

Public Abstract

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Title:From Stonewall to Millennium: Lesbian Representation in Three Representative Late 20th-Century Plays by American Women

From Stonewall to Millennium: Lesbian Representation in Three Late 20th-Century Plays by American Women explores the relationship between the lived experiences of LGBT people (especially lesbians and bisexual women) and staged depictions thereof. In the dissertation's three analytical chapters, I offer close, critical readings of three representative plays by American women, one from each of the final three decades of the 20th century: *Last Summer at Bluefish Cove* by Jane Chambers, *And Baby Makes Seven* by Paula Vogel, and *Stop Kiss* by Diana Son. Motivated by the New Historicist perspective that the significance of literary texts "can be fully grasped only in relation to the other expressive possibilities with which it interacts," I illuminate deeper meanings within the plays by investigating the social/political climates in which they were written and debuted.

Exploring past modes of living and staging LGBT identities and experiences is valuable because it helps contextualize the current historical moment, which is marked by aggressive social/political campaigns aimed at LGBT empowerment and enfranchisement. This project will be of interest to artists and scholars in the varied, but often intersecting, fields of Theatre, Performance Studies, Communication, Women's and Gender Studies, and Queer Theory, as well as those outside of the academy who take interest in LGBT history, American history, and the arts.