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## SEXOLOGY IN THE 19TH CENTURY

In the 19th century, the sin model of homosexuality gave way to a medical model that pathologized a wide variety of sexual “deviances.” This chapter explores some of the pressures that led to the development of this model.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this chapter, you should be able to do the following:

- 2.1 Describe the Victorian social views that contributed to the development of contemporary categories of sexual orientation.
- 2.2 Describe how the field of sexology helped create the terms for contemporary sexual orientation.
- 2.3 Examine the theories of early sexologist Havelock Ellis.
- 2.4 List the contributions of Sigmund Freud to 20th-century attitudes about sex and sexuality.
- 2.5 Explain the ongoing impact of sexology on contemporary sexual orientation.

For more than a century, scientists and scholars have sought to identify the combination of factors that makes a person feel sexual desire for someone of the same sex. This quest began in the 19th century, as Western medicine claimed status as a profession, with standardized training academies, curricula, and practices. The professionalization of medicine evolved through several developments in science at that time, including (1) refinement of scientific methods, (2) significant advances in technology, (3) a mania for taxonomy, and (4) a new understanding of human behavior as pathology. This chapter focuses on the early sexologists and their often gender-stereotypical ideas about homosexuality, culminating in an analysis of the popularization of Freudian terms and ideas in Europe and the United States.

We begin in 1894, when 24-year-old Lord Alfred Douglas (lover of poet and playwright Oscar Wilde) published a poem titled “Two Loves.” It depicts an idyllic scene, into which a beautiful young man enters. The poet’s persona asks him,

. . . Sweet youth,

Tell me why, sad and sighing, thou dost rove

These pleasant realms?

The young man answers that he is not the “true Love” that fills “the hearts of boy and girl with mutual flame.” He is instead, he sighs, “the Love that dare not speak its name” (Douglas). The homoeroticism that saturates the poem suggests that this “Love that dare not speak its name” is love between men or between women. But at the end of the 19th century, that love was nameless in several important ways [ $\lambda$  “**silent sin**” **Chapter 1**]. First, such love “dare[d] not speak its name” because many same-sex sexual practices were criminalized. For instance, Britain’s Criminal Law Amendment Act, passed in 1885, criminalized sexual touching between men. Anal intercourse (known as buggery) was already considered a reprehensible criminal act, once punishable by death; at the time of Douglas’s writing, it was punishable by imprisonment from 10 years to life (“Timeline”). Second, little public discourse about homoeroticism and homosexuality existed. In the contemporary world, Western media frequently offer news reports, movies, or conversation about a variety of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) issues. This was not the case in 19th-century Europe, where “sexual inversion” was considered an illness and discussed in journals aimed primarily at medical professionals. Finally, Douglas’s same-sex “Love” not only “dared not” but *could* not “speak its name.” The term *homosexual* had just been coined and had not gained much public circulation when Douglas composed his poem and committed acts of “gross indecency” with Wilde [ $\lambda$  **Chapter 9**]. At the time, then, few terms existed that described same-sex relations or acts in any way except as “sinful” or criminal.

In many ways, our contemporary Western understanding of sexuality was constructed at the turn of the 20th century by practitioners of the emerging disciplines of psychiatry, psychology, and sociology. Members of the legal profession, as well as early homosexual rights activists in Europe, also helped disseminate a way of talking about sex and sexuality that prefigured how we talk about sexuality today. Perhaps most important, the work of late 19th-century **sexologists** was crucial in constructing a discourse about sexuality that was scientific rather than laden with religious condemnation or criminal accusation. Such work was not without its own set of judgments and valuations, but our contemporary understanding of homosexuality as an *identity* begins with the sexologists.

## VICTORIAN SEX: SOME BACKGROUND

In the late 19th century, there was widespread disagreement about sex and its benefits—or potential hazards—physically, morally, and socially. On one hand, according to Jonathan Margolis in *O: The Intimate History of the Orgasm*, “[m]ost Victorian doctors considered sexual desire in women to be pathological and warned that female sexual excitement and indulgence could damage their reproductive organs and urinary system” (282). Similarly, Richard von Krafft-Ebing, in *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886), “linked masturbation to criminality” and described women “who exhibited ‘excessive’ sexual desire” as “nymphomaniacs” (Margolis 287). On the other hand, Margolis points out that Havelock Ellis argued that in marriage, “one should ascertain not just the sexual needs of the husband but of

the wife too” (293). What’s more, in Europe and the United States, Victorian-era doctors believed that inducing **paroxysm** (or orgasm) was an effective treatment for hysteria.

These divergent views are not surprising when we consider the numerous social, cultural, and political upheavals that characterize the turn of the 20th century. Change was in the air. The era was marked by increased urbanization, a growing middle class with greater earning power, continued industrialization, the further development of overseas empires, and along with this, growing colonial unrest. Perhaps most significantly, the rise of scientific thought challenged reliance on biblical or religious modes of understanding the human condition. Scientific upheavals, such as Darwin’s theory of evolution or the geological discovery of ancient fossils, suggested that the world was far older than the 6,000 years of recorded biblical history; many people found that scientific discovery could provide a deeper understanding of humanity than scriptural accounts, which were beginning to seem unreliable as sources of knowledge.

These changes affected the way individuals organized and understood their personal lives. As people moved into cities to find jobs and make money, family structures changed. Just a century before, most families consisted of complex and extended kinship networks in mostly rural areas; by the late 19th century, many people were living in smaller familial units, on their own, or in other pairings or groupings. We recall the emergence of “romantic friendships” among women at that time, such as so-called Boston marriages, in which two professional women set up housekeeping together [λ **Chapter 1**]. Concomitant with such “alternative” familial groupings were calls for women’s rights, particularly the vote, as women entered the paid workforce in greater numbers. The move to cities also brought individuals into closer contact with prostitution and the “sexual underground.” Urban centers were (and still are, to a considerable extent) areas in which people could explore and construct a variety of intimate and erotic arrangements. Historian George Chauncey notes that beginning roughly in 1890 “a highly visible, remarkably complex, and continually changing gay male world took shape in New York City” (1). Jonathan Margolis points out that this era also saw an increase in the availability of contraceptives, such as condoms and diaphragms. People were not necessarily having more sex than before, but the available evidence suggests that sex, sexual diversity, and alternative intimate arrangements were more visible and becoming subjects of discussion—and concern.

In fact, a variety of Europeans—ranging from medical professionals and politicians to religious leaders and laypeople—were deeply troubled by the rapid changes they were seeing in family structures and sexual practices. Out of this concern, and motivated by an interest in understanding what people were doing and why, the field of **sexology** was born, and set about establishing a place in the newly professionalized pantheon of the sciences. The sexologists’ early documentation, theoretical musings, and scientific debates were crucial in providing a language with which to talk about sexuality in general and homosexuality in particular.

## SEXOLOGY: DEFINING A FIELD OF STUDY

In 1869, the German physician Karl Westphal (1833–1890) noted in the *Archive for Psychiatry and Nervous Diseases* a new abnormality or mental disorder, which he called “contrary sexual feeling,” meant to describe men whose sexual feelings were largely for other men and women whose sexual feelings were largely for other women. According

to Westphal, such men were generally effeminate and the women “mannish” in behavior and appearance. Westphal and later sexologists called these men and women *inverts* because their gender presentation and, to some degree, their sexual desires seemed to these researchers inverse to the expected norms for their sex (“Invert”). Also in 1869, the writer Karl Maria Kertbeny invented the term *homosexual* to describe similar behaviors (“Karl Maria Kertbeny”). This term was then used by a variety of others in the developing field of sexology to describe same-sex sexual interest.

One of the key characteristics of much sexological thinking about **inversion** was the belief that male inverts were in some way more feminine than “normal” men and that female inverts were more masculine than “normal” women. Iwan Bloch’s (1872–1922) *The Sexual Life of Our Times* (1907) offers a striking description of inversion, highlighting this gender “confusion”:

More especially after removing any beard or mustache that be present, we sometimes see much more clearly the feminine expression of face in a male homosexual, whilst before the hair was removed they appeared quite man-like. Still more important for the determination of a feminine habitus are direct physical characteristics. Among these there must be mentioned a *considerable deposit of fat*, by which the resemblance to the feminine type is produced, the contours of the body being more rounded than in the case of the normal male. In correspondence with this the *muscular system* is less powerfully developed than it is in heterosexual men, the skin is delicate and soft, and the complexion is much clearer than is usual in men. (qtd. in Bristow 36)

This kind of thinking about homosexuality was to remain influential, permeating the popular consciousness and seemingly supported by scientific research. The supposed link between deviation from sex and gender norms and homosexuality continues as a fundamental assumption underlying many studies throughout the 20th century and into the 21st [**Chapter 3**].

In 1886, German psychiatrist Dr. Richard von Krafft-Ebing (1840–1902) published *Psychopathia Sexualis*, in which he catalogued, described, and discussed a number of sexual “perversions.” According to Krafft-Ebing, “Homosexuals . . . had feelings that represented an ‘abnormal congenital manifestation,’ and ‘the essential feature of this strange manifestation of the sexual life is the want of sexual sensibility for the opposite sex, even to the extent of horror, while sexual inclination and impulse toward the same sex are present’” (Fout 274–275). Krafft-Ebing based his conclusions in large part on numerous case histories of those claiming to have same-sex sexual attractions. His goal in reviewing and analyzing these case histories was in line with much sexological practice: to categorize and provide a taxonomy for the variety of sexual interests and expressions. Krafft-Ebing also studied those whose sexual interests involved **masochism**, **fetishism**, and **sadism**—all terms that he invented.

Krafft-Ebing generally believed that homosexuality was **congenital**, a condition with which an individual was unfortunately born. At the same time, homosexuality could arise from other **etiologies**: “a hypochondriacal fear of infection during sexual intercourse,” fear of pregnancy, and “mental or moral weakness,” for instance (qtd. in Bristow 32). Homosexuality was seen as a “perversion”—something to be avoided or at best pitied. Krafft-Ebing’s language suggested that homosexuality was a mental illness, a belief many psychologists and psychiatrists supported well into the 20th century. As a point of

clarification, Krafft-Ebing used the term *heterosexual* to describe what he saw as the perverse practice of engaging in sexual relations with a member of the opposite sex without the aim of reproduction. Interestingly, Krafft-Ebing's views on homosexuality as a perversion shifted toward the end of his life; his final edition of *Psychopathia Sexualis* asserted that homosexuality was one manifestation of sexual desire and not necessarily a mental disease ("Krafft-Ebing").

Krafft-Ebing's view may have shifted in part due to the work of other sexologists and writers who were interested in homosexuality and who felt that homosexuals were neither perverse nor mentally ill. Karl Heinrich Ulrichs (1825–1895), a German student of law and theology, believed that homosexuals comprised a "third sex," which he called **Urnings**, a sexological category he described at some length in *The Riddle of "Man-Manly" Love*, a series of pamphlets published from 1864 to 1880. According to Ulrichs's theory, Urnings were the product of heredity and displayed visible physical differences from heterosexuals. For Ulrichs, the innateness of the Urning condition was the most significant reason that it should not be considered abnormal—hence his insistence that we recognize Urnings as a third sex beyond men and women (Bristow 20–26).

Given the enormous influence of the sexologists in creating a language to discuss homosexuality (and other sexual diversities), some contemporary thinkers have credited the turn of the 20th century with "giving birth" to the modern homosexual. Most notably, French philosopher Michel Foucault (1926–1984) famously asserted in his *History of Sexuality* ([1976] 1978) that the sexological categorization of sexual diversities in the late 19th century served to create not only new categories of mental illness but also new *identities* based on sexuality. As Foucault points out, those (e.g., sodomites) who had earlier engaged in homoerotic behavior were frequently condemned for their *acts*; with the rise of medical classifications and the science of psychology, such people were diagnosed as suffering from inborn mental disorders—and thus "the homosexual was now a species" (43). As David Halperin puts it, "although there are persons who seek sexual contact with other persons of the same sex in many different societies, only recently and only in some sectors of our society have such persons—or some portion of them—been homosexuals" (qtd. in Jagose 46). Hence, categorization worked not just to pathologize a new species of humans but also to allow those "afflicted" with homosexuality to consider themselves a "species" of people who could describe and talk about their lives beyond the often negative judgments of the medical establishment. Ulrichs, himself an Urning, used the medical classification of inversion and homosexuality to create a "reverse discourse" that attempted to speak positively about his sexual experiences and insist on the naturalness of the Urning condition as a "third sex."

It is important to keep in mind, as Foucault does, that the identity-creating process was enormously complex, involving not only the circulation of discourses in a variety of professional fields (medicine, law, and psychiatry) but also the shifting economic circumstances of many European nations at the time. As noted earlier, increased urbanization allowed for greater contact among people with divergent sexual interests, and some scholars—John D'Emilio, for instance, in the article "Capitalism and Gay Identity"—have pointed to such economic shifts and the emergence of capitalism as just as important as sexological research in the formation of a modern homosexual identity; after all, in a capitalist culture, it can be helpful to have distinct categories of individuals to whom to market goods and services. As we shall see throughout the rest of this book, complex forces and phenomena always play crucial roles in the development of personal identities as well as social and political organizations based on those identities.

**FIGURE 2.1 ■**  
Magnus Hirschfeld's  
Sexual Types: Masculine  
(Top), Urning (Center),  
and Feminine (Bottom).



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## HAVELOCK ELLIS

Havelock Ellis (1859–1939) was a British physician who wrote prolifically about sex and sexuality at the turn of the 20th century. One of his most important works, *Sexual Inversion*, coauthored with the writer John Addington Symonds in 1897, was an important early and relatively sympathetic discussion of homosexual men. Indeed, Ellis wanted to present a fair—and scientific—representation of homosexuality. His *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, a two-volume work collecting a sampling of his writing on sex (published in 1937 but including work copyrighted as early as 1905) reveals Ellis’s interest in a variety of sexual practices, not just homosexuality.

In this book, Ellis attempts to differentiate between “inversion” and other kinds of homosexuality. For Ellis, inverts are *primarily* disposed to sexual attraction to members of the same sex, whereas other forms of homosexual attraction may be due to “accidental absences.” For instance, when boys or girls are separated from one another in boarding schools, the “natural” object of sexual attraction (a member of the opposite sex) is absent; hence, sexual attraction “between persons of the same sex” may occur.

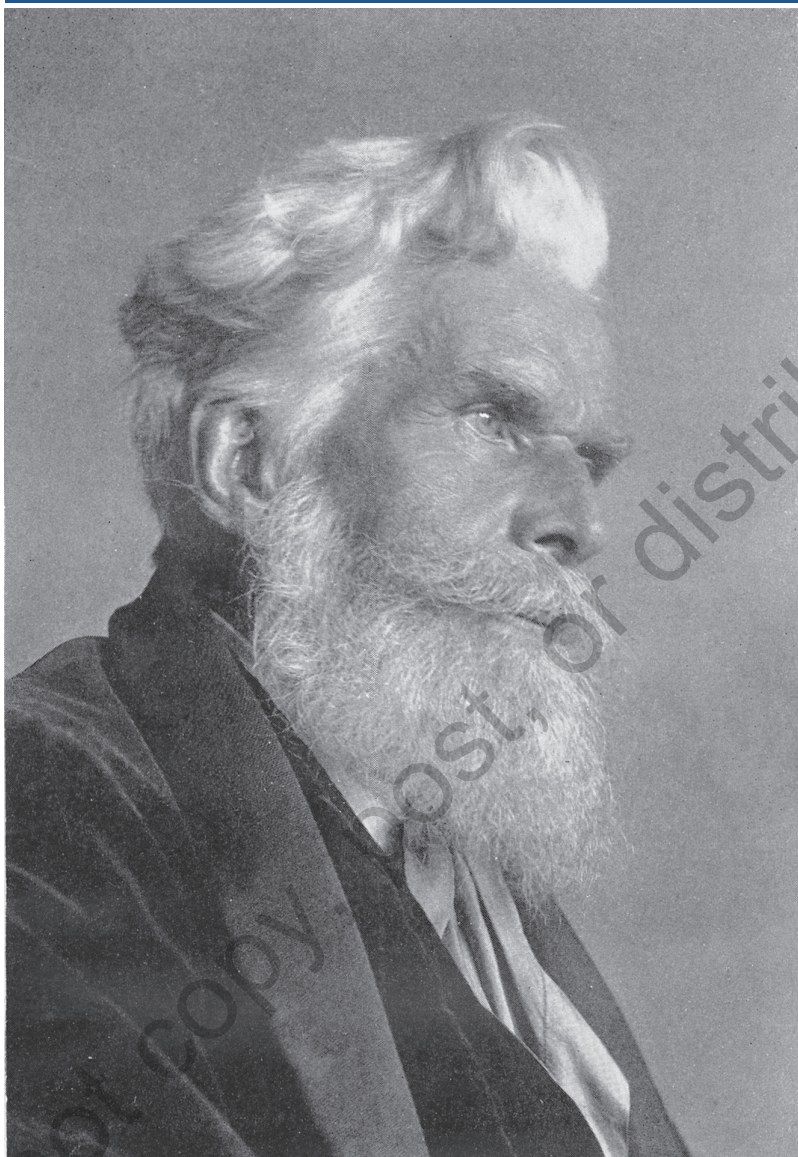
Ellis’s language is intriguing. He characterizes heterosexual attraction as “natural” while at the same time suggesting that homoerotic attraction is “a phenomenon of wide occurrence among all human races and among most of the higher animals” (1). Ellis then reviews the work of some of the major sexologists of his time. Then, after listing some famous supposed inverts of the past, he also presents several “cases” in which inverts describe their lives in narrative form, offering detailed sexual histories. It is clear that this listing of famous inverts and examples of inversion is designed to somewhat normalize (if not necessarily naturalize) homosexuality. In other words, given its presence among various human (and “higher animal”) populations, Ellis believed that homosexuality should probably be treated as another variation in human sexual behavior.

Ellis’s treatment of female inverts is similar. He notes that “[h]omosexuality is not less common in women than in men” (195) and that “[i]t has been noted of distinguished women in all ages and in all fields of activity that they have frequently displayed some masculine traits” (196). Ellis holds to the theory of inversion—that homosexual women are more often than not more masculine in presentation. At the same time, however, Ellis repudiates the myth that “mannish” female inverts are endowed by nature with abnormally large sexual organs that can, by themselves, produce “paroxysm” in a female partner.

Despite Ellis’s sensible rejection of some ridiculous myths about inverts, one doubts the validity of his scientific method when reading his characterization of some of their more pronounced physical attributes. For instance, he writes that “[a] marked characteristic of many inverts, though one not easy of precise definition, is their youthfulness of appearance, and frequently child-like faces, equally in both sexes” (290). Granted, Ellis qualifies his comments (“one not easy of precise definition”), but many of his other findings are outrageous, such as his belief that female inverts are “very good whistlers” (256) and that male inverts prefer “green garments” (299). At the same time, Ellis maintains, sympathetically, that “[a]ll avocations are represented among inverts” (293). Despite his often quirky conclusions, Ellis wanted to portray inverts in particular and homosexuality in general in a positive light.

A significant issue facing sexologists was the cause of inversion and homosexuality, and Ellis has much to say on this subject, even if he will not commit to one particular or necessary cause. As noted earlier, he believed that lack of a “natural” object of sexual

FIGURE 2.2 ■ Havelock Ellis.



Source: Smithsonian Institution from United States, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

attraction can induce homoerotic attractions. He says that, in the case of women, for instance, “[h]omosexuality is specially fostered by those employments which keep women in constant association, not only by day, but often at night also, without the company of men” (212). Such employments may include the work of nuns in convents or leaders of the “woman movement” (262). Ellis also felt, in line with the received wisdom of his day, that masturbation had deleterious side effects: “I am certainly inclined to believe that an early and excessive indulgence in masturbation, though not an adequate cause, is a favoring condition for the development of inversion, and that this is especially so in women” (277). This would be true because masturbation presupposes sexual desire, which was considered by Ellis and his contemporaries to be exclusively a masculine characteristic. Hence, a masturbating woman would be considered sexually “mannish” and, thus, an invert.



In general, Ellis subscribed to three principal causes of homoerotic sexual attraction: (1) the absence of more “natural” objects of affection, (2) significant disappointment in romantic relationships with the opposite sex, or (3) seduction by a member of the same sex. Presumably, a combination of these factors could also induce inversion. At the same time, Ellis did not want to preclude the strong possibility of congenital predisposition to inversion or homosexual attraction. He wrote,

These three influences, therefore . . . example at school, seduction, disappointment in normal love,—all of them drawing the subject away from the opposite sex and concentrating him on his own sex, are exciting causes of inversion; but they require a favourable organic predisposition to act on, while there are a large number of cases in which no exciting cause at all can be found, but in which, from earliest childhood, the subject’s interest seems to be turned on his own sex, and continues to be so turned throughout life. (324)

Interestingly, this passage prefigures the “nature versus nurture” debates that would become so important in academic circles throughout the 20th century: are complex behaviors and feelings, such as sexual attraction, biologically innate or the product of social influences or forces [**Chapter 3**]?

For Ellis, discussions of sexual inversion and homosexuality consisted not only of scientific explorations and theories but also of an awareness of the social dimension of the objects under study. He believed he viewed the topic of homosexuality from an unbiased perspective. But Ellis’s aim was more than just avoiding an “attitude of moral superiority” (356). He felt that bias against inverts and homosexuals was legally unfounded and untenable. He wrote that “legislation against homosexuality has no clear effect either in diminishing or increasing its prevalence” (350). This view is clearly related to his sense that there is no real “cure” for inversion or homosexuality: “The question of the treatment of homosexuality must be approached with discrimination, caution, and scepticism. Nowadays we can have but little sympathy with those who, at all costs, are prepared to ‘cure’ the invert. There is no sound method of cure in radical cases” (327). Given the congenital nature and apparent incurability of homosexuality, legislating against it seemed to Ellis nonsensical.

Find Out More in the Ellis case histories at the end of this chapter.

## PAVING THE WAY FOR FREUD

In many significant ways, the sexologists paved the way for Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), Austrian neurologist and founder of psychoanalysis. While Freud was not a sexologist per se, his theories of sexuality became guiding principles for many 20th-century approaches to the study of sex, sexuality, identity, and personality. His influence has been tremendous, but it is worth keeping in mind that Freud was working in the same cultural and intellectual milieu that gave rise to the study of sexology. Freud certainly knew the work of the sexologists and was acquainted with many of them personally. He also took very seriously the importance of sex and sexual feeling in the development of the individual. Much of his work focused on tracing “healthy” psychosexual development through various stages (such as oral, anal, and genital), and Freud suggested that the failure to navigate a particular stage successfully (“arrested development”) might result in homosexuality.

But for Freud, this was not necessarily serious cause for alarm as the successful resolution of each stage and the consequent development of a fully adjusted heterosexual personality and identity is, he felt, a rare achievement. We all get stuck somewhere.

Much of Freud's central thinking about sexuality and its relationship to identity is found in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, published in 1905. Freud believed in an innate “**polymorphous perversity**” that had to be shaped by social forces to achieve reproductive heterosexuality. This theory sharply differentiates Freud's work from that of the sexologists. As Steven Seidman writes, “[w]hereas sexologists defined the sexual instinct as reproductive and naturally heterosexual, Freud argued that the sexual instinct is oriented to pleasure. Freud argued that the body has many erotic areas and that there are many ways of experiencing sexual satisfaction” (7). According to this view, possibilities for sexual excitation were multiple, and the path of one's desire could not be reduced to particular physiological characteristics. British theorist Alan Sinfield notes as well that “[i]n *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* . . . Freud dismisses the sexologists' theories of innate inversion as crude, and disputes the anatomical basis they had been claiming. Even a change-over of 'mental qualities, instincts and character traits' cannot be demonstrated, let alone a physiological cross-over” (164).

Despite these differences, Freud and the sexologists shared some common insights into and beliefs about sexuality. According to Seidman, “Freud opened the way to thinking about sex as a fundamentally psychosocial reality; however, Freud never abandoned the sexological view that sex is natural” (12). David Halperin sees Havelock Ellis's and Freud's theories “separating sexual practices from gender” as representing “a key stage in the development of the possibility of gay identity” (Sinfield 163).

## SEXOLOGY'S LEGACY

As we think back on the development of sexology as a science, we quickly dismiss some of its early practitioners' more audacious claims, such as the predilection of male homosexuals for the color green. In many other ways, though, the sexologists helped shape our contemporary understanding of sex and sexuality. Their classifications of sexuality and the development of the categories “homosexual” and “heterosexual” survive today as “gay” and “straight,” two of the most significant identity markers in contemporary Western culture, society, and politics. In the next chapter, we trace sexology through the 20th and into the 21st century, noting the ways the scientists are, and are not, implicated in political controversies surrounding issues of sexuality.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. At the turn of the century, sexologists considered themselves scientists. Whatever the merits of their scientific practices (and those practices are obviously not without their faults), a scientific understanding of homosexuality has continued to be important to this day. In what ways? Do you think a scientific understanding of homosexuality is beneficial to contemporary LGBTQ people? Why or why not?
2. Reading Ellis's case histories of inverts, it seems clear that he asked the same series of questions to each person. His questionnaire seems to have looked something like this:

**Case History Format**

1. Parents' (and family's) social class, medical, and psychological history
2. Your own medical and psychological history
3. Memory of your childhood sexual feelings
4. Your first post-puberty sexual interests
5. Your earliest sexual experience, if any
6. The nature of your conscious desire at present
7. Your feelings about your sexual orientation

Using these prompts, try your hand at taking your own sexual history.

3. Although we in the contemporary world often think of the Stonewall riots in 1969 as inaugurating the contemporary fight for gay and lesbian civil rights, we have seen in this chapter some much earlier manifestations of sexual rights advocacy. Using the internet, a local library, or a local LGBTQ community center, research other late 19th- and early 20th-century homosexual or sexual rights movements. What do those earlier movements have in common with contemporary organizations and movements? What are some of the more striking differences? Consider how the sociopolitical situation today differs from that of a century ago.

**READINGS****Havelock Ellis**

*Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (1937), United Kingdom

**From "History II"**

My parentage is very sound and healthy. Both my parents (who belong to the professional middle class) have good general health; nor can I trace any marked abnormal or diseased tendency, of mind or body, in any records of the family.

Though of a strongly nervous temperament myself, and sensitive, my health is good. I am not aware of any tendency to physical disease. In early manhood, however, owing, I believe, to the great emotional tension under which I lived, my nervous system was a good deal shattered and exhausted. Mentally and morally my nature is pretty well balanced, and I have never had any serious perturbations in these departments.

At the age of 8 or 9, and long before distinct sexual feelings declared themselves, I felt a friendly attraction toward my own sex, and this developed after the age of puberty into a passionate sense of love, which, however, never found any expression for itself till I was fully 20 years of age. I was a day-boarder at school and heard little of school-talk on sex subjects, was very reserved and modest besides; no elder person or parent ever spoke to me on such matters; and the passion for my own sex developed gradually, utterly uninfluenced from the outside. I never even, during all this period, and till a good deal later, learned the practice of masturbation. My own sexual nature was a mystery to me. I found myself cut off from the understanding of others, felt myself an outcast, and, with a highly loving and clinging temperament, was intensely miserable. I thought about my male friends— sometimes boys of my own age, sometimes elder boys, and once even a master—during the day and dreamed about them at night, but was too convinced that I was a hopeless

monstrosity ever to make any effectual advances. Later on it was much the same, but gradually, though slowly, I came to find that there were others like myself. I made a few special friends, and at last it came to me occasionally to sleep with them and to satisfy my imperious need by mutual embraces and emissions. Before this happened, however, I was once or twice on the brink of despair and madness with repressed passion and torment. Meanwhile, from the first, my feeling, physically, toward the female sex was one of indifference, and later on, with the more special development of sex desires, one of positive repulsion. Though having several female friends, whose society I like and to whom I am sincerely attached, the thought of marriage or cohabitation with any such has always been odious to me.

As a boy I was attracted in general by boys rather older than myself; after leaving school I still fell in love, in a romantic vein, with comrades of my own standing. Now,—at the age of 37,—my ideal of love is a powerful, strongly built man, of my own age or rather younger—preferably of the working class. Though having solid sense and character, he need not be specially intellectual. If endowed in the latter way, he must not be too glib or refined. Anything effeminate in a man, or anything of the cheap intellectual style, repels me very decisively.

[. . .]

I cannot regard my sexual feelings as unnatural or abnormal, since they have disclosed themselves so perfectly naturally and spontaneously within me. All that I have read in books or heard spoken about the ordinary sexual love, its intensity and passion, lifelong devotion, love at first sight, etc., seems to me to be easily matched by my own experiences in the homosexual form; and, with regard to the morality of this complex subject, my feeling is that it is the same as should prevail in love between man and woman, namely: that no bodily satisfaction should be sought at the cost of another person's distress or degradation. I am sure that this kind of love is, notwithstanding the physical difficulties that attend it, as deeply stirring and ennobling as the other kind, if not more so; and I think that for a perfect relationship the actual sex gratifications (whatever they may be) probably hold a less important place in this love than in the other.

**From "History XXXVI.—Miss H., Aged 30"**

Among her paternal relatives there is a tendency to eccentricity and to nervous disease. Her grandfather drank; her father was eccentric and hypochondriacal, and suffered from obsessions. Her mother and mother's relatives are entirely healthy, and normal in disposition.

At the age of 4 she liked to see the nates of a little girl who lived near. When she was about 6, the nurse-maid, sitting in the fields, used to play with her own parts, and told her to do likewise, saying it would make a baby come; she occasionally touched herself in consequence, but without producing any effect of any kind. When she was about 8 she used to see various nurse-maids uncover their children's sexual parts and show them to each other. She used to think about this when alone, and also about whipping. She never cared to play with dolls, and in her games always took the part of a man. Her first rudimentary sex-feelings appeared at the age of 8 or 9, and were associated with dreams of whipping and being whipped, which were most vivid between

the ages of 11 and 14, when they died away on the appearance of affection for girls. She menstruated at 12.

Her earliest affection, at the age of 13, was for a schoolfellow, a graceful, coquettish girl with long golden hair and blue eyes. Her affection displayed itself in performing all sorts of small services for this girl, in constantly thinking about her, and in feeling deliciously grateful for the smallest return. At the age of 14 she had a similar passion for a girl cousin; she used to look forward with ecstasy to her visits, and especially to the rare occasions when the cousin slept with her; her excitement was then so great that she could not sleep, but there was no conscious sexual excitement. At the age of 15 or 16 she fell in love with another cousin; her experiences with this girl were full of delicious sensations; if the cousin only touched her neck, a thrill went through her body which she now regards as sexual. Again, at 17, she had an overwhelming, passionate fascination for another schoolfellow, a pretty, commonplace girl, whom she idealized and etherealized to an extravagant extent. The passion was so violent that her health was, to some extent, impaired; but it was purely unselfish, and there was nothing sexual in it. On leaving school at the age of 19 she met a girl of about the same age as herself, very womanly, but not much attracted to men. This girl became very much attached to her, and sought to gain her love. After some time Miss H. was attracted by this love, partly from the sense of power it gave her, and an intimate relation grew up. This relation became vaguely physical, Miss H. taking the initiative, but her friend desiring such relations and taking extreme pleasure in them; they used to touch and kiss each other tenderly (especially on the *mons veneris*), with equal ardour. They each experienced a strong pleasurable feeling in doing this, and sexual erethism, but no orgasm, and it does not appear that this ever occurred. Their general behavior to each other was that of lovers, but they endeavoured, as far as possible, to hide this fact from the world. This relation lasted for several years, and would have continued, had not Miss H.'s friend, from religious and moral scruples, put an end to the physical relationship. Miss H. had been very well and happy during this relationship; the interference with it seems to have exerted a disturbing influence, and also to have aroused her sexual desires, though she was still scarcely conscious of their real nature.

[. . .]

She has never masturbated. Occasionally, but very rarely, she has had dreams of riding accompanied by pleasurable sexual emotions (she cannot recall any actual experience to suggest this, though fond of riding). She has never had any kind of sexual dreams about a man; of late years she has occasionally had erotic dreams about women. Her feeling toward men is friendly, but she has never had sexual attraction toward a man. She likes them as good comrades, as men like each other. She enjoys the society of men on account of their intellectual attraction.

[. . .]

She is attracted to womanly women, sincere, reserved, pure, but courageous in character. She is not attracted to intellectual women, but at the same time cannot endure silly women. The physical qualities that attract her most are not so much beauty of face as a graceful, but not too slender, body with beautiful curves. The women she is drawn to are usually somewhat younger than herself. Women are much attracted to her, and without any effort on her part. She likes to take the active part and protecting role with them. She is herself energetic in character, and with a somewhat neurotic temperament. She finds sexual satisfaction in tenderly touching, caressing, and kissing the loved one's body. (There is no *cunnilinctus*, which she regards with abhorrence.) She feels more tenderness than passion.

[. . .]

She believes that homosexual love is morally right when it is really part of a person's nature, and providing that the nature of homosexual love is always made plain to the object of such affection. She does not approve of it as a mere make-shift, or expression of sensuality, in normal women. She has sometimes resisted the sexual expression of her feelings, once for years at a time, but always in vain. The effect on her of loving women is distinctly good, she asserts, both spiritually and physically, while repression leads to morbidity and hysteria. She has suffered much from neurasthenia at various periods, but under appropriate treatment it has slowly diminished. The inverted instinct is too deeply rooted to eradicate, but it is well under control.

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Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*. New York: Random House, 1937.