
Better than Orgasm: Sex, Authenticity and Intimacy in the New Women's Movement in Norway

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ABSTRACT

Authenticity and intimacy have become key expectations in contemporary romantic relationships. At the same time, it is taken for granted that sex forms a part of such relationships. This article explores how the relationship between sex, authenticity and intimacy was written about and negotiated in the Norwegian community of lesbian radical feminists in the 1970s and 1980s. The construction of male sexuality as fundamentally and inherently different from female sexuality in the periodicals of the lesbian movement made thinking and writing about women's sexual desire and genital sex difficult. This article further argues that the concept of genital sex potentially conflicted with the notions of authenticity and intimacy pursued by the lesbian radical feminist community. While authenticity and intimacy were constructed as preferable companions to sex in the New Left and in large parts of the women's movement, the Norwegian lesbian radical feminists often constructed authenticity and intimacy in opposition to genital sex.

In 1975, a separatist Women's House was opened in Oslo, Norway, and the newly founded lesbian organisation, Lesbisk Bevegelse (Lesbian movement), became one of its active groups. Visitors to the Women's House recounted scandalous tales of self-inspection circles where women examined their own and other people's vulvas to get to know their bodies better. Vulvas were also commonly used as decorative motifs within the movement. Most likely the tales exaggerated the frequency of the self-inspection circles, but undoubtedly vaginal imagery was far more visible there than in most other places in society. Although vulvas were all over the place, this investigation will show that the movement found genital sex both problematic and difficult to talk about.

While this article originally set out to document and analyse the views on sex and sexuality found in the lesbian radical feminist movement in Norway, it has ultimately taken the form of a more general analysis of the transformations of intimacy in late modernity, particularly of the new centrality of authenticity and intimacy.¹ I argue that this is one of several reasons why there is an absence of writing on female sex and sexuality in the various periodicals associated with the Norwegian movement. Theorists describing the transformations of intimacies since the 1960s have claimed that there is a link between the New Women's Movement and the development of new ideals and practices of family life and personal relationships, pointing to the

development of new expectations of equality and autonomy in relationships, and arguing that relationships came to primarily rest on intimacy and on the fulfilment of partners' emotional (and sexual) needs.² This article offers an empirical investigation of the discursive transformations of intimacy and new perceptions of the self in late modernity from the viewpoint of one specific context: the Norwegian lesbian feminist periodicals published in the period 1976–86. How did lesbian feminist ideologies of sex and sexuality relate to the new ideals of love and selfhood?

Why did lesbian radical feminists in Norway and elsewhere – a group most people would define by their sexuality – focus so little on sex?³ The lesbian radical feminist movement in Norway was first and foremost a child of the New Women's Movement and its exploration of womanhood, sisterhood and new ways of being women in the world. Second, it was also a child of the gay liberation movement and its new demands to come out and be visible. The lesbian radical feminists adopted a confrontational, unapologetic style and felt they were very different from older generations of feminists, not to speak of earlier generations of male and female homosexuals. They also had a strained relationship with the discourse of sexual liberation so central to the progressive circles of which they were a part. During the 1960s and 1970s, a wealth of voices and publications pointed to the necessity of a sexual liberation of the self and promoted a liberated sexuality as the road to authenticity and a better society. A particularly important text for the Western feminist movement was Anne Koedt's widely read essay *The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm*, published in 1970.⁴ In the midst of all this new talk about sexuality, the lesbian radical feminists struggled to write about lesbian sexuality. My analysis will suggest that the construction of an incongruence between 'sex' and 'women', as well as between 'sex' and 'authenticity and intimacy' must be seen as important factors for understanding why they found women's sexuality such a challenging subject.⁵ In the text, I use the terms 'sex' and 'sexuality' in much the same way as the lesbian radical feminists themselves seem to have used them in their periodicals. 'Sex' refers to sex acts and activities involving genitals, while 'sexuality' refers to a wider apparatus that also incorporates sexual desires, sexual preferences, sexual orientation and sexual identity. The Norwegian lesbian feminists produced a number of periodicals: *Lavendelexpressen*, *Lesbisk Internavis*, *LF-avisa* and *Amasonen*. *Lavendelexpressen* was the most extensive, with print runs ranging between 260 and 600 copies, and with a local as well as global editorial focus.⁶ The lesbian radical feminist movement was clearly international, and many of the texts published were translations (often of work originating in the United States), and some of the activists were obviously well-informed about current discussions elsewhere. Almost all articles were written under pseudonyms or signed with surnames only. The idea behind this policy, at least in the beginning, was to counteract the competition for prestige and fame associated with authorship in a patriarchal society, and because they were apprehensive of surveillance by the authorities. They also argued that their chosen pseudonyms might express a conscious feminist renaming of the self.⁷ I have chosen to omit all references to pseudonyms and names, and to focus on the content rather than on individual writers.

For this article, I have studied all available issues of these periodicals.⁸ While *Lavendelexpressen*, *LF-avisa* and *Amasonen* were explicitly radical feminist periodicals, *Lesbisk internavis* was published alternately by different lesbian groups in Norway, some of them without a feminist ideology.⁹ For background reading, I have also

examined the unpublished histories of Lesbisk Bevegelse by Gerd Brantenberg and the lesbian movement in the county of Telemark by Anne Mette Vibe, as well as other radical feminist publications from the period.¹⁰ The national Skeivt Arkiv (Queer Archive) holds a number of video interviews with lesbian radical feminists. I have watched all of these interviews, and indeed conducted some of them, but, as they include very little talk of sex and relationships, they have not been included among the materials under consideration here. Of course, this study of the lesbian periodicals does not capture everything that was said and done with regard to sex and sexuality within the movement. However, it seems probable that the ideological positions on sex that were captured through the lesbian periodicals are reasonably representative. Some of the other periodicals of the new women's movement occasionally tried to address women's sexuality and women's sexual pleasure (e.g. *Sirene*, *Kvinnefront* and *Kjerringråd*). However, this drew criticism from both inside and outside the movement. While some argued that the movement was too concerned with sexuality and too liberated, others found it to be overtly hostile to sexuality.¹¹ Sexuality was a sensitive and controversial matter throughout the new women's movement, but even more so within the lesbian radical feminist organisations.

Lesbian periodicals published in the period 1976–86 capture the writings and thoughts of multiple generations of lesbians because the generations of activists tend to be short-lived. The sociologist Nancy Whittier talks about micro-cohorts that change every two to three years.¹² This pattern can be recognised in the Norwegian periodicals. While other studies have focused on ideological changes and changes over time within the New Women's Movement, my material incorporates too few discussions on sex and sexuality for a systematic analysis of change to make sense.¹³ That said, there is no indication that views held on sex and sexuality were subject to any major change over the period.

Lesbian organising and the woman-identified woman

In 1975, a group of lesbian feminists in Oslo decided it was too difficult to do lesbian politics in the new feminist organisations, and also too difficult to do feminist work in the main gay rights organisation, DNF-48. To secure lesbian activists' visibility and a safe space, they founded Lesbisk Bevegelse (Lesbian movement).¹⁴ In addition to Lesbisk Bevegelse in Oslo, there were also a few lesbian radical feminist groups across the country, like Lesbisk Rørsle in Telemark and Sappho in Bergen. The small Norwegian organisations of the lesbian radical feminists took active part in all kinds of demonstrations: staging actions, attending and arranging women's camps as well as national and international meetings, running a library and a vegetarian café at Kvinnehuset, running a separatist press (*Sfinxa*), establishing a theatre group (*Livets mangfold*) and many other activities. They were not only doing lesbian separatist work, but they also participated in other parts of the new women's movement. Many of them quit their studies or day jobs, replacing these activities with short-term work so they could have more time for their activist work. Although members of the lesbian radical feminist movement in Norway were few in number, their perceptions of society and self would, to a large degree, coincide with those found in other parts of the women's movement. Particularly when it came to sexual politics, it seems that the lesbian radical feminists'

views and perceptions on female sexuality in many ways represented a dominant position among Norwegian feminist activists.

The main dividing line of the Norwegian feminist movement of the 1970s lay between those who regarded capitalism as the main obstacle to freedom, equality and authenticity, and those who saw patriarchy as the main enemy.¹⁵ The lesbian radical feminists were clearly on the anti-patriarchal side. Radical feminism refers to a type of feminism focusing on the oppression of the patriarchy, the importance of sisterhood, egalitarian organisational structures, celebration of womanhood, separatism and activism. In their study of the new feminist movement across four decades, Myra Marx Ferree and Beth Hess define the term this way:

Radical feminists also emphasise the power that women already have in themselves and the need for mental transformation that would free women to act powerfully. This, however, is not to be used to enter and achieve in the male world, but rather to reject that world and its values. Women's ties to one another are crucial, not as a defence or a lever to power, but as a source of joy in themselves.¹⁶

While there were strong antagonisms between radical feminists and socialist feminists in the mid-1970s, such marked ideological positionings seemed to weaken and blur over time, and, by the early 1980s, lesbian feminists with different affiliations co-operated to publish the lesbian feminist periodicals.¹⁷

Same-sex sexual desire is one definition of lesbianism. This was not the definition used by the lesbian radical feminists. The highly influential manifesto, 'The Woman-Identified Woman', written by the US Radicalesbians in 1970, was translated into Norwegian and was considered an important document by lesbian radical feminists.¹⁸ The document's core argument was that women must free themselves from patriarchy, and start relating to one another instead of men. The content of this manifesto was echoed in the definition of lesbianism that was published in the first issue of *Laven-delexpressen*:

As lesbians we are in a different situation from that of heterosexual women; we are not dependent on men in the same way, socially, sexually or economically, which gives us experiences that the women's movement needs. If women had not started to relate to one another independently of men, and if we had not been fond of one another, regardless of sexual preferences, then there presumably would not have been a women's movement at all. Lesbianism is an alternative for all women.¹⁹

Sex was not considered to be the defining force of lesbianism by the lesbian radical feminists in Norway. Their focus was on lesbians as women-identified women, women who love other women 'regardless of sexual preference'. As Swedish historian Karin Lindeqvist explains: 'In this way, and by formulating a sexuality that was not predicated on genital relations, the group deconstructed the borders between categories like lesbian and heterosexual'.²⁰ In part, this can be seen as an attempt to 'sanitise' lesbianism in the eyes of other feminists, but also as a way for the movement to distinguish themselves from earlier generations of 'homosexual women' who had been defined by their sexual desire.²¹ Another reason to downplay the focus on sexuality was that the members came to the movement with different motivations. Some saw lesbianism as a political choice and an escape from patriarchy, while others explicitly sought sexual relations with women.²² Although not explicit in the definition above, it still seems to be implied that lesbianism also involves some sort of same-sex sexual desire.²³

Good and bad sexuality: The different natures of male and female sexuality

At first glance, sex and sexuality appear to be almost absent from the periodicals. A closer look reveals that sex and sexuality *were* featured, but in subtle ways. One of the strongest undercurrents is the fundamental difference in the portrayals of male and female sexuality. Women's sexuality was generally referred to in terms of love, tenderness, respect, emotional investment and communication. As its opposite, men's sexuality was described as hard, forceful and active, consumerist, competitive, non-invested, controlling, egotistical, unemotional and solely focused on orgasm, genitals and body parts. Much more space is devoted to describing men's sexuality than women's in these lesbian periodicals. In the column 'My first love', we find an explicit description of the differences between male and female sexuality:

Suddenly she held me tight and transfixed me with her gaze. Soft fingers against my ribs. Her heart beat so wildly that my own heart changed its beat and followed hers. Neither of us moved. This was no game! – This, exactly this, is something I will never experience again, I thought. – This is the first time, it will never be exactly the same again. Then I flung myself onto her and made love to her. Not tenderly and lovingly like a woman, but more like a James Bond/Morgan Kane imitation. Later she taught me a different way [...]. I grew up a little then. Became brave enough to admit that even 'rock hard' me could feel That's what she taught me. It took a woman.²⁴

Sexual desire is unmistakably present in this story, and the norms for how this desire should play out are clearly described. Love, softness and tenderness are good qualities. 'Hardness' and active, physical moves, like flinging oneself onto someone and making love to them, are approaches from which lesbians should seek to liberate themselves.

The tension between active and passive, between being an object and an authentic subject, was constantly negotiated within the movement, and we will return to this later. Freeing themselves from the objectifying gaze of patriarchy was key to the new women's movement, and the invading and violating sexual gaze of men was a prominent theme in several stories.²⁵ In the first issue of *Lavendelexpressen*, a lesbian described how she set out to have a peaceful day alone in the woods reading Kate Millett. However, she met several men along the way, and one of them tried to initiate a conversation. Although she refused to engage with his small talk, he had already ruined her day:

[...] my train of thought had been severed. Instead of experiencing a woman's thoughts about another woman, I sat there being annoyed by men. The moment had been torn to pieces, there was nothing left but hatred. Men, a hazard of global dimensions, world terrorists, so alone with their own selves that they remain oblivious to other people's situation.²⁶ Fuck, they're always there to break you down. I might as well pack up my things and head indoors to read, instead of sitting here, being eaten alive. Shit.²⁷

As she was getting up to leave, another man snuck up behind her, exposed himself and started masturbating. The author describes her reflections: 'How typically male, to humiliate and force women into passive participation, to use women in that way, to give himself an illusion of interaction. How lonely he is with his dick, so little in touch with anything but his own bodily responses, so fucking male'.²⁸ A few pages earlier we find an introduction to the SCUM manifesto by Valerie Solanas, and a translation of her chapter 'Great Art and Culture'. Here Solanas argues that 'the male artist

is just fixated on sexuality, unable to relate to anything apart from his own physical reactions'.²⁹ A description of male sexuality as being disconnected is regularly repeated in the periodicals. In the piece 'Love, Intimacy and Completeness, Mother', a daughter discusses the similarities between her own life as a lesbian among other lesbians, and her mother's life as a widow among her female friends. But her mother keeps insisting that she cannot understand the sexual part of her daughter's life, that women can be together *like that*. The author tries to explain:

I put all the good female descriptives to use to say something about the phenomenon: love and intimacy and tenderness and goodness, and yes, completeness, that's what it's about. The completeness forged by friendship, love and sexuality. It is hard to understand, my mother responds when I am done. Because women can't experience that sense of completeness with men. In the company of men, women find themselves in a split world, with opposites (that should attract), differences and loneliness.³⁰

The discourse established in these periodicals is one of women as being focused on intimacy and emotional closeness, and men as being disconnected and incapable of intimacy. The cultural critic Ellen Willis summarises radical feminist views on female and male sexuality as a biological determinism that sees men as inherently violent and predatory, women as inherently loving and nurturing.³¹ The presumption was that only in a lesbian relationship could women be free from the warped understanding of sex and sexuality in patriarchal society. In Norway, as well as in Sweden and the United States, lesbian radical feminists saw lesbian relationships as better than heterosexual ones because they were free from conventional gender roles, and because women 'by nature' were better lovers and partners.³² In this light, lesbianism became 'the highest form of love, and heterosexuality [the ultimate] sign of female masochism'.³³ Male sexuality was bad, inauthentic and in many cases dangerous to women. With the increased focus on domestic violence, rape, incest, prostitution and pornography towards the end of the 1970s, the disgust and fear of male sexuality only grew.³⁴

At one point, the portrayal of male sexuality in *Lavendelexpressen* reveals discord within the community. *Lavendelexpressen* no. 5 carries an article about the preparatory writings toward a new Norwegian Children Act.³⁵ The article took a strong position against granting new rights to fathers and elicited two long replies. The replies reacted against the hateful tone towards men. One of them quoted the original article's argument that fathers try to portray themselves as naturally nurturing and loving 'based on something that at some point squirted out of their dicks'.³⁶ The reader found this very disturbing.

When I read this, my thoughts go to various conservative Christian movements and their relationship with sexuality. I read, and I think, 'yuck, how gross'. And what is gross are dicks and sperm. 'Disgusting, ugh', I grimace, because I have heard all this before, my whole life, in fact. I have also heard that my own genitals are disgusting and smell bad. I think most of us have 'inherited' similar attitudes and have had to spend time and effort to rid ourselves of them. That's why I had not expected to find these attitudes in a feminist lesbian magazine. My struggle against the patriarchy is not related to whether the male body is disgusting or not. If I thought it was, then I would consider it a personal problem rather than an appropriate political argument against men.³⁷

This contributor ends her letter by saying that she has decided to leave the organisation because she in no way wants to be associated with such attitudes. The fact that

she chose to leave may suggest that she saw the 'man-hating' line as being dominant within the organisation at the time.³⁸

So hard to talk about: The role of genital sex

While the magazines give a pretty clear picture of how male sexuality is perceived, the perception of female sexuality is far more elusive. Despite the slogan 'the personal is political', and despite extensive personal exploration in consciousness-raising groups, it seems to have been difficult for members of the lesbian movement to speak and write explicitly about sex, sexual experiences and desires.³⁹ Apart from qualities like softness, tenderness, nurturing, love-based and holistic relations, descriptions of lesbian desire and sex are far less detailed than descriptions of male sexuality. In *Lavendexpressen* no. 2 we find a call for texts on lesbian sexuality because 'that is something we rarely talk about'.⁴⁰ Indicative of the problematic status of the topic, none of the readers followed up on the request. The next issue features a poem, probably written by someone in the editorial group, that reflects on the lack of response to the call, and about the difficulties of sex.

Sitting here trying to write a poem on this and that
 but especially about lavendexpressen not managing to
 put together a special issue on couples and sexuality because
 none of us managed to write about it even if we
 have definitely tried and not only tried one by one
 but we have talked about this
 subject and I got a lot out of it actually and we
 said all sorts of things and I thought that during the conversation
 it emerged that not everyone felt things were as easy
 as I had thought I assumed everyone was managing
 better than me but now I'm not so sure
 and I thought I would write about that
 but it isn't simple because someone could recognise me
 at least two maybe three well I'm not sure
 because I was so drunk but anyway speaking of sex
 or sexuality and that thing about managing I don't really mean
 super-duper or anything I don't mean you
 have to like manage and that everything

should be like in the books because books lie
hell I have to say that all books lie on that particular subject
they must be otherwise I am well anyway
it doesn't matter and I guess I shouldn't get too personal
but what I wanted to say was something about hands that hold
(now I have been recognised) and wanting to be held so it feels
good but I guess I should try to say something more specific
well I have slept with a few not very many
but a few and that has been a mixed experience
not necessarily a great success but one thing is for sure
but to talk straight I'm not talking about + orgasms
I mean orgasm is not a must for a successful sex life
in my opinion so that's not what I am talking about or alluding to
or anything forget the orgasms if they are there or not
help now I've written that impossible word four times already and I
only meant to say that it is totally irrelevant or I mean
it isn't really either oh god why can't I just shut up
in real life things normally stop here and what
did I mean and I babble every which way
and preferably in the dark.⁴¹

The author of the poem finds the word orgasm 'impossible' to say, and she shows how sex is full of complications, shortcomings and disappointments. In this and other texts, there is also a recognition that there is no language available to address all of this, particularly the pleasurable parts. Still, *Lavendelexpressen* felt that they *should* write about sex. This reflects the difficulty of escaping the understanding of sexuality as a route to personal freedom and self-realisation.⁴² The historian Lillian Faderman states: 'Unlike the era of romantic friends or devoted companions, when sexuality might have been negligible in a woman's life, in the sex-conscious 70s women felt as guilty about denying themselves sexual pleasures as their predecessors would have felt guilty had they indulged'.⁴³ Feeling that one should write about sex is, however, not the same as having the appropriate language to do so. In the poem above, books and media representations are said to give untrue descriptions of women's sex and sexuality. Porn was of course seen as the most horrid example of misrepresentation,

but ordinary literature had also failed to give the author above a useful language that could describe her experiences or give her something to which she could relate.

The author is unsure what position to take with respect to orgasms. The above text says to 'forget the orgasms', and that 'orgasm is not a must for a successful sex life'. The author nevertheless recognises that it is not 'totally irrelevant' either. In her article about the female orgasm in American sexual thought and second-wave feminism, the historian Jane Gerhard argues that in the early years of US women's liberation 'the female orgasm came to signify the political power of women's sexual self-determination'.⁴⁴ Alfred Kinsey, William Howell Masters and Virginia Johnson, and later also Anne Koedt in *The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm*, emphasised the centrality of the clitoris in women's orgasms.⁴⁵ All of them, however, still saw 'orgasm as the sole indicator of sexual pleasure'.⁴⁶ Both (male) sexual liberationists of the 1960s and the feminists of the early 1970s saw sex as an arena of empowerment, personal freedom and authenticity. Liberated and authentic individuals would create a better society, and thus sexual liberation was highly political.⁴⁷ One of the few early US voices that spoke against this focus on genital sex and orgasm was activist Dana Densmore in the feminist separatist Cell 16 in Boston. In 1971 she wrote that instead of being intimidated by psychiatrists for their lack of vaginal sexuality, women now found themselves oppressed by an 'orgasm frenzy'. 'Our right to enjoy our own bodies has not only been bestowed upon us [...], it is almost a duty'.⁴⁸ In the late 1970s, the perception of sex as dangerous and harmful was more prominent than the perception of sex as liberating in both the US and Norwegian feminist movements.⁴⁹ With an increased focus on men's sexual violence towards women, the movement focused on connection and intimacy rather than on pleasure and orgasm when they wrote about women's sexuality. The historian Ruth Rosen describes how lesbian feminists in the United States talked and wrote euphorically about lesbian sex. Lesbians were better lovers than men because 'they took their time, they snuggled, they teased, they wove sexual and emotional intimacy into a seamless passionate experience'.⁵⁰

This scepticism towards orgasms might also illustrate why it was so hard for the young lesbian radical feminists to navigate the landscape of genital sex. If it was mainly men who had a (problematic and patriarchal) sexuality, and women more of a (warm and loving) sensuality, what then were good and legitimate feminist desires? It was obvious and easy to reject the perception of women as sexual objects, but becoming sexual subjects seemed a lot harder. It was unclear what parts of sex and sexuality were available to feminist lesbians. It had to be different from the bad male sexuality, but it proved difficult to be more specific than talk of 'sensuality' and 'hands that hold so it feels good'. It was hard to find words, desires and sexual acts that were clearly feminist and different from male sexuality. Was a wish for orgasms patriarchal? Was flinging oneself onto a lover male? How to be a female sexual subject, when sexual subjectivity and agency were mainly ascribed to men?

Only towards the end of the publishing life of the lesbian feminist periodicals did signs emerge of a different approach to lesbian sexual subjectivity. A travelogue from a Nordic lesbian event held in Gothenburg describes a gathering of fifteen Nordic lesbians. The seminar was entitled 'Sexuality', and upon arrival the participants immediately decided to sit down and talk in groups.⁵¹ The author's own group moved quickly on to sharing stories about their love lives.

I found that I learnt a lot, both about myself and about others. I think it is important to talk more openly about sexuality and love, both to support one another and rid ourselves of weird myths and old prejudices that still shackle us to some extent. We also talked about wanting more erotic images and some new words to better describe our relationships and our love.⁵²

In explicitly talking about their own sexuality, and expressing something they wanted, 'erotic images and some new words', this report constitutes an exception in the lesbian feminist periodicals.⁵³ This could potentially be interpreted as a faint echo of the feminist sex wars that affected lesbian communities, particularly in the United States, at this time.⁵⁴ Although the pro-sex wing of the feminist sex wars hardly seem to have influenced feminist organisations in Norway, and certainly not the lesbian radical feminist ones, I still interpret this comment as a sign of the existence or emergence of a more positive, light-hearted and explorative approach to lesbian sex than that seen in earlier periodicals. Otherwise it is primarily 'love' and 'sensuality' rather than genital sex that is the celebrated approach to bodily pleasure in the periodicals. There are no texts or articles that focus on orgasms, how to achieve sexual fulfilment or the importance of sex. There is an explicit contrast made between women's realities: passionate friendships and emotional intimacy on the one hand, and sex on the other.

From the point of view of the lesbian radical feminist publications in Norway, orgasms and genital sex were complicated. Orgasms were suspect because they figured prominently in pornography and literary descriptions of sex, and thus might reflect a patriarchal goal-oriented view of sex. Also, the author of the long poem quoted above stresses that she does not imply that sex is something 'you have to, like, manage'. 'Managed sex', sex focused on orgasm, performance and achievement, was how men related to sex. Women should do it differently. However, it was of primary importance that the focus on orgasms should not take precedence over what was seen as far more important than genital pleasure: to be authentic and intimate with another human being; to communicate, to love and be loved as a whole person. While *sexual desire* was potentially problematic in this context, *emotional desire* (love and intimacy) was seen as natural and good.⁵⁵

Authenticity and intimacy

There are many reasons why lesbian sex and sexuality did not feature prominently in the periodicals of the lesbian radical feminists. The wish to cleanse homosexuality of the sleaziness often associated with representations of lesbians, notably for instance in pornography, may have been one motivation. Another may have been the wish not to provoke other feminists who already felt uncomfortable with lesbianism. Wanting to unite 'inborn lesbians' with lesbians who had joined the movement on political rather than sexual grounds may also have been an objective. And then there were the less strategic reasons: a lack of language and feelings of shame, embarrassment or inadequacy also appear to have played their part. The view that sex was not that important was yet another reason.⁵⁶ And, as already pointed out, since genital sex was mainly constructed as male and patriarchal, the women in the lesbian movement probably found it particularly difficult to touch on sex and desire in their writings. My main point in this article, however, is that genital sex and sexual fulfilment were toned

down in the writings of the lesbian radical feminist movement also because these were constructed as potential obstructions to reach far more important goals: authenticity and intimacy.

Michel Foucault shows how 'sexuality' from the nineteenth century and onward became 'an essential construct in determining not only moral worth, but also health, desire and identity' in Western culture.⁵⁷ Central to Foucault's theory is also how sexuality came to be seen as the authentic truth of a person, and how subjects now came to feel obligated to tell the truth about themselves by confessing the details of their sexuality. The writings of the Norwegian lesbian radical feminists are implicitly in opposition to this view of sexuality and truth. They wanted their truth, their authenticity, to rest on their identity as women, and on their identity as women-loving women, as lesbians. They did not want their truth to rest on their sex acts or on an identity resting primarily on sexual desire. Their authentic selves were not to be found in orgasms and sexual exploration; their authentic selves were to be found through introspection, self-reflection, sisterhood and community.

The lesbian radical feminist movement of the 1970s and 1980s was deeply connected to other contemporary social movements and the major cultural shifts that occurred at the time. One such shift was the cultural move towards an ethics of authenticity and the moral obligation to be 'true to oneself'.⁵⁸ The famous 1970 manifesto of the Radicalesbians carries numerous references to authenticity. The opening paragraphs state that a lesbian is a woman 'who, often beginning at an extremely early age, acts in accordance with her inner compulsion to be a more complete and freer human being'.⁵⁹ This complete and free human being, coming from within, is the authentic self:

It is the primacy of women relating to women, of women creating a new consciousness of and with each other, which is at the heart of women's liberation, and the basis for the cultural revolution. Together we must find, reinforce, and validate our authentic selves.⁶⁰

The Norwegian periodicals express the same longing through their focus on completeness and on living lives that allowed all parts of themselves to be present at all times, and through their strong belief in the existence of a true and authentic self behind all the inauthenticity forced upon women by patriarchy. Lindeqvist expresses this belief in, and longing for, authenticity in the Swedish movement: 'Beneath the destructive femininity there exists an authentic one, a self unspoiled by societal values and norms, a self that can be found outside of heterosexual relations'.⁶¹ According to this logic, a lesbian relationship is a (*the*) route to authenticity. Sitting in circles while discussing their lives and trying to identify and dismantle patriarchal mechanisms and patterns – searching for authenticity beyond patriarchy – was integral to the lesbian feminist community and it was considered crucial political work.

In addition to the inspiration from American feminism, research also emphasises how ideals of authenticity and of raising consciousness on a personal level to facilitate social change were key aspects of the whole New Left movement.⁶² Consciousness-raising groups were an important political tool in the New Women's Movement, and their format and approach appear to have been applied on many occasions when lesbian feminists met up. In a two-part fairy tale about a little white mouse, published by *Lesbisk [intern]avis*, this part of the culture is portrayed and problematised,

particularly the hegemonic status of public self-exploration. After escaping loneliness and bullying among the grey mice (the heterosexuals), the little white mouse found community among a group of other white mice (the lesbians). However, after a while, the new community started to feel a little stifling. When she lived among the grey mice, the little white mouse had asserted herself through her athletic abilities, but these activities were scorned by the lesbians.

Here no one cared particularly for running or jumping or playing ball games. 'That's just something the stupid grey mice do, because they are afraid to look for white hairs in their own fur', they said. Instead, they often sat in groups and talked, or they played the 'Get to know yourself' game. That meant selecting one or two in the group to be told that something they had said or done was stupid.⁶³

The white mouse experienced that running and playing was frowned upon, while consciousness-raising through talking-circles and 'honest critique' was seen as the all-important activity that would lead to authenticity, honest living and intimacy. Also, sessions of self-criticism and criticism by the group were seen as necessary tools to dismantle the patriarchy within one's own psychological structure, and a tool to build community. However, the fairy tale also suggests that the intended result sometimes failed to materialise and goes on to describe how jealousy and possessiveness were clamped down on. When the protagonist discovered that she wanted to keep her 'best friend' to herself, she did everything she could to hide these unacceptable feelings. She 'became a champion at "verbalising" (that meant putting into words) the thoughts and feelings she had inside, and she became quite an expert at sounding the alert when some of the others said something wrong or stupid'.⁶⁴ By attacking others, she hoped not to be exposed herself.

Several times the periodicals refer to jealousy as an unacceptable but sadly persistent emotion in the lesbian community.⁶⁵ Although there are no articles that specifically describe how lesbian relationships should be organised, it is reasonable to believe that many of the Norwegian readers had also read, for example, the pamphlet printed by the Swedish Lesbisk Front in 1978. The pamphlet describes how older homosexual women, in contrast to the new lesbian feminists, would direct their love of women towards *one* woman, and based their relationships on ownership and jealousy just like heterosexual relationships.⁶⁶ Jealousy was seen as an expression of a patriarchal ownership ideology, and was one of the emotions and practices that the talking circles sought to correct. As expressed in the above-mentioned fairy tale, the people of the patriarchy focused on inessential activities like running and ball games. The lesbian radical feminists focused on the most important and hardest task of all: to find and become their true and most authentic selves – beings beyond patriarchy.

While the fairy tale was critical of this focus, the quest for authenticity was otherwise universally embraced in the periodicals and runs through all the activist cohorts represented. A report from the lesbian community in the town of Stavanger in 1982 reflects many of the same values found in the first volumes. The goal is still honest, intimate and authentic relations and, to achieve that, 'we must learn to communicate'.⁶⁷

As long as we know each other from pub crawls, parties and after-parties, we will not feel secure and safe in one another's company. We must learn to speak openly to one another and tell it like it is. Speaking openly is difficult. We have to work at being able to do that. Eventually we might even appreciate that others try to correct our attitudes and our behaviour. But for that we need to feel safe and confident. We achieve this by daring to invest in one another, starting by simply addressing

moods and feelings that are otherwise not talked about. Just like the women's movement of the 60s we have to learn how to invest in ourselves and cherish the powers within us.⁶⁸

Superficial and mind-numbing activities like pub crawls and parties (and sports, according to the fairy tale) prevent the possibility of trust and closeness. To reach the necessary intimacy, and to find the true and authentic forces within oneself and one another, one has to be prepared to work hard on soul searching, disclosure and communication. Philosopher Charles Taylor (1989; 1991) has carefully outlined these ethics in his research on the position of the self in late modernity.⁶⁹ The search for authenticity is central because of the moral obligation associated with achieving one's full potential:

There is a certain way of being human that is my way. I am called upon to live my life in this way, and not in imitation of anyone else's. But this gives a new importance to being true to myself. If I am not, I miss the point of my life, I miss what being human is for me.⁷⁰

This discourse is also important for our understanding of the lesbian radical feminist movement in Norway. If they failed to uncover and dismantle patriarchy within themselves, they would, to quote Taylor, miss 'the potentiality that was properly their own'.⁷¹ The consequence of the ethics of authenticity is the necessity of finding and articulating one's true self. The work of finding this true female and feminist self was certainly something embarked on by the lesbian radical feminists. And, being placed outside of patriarchy, lesbian feminists believed they would have better access to their authentic selves than most other groups in society. Authentic feminist sex was (had to be!) very different from the competitiveness, the focus on performance and achievement, and the disconnected body parts they saw as the patriarchal approach to sex. In this process, the chase for genital sex and orgasms could be seen as the opposite of the quest for true authenticity.

A discourse which is both parallel and integral to the discourse of authenticity is what we can call the discourse or ethics of intimacy. We saw this expressed in the descriptions of female love, and in the arguments that explained why female love and sex was better than male love and sex. In the lesbian periodicals, both authenticity and intimacy are seen as qualities one should work to achieve. The sociologist Lynn Jamieson names a particular ethics of intimacy: *disclosing intimacy*. It is a form of intimacy that emphasises:

mutual disclosure, constantly revealing your inner thoughts and feelings to each other. It is an intimacy of the self rather than an intimacy of the body, although the completeness of intimacy of the self may be enhanced by bodily intimacy.⁷²

The sociologist Eva Illouz stresses that, within this discourse, a relationship is an arena for expressing 'and in fact find[ing] one's authentic self'.⁷³ The American culture scholar David Shumway argues that romantic relationships have become an important part of the process of self-discovery or self-identity. Sexuality is, however, an underlying factor, as intimacy is usually understood as 'friendship +'.⁷⁴ Although sex is the implied '+', the focus of this discourse is primarily on the importance of communication, autonomy, authenticity and intimacy. The sociologist Anthony Giddens termed the relationships built on disclosing intimacy 'pure relationships'.⁷⁵ The pure relationship exists solely to meet the partners' emotional and sexual needs and is

likely to continue only so long as it succeeds. In contrast to marriage (regulated by law, customs and morality), the pure relationship is 'entered into for its own sake, for what can be derived by each person from a sustained association with another'.⁷⁶ Giddens also emphasises equality as a necessary prerequisite for this kind of relationship.

From the 1970s onwards, the ideal-typical marriage began to be described as something similar to 'disclosing intimacy' in Western public stories.⁷⁷ Shumway shows how the discourse on intimacy progressively emerged in self-help books, movies and intimacy literature. He states that:

a longing to be known is at the heart of the discourse of intimacy. Where the romantic lover sought mystery and to remain mysterious, the lover under intimacy wants to break through deception to a true meeting of minds.⁷⁸

According to Shumway, the discourse of intimacy came to replace or supplement the older discourse of romance. Intimate middle-class relationships of late modernity rest on the partners being able to realise their inner authentic selves, and that they are equal, self-reflective and self-determining individuals. Norway's lesbian radical feminist periodicals and their talk of intimacy form a part of this production of a new discourse of intimacy. The Norwegian lesbian feminists can almost be seen as an ideal-typical group for developing disclosing intimacy. There were few structural inequalities among the lesbian feminists; almost all of them were white and middle-class, or on their way to becoming middle-class, and they had a strong ideological investment in a close and loving sisterhood to the extent that potential differences were downplayed. Since most of them were also young and had no children, they were also less preoccupied with the more practical forms of intimacy involved with care and dependence.

A wealth of empirical studies show that not only feminist lesbians of the 1970s valued disclosing intimacy in romantic relationships more than sex. The same applied for a large proportion of all women from these generations.⁷⁹ As such, the lesbian feminists were describing empirical realities when they wrote about women being better at communication and intimacy, and men being more focused on genital sex than women. However, the lesbian radical feminist writings were of course also reproducing this pattern, *and* describing it as an inevitable, general and stable characteristic. The lesbian feminists did not believe in the possibility of equal heterosexual relationships under patriarchy and were indifferent to men's potential for development when it came to sex, authenticity and intimacy. The stories constructed in the lesbian feminist periodicals are 'old-school' and 'traditional' in the sense that they reproduce a story of men and women as inherently different from one another, particularly when it comes to intimacy and sexuality. Their stories are 'new' and 'postmodern' in their emphasis on authenticity and disclosing intimacy as the end purpose of human relationships. In the above story about the masturbator in the woods, the flashing was described as 'an illusion of interaction', and the man as 'lonely' and 'not in touch with anything but his own bodily responses'.⁸⁰ In the same issue of *Lavendelekspressen* we read Valerie Solanas's words that the male artist is just fixated on sexuality, unable to relate to anything apart from his own physical reactions. To the lesbian radical feminists, this was the exact opposite of what a solid lesbian relationship would or should be: built on interaction, communication and intimacy, and where bodily responses were secondary.⁸¹

Conclusion

The above analysis makes it clear that the vagina-inspection circles at the Women's House (referred to in the introduction) were definitely not intended as tools to improve sexual technique or to achieve better sexual satisfaction. Instead, they may be interpreted as tools to get to know oneself and others fully and intimately, by meeting one another nakedly and openly. They were driven by emotional rather than sexual desire, by a hunger for self-knowledge, authenticity and disclosing intimacy, rather than by a quest for genital satisfaction.

The lesbian radical feminists in Norway did not write or reflect extensively on sex and sexuality in their periodicals. While there are several reasons for this downplaying of sex, my main argument in this article has been that sex was downplayed because it conflicted with some of the main underlying foci of the movement: authenticity and intimacy. While Jane Gerhard and Michael Shumway show how authenticity and intimacy were constructed as preferable *companions* to sex in the New Left and in large parts of the women's movement, the Norwegian lesbian radical feminists often constructed authenticity and intimacy in *opposition* to genital sex.⁸²

Changes in gender relations, gender dynamics and same-sex relationships have pushed for 'more egalitarian forms of relationships and creative life experiments' since the 1970s.⁸³ Love and sexuality have become highly reflective arenas, and an ethics of authenticity and intimacy has become central to personal relationships. The Norwegian lesbian radical feminists of the 1970s and 1980s formed a part of this shift. Their political ideals and visions necessitated the formation of new relationship models that rested on authenticity and intimacy rather than on sexuality. In their fight against patriarchy and their exploration of female identity and sisterhood, in their refusal to be objects, figures of old-fashioned female homosexual objects or patriarchal, lustful and objectifying subjects, lesbian radical feminists in Norway did not create a wide-open space for discussions about sexual desire.⁸⁴ They did, however, become part of the move towards a discourse where authenticity and intimacy are seen as the most important components of human relationships.

Notes

1. I choose to use the term 'lesbian radical feminist' to emphasise that the communities I write about are lesbians who mainly subscribed to a radical feminist ideology. In Norway, many radical feminists were not lesbians (for example in the organisation Nyfeministene), and many lesbian feminists were not radical feminists (e.g. in the lesbian and gay socialist organisation AHF). Many of the influential lesbian feminists in Norway were 'socialist feminists', not 'radical feminists'.
2. See Ulrich Beck and Elizabeth Beck-Gernsheim, *The Normal Chaos of Love* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995); Anthony Giddens, *Transformations of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992); Eva Illouz, *Saving the Modern Soul: Therapy, Emotions, and the Culture of Self-Help* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Ken Plummer, *Intimate Citizenship: Private Decisions and Public Dialogues* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003); Davis Shumway, *Romance, Intimacy, and the Marriage Crisis* (New York: New York University Press, 2003); Jeffrey Weeks, *The World We Have Won: The Remaking of Erotic and Intimate Life* (London: Routledge, 2007).
3. Along with several other researchers, I argue that lesbian radical feminists tended to downplay sexuality. See Emma Isaksson, *Kvinnokamp: Synen på underordning och motstånd i den nya kvinnorörelsen* (Stockholm: Atlas, 2007); Karin Lindeqvist, *Med hela foten: Konstruktionen av lesbiskhet som kollektiv identitet i Grupp Viktoria och Lesbisk Front, 1973–1979* (D-uppsats: Södertörns högskola, 2003); Hanna Hallgren, *När lesbiska blev kvinnor: När kvinnor blev lesbiska – Lesbiskfeministiska kvinnors diskursproduktion rörande kön, sexualitet, kropp och identitet under 1970- och 1980-talen i Sverige* (Göteborg: Kabusa

- böcker, 2008); Alice Echols, *Daring to be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967–1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989); Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers. A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), pp. 231–2.
4. Anne Koedt, *The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm* (Somerville: New England Free Press, 1970).
 5. Alice Echols also points to this tension between sex and women in the US movement. Echols, *Daring to be Bad*, pp. 173–5, 216–19 and 255–6. See also Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, pp. 246–52. For more on Norwegian feminist sexual politics in the period see Birgit Bjerck et al. (eds), *Mannfolk!: 13 innlegg om mannshat i kvinnekampen* (Oslo: Pax, 1983); Synnøve Skarsbø Lindtner, ‘“Som en frisk vind gjennom stuen”’: Kvinnebladet Sirene (1973–1983) og det utvidete politikkbegrepet’ (PhD dissertation, University of Bergen, 2014); Trine Rogg Korsvik, ‘“Pornografi er teori, voldtekt er praksis”’: Kvinnekamp mot voldtekt og pornografi i Frankrike og Norge ca 1970–1985’ (PhD dissertation, University of Oslo, 2014); Hilde Danielsen, ‘Negotiating Abortion Rights and Sexual Pleasure in the New Women’s Movement in Norway in the 1970s’, *labrys: études féministes/estudos feministas* (2018), <http://www.labrys.net.br/labrys31/nordic/hilde.htm>.
 6. *Lavendelexpressen* no. 2, 1977, p. 3; Runa Haukaa, *Bak slagordene: Den nye kvinnebevegelsen i Norge* (Oslo: Pax, 1982), p. 159; Siv Taule, ‘“Støtt de lesbiske i Kina og Albania!”: Lesbiskfeministiske tidsskrift fra 1970– og 1980-tallet’ (Unpublished master thesis, University of Bergen, 2017), p. 22.
 7. *Lavendelexpressen* no. 1, 1976, p. 1.
 8. The Skeivt Arkiv [Queer archive] at the University Library of Bergen holds the most complete collections of these magazines in Norway. Their collection consists of: *Lavendelexpressen* (1976–1981), six issues; *Lesbisk internavis* (1980–1982), six issues; *LF-avisa* (1983–1984), three issues; *Amasonen* (1984–1986), ten issues.
 9. After some years in decline, Lesbisk Bevegelse was officially closed down in the autumn of 1982, but was partly replaced by a new group, Lesbiske Feminister (LF) [Lesbian feminists]. LF closed down in 1984 (*Amasonen* no.2, 1984, p. 3) and Lesbiske Aktivister (LA) [Lesbian activists], a group originating from the socialist lesbian/gay organisation AHF, took over several of their functions (*Amasonen* no. 8, 1984, p. 24). They lasted until 1986 (*Amasonen* no. 2, 1986, pp. 10–11, 44).
 10. Gerd Brantenberg, *Lesbisk Bevegelses historie* (Unpublished manuscript, 1980, Skeivt arkiv, Kim Frieles arkiv); Anne Mette Vibe, *Fra historien til Lesbisk Rørsle i Telemark på 70- og 80-tallet* (Unpublished manuscript, without year. Skeivt arkiv, Lesbisk rørsle i Telemark).
 11. Danielsen, ‘Negotiating Abortion Rights’, p. 10.
 12. Nancy Whittier, *Feminist Generations: The Persistence of the Radical Women’s Movement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), p. 74.
 13. See Drude Dahlerup, *Rødstrømperne: Den danske Rødstrømpebevægelses udvikling, nytænkning og gennemslag 1970–1985* (København: Gyldendal, 1998); Echols *Daring to be Bad*; Myra Marx Ferre and Beth B. Hess, *Controversy and Coalition: The New Feminist Movement Across Four Decades of Change* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Hallgren, *När lesbiska blev kvinnor*; Korsvik ‘Pornografi er teori, voldtekt er praksis’; Lindtner, ‘“Som en frisk vind gjennom stuen”’; Ingrid Birce Müftüoğlu, *Hverdagens politikk i 1970-tallets kvinnebevegelse* (PhD Dissertation, University of Bergen, 2013); Taule ‘Støtt de lesbiske i Kina og Albania!’; Verta Taylor and Leila Rupp, ‘Women’s Culture and Lesbian Feminist Activism: A Reconsideration of Cultural feminism’, *Signs* 19 (1993); Nella van Dyke and Ronda Cress, ‘Political Opportunities and Collective Identity in Ohio’s Gay and Lesbian Movement, 1970 to 2000’, *Sociological Perspectives* 49 (2006), pp. 503–26; Whittier, *Feminist Generations*.
 14. Brantenberg, *Lesbisk Bevegelses historie*; Haukaa, *Bak slagordene*.
 15. For an overview of the history of the Norwegian women’s movement, see Hilde Danielsen (ed.) *Da det personlige ble politisk. Den nye kvinne- og mansbevegelsen på 1970-tallet* (Oslo: Scandinavian Academic Press, 2013); Haukaa, *Bak slagordene*; Elisabeth Lønnå, *Stolthet og kvinnekamp: Norsk kvinnesaksforenings historie fra 1913* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 1996).
 16. Ferree and Hess, *Controversy and Coalition*, p. 50. See also Rebecca Jennings, *A Lesbian History of Britain: Love and Sex between Women since 1500* (Oxford: Greenwood Publishing, 2007), pp. 175–7. Alice Echols and Ellen Willis (controversially) argue that it is crucial to separate between ‘radical feminism’ and ‘cultural feminism’ (Echols, *Daring to be Bad*; Ellen Willis, ‘Radical Feminism and Feminist Radicalism’, *Social Text* 9/10 (1984), pp. 91–118). In the Norwegian context I doubt this divide would be useful. The Norwegian organisations were much smaller and less ideologically sophisticated than the American ones, and you can find elements of both so-called ‘radical’ and ‘cultural’ feminism present during the ten-year time span when these organisations existed.
 17. *Amasonen*, the last one of these periodicals, was produced by various constellations of lesbians, some from Lesbisk Bevegelse, some from the organisation AHF, and some independent ones.

18. Radicalesbians, *The Woman-Identified Woman* (Pittsburgh: Know. Inc., 1970). This four-page pamphlet was first distributed during a lesbian protest at the Second Congress to Unite Women on 1 May 1970 in New York City. Special Collections Library, Duke University.
19. *Lavendelexpressen* no. 1, 1976, p. 14. The Norwegian material throughout the article is translated by the author.
20. Lindeqvist, *Med hela foten*, p. 39. Translated by the author.
21. Hallgren, *När lesbiska blev kvinnor*, pp. 314–27. See also Kathy Rudy, 'Radical Feminism, Lesbian Separatism, and Queer Theory', *Feminist Studies* 27 (2001), pp. 190–222.
22. Verta Taylor and Nancy Whittier, 'Collective identity in social communities: Lesbian feminist mobilization', in Aldon D. Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller (eds), *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), pp. 115–17; Lindeqvist *Med hela foten*, p. 11.
23. Lindeqvist, *Med hela foten*, p. 11.
24. *Lavendelexpressen* no. 5, 1980, p. 8.
25. See also Dahlerup *Rødstrømperne*, vol. 2, pp. 45–54.
26. This is probably a reference to the Bishops' Convention of the Church of Norway in 1954, when the bishops stated that homosexuals posed a hazard of global dimensions.
27. *Lavendelexpressen* no. 1, 1976, pp. 33–4.
28. *Lavendelexpressen* no. 1, 1976, pp. 34–5.
29. *Lavendelexpressen* no. 1, 1976, p. 28.
30. *Lavendelexpressen* no. 2, 1977, p. 12.
31. Ellen Willis, *No More Nice Girls: Countercultural Essays* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), p. 6. Alice Echols would ascribe this biological determinism to the influence of what she calls 'cultural feminism' (Echols, 1989).
32. Lindeqvist, *Med hela foten*, p. 41.
33. Faderman, *Odd girls and Twilight Lovers*, p. 205.
34. Korsvik, 'Pornografi er teori, voldtekt er praksis'; Lindtner 'Som en frisk vind gjennom stuen'.
35. The preparatory writings can be found in NOU 1977: 35, *Lov om barn og foreldre (barne-loven)*, (NOU 1977:35). The new Children's Act, LOV-1981-04-08-7, took effect from 1 January 1982.
36. *Lavendelexpressen* no. 5, 1980, p. 7.
37. *Lavendelexpressen* no. 6, 1981, p. 3.
38. For more on the so-called debate on man-hate in the Norwegian feminist movement see Lindtner, 'Som en frisk vind gjennom stuen', pp. 340–73.
39. In her analysis of the feminist magazine *Sirene* (the Norwegian equivalent of American *Ms*), the media scholar Synnøve Lindtner argues that *Sirene* also struggled with how to approach female sexuality. They did, however, write much more about it than the lesbian periodicals, promoting a heterosexual, functional and hygienic sexuality rather than focusing primarily on desire and self-fulfillment. Lindtner connects this to a long Norwegian tradition of sexual progressiveness linked to medical expertise and a focus on the positive effects of functional sex lives for society, rather than a focus on the personal benefits (Lindtner 'Som en frisk vind gjennom stuen', pp. 209–42). The Danish folklorist and lesbian activist Karin Lützen also suggests that the Norwegian movement was more sex-restrictive than the libertarian Danish one. Lützen revised the lesbian section of *Our Bodies Our Selves* in its Danish version in 1982. She included lesbian desire in the chapter which, according to her, had previously focused on oppression and invisibility. While the Danish lesbian feminist community had been happy with the new version, it was not similarly received when used to inform the work on a new Norwegian version of the book. Lützen received feedback from the Norwegian adaptor that the text seemed overly promiscuous, and that it appeared to suggest that lesbianism was only about sexuality. Karin Lützen, *Hvad hjertet begjærer: Kvinders kærlighed til kvinder* (København: Tidens skrifter, 1986), pp. 314–16.
40. *Lavendelexpressen* no. 2, 1977, p. 3.
41. *Lavendelexpressen* no. 3, 1977, p. 5.
42. Jane Gerhard, *Desiring Revolution: Second-Wave Feminism and the Rewriting of Twentieth-Century American Sexual Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); Lindtner, 'Som en frisk vind gjennom stuen'; Eva Illouz, *Saving the Modern Soul: Therapy, Emotions, and the Culture of Self-Help* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), pp. 126–7.
43. Faderman, *Odd girls and Twilight Lovers*, p. 208.
44. Jane Gerhard, 'Revisiting "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm": The Female Orgasm in American Sexual Thought and Second Wave Feminism', *Feminist Studies* 26 (2000), p. 450.
45. Koedt, *The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm*; Gerhard, 'Revisiting "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm"', p. 450.
46. Gerhard, 'Revisiting "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm"', p. 461.

47. Gerhard, 'Revisiting "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm"', p. 464.
48. Dana Densmore in Gerhard, 'Revisiting "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm"', p. 468; see also Echols, *Daring to be Bad*, pp. 111–12, 149–202.
49. Echols, *Daring to be bad*; Gerhard, 'Revisiting "The Myth of the Vaginal orgasm"'; Korsvik, 'Pornografi er teori, voldtekt er praksis'; Lindtner 'Som en frisk vind gjennom stuen'.
50. Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open. How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America* (New York: Penguin Books, 1996), p. 170.
51. *Amasonen* no. 4, 1984, p. 21.
52. *Amasonen* no. 6, 1984, pp. 9–10.
53. The only other example I have found is an erotic short story, translated from German, in a special issue on pornography (*Amasonen* no. 4, 1984, pp. 15–18).
54. See e.g. Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, pp. 246–70.
55. The concept 'emotional desire' is derived from Hanna Bertilsdottir Rosqvist and Catrine Andersson, 'Bad sex, good love: Homonormativity in the Swedish Gay Press, 1969–86', in *GLQ*, 22 (2015).
56. See e.g. Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, p. 248.
57. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1* (London: Penguin Books, 1978); Gary Gutting and Johanna Oksala, 'Michel Foucault', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2019 Edition),
58. Doug Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity and the New Left in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1991).
59. Radicalesbians, *The Woman-Identified Woman*, p. 1.
60. Radicalesbians, *The Woman-Identified Woman*, p. 4.
61. Lindeqvist, *Med hela foten*, p. 41. Translated by author.
62. Lindtner, 'Som en frisk vind gjennom stuen', pp. 142–208; Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity*.
63. *Lesbisk [Intern]avis*, no. 3, 1980, p. 19.
64. *Lesbisk [Intern]avis*, no. 3, 1980, p. 19.
65. E.g. in *Lesbisk internavis* 1982, no. 2, p. 4; or in a satirical story in *Lavendelexpressen* no. 5, 1980, pp. 14–15.
66. Isaksson, *Kvinnokamp*, p. 282.
67. *Lesbisk internavis*, no. 6, 1982, p. 5.
68. *Lesbisk internavis* 1982, no. 2, p. 4.
69. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self. The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989); Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, (Cambridge, Mass.; Harvard University Press, 1992).
70. Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, pp. 28–9.
71. Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, p. 29.
72. Lynn Jamieson, *Intimacy. Personal Relationships in Modern Society* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1998), p. 1.
73. Illouz, *Cold Intimacies*, p. 126.
74. Shumway, *Romance, Intimacy, and the Marriage Crises*, p. 142.
75. Giddens, *Transformations of Intimacy*, p. 2.
76. Giddens, *Transformations of Intimacy*, p. 58.
77. Shumway, *Romance, Intimacy, and the Marriage Crises*, pp. 134–40; Jamieson, *Intimacy*, p. 18.
78. Shumway, *Romance, Intimacy, and the Marriage Crises*, p. 207.
79. Jamieson, *Intimacy*, pp. 126–33.
80. *Lavendelexpressen* no. 1, 1976, pp. 34–5.
81. *Lavendelexpressen* no. 1, 1976, p. 28.
82. Gerhard, *Desiring Revolution*; Shumway, *Romance, Intimacy, and the Marriage Crises*.
83. Weeks, *The World We Have Won*, p. 8.
84. Hallgren, *När lesbiska blev kvinnor*, p. 217.

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