in the 1960s and '70s devised a new cinema in opposition to the establishment model, they were never completely able to define themselves outside of Hollywood's terms. The power to set the terms of how to figuratively represent countercultural ideals and taboos is examined in Beth Bailey's "Sex as a Weapon: Underground Comix and the Paradox of