



**How to Do the History of Homosexuality**

**David M. Halperin**

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*earlier: Is there a history of sexuality?*

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For Kirk Ormand.

And for Ann Pellegrini.

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## How to Do the History of Male Homosexuality

The history of sexuality is now such a respectable academic discipline, or at least such an established one, that its practitioners no longer feel much pressure to defend the enterprise—to rescue it from suspicions of being a palpable absurdity. Once upon a time, the very phrase “the history of sexuality” sounded like a contradiction in terms: how, after all, could *sexuality* have a *history*? Nowadays, by contrast, we are so accustomed to the notion that sexuality does indeed have a history that we do not often ask ourselves what *kind* of history sexuality has. If such questions do come up, they get dealt with cursorily, in the course of the methodological throat clearing that historians ritually perform in the opening paragraphs of scholarly articles. Recently, this exercise has tended to include a more or less obligatory reference to the trouble once caused to historians, long long ago in a country far far away, by theorists who had argued that sexuality was socially constructed—an intriguing idea in its time and place, or so we are reassuringly told, but one that was taken to outlandish extremes and that no one much credits any longer.<sup>1</sup> With the disruptive potential of these *metahistorical* questions safely relegated to the past, the historian of sexuality can get down, or get back, to the business at hand.

But this new consensus, and the sense of theoretical closure that accompanies it, is premature. I believe that it is

more useful than ever to ask how sexuality can have a history. The point of such a question, to be sure, is no longer to register the questioner's skepticism and incredulity (as if to say, “How on earth could such a thing be possible?”) but to inquire more closely into the modalities of historical being that sexuality possesses: to ask how exactly—in what terms, by virtue of what temporality, in which of its dimensions or aspects—does sexuality have a history?

That question, of course, has already been answered in a number of ways, each of them manifesting a different strategy for articulating the relation between continuity and discontinuity, identity and difference, in the history of sexuality. The constructionist-essentialist debate of the late 1980s should be seen as a particularly vigorous effort to force a solution to this question, but even after constructionists claimed to have won it, and essentialists claimed to have exposed the bad scholarship produced by it, and everybody else claimed to be sick and tired of it, the basic question about the historicity of sexuality has remained. In fact, current work in the history of sexuality still appears to be poised in its emphasis between the two poles of identity and difference, which in my view represent merely reformulated versions of the old essentialist and constructionist positions. Nonetheless, it may be prudent to recast the question in less polemical or old-fashioned terms by acknowledging that any adequate attempt to describe the historicity of sexuality will have to fix on some strategy for accommodating the aspects of sexual life that seem to persist through time as well as the dramatic differences between historically documented forms of sexual experience. Current analytic models that attempt to do this by mapping shifts in the categories or classifications of an otherwise unchanging “sexuality,” or by insisting on a historical distinction between pre-modern sexual acts and modern sexual identities, simply cannot capture the complexity of the issues at stake in the new histories of sexual subjectivity that are available to us.<sup>2</sup>

The tensions between interpretative emphases on continuity and discontinuity, identity and difference, appear with almost painful intensity in the historiography of homosexuality. They reflect not only the high political stakes in any contemporary project that involves producing representations of homosexuality but also the irreducible definitional uncertainty about what homosexuality itself really is.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps the clearest and most explicit articulation of the consequences of this uncertainty for historians is found in the introduction to *Hidden from History*, the path-breaking anthology of lesbian and gay history published in 1989: “Same-sex genital sexuality, love and friendship, gender non-conformity, and a certain aesthetic or political perspective are all considered to have some

Why does “male homosexuality” fall into the field of “hist.”?

(often ambiguous and always contested) relationship to that complex of attributes we today designate as homosexuality. . . . Much historical research has been an effort to locate the antecedents of those characteristics a given historian believes are constitutive of contemporary gay identity, be they sodomitical acts, cross dressing, or intimate friendships."<sup>4</sup> If contemporary gay or lesbian identity seems to hover in suspense between these different and discontinuous discourses of sodomy, gender inversion, and same-sex love, the same can be said even more emphatically about homosexual identity as we attempt to trace it back in time. The essence of the constructionist approach to the history of homosexuality, after all, was to argue that homosexuality is a modern construction, not because no same-sex sexual acts or erotic labels existed before 1869, when the term "homosexuality" first appeared in print but because no single category of discourse or experience existed in the pre-modern and non-Western worlds that comprehended exactly the same range of same-sex sexual behaviors, desires, psychologies, and socialities, as well as the various forms of gender deviance, that now fall within the capacious definitional boundaries of homosexuality. Some earlier identity categories attached to same-sex sexual practices occupied some of the discursive territory now claimed by homosexuality; others cut across the frontier between homosexuality and heterosexuality. A number of these identity categories persisted in various forms for thousands of years before the modern term or concept of homosexuality was invented. It is quite possible that the current definitional uncertainty about what homosexuality is, or the uncertainty about what features are constitutive of lesbian or gay male identity, is the result of this long historical process of accumulation, accretion, and overlay. The history of discourses pertaining to forms of male intimacy may be especially revealing, because such discourses have been extensively and complexly elaborated over time, and they condense a number of the crosscutting systems of thought at whose intersection we now find ourselves.

Contradictions coverage.  
Coherence/in ~ :::

In what follows I offer what I believe is a new strategy for approaching the history of sexuality in general and the history of male homosexuality in particular. My strategy is designed to rehabilitate a modified constructionist approach to the history of sexuality by readily acknowledging the existence of transhistorical continuities, reintegrating them into the frame of the analysis, and reinterpreting their significance within a genealogical understanding of the emergence of (homo)sexuality itself. A construction-

ist history of (homo)sexuality, in my view, can easily accommodate such continuities and need not be afraid of or embarrassed by them.

I begin where all histories of homosexuality must begin (like it or not), namely, with the modern notion of homosexuality, which, explicitly or implicitly, defines the horizons of our immediate conceptual universe and inevitably shapes our inquiries into same-sex sexual desire and behavior in the past. If we cannot simply escape from the conceptual tyranny of homosexuality by some feat of scholarly rigor (as I once thought we could)—by an insistent methodological suspension of modern categories, by an austere historicist determination to identify and bracket our own ideological presuppositions so as to describe earlier phenomena in all their irreducible cultural specificity and time-bound purity—we can at least insist on taking our categories so seriously as to magnify their inner contradictions to the point where those contradictions turn out to be analytically informative. And if we really try hard to make our modern definitions of homosexuality apply to the past, we will place so much heuristic pressure on them that they will dissolve to reveal the shape of other, earlier categories, discourses, logics, coherences.

To follow the disintegration of our own concepts as we trace them backward in time can be the start of an inquiry into the alterity of the past. A genealogical analysis of homosexuality begins with our contemporary notion of homosexuality, incoherent though it may be, not only because such a notion inevitably frames all inquiry into same-sex sexual expression in the past but also because its very incoherence registers the genetic traces of its own historical evolution. In fact, it is this incoherence at the core of the modern notion of homosexuality that furnishes the most eloquent indication of the historical accumulation of discontinuous notions that shelter within its specious unity. The genealogist attempts to disaggregate those notions by tracing their separate histories as well as the process of their interrelations, their crossings, and, eventually, their unstable convergence in the present day.

Of course, to speak of "convergence" in this context is merely to describe how the modern concept of homosexuality functions; it is not to subscribe to a belief in that functioning. It is therefore not to reduce the heterogeneities of queer existence in the present or the past to an "over-arching principle that speaks for an already given whole" but, rather, to demonstrate how the modern notion of homosexuality has come to perform the role of such a principle.<sup>5</sup> I wish to avoid the implication that by analyzing the triumphalism of a modern discursive category I am in any way participating in that triumphalism. On the contrary, I wish to bring out the particularity of "homosexuality" as a singular, distinctive forma-

method



tion that pretends to represent all same-sex sexual expression, a partial perspective that claims to encompass the whole. My response is to deidealize <sup>†</sup> homosexuality, so as to return it to its cultural specificity and contingency.

To that end, I shall try to describe, very tentatively, very speculatively, some important pre-homosexual discourses, practices, categories, patterns, or models (I am really not sure what to call them) and to sketch their similarities with and differences from what goes by the name of homosexuality nowadays. I do so by way of gesturing toward a larger genealogical project that others, I hope, will correct and complete. The project I envision needs to be systematic in distinguishing those earlier, pre-homosexual traditions of homosexual discourse both from one another and from the modern discourses of homosexuality, while also noting overlaps or commonalities among them. It needs to describe these different categories in all their positivity and build as much specificity as possible into each of them, while also accounting for their interrelations. And it needs to identify ruptures within each of these discursive traditions—breaks, transformations, reconfigurations—so as to take account of heterogeneities contained within the long histories of their respective evolutions. Such a project, if successful, would be able to capture the play of identities and differences *within* the synchronic multiplicity of different but simultaneous traditions of discourse that have existed through the ages as well as the play of identities and differences *across* the various diachronic transitions within each of them over the course of time, while foregrounding the significant break effected during the past three or four centuries by the emergence of the discourses of (homo)sexuality itself.

The project I have imagined and described is not an entirely original invention of my own. Previous historians and sociologists have identified four principal models according to which same-sex sexual behaviors are culturally constructed around the world (age-differentiated, role-specific, gender-crossing, and homosexual), and these four models reveal some obvious correspondences with the categories employed in the genealogy of male homosexuality I am about to outline. <sup>✓</sup> My own approach is distinguished, I believe, by being explicitly genealogical rather than sociological or behavioral (or even, in a strict sense, historical) and by making visible a series of discursive figures immanent in the social and cultural traditions of Europe in particular. (I focus here on the history of European discourses, because I am attempting to construct the genealogy of a European notion—that is, homosexuality—but I include non-European material in my survey whenever it seems pertinent.) My most immediate precursors, it turns out, are the editors of *Hidden from History* quoted above: the three models of homosexuality that they enumerate—“same-sex genital sexual-

ity” (or “sodomitical acts”), “love and friendship” (or “intimate friendships”), and “gender non-conformity” (or “cross-dressing”)—closely anticipate the divisions I will be proposing here.

I will argue, in any case, that there is no such thing as a history of male homosexuality. At least, there is no such thing as a singular or unitary history of male homosexuality. Instead, there are histories to be written of at least four different but simultaneous categories or traditions of discourse pertaining to aspects of what we now define as homosexuality. Each of these traditions has its own consistency, autonomy, density, particularity, and continuity over time, though each also undergoes various breaks or ruptures. Each has subsisted more or less independently of the others, although they have routinely interacted with one another, and they have helped to constitute one another through their various exclusions. Their separate histories, as well as the history of their interrelations, have been obscured but not superseded by the recent emergence of the discourses of (homo)sexuality. In fact, what “homosexuality” signifies today is an effect of this cumulative process of historical overlay and accretion. One result of that historical process is what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick memorably calls “the unrationalized coexistence of different models” of sex and gender in the present day.<sup>7</sup> I believe I am now in a position to offer, as a hypothesis, a historical explanation for the phenomenon that Sedgwick has so brilliantly described.

I suggest that if our “understanding of homosexual definition . . . is organized around a radical and irreducible incoherence,” owing to “the unrationalized coexistence of different models” of sex and gender, as Sedgwick says, it is because we have retained at least four pre-homosexual models of male sexual and gender deviance, all of which derive from an age-old system that privileges gender over sexuality, alongside of (and despite their flagrant conflict with) a newer homosexual model derived from a more recent, comparatively anomalous system that privileges sexuality over gender.<sup>8</sup> If that explanation is correct, then a genealogy of contemporary homosexual discourse—which is to say, a historical critique of the category of homosexuality, such as I propose to undertake here—can significantly support and expand Sedgwick’s influential discursive critique of the category of homosexuality in *Epistemology of the Closet* and provide it with an overdue and much-needed historical grounding.<sup>9</sup>

The four pre-homosexual categories of male sex and gender deviance that I have identified so far can be described, very provisionally, as categories of (1) effeminacy, (2) pederasty or “active” sodomy, (3) friendship or male love, and (4) passivity or inversion. A fifth category, the category of homosexuality, is—despite occasional pre-figurations in earlier discourses

gender  
sexuality

to reconceptualize  
the categories  
themselves.

(which it would be valuable to trace, though I cannot do so here)—a recent addition. Each of these five categories requires a separate analysis. I will concentrate on the history of discourses, because what I am attempting to map out is a genealogy of the modern discourses of homosexuality, but, as will become evident, I do not mean to exclude the history of practices, whose relation to the history of discourses remains to be fully considered. In any case, my principal aim is to produce a model, to articulate a patterning of discourse, not to write a social history or a descriptive survey of sexual practices. And even so I will make no attempt here to recover the variety of discursive silences, the subjugated knowledges, the non-represented voices that must figure significantly, or at least be taken into account, in any substantive history of male homosexuality. The preliminary genealogy offered here will inevitably overrepresent dominant or elite discourses, though it is not entirely limited to them, and as such it will be admittedly partial and incomplete. A fully realized genealogical inquiry would need to overcome, to the greatest possible degree, such limitations.

Let me emphasize at the outset that the names I have chosen for the first four of these categories are heuristic, tentative, and ad hoc. My designations are not proper historical descriptors—how could they be, since the first four categories cut across historical periods, geographies, and cultures? Nor will my definitions of the first four categories explicate the historical meanings of the names I have called them. For example, “sodomy,” “that utterly confused category,”<sup>10</sup> was applied historically to masturbation, oral sex, anal sex, and same-sex sexual relations, among other things, but my second category refers to something much more specific—not because I am unaware of the plurality of historical meanings of “sodomy” but because I use the term “active sodomy” specifically in a transhistorical fashion to denominate a certain model or structure of male homosexual relations for which there is no single proper name. That is unfortunate, but for the moment I see no alternative. With that as a final warning, let me now begin.

*Effeminacy :::*

Effeminacy has often functioned as a marker of so-called sexual inversion in men, of transgenderism or sexual role reversal, and thus (according to one very specific and historically contingent cultural logic) of homosexual desire. Nonetheless, it is useful to distinguish effeminacy from male passivity, inversion, and homosexuality. In particular, effeminacy should be clearly distinguished from homosexual object-choice or same-sex sexual preference in men—and not just for the well-rehearsed reasons that it is

possible for men to be effeminate without being homosexual and to be homosexual without being effeminate. Rather, effeminacy deserves to be treated independently because it was for a long time defined as a symptom of an excess of what we would now call heterosexual as well as homosexual desire. It is therefore a category unto itself.

Effeminacy did not always imply homosexuality. In various European cultural traditions men could be designated as “soft” or “unmasculine” (*malthakos* in Greek, *mollis* in Latin and its Romance derivatives) either because they were invert or pathics—because they were *womanly*, or transgendered, and liked being fucked by other men—or because, on the contrary, they were *womanizers*, because they deviated from masculine gender norms insofar as they preferred the soft option of love to the hard option of war. In the culture of the military elites of Europe, at least from the ancient world through the Renaissance, normative masculinity often entailed austerity, resistance to appetite, and mastery of the impulse to pleasure. (The once fashionable American ideal of the Big Man on Campus, the football jock who gets to indulge limitlessly his love of hot showers, cold beer, fast cars, and faster women, would appear in this context not as an emblem of masculinity but of its degraded opposite, as a monster of effeminacy.) A man displayed his true mettle in war, or so it was thought, and more generally in struggles with other men for honor—in politics, business, and other competitive enterprises. Those men who refused to rise to the challenge, who abandoned the competitive society of men for the amorous society of women, who pursued a life of pleasure, who made love instead of war—they incarnated the classical stereotype of effeminacy. This stereotype seems to live on in the American South, where “a redneck queer” is defined as “a boy from Alabama who larks girls better’n football.”<sup>11</sup> It is also alive and well in Anglo-Celtic Australia, where a real bloke supposedly avoids the company of women and prefers to spend all his time with his mates: that’s how you can be sure that he’s straight.

This stereotype, which admittedly sorts out rather oddly with recent notions of hetero- and homosexuality, goes far back in time. For the ancient Greeks and Romans, a man who indulged his taste for sexual pleasure with women did not necessarily enhance his virility but often undermined it. To please women, such a man was likely to make an effort to appear smooth instead of rough, graceful instead of powerful, and might even compound that effeminate style by using makeup and perfumes, elaborate grooming, and prominent jewelry. In the late antique dialogue ascribed to Lucian discussed in the previous chapter, which features a debate between two men as to whether women or boys are better vehicles of male erotic pleasure, it is the advocate of boys who is portrayed as hypervirile, whereas



the defender of women, a good-looking young man, is described as exhibiting "a skillful use of cosmetics, so as to be attractive to women."<sup>12</sup> Similarly, the stereotype of an adulterer in the ancient Greek literary tradition can be judged from the following description, in a romance by the Greek prose writer Chariton, of a man who flagrantly exhibits all the canonical identifying markers of adultery: "His hair was gleaming and heavily scented; his eyes were made up; he had a soft cloak and fine shoes; heavy rings gleamed on his fingers."<sup>13</sup> Effeminacy has traditionally functioned as sign of heterosexual excess in men.

It was men, evidently, who liked men to be rough and tough. They may have liked their women and boys to be soft and smooth, but they did not respect these qualities in a mature man. Women, by contrast, seem to have found the soft style of masculinity more appealing. This has created

✓ a certain tension between gender norms and erotic pleasure in traditional male cultures. The paradigmatic instance, which illustrates the traditional clash between hard and soft styles of masculinity, can be found in the figure of Hercules. Hercules is a hero who oscillates between extremes of hypermasculinity and effeminacy: he is preternaturally strong, yet he finds himself enslaved by a woman (Queen Omphale); he surpasses all men at feats of strength, yet he is driven mad by love, either for a woman (Iole) or for a boy (Hylas).<sup>14</sup> Hercules sets the stage for such modern figures as Shakespeare's Mark Antony, who claims Hercules as his literal ancestor in *Antony and Cleopatra* and who incurs similar charges of effeminacy when he takes time out from ruling the Roman Empire to live a life of passion and indulgence with Cleopatra. The roles of ruler and lover are made to contrast from the very opening of the play, when Antony is described as "the triple pillar of the world transform'd / Into a strumpet's fool" (1.1.12-13).

Antony is not unique in Shakespeare. Othello also voices anxieties about the incapacitating effects of conjugal love on a military leader. But this tension is best represented for our purposes by Shakespeare's Romeo, who may nowadays figure as an icon of male heterosexuality but who once saw his own romantic ardor in a less normative light. Berating himself for a lack of martial strength, reluctant as he is to fight Juliet's cousin Tybalt, and invoking the traditional opposition between the cold, wet melancholia of love and the hot, dry nature of masculine virtue, Romeo exclaims:

O sweet Juliet,  
Thy beauty hath made me effeminate,  
And in my temper softened valour's steel!<sup>15</sup>

(3.1.113-15)

The survival and interplay of these different notions of effeminacy may help explain the persistent sexual ambiguity that attaches, even today, to predominantly male institutions, such as fraternities, the armed forces, the church, the corporate boardroom, or Congress: Is the sort of manhood fostered and expressed there to be considered the truest and most essential form of masculinity, virility in its highest and purest form, or an exceptional and bizarre perversion of it?

*paederasty / "active" sodomy.*

In short, effeminacy needs to be distinguished from homosexuality. This brings me to the second pre-homosexual category I want to describe: paederasty or "active" sodomy. These terms, as I will use them, refer to the male sexual penetration of a subordinate male—subordinate in terms of age, social class, gender style, and/or sexual role.<sup>16</sup> Such a notion of subordination reflects the widespread social symbolization of phallic penetration as a marker of hierarchical power. Accordingly, the discourses of paederasty or active sodomy are shaped by a crucial distinction between the male desire to penetrate and the male desire to be penetrated and, thus, between paederasty or "active" sodomy, on one side of the hierarchical equation, and male passivity or inversion, on the other. (My differentiation between the second and the fourth of the five categories conforms to that distinction.)

The nineteenth-century sexologists, who inherited that traditional opposition and then systematically elaborated it into the distinction between paederasty ("Greek love") and passivity ("contrary sexual feeling" or "inversion of the sexual instinct"), based their division on a psychiatric distinction between "perversity" and "perversion," according to which an inverted, transgendered, or passive sexual orientation always indicated "perversion" in a man, whereas the sexual penetration of a subordinate male might qualify merely as "perversity." These Victorian medical writers, who were still largely untouched by the distinction between homo- and heterosexuality (which had yet to assert its ascendancy over earlier modes of sexual classification), were at pains to determine whether deviant sexual acts proceeded from an individual's morally depraved character (i.e., perversity)—whether, that is, they were merely the result of vice, which might be restrained by laws and punished as a crime—or whether they originated in a pathological condition (i.e., perversion), a mental disease, a perverted "sexuality," which could only be medically treated.

The distinction is expounded by Krafft-Ebing as follows: "Perversion of the sexual instinct . . . is not to be confounded with perversity in the sexual act; since the latter may be induced by conditions other than psy-

chopathological. The concrete perverse act, monstrous as it may be, is clinically not decisive. In order to differentiate between disease (perversion) and vice (perversity), one must investigate the whole personality of the individual and the original motive leading to the perverse act. Therein will be found the key to the diagnosis."<sup>17</sup> The male sexual penetration of a subordinate male certainly represented a perverse act, but it might not in every case signify a perversion of the sexual instinct, a mental illness affecting "the whole personality": it might indicate a morally vicious character rather than a pathological condition.

Implicit in this doctrine, and highly significant for the purposes of my analysis, is the premise that there was not necessarily anything sexually or psychologically abnormal in itself about the male sexual penetration of a subordinate male. If the man who played an "active" sexual role in sexual intercourse with other males was conventionally masculine in both his appearance and his manner of feeling and acting, if he did not seek to be penetrated by other men, and/or if he also had sexual relations with women, he might not be sick but immoral, not perverted but merely perverse. His penetration of a subordinate male, reprehensible and abominable though it might be, could be reckoned a manifestation of his excessive but otherwise normal male sexual appetite. Like the somewhat earlier, aristocratic figure of the libertine or rake or roué, such a man perversely refused to limit his sexual options to pleasures supposedly prescribed by nature and instead sought out more unusual, unlawful, sophisticated, or elaborate sexual experiences to gratify his jaded sexual tastes.<sup>18</sup> In the case of such men, paederasty or sodomy was a sign of an immoral character but not of a personality disorder, "moral insanity," or psychological abnormality.<sup>19</sup>

The sexologists' distinctions between the perverse and the perverted, between the immoral and the pathological, between the merely vicious and the diseased, may strike us as quaintly Victorian, but prominent psychologists, sociologists, and jurists today continue to draw similar distinctions between "pseudo-homosexuality" and "homosexuality," or between "situational," "opportunistic" homosexuality and what they call, for lack of a better term, "real" homosexuality.<sup>20</sup> The acts of homosexual penetration performed on men in prison by men who lead heterosexual lives out of prison, for example, are often regarded not as symptoms of a particular psychosexual orientation, as expressions of erotic desire, or even as "homosexuality," but as mere behavioral adaptations by men to a society without women. Such behavior, it is often believed nowadays, simply vouches for the male capacity to enjoy various forms of perverse gratification<sup>21</sup> and, further, to eroticize hierarchy—to be sexually aroused by

the opportunity to play a dominant role in structured relations of unequal power. But the underlying notion is that a conventionally masculine man who sexually penetrates a subordinate partner of either sex is acting out a conventional male role. That notion has a long history.

In fact, the distinction between a quasi-normal, non-homosexual homosexuality and an absolutely deviant sexual inversion—the distinction that was systematically elaborated in nineteenth-century psychiatry and that lives on today—did not originate in the Victorian period. It reflects an age-old practice of classifying sexual relations in terms of penetration versus being penetrated, superordinate versus subordinate status, masculinity versus femininity, and activity versus passivity—in terms of hierarchy and gender, that is, rather than in terms of sex and sexuality. Possible evidence for an age-structured, role-specific, hierarchical pattern of sexual relations among males can be found in the Mediterranean basin as early as the Bronze Age civilizations of Minoan Crete in the late second millennium B.C. and as late as the Renaissance cities of Italy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries A.D.<sup>22</sup> The best known and most thoroughly documented historical instances of this pattern are probably ancient Greek and Roman paederasty and early modern European sodomy, but the pattern itself seems to have pre-existed them, and it also has outlived them.<sup>23</sup>

The evidence from judicial records in fifteenth-century Florence is sufficiently detailed to afford us a glimpse of the extent and distribution of sodomitical activity in one (admittedly notorious) pre-modern European community. Between 1432 and 1502 as many as seventeen thousand individuals in Florence, most of them males, were formally incriminated at least once for sodomy, out of a total population of forty thousand men, women, and children: two out of every three men who reached the age of forty in this period were formally incriminated for sodomy. Among those who were indicted, approximately 90 percent of the "passive" partners (including, according to Florentine notions, the insertive partners in oral copulation as well as the receptive partners in anal intercourse) were eighteen years old or younger, and 93 percent of the "active" partners were nineteen or older—the vast majority of them under the ages of thirty to thirty-five, the time of life at which men customarily married.<sup>24</sup>

This is sex as hierarchy, not mutuality, sex as something done to someone by someone else, not a common search for shared pleasure or a purely personal, private experience in which larger social identities based on age or social status are submerged or lost. Here sex implies difference, not identity, and it turns on a systematic division of labor. It is the younger partner who is considered sexually attractive, while it is the older one who experiences erotic desire for the younger. Although love, emotional inti-



macy, and tenderness are not necessarily absent from the relationship, the distribution of erotic passion and sexual pleasure is assumed to be more or less lopsided, with the older, "active" partner being the subject of desire and the recipient of the greater share of pleasure from a younger partner who figures as a sexual object, feels no comparable desire, and derives no comparable pleasure from the contact (unless he is an invert or pathic and therefore belongs to my fourth category). The junior partner's reward must therefore be measured out in currencies other than pleasure, such as praise, assistance, gift, or money. As an erotic experience, an experience of passion or desire, paederasty or sodomy refers to the "active" partner only.<sup>25</sup>

✓ This traditional, hierarchical model of male sexual relations represents sexual preference without sexual orientation (in the case of the "active" partner, who is still the point of reference here). Numbers of texts going back to classical antiquity testify to a conscious erotic preference on the part of "men," even to the point of exclusivity, for sexual intercourse with members of one sex rather than the other; indeed, a venerable subgenre of erotic literature consists of formal debates between two "men" about whether women or boys are superior vehicles of male sexual gratification.<sup>26</sup> (By "men" I refer to adult, socially empowered males, as opposed to subordinate men or "boys.") Such playful debates are widely distributed in the luxury literatures of traditional male societies: examples can be found in Greek prose works from late antiquity, in medieval European and Arabic poetry and prose, in late imperial Chinese writings, and in seventeenth-century Japanese literature.<sup>27</sup>

But the explicit and conscious erotic preferences voiced in such contexts should not be equated with declarations of sexual orientation, for at least three reasons. First, they are presented as the outcome of conscious choice, a choice that expresses the male subject's values and preferred way of life, rather than as symptoms of an involuntary psychosexual condition. The "men" who voice such preferences often see themselves as at least nominally capable of responding to the erotic appeal of both good-looking women and good-looking boys. This is sexual object-choice as an expression of ethics or aesthetics, as an exercise in erotic connoisseurship, not as a reflex of sexuality. It is more like vegetarianism than homosexuality. Second, same-sex sexual object-choice in and of itself does not necessarily function in this context as a marker of difference. It does not individuate men from one another in terms of their "sexuality." Finally, same-sex sexual object-choice in this case does not mark itself visibly on a man's physical appearance or inscribe itself in his personal mannerisms or deportment. Nor does it impugn his masculinity.<sup>28</sup>

Nonetheless, paederasty or sodomy did provide an opportunity and a context for "men" to express and discuss their sexual tastes, to explore their erotic subjectivities, and to compare their sexual preferences. It is in the context of erotic reflection by socially empowered, superordinate, conventionally masculine males that "men" have been able to articulate conscious erotic preferences, sometimes to the point of exclusivity, for sexual relations with boys or women, as well as for sexual relations with certain kinds of boys or women. The highly elaborate, ritualistic, conspicuously public practice of courtship and lovemaking provided socially empowered males with a traditional, socially sanctioned discursive space for articulating such preferences and for presenting themselves as conscious subjects of desire. ✓

This point is an important one for historians, and it has long been obscured. John Boswell, who influentially defined as "gay sexuality" all same-sex "eroticism associated with a conscious preference," thought that if he could find in pre-modern Europe evidence of conscious erotic preferences by some males for others, he would have documented the existence of "gay sexuality" in that period as well.<sup>29</sup> Of course, evidence of conscious erotic preferences does exist in abundance throughout the surviving documentary record, but it tends to be found in the context of discourses linked to the senior partners in hierarchical relations of paederasty or sodomy. It therefore points not to the existence of "gay sexuality" per se but to one particular discourse and set of practices constituting one aspect of what counts as gay sexuality nowadays, an aspect of gay sexuality that no gay man would identify with the totality of gay sexuality. Declarations of conscious erotic preferences are rarely, if ever, to be found in the contexts of the three other traditional discourses of male same-sex eroticism and gender deviance discussed here. And so conscious same-sex erotic preference ought not be equated with the whole of gay sexuality or male homosexuality. It represents merely one historical tradition among several.<sup>30</sup>

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Friendship  
and love

Far removed from the hierarchical world of the sexual penetration of subordinate males by superordinate males is the world of male friendship and love, which can claim an equally ancient discursive tradition. To be sure, hierarchy is not always absent from social relations between male friends: from the heroic comradeships of Gilgamesh and Enkidu in the Babylonian *Epic of Gilgamesh*, David and Jonathan in the biblical Books of Samuel, and Achilles and Patroclus in the *Iliad*, to the public displays of royal affection by England's James I and his male courtiers, to the latest Amer-

ican biracial cop thriller, male friendships often reveal striking patterns of asymmetry.<sup>31</sup> Precisely to the extent, however, that such friendships are structured by social divisions or by inequalities of power, to the extent that they approximate patron-client relationships in which the two "friends" are assigned radically different duties, postures, and roles, to just that extent are such friendships opened up to the possibility of being interpreted, then as now, in paederastic or sodomitical terms.<sup>32</sup> Within the horizons of the male world, as we have seen, hierarchy itself is *hot*: it is indissociably bound up with at least the potential for erotic signification. Hence, disparities of power between male intimates take on an immediate and inescapable aura of eroticism. Conversely, what often looks to us nowadays like eroticism may have served in the past to constitute, to dramatize, and to identify as "friendships" routine relationships of dependence between unequals.<sup>33</sup>

No wonder, then, that three and four centuries after the composition of the *Iliad*, some Greeks of the classical period interpreted Achilles and Patroclus as a paederastic couple (although they could not always agree on who was the man and who was the boy), while more recently scholars have disputed whether James I was homosexual or whether David and Jonathan were lovers. Such disputes, which often have a long history, tend to conflate notions of friendship first with notions of erotic hierarchy, paederasty, or sodomy, and then with notions of homosexuality. It may be useful therefore to distinguish friendship both from erotic hierarchy and from homoerotic desire.

It should be noted that in addition to the tradition of the heroic warrior with his subordinate male pal or sidekick (who inevitably dies), in addition to the patron-client model of male friendship, which may well have been the dominant model of friendship in the early modern period, there is another tradition that emphasizes equality, mutuality, and reciprocity in love between men.<sup>34</sup> Such an egalitarian relation can obtain only between two men who occupy the same social rank, usually an elite one, and who can claim the same status in terms of age, masculinity, and social empowerment. In the eighth and ninth books of his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle championed precisely such a reciprocal model of friendship between male equals, and he wrote, most influentially, that the best sort of friend is "another self," an *allos autos* or alter ego (9.4 [1166a31]). The sentiment is echoed repeatedly down through the centuries: a true friend is part of oneself, indistinguishable from oneself. True friends have a single mind, a single heart in two bodies. As Montaigne writes in his essay *On Friendship*, "Our souls mingle and blend with each other so completely that they efface the seam that joined them, and cannot find it again."<sup>35</sup>

The friendship of virtuous men is characterized by a disinterested love that leads to a merging of individual identities and hence to an unwillingness to live without the other, a readiness to die with or for the other. We find the theme of the inseparability of male friends in both life and death repeated time and again from representations of Achilles and Patroclus, Orestes and Pylades, Theseus and Pirithous in the ancient world to *Lethal Weapon*'s Mel Gibson and Danny Glover in the modern world.

The language used to convey such passionate male unions often appears to modern sensibilities suspiciously overheated, if not downright erotic. Thus Montaigne can write:

If you press me to tell why I loved him, I feel that this cannot be expressed, except by answering: Because it was he, because it was I . . . it is I know not what . . . which, having seized my whole will, led it to plunge and lose itself in his; which, having seized his whole will, led it to plunge and lose itself in mine, with equal hunger, equal rivalry. [Note that Montaigne's insistence on perfect equality in friendship is emphasized even at the syntactical level of his prose, by the parallelism and mutual correspondence of the clauses that refer to the reciprocal devotion of the two friends.] I say lose, in truth, for neither of us reserved anything for himself, nor was anything either his or mine. . . . Our souls pulled together in such unison, they regarded each other with such ardent affection, and with a like affection revealed themselves to each other to the very depths of our hearts, that not only did I know his soul as well as mine, but I should certainly have trusted myself to him more readily than to myself.<sup>36</sup>

Similarly, in a 1677 drama on a Roman theme by Dryden, *All for Love*, Antony can say about his noble friend Dolabella:

I was his soul, he lived not but in me.  
We were so closed within each other's breasts,  
The rivets were not found that joined us first.

[Compare Montaigne's "Our souls mingle and blend with each other so completely that they efface the seam that joined them, and cannot find it again."]

That does not reach us yet: we were so mixed  
As meeting streams, both to ourselves were lost;

We were one mass; we could not give or take  
 But from the same, for he was I, I he.<sup>37</sup>  
 (3.90-96)

It is difficult for us moderns—with our heavily psychologistic model of the human personality, our notion of unconscious drives, our tendency to associate desire with sexuality, and our heightened sensitivity to anything that might seem to contravene the strict protocols of heterosexual masculinity—it is difficult for us to avoid reading into such passionate expressions of male love a suggestion of “homoeroticism” at the very least, if not of “latent homosexuality,” those being the formulations that often act as a cover for our own perplexity about how to interpret same-sex emotions that do not quite square with canonical conceptions of sexual subjectivity. But quite apart from the difficulty of entering into the emotional lives of pre-modern subjects, we need to reckon with the discursive contexts in which such passionate declarations were produced.

The thematic insistence in the two texts quoted above on mutuality and the merging of individual identities, although it may invoke in the minds of modern readers the formulas of heterosexual romantic love (e.g., Cathy’s “I am Heathcliff”), in fact situates avowals of reciprocal love between male friends in an honorable, even glamorous tradition of heroic comradeship: precisely by carefully removing any hint of subordination on the part of one friend to the other and, thus, any suggestion of hierarchy, the emphasis on the fusion of two souls into one actually distances such a love from erotic passion. Montaigne even expresses despair about the impossibility of combining the two kinds of emotion within the confines of a single relationship.<sup>38</sup> He certainly never betrays the slightest doubt, in writing about his love for Etienne de La Boétie, that the sentiments he expresses are entirely normative, even admirable and boastworthy (although of course unique in their specifics). Far from offering us clues to his psychopathology, inadvertently revealing to us traces of his suppressed or unconscious desires, or expressing his erotic peculiarities (something he freely does elsewhere in his *Essays*), Montaigne deliberately immunizes his account of that friendship from disreputable interpretation by elaborately presenting his love as egalitarian, non-hierarchical, and reciprocal. For by such means he detaches it from the erotic realms of difference and hierarchy, setting it explicitly *against* the sexual love of men and women as well as the male sexual enjoyment of boys.

That doesn’t mean that male lovers couldn’t appeal to the friendship tradition as a cover for, or as a means of ennobling, erotic passion: “Why

shouldst thou kneel?” Edward II asks Gaveston in Marlowe’s recreation of the story; “knowest thou not who I am? / Thy friend, they self, another Gaveston!” (1.1.141-42). (Dryden’s Antony might be invoking this very precedent.) But it does indicate that sexual love, at least as it is viewed within the cultural horizons of the male world, is all about penetration and therefore all about position, superiority and inferiority, rank and status, gender and difference. Friendship (of the non-patronage sort), by contrast, is all about sameness: sameness of rank and status, sameness of sentiment, sameness of identity. It is this very emphasis on identity, similarity, and mutuality that distances the friendship tradition, in its original social and discursive context, from the world of sexual love. Sexual love, in the light of the male friendship tradition, actually sounds like a contradiction in terms: sexual penetration is not the sort of thing you would do to someone you really love.

So if the tradition of male friendship maintains a certain distance from the world of sexual difference and sexual relations, why include an account of that tradition here, in a genealogy of male homosexuality? Because the friendship tradition provided socially empowered men with an established discursive venue in which to express, without social reproach, sentiments of passionate and mutual love for one another. And such passionate, mutual love between persons of the same sex is an important component of what we now call homosexuality. So if we are to devise a complete and satisfactory genealogy of male homosexuality, we will have to find room in it for a history of male love.

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Both paederasty/sodomy and friendship/love are consonant with masculine gender norms, with conventional masculinity as it has been defined in a number of European cultures. If anything, paederasty and friendship are both traditionally masculinizing, insofar as they express the male subject’s virility and imply a thoroughgoing rejection of everything that is feminine. Both can therefore be seen as consolidating male gender identity (although not, of course, in every instance). As such, they belong to a different conceptual, moral, and social universe from what the Greeks called *kinaidia*, the Romans *mollitia*, and the nineteenth-century sexologists “contrary sexual feeling” or “sexual inversion.” All these terms refer to the male “inversion” or reversal of masculine gender identity, a wholesale surrender of masculinity in favor of femininity, a transgendered condition expressed in everything from personal comportment and style to physical appearance, manner of feeling, sexual attraction to “normal”



men, and preference for a receptive or "passive" role in sexual intercourse with such men.

The mere fact of being sexually penetrated by a man is much less significant for the sexual classification of passives or inverts than the question of the penetrated male's pleasure. In the pre-modern European systems of paederasty and sodomy, boys may be sexually penetrated, but they do not supposedly derive much pleasure from the act: they are the more or less willing objects of adult male desire, but they are not conventionally assigned a share of desire equal to that of their senior male partners, nor are they expected to enjoy being penetrated by them. Although they are "passive" in terms of their behavior, then, they are not passive in their overall erotic temperament or attitude: they are not aroused by the prospect or the act of submission. They have to be motivated to submit to their male lovers by a variety of largely non-sexual inducements, such as gifts or threats. So their "passivity" does not extend to their desire, which remains unengaged and can therefore claim to be uncontaminated by any impulse to subordination, any hint of "femininity." In that respect, they uphold and embody, even while playing a "passive" sexual role, traditional standards of virility.

*Kinaidoi* (*cinaedi* in Latin) and inverts, by contrast, actively desire to submit their bodies "passively" to sexual penetration by men, and in that sense they are seen as having a woman's desire, subjectivity, and gender identity. The category of male passive or invert applies specifically to subordinate males whose willingness to submit themselves to sexual penetration by men proceeds not from some non-sexual motive (including love for their partner) but from their own erotic desires and/or from their assumption of a feminine gender identity.

Although the pleasure he takes in being sexually penetrated may be the most flagrant, the most extreme expression of the overall gender reversal that characterizes the male invert, inversion is not necessarily, or even principally, defined by the enjoyment of particular sexual acts. Nor does it have to do strictly with homosexual desire, because inverts may have insertive phallic sex with women without ceasing to be considered inverts. Rather, inversion has to do with deviant gender identity, sensibility, and personal style, one aspect of which is the "womanly" liking for a "passive" role in sexual intercourse with other men. Therefore notions of inversion do not tend to make a strict separation between specifically sexual manifestations of inversion and other, equally telling deviations from the norms of masculinity, such as the adoption of feminine dress. The emphasis falls on a violation of the protocols of manhood, a characterological failure of grand proportions that cannot be redeemed (as sodomy can) by the enjoyment of

sexual relations with women. Inversion is not about sexuality but about gender, to the extent that it makes sense to separate the two.<sup>39</sup>

What, then, is the difference between effeminates and passives? What distinguishes those men (belonging to my first category) who affect a "soft" style of masculinity and prefer making love to making war from those men (belonging to this fourth category) who have effeminate mannerisms and wish to submit their bodies, in "womanly" fashion, to the phallic pleasures of other men? The distinction is a subtle one, and it is easily blurred. After all, some stigma of gender deviance, of effeminacy, attaches to both types of men. And polarized definitions of the masculine and the feminine, along with the hyperbolic nature of sexual stereotyping, enable the slightest suggestion of gender deviance to be quickly inflated and transformed into an accusation of complete and total gender treason. From *liking* women to wanting to be *like* women is, according to the phobic logic of this masculinist ideology, only a small step—which is why both effeminates and passives (or "pathics") can be characterized as soft or unmasculine. The common application of the vocabulary of gender deviance to both effeminates and passives complicates for the modern interpreter the problem of distinguishing them.

One way to describe the difference between effeminates and passives is to contrast a universalizing notion of gender deviance with a minoritizing one. "Softness" either may represent the specter of potential gender failure that haunts all normative masculinity, an ever-present threat to the masculinity of every man, or it may represent the disfiguring peculiarity of a small class of deviant individuals.<sup>40</sup> Effeminates belong to the former category—they are men who succumb to a tendency that all normal men have and that all normal men have to guard against or suppress in themselves—whereas passives are men who are so unequal to the struggle that they can be seen to suffer from a specific constitutional defect, namely, a lack of the masculine capacity to withstand the appeal of pleasure (especially pleasure deemed exceptionally disgraceful or degrading) as well as a tendency to adopt a specifically feminine attitude of surrender in relations with other men. Passives therefore belong to a minoritizing category of male gender deviance.

It is these latter features that define the invert, even more than his desire or his sexual object-choice, because neither his desire nor his sexual object-choice is unique to him. The desire for a male partner, for example, is something the invert has in common both with the paederast and with the heroic male friend, figures vastly removed from him in social and moral status. Similarly, the desire to be penetrated by other men is something the invert has in common with the male homosexual, although many gay

men who like to be penetrated do not necessarily qualify as inverts, either in their own eyes or in those of others. Inversion also differs from paederasty and friendship in that the love of boys and the love of friends are not necessarily discreditable sentiments, and they may well be confessed or even championed by the subjects themselves. Inversion, by contrast, is a shameful condition, never proclaimed about oneself (until relatively recently, that is, when a certain camp effrontery has become possible for some men), and almost always ascribed to some other person by an accuser whose intent is to demean and to vilify.

Moreover, traditional representations of "active" paederasts or sodomites do not necessarily portray them as visibly different in their appearance from normal men. You can't always tell a paederast or a sodomite by looking at him. An invert, by contrast, usually stands out, because his reversal of his gender identity affects his personal demeanor and shapes his attitude, gestures, and manner of conducting himself. Unlike the active penetration of boys, which might differentiate the lover of boys from the lover of women in terms of erotic preference but may not mark him as a visibly different sort of person, passivity or inversion stamps itself all over a man's social presentation and identifies him as a spectacularly deviant social type. It is in the context of inversion that we most often find produced and elaborated representations of a peculiar character type or stereotype, a phobic caricature embodying the supposedly visible and flagrant features of male sexual and gender deviance. Although this type is attached to homosexual sex, it is not attached to homosexual sex absolutely, for it is connected much less regularly, if at all, with paederasty or "active" sodomy; rather, it seems to be associated with passive or receptive homosexual sex, seen as merely one aspect of a more generalized gender reversal, an underlying betrayal of masculinity.<sup>41</sup> There is a remarkably consistent emphasis throughout the history of European sexual representation on the deviant morphology of the invert, his visibly different mode of appearance and dress, his feminine style of self-presentation. Inversion manifests itself outwardly.

It doesn't take one to know one. Everybody seems to know what an invert looks like and how he behaves, even if no normal man could possibly impersonate one. As a character in an ancient Greek comedy says, "I have absolutely no idea how to use a twittering voice or walk about in an effeminate style, with my head tilted sideways like all those pathics that I see here in the city smeared with depilatories."<sup>42</sup> Similarly, the Roman orator Quintilian speaks of "the plucked body, the broken walk, the female attire" as "signs of one who is *mollis* [soft] and not a real man."<sup>43</sup> Ancient physiognomists, experts in the learned technique of deciphering a person's

character from his or her appearance, provide a more detailed description of the type: "You may recognize him by his provocatively melting glance and by the rapid movement of his intensely staring eyes. His brow is furrowed while his eyebrows and cheeks are in constant motion. His head is tilted to the side, his loins do not hold still, and his slack limbs never stay in one position. He minces along with little jumping steps; his knees knock together. He carries his hands with palms turned upward. He has a shifting gaze, and his voice is thin, weepy, shrill, and drawling."<sup>44</sup> All attempts at concealment are useless: "For it is by the twitching of their lips and the rotation of their eyes, by the haphazard and inconsistent shifting of their feet, by the movement of their hips and the fickle motion of their hands, and by the tremor of their voice as it begins with difficulty to speak, that effeminates are most easily revealed."<sup>45</sup>

But the ability to unmask an invert is hardly limited to specialist gender detectives. The Roman leader Scipio Aemilianus, consul in 147 B.C. and censor in 142, had no difficulty branding an opponent with all the telltale signs: "For the kind of man who adorns himself daily in front of a mirror, wearing perfume; whose eyebrows are shaved off; who walks around with plucked beard and thighs; who when he was a young man reclined at banquets next to his lover, wearing a long-sleeved tunic; who is as fond of men as he is of wine: can anyone doubt that he has done what *cinaedi* are in the habit of doing?"<sup>46</sup> The unmentionable deed of the *cinaedi*, of course, is passive bodily penetration.

The particular markers of inversion are culture-bound and therefore susceptible to change over time. In fact, it is in the context of inversion that we need to be particularly alert to breaks in historical continuity, to ruptures in the long traditions of representing and conceptualizing male passivity and gender deviance. Unfortunately, an analysis of discontinuities within these traditions falls outside the scope of the very rough and approximate genealogical outline offered here. Some differences will be evident from the citations that follow. What is striking, however, is the consistent legibility of inversion, which remains one of its perennial features. The medieval and early modern "catamite" (a word sometimes presumed, on the basis of dubious etymological reasoning, to signify the passive partner of a sodomite) is another highly "overt" type, and he clearly belongs in something like the same sort of category as the ancient Mediterranean *cinaedus* already described.

Here, for example, is a retrospective account of the goings-on at the court of the English king William Rufus, at the turn of the twelfth century, by a monastic chronicler named Orderic Vitalis: "At that time effeminates set the fashion in many parts of the world: foul catamites,



doomed to eternal fire, unrestrainedly pursued their revels and shamelessly gave themselves up to the filth of sodomy. They rejected the traditions of honest men, ridiculed the counsel of priests, and persisted in their barbarous way of life and style of dress. They parted their hair from the crown of the head to the forehead, grew long and luxurious locks like women, and loved to deck themselves in long, over-tight shirts and tunics."<sup>47</sup> Note that nothing in this passage establishes that the "effeminates" excoriated in it are being condemned specifically for sexual passivity (although the use of the word "catamite" clearly points in that direction). It would be easy enough for an incautious (or essentialist) historian to construe Orderic's reference to "the filth of sodomy" as implying the opposite—namely, that the "effeminates" are also being accused of playing an "active" role in homosexual intercourse. But I think it is possible to determine more precisely what Orderic is talking about. It is because there is admittedly no way to settle the question on the basis of a literary analysis alone that the approach I am advocating here can aid decisively in the accurate decipherment of historical texts. Although there is probably no way to settle the matter definitively, it should be possible to resolve some ambiguities and narrow the interpretative options. In Orderic's case, the text's insistence on the visible deviance of the catamites, its ascription to them of an effeminate morphology, situates it in a discursive tradition considerably more specific than that of merely "gay male representation." Instead, Orderic's account would seem to belong to a particular European tradition of discourse, a particular discursive mode of representing male inverts or passives, which emphasizes their extravagantly feminine appearance. The more we know about the discursive rules and regularities that control the production of statements about historical sexual actors, the easier it may be to figure out what is going on in a particular passage even in the absence of explicit linguistic indicators. In this way, attentiveness to the discursive context of Orderic's text makes it possible, I believe, to extract from his ambiguous and indeterminate language a better idea of the transgression for which the "effeminates" are being condemned than we could ever do on the basis of his words alone.

From Orderic we leap across another gap in time to the Renaissance court of the French king Henri III, where in July 1576 one observer, commenting indignantly on the "effeminate, lewd make-up and adornments" of the king's *mignons*—minions, or darlings (a synonym for "catamite")—remarked that "these fine *mignons* wear their hair long, curled and recurled by means of artifice, with little velvet bonnets on top of it, like the whores of the brothels."<sup>48</sup> Here is another example of male gender

deviance that discloses itself visibly even to the eyes of more properly masculine men—and carries with it an unmistakable sexual implication.

A century and a half later Londoners painted a vivid portrait of the "mollies," the effeminate men who gathered privately in certain taverns called "molly houses." Samuel Stevens, a religious crusader for the reformation of morals, furnished a description in November 1725: "I found between 40 and 50 men making love to one another, as they called it. Sometimes they would sit in one another's laps, kissing in a lewd manner and using their hands indecently. Then they would get up, dance and make curtsies, and mimic the voices of women. . . . Then they would hug, and play, and toy, and go out by couples into another room on the same floor to be married, as they called it." Another firsthand account of a molly house includes a description of a costume ball held there: "The men [were] calling one another 'my dear' and hugging, kissing, and tickling each other as if they were a mixture of wanton males and females, and assuming effeminate voices and airs. . . . Some were completely rigged in gowns, petticoats, headcloths, fine laced shoes, furbelowed scarves, and masks; some had riding hoods; some were dressed like milkmaids, others like shepherdesses with green hats, waistcoats, and petticoats; and others had their faces patched and painted and wore very extensive hoop petticoats, which had been very lately introduced."<sup>49</sup> A literary echo of this stereotype can be found in the figure of Captain Whiffle, in Tobias Smollett's novel *Roderick Random* (1748). But it is a character in John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (also 1748) who makes the traditional insistence on the visibility of the male invert in terms that look forward to the pathologizing discourses of the modern era. There is, she says, "a plague-spot visibly imprinted on all that are tainted" with this passion.<sup>50</sup>

For it was precisely this visibly disfigured victim of erotic malignancy who provided neurologists and psychiatrists in the latter part of the nineteenth century with the clinical basis for the first systematic scientific conceptualization and definition of pathological (or perverted) sexual orientation. In August 1869, the same year that witnessed the first printed appearance of the word "homosexuality," Karl Friedrich Otto Westphal, a German expert on "the diseases of the nerves" or "nervous system," published an article on "contrary sexual feeling" or "sensibility" [*conträre Sexualempfindung*], which he presented as a symptom of a neuropathic or psychopathic condition.<sup>51</sup> Specialists continued to argue over the proper scientific designation for this condition, and already by 1878 an Italian specialist by the name of Arrigo Tamassia could speak of "inversion of the sexual instinct," a designation that ultimately proved more popular than Westphal's formula.<sup>52</sup> But we should not be deceived by all this fervor of



terminological innovation. Despite the newfangled names, the condition that the doctors were busy constructing as a perverted orientation shared a great many features with the deviant character that had been ascribed from time immemorial to the stigmatized figure of the *kinaidos* or *cinaedus*, the *mollis*, the "catamite," "pathic," "minion," or "molly."<sup>53</sup> It was this ancient figure, this venerable category of "folk" belief that was reconstructed by means of the sophisticated conceptual apparatus of modern sexology into a new scientific classification of sexual and gender deviance, a psychosexual orientation.

But sexual inversion, if it was indeed an orientation, still did not equate to homosexuality. "Contrary sexual feeling," for example, was intended to signify a sexual feeling contrary to the sex of the person who experienced it—that is, a feeling of belonging to a different sex from one's own, as well as a feeling of erotic attraction at odds with the sex to which one belonged (because its object was a member of the same sex as oneself and because it expressed a masculine or feminine attitude proper to members of a sex different from one's own). Westphal, like many of his contemporaries, did not distinguish systematically between sexual deviance and gender deviance. Attraction to members of one's own sex indicated an identification with the opposite sex, and an identification with the opposite sex sometimes expressed itself as a feeling of sexual attraction to members of one's own sex. In this Westphal was reproducing the assumptions of his own culture, but he had also been influenced by the arguments of Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, the first political activist for the emancipation of sexual minorities, whom he cites in his article, and who in a series of writings composed from about 1862 on described his own condition as that of an *anima muliebris virili corpore inclusa*, a "woman's soul confined by a male body."<sup>54</sup>

Similarly, the concept of sexual inversion treated same-sex sexual desire and object-choice as merely one of a number of pathological symptoms exhibited by those who reversed, or "inverted," the sex roles generally thought appropriate to their own sex. Such symptoms, indicating masculine identification in women and feminine identification in men, comprised many different elements of personal style, ranging from the ideologically loaded (women who took an interest in politics and campaigned for the right to vote) to the trivial and bizarre (men who liked cats), but the thread that linked them was sex-role reversal or gender deviance.<sup>55</sup> Sexual preference for a member of one's own sex was not clearly distinguished from other sorts of non-conformity to one's gender identity, as defined by prevailing cultural norms of manliness and womanliness. One implication of this model, which differentiates it strikingly from notions of homosexuality, is that the conventionally masculine and feminine same-sex partners of

inverts are not necessarily abnormal or problematic or deviant themselves; the straight-identified male hustler, or the femme who allows herself to be pleased by a butch, is merely acting out a proper sexual scenario with an improper partner and may well be sexually normal in his or her own right (as Krafft-Ebing himself had emphasized in the passage previously quoted), however criminal their actual conduct may be.<sup>56</sup>

If paederasty or sodomy was traditionally understood as a sexual preference without a sexual orientation, inversion by contrast was defined as a psychological orientation without a sexuality. In a footnote at the end of his article Westphal emphasized "the fact that 'contrary sexual feeling' does not always coincidentally concern the sexual drive as such but simply the feeling of being alienated, with one's entire inner being, from one's own sex—a less developed stage, as it were, of the pathological phenomenon."<sup>57</sup> For Westphal and his colleagues, "contrary sexual feeling" or sexual inversion was an essentially psychological condition of gender dysphoria that affected the inner life of the individual, an *orientation* not necessarily expressed in the performance or enjoyment of particular (homo)sexual acts. In fact, Westphal's star example of contrary sexual feeling in a male was an individual who strictly avoided—or at least claimed to avoid—all sexual contact with members of his own sex, who expressed a distinct sexual desire for women, and who was diagnosed as suffering from contrary sexual feeling on the basis of his gender style alone, not on the basis of homosexual desire.<sup>58</sup>

This personage turned out to be one "Aug. Ha.," who had been arrested at a train station in Berlin in the winter of 1868, at the age of twenty-seven, while wearing women's clothes. He had worked as a servant for several households, often wearing female attire and even owning fake breasts at some point; he had also stolen women's clothing and toiletries from his employers and had been imprisoned for using false identities. Medical records had noted the "almost effeminate conduct of the patient, who speaks with a lisping voice in an effeminate tone." Westphal met him and examined him personally. He described Ha. as "powerfully built" and "well fed," tall, clean-shaven, with well-developed muscles and body fat, regular features, and thick, long, blond, slightly curly hair—though Westphal thought it might be possible to discern "something feminine" in the patient's facial characteristics. Anatomically, Aug. Ha. was hardly exotic. Physical examination revealed "no particular deformity" in the ears (although the earlobes bore traces of piercing), and abundant body hair, with pubic hair reaching up to the navel. The scrotum and skin of the penis were strongly pigmented and wrinkled; the testicles were "only of moderate size"; the anus showed "nothing special."

More to the point, Ha. maintained that he "never let himself be used by men and never busied himself with them in a sexual way, even though many offers in this direction reached him." He had simply had a strong "inclination" or a "drive" (his own words [*Neigung, Trieb*]) to dress up as a woman since he was eight years old and had often been punished by his mother for getting into her clothes. He had always had good relations with women and in his youth he had gone out dancing with them while wearing women's clothes himself. He had an "inclination [again, his own word, *Neigung*] to cultivate sexual relations with women, though rarely, for fear of becoming repulsive." He continued to occupy himself with needlework, embroidering cloths and manufacturing small women's hats, while under observation in the hospital. Westphal applied for and succeeded in obtaining his release, but, when his true identity became known, Ha. was rearrested and arraigned in the light of his earlier thefts, and at the time of writing was serving a two-year sentence for recidivism in the Brandenburg prison.<sup>59</sup>

Sexual inversion, then, does not represent the same notion as homosexuality because same-sex sexual object-choice, or homosexual desire, is not essential to it: one can be inverted without being homosexual, and one can have homosexual sex, if one is a paederast or sodomite, without qualifying as sexually inverted: according to nineteenth-century psychiatric criteria, one would be merely perverse, not perverted. Hence, as Kinsey (who was versed in these concepts) insisted, "Inversion and homosexuality are two distinct and not always correlated types of behavior."<sup>60</sup> Instead, the notions of contrary sexual feeling and sexual inversion seem to glance back at the long tradition of stigmatized male passivity, effeminacy, and gender deviance, which focuses less on homosexual sex or homosexual desire per se than on an accompanying lack of normative masculinity in one or both of the partners.<sup>61</sup>

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homosexuality

Now, at last, we come to homosexuality, a category whose peculiar and distinctive features and ramifications will, I hope, stand out more clearly in contrast to the four discursive traditions already discussed. The word "homosexuality" appeared in print for the first time in German in 1869, in two anonymous pamphlets published in Leipzig by an Austrian translator of Hungarian literature who took the name of Karl Maria Kertbeny. Although Kertbeny claimed publicly to be "sexually normal" himself, his term "homosexuality" can be considered an originally pro-gay coinage, insofar as Kertbeny used it in the course of an unsuccessful political cam-

paign to prevent homosexual sex from being criminalized by the newly formed Federation of North German States.

Unlike "contrary sexual feeling," "sexual inversion," and "Uranian love," "homosexuality" was not coined to interpret the phenomenon it described or to attach a particular psychological or medical theory to it, and Kertbeny himself was vehemently opposed to third-sex or inversion models of homosexual desire. "Homosexuality" simply referred to a sexual drive directed toward persons of the same sex as the sex of the person who was driven by it. Indeed, it was the term's very minimalism, when viewed from a theoretical perspective, that made it so easily adaptable by later writers and theorists with a variety of ideological purposes. As a result, the term now condenses a number of different notions about same-sex sexual attraction as well as a number of different conceptual models of what homosexuality is.

Specifically, "homosexuality" absorbs and combines at least three distinct and previously uncorrelated concepts: (1) a psychiatric notion of perverted or pathological orientation, derived from Westphal and his nineteenth-century colleagues, which is an essentially psychological concept that applies to the inner life of the individual and does not necessarily presume same-sex sexual behavior; (2) a psychoanalytic notion of same-sex sexual object-choice or desire, derived from Freud and his coworkers, which is a category of erotic intentionality and does not necessarily imply a permanent sexual orientation, let alone a deviant or pathological one (since, according to Freud, most normal individuals make an unconscious homosexual object-choice at some point in their fantasy lives); and (3) a sociological notion of sexually deviant behavior, derived from nineteenth- and twentieth-century forensic inquiries into "social problems," which focuses on non-standard sexual practice and does not necessarily refer to erotic psychology or sexual orientation (since same-sex sexual behavior, as Kinsey showed, is not the exclusive property of those with a homosexual sexual orientation, nor is it necessarily pathological, since it is widely represented in the population). So neither a notion of orientation, nor a notion of object-choice, nor a notion of behavior alone is sufficient to generate the modern definition of "homosexuality"; rather, the notion seems to depend on the unstable conjunction of all three. "Homosexuality" is at once a psychological condition, an erotic desire, and a sexual practice (and those are three quite different things).

Furthermore, the very notion of homosexuality implies that same-sex sexual feeling and expression, in all their many forms, constitute a single thing, called "homosexuality," which can be thought of as a single integrated phenomenon, distinct and separate from "heterosexuality." "Ho-

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 "homosexuality" refers to all same-sex sexual desire and behavior, whether hierarchical or mutual, gender-polarized or ungended, latent or actual, mental or physical. And, perhaps most important of all, it makes homosexual object-choice itself function as a marker of sexual and social difference.

The originality of "homosexuality" as a category and a concept appears more vividly in this light. Earlier discourses, whether of sodomy or inversion, referred to only one of the sexual partners: the "active" partner in the case of sodomy, the effeminate male or masculine female in the case of inversion. The other partner, the one who was not motivated by sexual desire or who was not gender-deviant, did not qualify for inclusion in the category. "Homosexuality," by contrast, applies to both partners, whether active or passive, whether gendered normatively or deviantly. The hallmark of "homosexuality," in fact, is the refusal to distinguish between same-sex sexual partners or to rank them by treating one of them as more (or less) homosexual than the other.

Kinsey can be taken as representative of this modern outlook. Dismissing as "propaganda" the tendency of some men to define their own sexual identity according to a role-specific, pre-homosexual model—to consider themselves straight because they only had fellatio performed on them by other men and never performed it themselves—Kinsey wrote that all "physical contacts with other males" that result in orgasm are "by any strict definition . . . homosexual."<sup>62</sup> According to Kinsey, in other words, it doesn't matter who sucks whom. Same-sex sexual contact is all that is required.

In this way homosexuality, both as a concept and as a social practice, significantly rearranges and reinterprets earlier patterns of erotic organization, and as such it has an additional number of important practical consequences. First, under the aegis of homosexuality, the significance of gender and of gender roles for categorizing sexual acts and sexual actors fades.<sup>63</sup> So one effect of the concept of homosexuality is to detach sexual object-choice from any necessary connection with gender identity, making it possible to ascribe homosexuality to women and to men whose gender styles and outward appearance or manner are perfectly normative.

To be sure, this conceptual transformation has not been either total or absolute. Many people nowadays, both gay and non-gay, continue to draw a direct connection between gender deviance and homosexuality. Despite the dominance of the categories of homosexuality and heterosexuality, active women and passive men, as well as effeminate men and masculine women, are still considered somehow *more homosexual* than other, less flamboyantly deviant, persons who make homosexual object-choices. Here we can discern the force with which earlier, pre-homosexual sexual

categories continue to exert their authority within the newer conceptual universe of homo- and heterosexuality.

A second effect of the hegemony of the recent homo-/heterosexual model has been to downplay the taxonomic significance of sexual roles. Even the most asymmetrical behaviors can get trumped for the purposes of sexual classification by the sameness or difference of the sexes of the persons involved. Witness the anxiety expressed in the following anonymous letter to the sex advice columnist of an alternative newspaper:

I'm a 200 percent straight guy, married with children. About six months ago, I went to a masseur who finished things with a terrific blow job. If you wonder why I didn't stop him, the truth is, I couldn't, because he was massaging my asshole with his thumb while blowing me. It was so good that I've been going back to this guy just about every week, not for the massage but for the blow job. Now I'm starting to worry that this might label me as gay. I have no interest in blowing this guy, but I wonder if the guy who gets the blow job is as guilty as the one who does it.<sup>64</sup>

The letter writer's worry is a direct effect of the emergent discourses of sexuality and of the recent changes in sexual classification that they have introduced. No such anxieties assail those as yet untouched by the discourses of sexuality.<sup>65</sup>

twice The homo/heterosexual model has other consequences as well. Homosexuality translates same-sex sexual relations into the register of sameness and mutuality. Homosexual relations no longer necessarily imply an asymmetry of social identities or sexual positions, nor are they inevitably articulated in terms of hierarchies of power, age, gender, or sexual role—which, again, is not to claim that such hierarchies do not continue to function meaningfully in lesbian or gay male societies and sexualities or that they do not structure the relations of many different sorts of lesbian and gay male couples: in some quarters it still matters a lot who sucks—or fucks—whom.<sup>66</sup> Nonetheless, homosexual relations are not necessarily lopsided in their distribution of erotic pleasure or desire. Rather, like that of heterosexual romantic love, the notion of homosexuality implies that it is possible for sexual partners to bond with one another not on the basis of their difference but on the basis of their sameness, their identity of desire and orientation and "sexuality." Homosexual relations cease to be compulsorily structured by a polarization of identities and roles (active/passive, insertive/receptive, masculine/feminine, or man/boy). Exclusive, lifelong, companionate, romantic, and mutual homosexual love becomes possible



for both partners. Homosexual relations are not organized merely according to the requirements or prescriptions of large-scale social institutions, such as kinship systems, age classes, or initiation rituals; rather, they function as principles of social organization in their own right and give rise to freestanding social institutions.<sup>67</sup>

Homosexuality is now set over against heterosexuality. Homosexual object-choice, in and of itself, is seen as marking a difference from heterosexual object-choice. Homo- and heterosexuality have become more or less mutually exclusive forms of human subjectivity, different kinds of human sexuality, and any feeling or expression of heterosexual desire is thought to rule out any feeling or expression of homosexual desire on the part of the same individual, with the exception of "bisexuals" (who are therefore thought of as belonging to an entirely separate "sexuality"). For sexual object-choice attaches to a notion of sexual orientation, such that sexual behavior is seen to express an underlying and permanent psychosexual feature of the human subject. Hence people are routinely assigned to one or another sexual species on the basis of their sexual object-choice and orientation.

In short, homosexuality is more than same-sex sexual object-choice, more even than conscious erotic same-sex preference. Homosexuality is the specification of same-sex sexual object-choice in and of itself as an overriding principle of sexual and social difference. Homosexuality is part of a new system of sexuality, which functions as a means of personal individuation; it assigns to each individual a sexual orientation and a sexual identity. As such, homosexuality introduces a novel element into social organization, into the social articulation of human difference, into the social production of desire, and ultimately into the social construction of the self.

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It may be easier to grasp some of the overlapping and distinguishing features of our five discursive traditions in the history of (homo)sexual classification by consulting table 1. As this schematic comparison indicates, each of the five traditions is irreducible to the others. I am not interested in defending the rightness or wrongness of the individual answers I have given to my own set of questions (I acknowledge that my answers are debatable); rather, I wish to show by the way my affirmatives and negatives are scattered across the chart that the patterns I have sketched do not reduce to a single coherent scheme.

One way to make sense of this table is to note the radical difference between the initial category ("homosexuality") and the four others. All of the

TABLE 1. THE FIVE CATEGORIES

|   | homosexuality | effeminacy      | sodomy                        | friendship | inversion       |
|---|---------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|------------|-----------------|
| Is it an orientation                            | Yes           | No              | Not really                    | No         | Yes (?)         |
| Does it involve gender-deviance?                | Maybe         | Yes             | No (?)                        | No         | Yes             |
| Does it involve same-sex genital contact        | Mostly        | Not necessarily | Mostly                        | No (?)     | Sometimes       |
| Is it a sexual preference?                      | Yes           | No              | Sometimes                     | No         | Not really      |
| Does it represent a character type?             | Maybe         | Yes             | No (?)                        | No         | Yes             |
| Does it involve homoerotic desire?              | Yes           | Sometimes       | Yes, at least for one partner | Maybe      | Not necessarily |
| Does it classify women and men together?        | Yes           | No              | No                            | No (?)     | Yes             |
| Is it constant across sex or gender transition? | Maybe         | No              | No                            | No         | No              |

final four traditional, post-classical, or long-standing categories ("effeminacy," "paederasty/sodomy," "friendship/love," "passivity/inversion") depend crucially on notions of gender. This is obvious in the case of effeminacy and passivity/inversion, but it is also true of paederasty/sodomy and friendship/love, since they are defined by the male subject's embodiment and performance of traditionally masculine and masculinizing norms, just as effeminacy and passivity/inversion are defined by the male subject's violation of them. In these traditional systems of sex and gender, the notion of "sexuality" is dispensable because the regulation of conduct and social status is accomplished by the gender system alone.

Of course, social status and class also contribute to the production of the final four categories. For example, effeminacy applies especially to

those men who are high enough in rank and status to be susceptible of suffering a loss or reduction in rank by comporting themselves at variance with the behavior expected of the elite. Friendship/love demands an equality of rank between the partners, whereas paederasty/sodomy depends on a socially significant difference between the partners in age, status, and sexual role. Passivity/inversion defines itself in relation to the gender hierarchy. With the arrival of homosexuality, the systems of difference that were internal to the structure of the earlier four categories find themselves externalized and reconstituted at the border between homosexuality and heterosexuality, categories that now represent in and of themselves new strategies of social differentiation and regulation and new ways of regulating and enforcing gender norms. The homo/hetero categories function not to maintain an already existing hierarchy of gender and status but to manage, by differentiating and disciplining them, unranked masses of notionally identical "individuals." One name for that technique of governing individuals en masse by comparing and differentiating them is normalization.<sup>68</sup>

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There is an irony in sex. I refer to a different irony from the familiar ones produced by all the tragicomic disproportions between love and its objects, between feeling and expression, between desire and demand. The irony I have in mind is etymological. For the word "sex" itself may derive from the Latin *secare*, "to cut or divide": it originally signified the sharpness and cleanness of the division between the natural categories of male and female. And yet "sex" has had the fine edge of its meaning so blunted by historical shifts and rearrangements in the concepts and forms of sexual life that it now represents what is most resistant to clear classification, discrimination, and division.

More particularly, the emergence of homosexuality as a category has not only made it difficult for us to grasp earlier kinds or classifications of sex and gender in all their positivity and specificity. It has also complicated for us the task of understanding the significance of various present-day asymmetries *within* homosexual relations, patterns of preference or practice that deviate from the ideal standards of reciprocity, equality, and gender identity imposed by the crypto-normative force of the homosexual category itself. How do we now understand the role that perceived differences in age, gender style, sexual role, body type, social class, ethnicity, race, religion, and/or nationality play in structuring, however partially, the relations of some lesbian and gay male couples? Such differences between the partners often turn out to be richly meaningful, both to the

partners themselves and to those who come into contact with them, but it's no longer clear exactly how those differences function to construct actual forms of lesbian and gay life or what their structural significance is in fashioning contemporary lesbian or gay male sexualities.

In the "History" chapter of his book on Oscar Wilde, arguably the most brilliant and original exploration of how to do the history of male homosexuality, Neil Bartlett ponders the relation between past and present formations of homosexual existence in these very terms, and I can think of no better way to conclude than by quoting him.

[ "What kind of man was he?"

That is, what kind of men were we?

... Watching that man in the high-heeled shoes, the black dress falling off one shoulder (it is late in the evening), I remember that he and his sisters have been making their own way as ladies of the night [in London] since 1870, when Fanny and Stella were doing the Strand.<sup>69</sup> His frock is handed down, second-hand, part of a story, part of a tradition. And that man buying his younger boyfriend (slightly embarrassed, but happily drunk) another drink—I remember the bizarre twisting of mythologies that Wilde used to justify his adoration of young men, the mixing of a pastiche of Classical paederasty with a missionary zeal for "the criminal classes," the sense that they, not the boys he left sleeping in [his home in] Chelsea, were his true sons—should I forget all that, should I be embarrassed myself? Should I look the other way? Should I dismiss all that simply because now, as then, one man is paying for another? Isn't there an attempt to create a new kind of relationship, an affair of the heart somehow appropriate to the meeting of two very different men? That's our real history, the one we're still writing.<sup>70</sup>

45. W. H. Auden, *Collected Poems*, ed. Edward Mendelson (New York: Random House, 1976), 129.

46. See Foucault, *Le souci de soi*, 246-59, for a detailed elaboration of this point. Compare Saikaku, *The Great Mirror*, 5.2, in which a boy is held back momentarily from having sex with a beautiful girl who offers herself to him—not by his own lack of desire for her but by his personal commitments, specifically by his hitherto unswerving devotion to the way of boy-love (200-201).

47. "Julian and Maddalo" iv, 39-42.

48. Saikaku, *The Great Mirror*, 53, 56. Paul Gordon Schalow, the translator, explains in his introduction that

in the first case, Saikaku is describing the age when boys and girls first become aware of themselves sexually. The girl fusses over her outward appearance in a mirror, whereas the boy is concerned about the less noticeable but in some ways more important cleanliness of his teeth. The preference implicit here is for the boy's more innocent and perhaps less calculating concern with hygiene than with superficial appearances. In the second case, neither situation with courtesan or actor allows sexual intercourse for the paying patron, but the "intimate conversation" possible with the kabuki boy provides a recompense of sorts, suggesting a nonsexual satisfaction found in having an affair with an actor that is lacking with a courtesan. The third example juxtaposes two financially draining situations, supporting a sick wife versus supporting a spendthrift boy. Again the implication is that the sick wife represents a hopeless situation, whereas the boy, in spite of his spending habits, offers some pleasurable compensations.

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I wonder if a similarly earnest account could be given of the fourth example. For further arguments, see my review of Schalow's translation in the *Journal of Japanese Studies* 17 (1991): 398-403.

In the *Erôtes*, similarly, Callicratidas juxtaposes the image of a girl with a mirror and a comb to that of a boy with a book and a lyre (44).

49. For fuller documentation, see Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*; Winkler, *Constraints of Desire*; Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality*; David M. Halperin, John J. Winkler, and Froma I. Zeitlin, eds., *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990); and the various studies cited in those works.

50. Compare Paul Gordon Schalow, "Male Love in Early Modern Japan: A Literary Depiction of the 'Youth,'" in *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, ed. Martin Bauml Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey, Jr. (New York: New American Library, 1989), 118-28, 506-9, esp. 120: "Those who pursued sexual relations exclusively with women or exclusively with youths were in a minority and were considered mildly eccentric for limiting their pleasurable options."

51. Compare Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), esp. 332-35, 373-79, on the strange relations or irrelations among and within the terms "two," "the pair," "parity,"

"the couple," "the double," "fetishism," "homosexuality," "heterosexuality," "bisexuality." In a similar vein, it may be worth noting the various relations of resemblance, doubling, and difference that U.S. Postal Service Poster 669 (fig. 1) constructs by juxtaposing the philatelic series of four stamps to the quilt that presumably inspired their design. Like the mirror-opposite figures of the lovebirds on the stamp, each stamp in the series of repeated stamps resembles its counterparts exactly: they are all identical replicas of one another and, as such, indicate indexically the process of mechanical engraving or imaging, and the technology of industrial mass production, that created them. The quilt, by contrast, is a unique, handmade, labor-intensive, and originally non-commodified artifact emanating from an indigenous folk tradition. The stamp is intended to glorify that tradition as a precious part of the national heritage of the United States. It does so by supposedly appropriating elements of the quilt's design and reproducing them in a new medium, thereby claiming for the products of impersonal mechanized industrial labor the aura of the artifactual and the homely. In that sense, the two opposites on the poster are not the paired lovebirds but the implicit couple constituted by the two featured modes of inscription or representation: quilting and engraving (or computer graphics).

52. For more elaborate philosophical arguments to this effect, see my essays, "Platonic Erôs and What Men Call Love," *Ancient Philosophy* 5 (1985): 161-204, esp. 182-87, and "Plato and the Metaphysics of Desire," in *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy*, vol. 5, 1989, ed. John J. Cleary and Daniel C. Shartin (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1991), 27-52, esp. 29-36.

53. D. A. Miller, "The Late Jane Austen," *Raritan* 10, no. 1 (summer 1990): 55-79 (quotation on 57; my emphasis). Much of the remainder of Miller's essay is taken up with adumbrating that fundamental insight. More recently, Miller's point has been made with aphoristic economy by Regina Kunzel, "Situating Sex: The Problem of Prison Sexual Culture in the Mid-Twentieth-Century U.S.," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 8, no. 3 (2002): 253-70, esp. 265: "naturalization does not happen naturally; it requires cultural work."

#### CHAPTER FOUR

The title of my essay pays tribute to the work of Arnold I. Davidson, which has consistently, enduringly, and powerfully shaped my own: see, esp., his essays "How to Do the History of Psychoanalysis: A Reading of Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*," *Critical Inquiry* 13, no. 2 (1987): 252-77, "Sex and the Emergence of Sexuality," *Critical Inquiry* 14, no. 1 (1987): 16-48, and "Closing Up the Corpses: Diseases of Sexuality and the Emergence of the Psychiatric Style of Reasoning," in *Meaning and Method: Essays in Honor of Hilary Putnam*, ed. George Boolos (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 295-325. In my recent work on the history of sexuality, particularly in this essay and in "Forgetting Foucault" (in this volume), I have returned to a set of issues that Davidson's work first opened up for me and that I have pondered for well over a decade now.

Many people have discussed with me the ideas touched on in this essay; I cannot list all their names here, as I would like to do. But I must thank Patricia Crawford and Hilary Fraser, who invited me to participate in their Australian Academy of the Social Sciences Workshop "Gender, Sexualities, and Historical Change," University of West-



ern Australia, 31 July–1 August 1998. Discussions among members of that workshop provided the immediate stimulus for this essay. I owe a particular debt in this regard to Judith M. Bennett.

This essay was written for delivery at the conference "Sex and Conflict: Gay and Lesbian Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences," Lund University, 9–10 October 1998. I wish to thank Eva Österberg and Johanna Esseveld for giving me that opportunity to present my work and Martha Vicinus and Lillian Faderman, my fellow participants, for encouraging me to persevere with it.

Finally, I would like to thank George E. Haggerty, whose work and conversation originally prompted me to broach some of these ideas. See his *Men in Love: Masculinity and Sexuality in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), which offers a refreshingly different solution from the one proposed here to a similar question about how to do the history of male homosexuality.

Some of the material and the argumentation presented here also appear in my entry "Sex, Sexuality, Sexual Classification," in *Critical Terms for Gender Studies*, ed. Catharine Stimpson and Gilbert Herdt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), in press.

1. See, for example, Jacqueline Murray, "Twice Marginal and Twice Invisible: Lesbians in the Middle Ages," in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage (London: Garland, 1996), 191–222; or the otherwise excellent article by Anna Clark, "Anne Lister's Construction of Lesbian Identity," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 7 (1996): 23–50.

2. Or so I argue in "Historicizing the Subject of Desire" and in "Forgetting Foucault." For a quite different but powerful and persuasive argument for the importance of emphasizing continuities in women's history, see Judith M. Bennett, "Confronting Continuity," *Journal of Women's History* 9, no. 3 (1997): 73–94.

3. The demonstration of the existence of such an irreducible definitional uncertainty is the central, invaluable accomplishment of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). As will become evident, I have taken on board her critique (45–48) of my earlier work, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love* (New York: Routledge, 1990), applying her lesson about the irresolvable contradictions in what we are too quick to call "homosexuality as we understand it today." At the same time, however, I will continue to insist on documenting the existence of what she terms, sarcastically, "a Great Paradigm Shift" in the history of homosexuality—namely, the emergence of the discourses of homosexuality themselves in the modern period. Far from seeing a conflict between a historical inquiry into the construction of homosexuality and a discursive analysis of the contradictions in the modern notion of homosexuality, I see such a historical inquiry as helping account for the ineradicable incoherence of the modern notion. Sedgwick's own work, in fact, has enabled me to bring the historical and discursive critiques of homosexuality into closer and more systematic alignment.

4. Martin Bauml Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey, Jr., eds., *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past* (New York: New American Library, 1989), 8.

5. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), 107.

6. See Randolph Trumbach, "London's Sodomites: Homosexual Behavior and Western Culture in the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of Social History* 11 (1977): 1–33; Barry

D. Adam, "Age, Structure, and Sexuality: Reflections on the Anthropological Evidence on Homosexual Relations," in *Anthropology and Homosexual Behavior*, ed. Evelyn Blackwood (New York: Haworth, 1986), 19–33, and "Structural Foundations of the Gay World," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 27 (1985): 658–71, reprinted in *Queer Theory/Sociology*, ed. Steven Seidman (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 111–26; Gilbert Herdt, "Homosexuality," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade, 10 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 6:445–52, and *Same Sex, Different Cultures* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1997); and David F. Greenberg, *The Construction of Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 25. Not all of these authors employ a fourfold taxonomy, and they use different names for their categories. Greenberg speaks of "transgenderal," "transgenerational," and "egalitarian" types (the last two terms are, in my view, misleading).

Finally, in a series of articles and books beginning in the 1970s, Stephen O. Murray has been defining and refining the sociological or typological models according to which forms of male same-sex behavior around the world have been elaborated and institutionalized: for his most recent and comprehensive treatment of the topic, see Stephen O. Murray, *Homosexualities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), esp. 1–21, where he differentiates among "age-stratified," "gender-stratified," and "egalitarian" (gay or lesbian) organizations of homosexuality. Murray makes the important and fundamental point that "there is diversity [in homosexual behavior and classification], but there are only a few recurring patterns. Relatively few of the imaginable structurings of same-sex sex recur in the panorama of known societies. . . . There are not hundreds or even dozens of different social organizations of same-sex sexual relations in human societies. . . . Only a few categorization systems recur across space and time" (1–2). For earlier soundings of this note in Murray's previous work, see his *Social Theory, Homosexual Realities* (New York: Gay Academic Union, 1984), 46, "Homosexual Acts and Selves in Early Modern Europe," in *The Pursuit of Sodomy: Male Homosexuality in Renaissance and Enlightenment Europe*, ed. Kent Gerard and Gert Hekma (New York: Harrington Park Press, 1989), originally published as *Journal of Homosexuality*, vol. 16, nos. 1–2 (1988), with Murray's article at 457–77, but see esp. 469, and "Homosexual Categorization in Cross-Cultural Perspective," in *Latin American Male Homosexualities* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 3–31, esp. 4. In the latter essay, Murray had proposed a fourfold typology, including a category called "profession-defined organization of homosexuality"; in his recent book, *Homosexualities*, that category has been collapsed into "gender-stratified" homosexuality (5).

7. Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, 47.

8. The quoted material is from *ibid.*, 85, 47.

9. I respond in greater detail to Sedgwick's critique of constructionist history in the introduction to this volume.

10. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, *An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1980), 101.

11. Rosemary Daniell, *Sleeping with Soldiers: In Search of the Macho Man* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1984), 71.

12. Pseudo-Lucian, *Erôtes* 9, trans. M. D. Macleod, in *Lucian VIII* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967). See, generally, "Historicizing the Subject of Desire," in this volume.

13. Chariton, *Chaereas and Callirhoe* 1.4, trans. B. P. Reardon, in *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*, ed. B. P. Reardon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 27.

Similarly, Artemidorus observes that men who dream that they wear facial makeup, jewelry, or unguents will suffer disgrace (i.e., will be exposed) as adulterers: see 81.15-17, 106.16-107.2, and 269.11-13 Pack, cited with discussion by Suzanne MacAlister, "Gender as Sign and Symbolism in Artemidoros' *Oneirokritika*: Social Aspirations and Anxieties," *Helios* 19 (1992): 140-60, esp. 149-50. Compare the representations of Agathon in Old Comedy: commentary by Froma I. Zeitlin, "Travesties of Gender and Genre in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazousae*," in *Playing the Other: Gender and Society in Classical Greek Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 375-416; Frances Muecke, "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Woman," *Classical Quarterly* 32 (1982): 41-55.

14. See Nicole Loraux, "Herakles: The Super-Male and the Feminine," trans. Robert Lamberton, in *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*, ed. David M. Halperin, John J. Winkler, and Froma I. Zeitlin (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), 21-52.

15. See Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 25-26. I wish to thank Vernon Rosario for suggesting the humoral gloss on this passage. See also Joseph Cady, "The 'Masculine Love' of the 'Princes of Sodom' 'Practising the Art of Ganymede' at Henri III's Court: The Homosexuality of Henri III and His Mignons in Pierre de L'Estoile's *Mémoires-Journaux*," in *Desire and Discipline: Sex and Sexuality in the Premodern West*, ed. Jacqueline Murray and Konrad Eisenbichler (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 123-54, esp. 132-33: "However, in the Renaissance the word 'effeminate,' when applied to a man, did not automatically connote homosexuality, but instead had a diversity of meaning it lacks today. For instance, the term sometimes designated a kind of hyper or helpless male heterosexuality, a usage that, of course, no longer exists. Donne's remark that he is called 'effeminate' because he 'love[s] womens joyes,' in his epigram 'The Jughler' (1587?-1596?), belongs to this Renaissance tradition." For further details Cady refers the reader to his earlier essay "Renaissance Awareness and Language for Heterosexuality: 'Love' and 'Feminine Love,'" in *Renaissance Discourses of Desire*, ed. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993), 143-58.

16. Individual cultural systems of social and sexual hierarchy tend to collapse the distinctions among these different categories or orders of subordination, treating boys as feminine, or women as minors, or passive sexual partners (of whatever sex) as feminine, or feminized partners as junior: hence, Alan Sinfield speaks of "a conflation of subordinations" and foregrounds the element of unequal power that consistently structures erotic life, noting that "the elaborate social structures of modernity offer equally potent hierarchies of class and race, and they too may be conflated with subordinations of age and gender" (*Gay and After* [London: Serpent's Tail, 1998], 66). See also, by Sinfield, "The Production of Gay and the Return of Power," in *De-Centring Sexualities: Politics and Representations beyond the Metropolis*, ed. Richard Phillips, Diane Watt, and David Shuttleton (London: Routledge, 2000), 21-36, esp. 30. Sinfield develops the point further in "Lesbian and Gay Taxonomies," forthcoming. While I welcome the political emphasis on power inequities that Sinfield brings to his account of eroticism, I wish to keep the different categories or orders of subordination separate, both analytically and empirically, so as to be able to describe, in any particular social situation, the exact nature of the hierarchy at issue. Not all systems of hierarchy conflate all subordinations, nor do they do so in the same way. Moreover, in any particular social context, important distinctions among types of subordinate identities may be made: that is, boys may

be viewed as junior but not necessarily as feminine; women may be seen as subordinate but not necessarily as minors; passive sexual partners may be seen as dominated but not necessarily as feminized. It is important to preserve the possibility of attending to these differences, which may figure significantly in the minds of individual social actors as well as in the sexual codes of social groups.

17. Quoted by Davidson, "Closing Up the Corpses," 315 (cited in full in my head-note to this chap.).

18. On the aristocratic types mentioned, see Randolph Trumbach, "The Birth of the Queen: Sodomy and the Emergence of Gender Equality in Modern Culture, 1660-1750," in *Hidden from History*, ed. Duberman, Vicinus, and Chauncey, 129-40, 509-11.

19. I follow here the arguments of Davidson, "Closing Up the Corpses"; and George Chauncey, Jr., "From Sexual Inversion to Homosexuality: Medicine and the Changing Conceptualization of Female Deviance," in *Passion and Power: Sexuality in History*, ed. Kathy Peiss and Christina Simmons, with Robert A. Padgug (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), 87-117.

20. See, for some recent examples, Thorkil Vanggaard, *Phallos: A Symbol and Its History in the Male World*, trans. from the Danish by Thorkil Vanggaard (New York: International Universities Press, 1972), 17 and passim; Lionel Ovesey, *Homosexuality and Pseudohomosexuality* (New York: Science House, 1969); and Richard A. Posner, *Sex and Reason* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), esp. 105-7, 152, 296.

For a genealogy of this distinction between situational homosexuality and true homosexuality, see the trenchant analysis by Regina Kunzel, "Situating Sex: The Problem of Prison Sexual Culture in the Mid-Twentieth-Century U.S.," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 8, no. 3 (2002): 253-70, who also notes the continuities between so-called situational homosexuality and earlier sexual formations, such as paederasty/sodomy and inversion (my terms, not hers).

21. For example, Gary W. Dowsett, *Practicing Desire: Homosexual Sex in the Era of AIDS* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996).

22. For Bronze Age Crete, see Robert B. Koehl, "The Chieftain Cup and a Minoan Rite of Passage," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 106 (1986): 99-110, and "Ephoros and Ritualized Homosexuality in Bronze Age Crete," in *Queer Representations: Reading Lives, Reading Cultures*, ed. Martin Duberman (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 7-13.

23. For some modern instances, see George Chauncey, Jr., "Christian Brotherhood or Sexual Perversion? Homosexual Identities and the Construction of Sexual Boundaries in the World War One Era," *Journal of Social History* 19 (1985/86): 189-211, reprinted in *Hidden from History*, ed. Duberman, Vicinus, and Chauncey, 294-317, 541-46; John Marshall, "Pansies, Perverts and Macho Men: Changing Conceptions of Male Homosexuality," in *The Making of the Modern Homosexual*, ed. Kenneth Plummer (London: Hutchinson, 1981), 133-54, esp. 149-52; Albert J. Reiss, Jr., "The Social Integration of Queers and Peers," *Social Problems* 9 (1961/62): 102-20, reprinted in *Social Perspectives in Lesbian and Gay Studies: A Reader*, ed. Peter M. Nardi (New York: Routledge, 1998), 12-28; John H. Gagnon and William Simon, *Sexual Conduct: The Social Sources of Human Sexuality* (Chicago: Aldine, 1973), 240-51.

Alan Sinfield, "Lesbian and Gay Taxonomies," protests that "the age model" of homosexual relations still flourishes in Western post-industrial cultures today and, in fact, "figures in many of the most influential books of our time," such as Alan Hollinghurst's



*The Swimming-Pool Library* (London: Vintage, 1989) or Neil Bartlett's *Ready to Catch Him Should He Fall* (New York: Dutton, 1991). Similarly, Stephen Murray claims that "pederastic relationships continue to exist even today in cities with generally recognized gay neighborhoods and institutions" (*Homosexualities*, 12). But the pattern I am describing here is not defined simply by a difference in age or in generation between the two male partners but by (among other things) a largely lop-sided or non-reciprocal pattern of desire and pleasure, which is hardly a prominent element in the two novels cited by Sinfield or, I should think, in the contemporary relationships to which Murray refers. "Paederasty/sodomy" is a much more specific pattern than what Sinfield intends by "the age model" which, for him, is really a subcategory of homosexuality.

24. Michael Roche, *Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 4, 96-97. Roche's statistics have come in for some criticism, however, from Samuel K. Cohen, Jr., in his review of the book in *Speculum* 74, no. 2 (April 1999): 481-83.

25. Thus, for example, the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Florentine definitions of "sodomy" and "sodomite" refer to the "active" or insertive partner in anal intercourse only (Roche, *Forbidden Friendships*, 14, 110).

26. See Halperin, *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality*, 163n. 53, for an admittedly incomplete list of ancient Greek and Roman texts documenting a conscious erotic preference on the part of men for sexual intercourse with members of one sex rather than the other.

27. For more detailed references, see "Historicizing the Subject of Desire," in this volume, esp. 180-81, nn. 20-21; also Everett K. Rowson, "The Categorization of Gender and Sexual Irregularity in Medieval Arabic Vice Lists," in *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, ed. Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub (New York: Routledge, 1991), 50-79; and J. W. Wright and Everett K. Rowson, eds., *Homoeoticism in Classical Arabic Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

28. See Cynthia B. Herrup, *A House in Gross Disorder: Sex, Law, and the Second Earl of Castlehaven* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 33: "The prosecutions for sodomy about which we have information before the late seventeenth century rarely condemned defendants for effeminate behavior; conversely, reproaches for effeminacy rarely included sexual examples."

29. John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 44.

30. For an attempt to document several instances of same-sex sexual object-choice, and even of conscious erotic preferences for persons of the same sex as oneself, that nonetheless do not satisfy the criteria for homosexuality, see "Historicizing the Subject of Desire," in this volume.

31. See, for more on James and his male courtiers, Alan Bray and Michel Rey, "The Body of the Friend: Continuity and Change in Masculine Friendship in the Seventeenth Century," in *English Masculinities 1660-1800*, ed. Tim Hitchcock and Michèle Cohen (London: Addison Wesley Longman, 1999), 65-84. More generally, on the patterns of asymmetry in male friendships, see Halperin, "Heroes and Their Pals," in *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality*, 75-87, 176-79.

32. See Alan Bray, "Homosexuality and the Signs of Male Friendship in Elizabethan England," in *Queering the Renaissance*, ed. Jonathan Goldberg (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1994), 40-61. I interpret Bray to provide evidence for this claim, al-

though he does not quite make it himself. See also Herrup, *A House in Gross Disorder*, 33: "Whether or not actually pederastic, the sodomitical relationships described in the legal records invariably paired authority and dependency—men and boys, masters and servants, teachers and pupils, patrons and clients."

33. Alan Sinfield emphasizes what he seems to regard as the intrinsic sexiness of power (as opposed to its contingent sexiness within specific historical and cultural contexts, as I would prefer) in "The Production of Gay and the Return of Power," 27 ("Power is sexy"). By contrast, Bray and Rey, "The Body of the Friend," emphasize quite properly that virtuous friendship between men unequal in rank was worlds apart from what counted as "sodomy" in England before the later seventeenth century.

34. See, again, Bray and Rey, "The Body of the Friend," for a brief but panoramic survey of the patron-client model of friendship in England from the middle ages until the later seventeenth century.

35. *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Donald M. Frame (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1958), 139.

36. *Ibid.*, 139-40.

37. I owe this citation to Haggerty, *Men in Love*, 25 (cited in full in the headnote to this chap.), who interprets it eloquently but almost exactly contrary to the way I do. For a contrasting approach to this topic, see C. Stephen Jaeger, *Ennobling Love: In Search of a Lost Sensibility* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999).

38. See Marc D. Schachter, "That Friendship Which Possesses the Soul": Montaigne Loves La Boétie," *Journal of Homosexuality* 41, nos. 3-4 (2001): 5-21, for a detailed study of this tension in Montaigne.

39. I overstate for the sake of emphasis. For a more nuanced and complex account of the interrelations of sexuality and gender in transgenderism, see Don Kulick, *Travesti: Sex, Gender, and Culture among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), and, esp., "Problematic Childhood Sexuality," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Philadelphia, 2-6 December 1999.

40. See Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, esp. 1, 9, 85-86, whence I derive the distinction between "universalizing" and "minoritizing" constructions of sexual identity.

41. For a more detailed contrast between the invert and the sodomite as discursive types see Halperin, "Forgetting Foucault," in this volume.

42. Cited and translated by Maud W. Gleason, *Making Men: Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995), 68.

43. Quintilian, *Institutes* 5.9.14, cited and translated by Amy Richlin, "Not before Homosexuality: The Materiality of *Cinaedus* and the Roman Law against Love between Men," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 3, no. 4 (April 1993): 523-73, esp. 542.

44. This is a composite passage by ancient physiognomic writers, assembled by Gleason, *Making Men*, 63.

45. Another composite passage, *ibid.*, 78.

46. Aulus Gellius, 6.12.5, cited and translated by Craig A. Williams, *Roman Homosexuality: Ideologies of Masculinity in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 23. A measure of the distance between inversion or passivity and male love can be gauged from the fact that Scipio was quite willing to identify himself publicly as bound to his friend Laelius by a "bond of love," according to the Roman historian Valerius Maximus (8.8.1). (I wish to thank Tom Hillard of Macquarie University for



this observation and citation.) There would not necessarily have been any inconsistency or hypocrisy in Scipio's attitude.

47. *Historia ecclesiastica* 8.10, cited and translated by Glenn W. Olsen, "St. Anselm and Homosexuality," *Anselm Studies: An Occasional Journal* (Special issue: "Proceedings of the Fifth International Saint Anselm Conference: St. Anselm and St. Augustine—Episcopi ad Saecula," ed. Joseph C. Schnaubelt et al.), vol. 2 (1988), 93-141, esp. 110.

48. Cited and translated (with slight alterations here) by Cady, "'Masculine Love' of the 'Princes of Sodom,'" 133. Cady, of course, draws a different conclusion about the existence of homosexuality in the Renaissance from this and other comments by Pierre de L'Estoile.

49. The two passages are cited and quoted by Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (London: Gay Men's Press, 1982), 81, 87.

50. Quoted and discussed by Lisa L. Moore, *Dangerous Intimacies: Toward a Sapphic History of the British Novel* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997), 72-74.

51. C. Westphal, "Die conträre Sexualempfindung, Symptom eines neuropathischen (psychopathischen) Zustandes," *Archiv für Psychiatrie und Nervenkrankheiten* 2 (1870): 73-108.

52. Arrigo Tamassia, "Sull' inversione dell' istinto sessuale," *Rivista sperimentale di freniatria e di medicina legale* 4 (1878): 97-117.

53. Of course, the molly himself is a complex figure, already verging on the homosexual, as Trumbach and others have shown. For one thing, mollies clearly have sex with other mollies. I do not mean to skip over the vexed interpretative issues; I merely wish to make the point that the figure of the molly—however forward-looking he may be in other respects—retains many of the features traditionally ascribed to male inverters or passives.

54. The basic study is Hubert Kennedy, *Ulrichs: The Life and Works of Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, Pioneer of the Modern Gay Movement* (Boston: Alyson, 1988). Westphal cites Ulrichs, under his pseudonym Numa Numantius, in "Die conträre Sexualempfindung," 92 ff.

55. See Chauncey, "From Sexual Inversion to Homosexuality."

56. My account derives from Chauncey, *ibid.* Long before Krafft-Ebing, Westphal, in "Die conträre Sexualempfindung," 108, emphasized that not all cases of "unnatural lewdness" (the conduct criminalized by article 143 of the Prussian criminal law code, soon to become the infamous article 175 of the imperial German law code) proceed from pathological causes: just as it is possible to identify some thefts as the result of pathological compulsion without implying that most thefts are motivated by mental illness, so ordinary human viciousness, not psychological disturbance, is to blame for many cases of "unnatural lewdness."

57. Westphal, "Die conträre Sexualempfindung," 107n: "Dass es sich nicht immer gleichzeitig um den Geschlechtstrieb als solchen handle" (emphasis shown in text is mine).

58. *Ibid.*, 98, accepts the subject's claims about his sexual normality both on the basis of his own testimony and on the basis of the independent fact that at the time of his arrest he was found to be suffering from gonorrhea (which Westphal, like Karl Maria Kertbeny in this respect, evidently believes could not be transmitted by homosexual sex). Far from being an embarrassment or an obstacle to the diagnosis, the subject's heterosexual desire is underscored in Westphal's account.

59. *Ibid.*, 82-91, 97-100. I have been aided by Robert Grimm, "The Dawn of Contrary Sexual Sensitivity" (unpublished manuscript, University of Washington), who cites, translates, and discusses a number of the passages quoted here.

60. Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardell B. Pomeroy, and Clyde E. Martin, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (Philadelphia: Saunders, 1948), 615. For a detailed elaboration of the distinction between homosexuality and inversion, see C. A. Tripp, *The Homosexual Matrix* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975), 22-35.

61. In this one respect, at least, Kinsey proves a more reliable historian than Foucault. In *The History of Sexuality* Foucault dated the birth of homosexuality (as a discursive category) to Westphal's article:

We must not forget that the psychological, psychiatric, medical category of homosexuality was constituted from the moment it was characterized—Westphal's famous article of 1870 on "contrary sexual sensations" can stand as its date of birth—less by a type of sexual relations than by a certain quality of sexual sensibility, a certain way of inverting the masculine and the feminine in oneself. Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphroditism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species.

(43)

I believe Foucault was right to see in Westphal the emergence of a modern psychiatric notion of erotic orientation, which brought with it a specification of deviant individuals and a shift from a juridical discourse of prohibited acts to a normalizing discourse of perverted psychology. But I also believe Foucault was wrong to identify Westphal's category of "contrary sexual feeling" with homosexuality. In *Epistemology of the Closet* Sedgwick ingeniously argued that my "reading of 'homosexuality' as 'we currently understand it' . . . is virtually the opposite of Foucault's," insofar as Foucault has a "gender transitive" understanding of homosexuality, whereas I have a "gender intransitive" one (46). That may well explain why Foucault did not take what I regard as the historically necessary step of systematically differentiating "sexual inversion" from "homosexuality." Still, the ultimate issue here may not be a difference of opinion about what homosexuality is so much as an uncertainty about whether it is possible to draw a meaningful distinction in the history of modern European discourses between an "orientation" and a "sexuality."

62. Kinsey, Pomeroy, and Martin, *Sexual Behavior*, 616, 623.

63. The aptly chosen word *fades* here derives from Adam, who writes that in homosexuality "sex-role definitions fade from interpersonal bonding" ("Structural Foundations," 111). This paragraph and much of what follows have been inspired by Adam.

64. Quoted by Dan Savage, *Savage Love: Straight Answers from America's Most Popular Sex Columnist* (New York: Plume, 1998), 189-90.

65. See, in addition to Kinsey, Pomeroy, and Martin, *Sexual Behavior*, the following: Chauncey, "Christian Brotherhood or Sexual Perversion?" 294-317, 541-46; and Michaelartos, John McLeod, and Phil Nott, *Meanings of Sex between Men: A Study Conducted by the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations for the Commonwealth*

Department of Human Services and Health, 1993 (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1994).

66. See Barry D. Adam, "Age Preferences among Gay and Bisexual Men," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 6, no. 3 (2000): 413-34. See, also, the data on gay men in London and Cardiff collected by Anthony P. M. Coxon, *Between the Sheets: Sexual Diaries and Gay Men's Sex in the Era of AIDS* (London: Cassell, 1996), esp. 94-96: although he notes that "if a man engages in a particular sexual practice it is more likely that he will do so in both active and passive modalities (even over a period of a month) than restrict himself to only one of them," he also points out some "interesting contrary trends," including exceptional "role rigidity" in the case of anal intercourse, in which "those who were either exclusively active or exclusively passive now equal or exceed those who are both." Even Coxon, however, concludes that his "results do not support the idea that, even over a one-month period, gay men tend to be exclusively active or passive during anal intercourse," and he cites a Dutch study that suggests that the percentage of gay men who switch roles may be significantly larger in Amsterdam. Similarly, role swapping appears to be the norm today in gay male relations in Australia, according to Dowsett, *Practicing Desire*, 81: "Although there was a decided preference among some gay men [in the group sampled] in their assessment of sexual 'enjoyment' for the insertive or the receptive mode in anal intercourse, in practice such activity is commonly reciprocal, men moving from insertive to receptive modes at will." Dowsett's conclusions have been massively confirmed by a recent review of the empirical literature on anal intercourse around the world by Gary Smith, "Heterosexual and Homosexual Anal Intercourse: An International Perspective," *Venereology* 14, no. 1 (2001): 28-37, who finds that "among gay-identified predominantly homosexually active men who engage in anal intercourse, most are both insertive and receptive," noting that this finding remained constant in studies of societies belonging to the so-called post-industrial West undertaken "from the mid-1960s to the late 1990s."

It is possible that such results have been overstated, or their significance exaggerated, perhaps owing to the distaste with which supposedly "liberated" gay men view rigid role playing. Moreover, Gary Smith cautions me (in an e-mail message, 7 August 2001) that the quantitative data on anal intercourse among gay men should not be taken to indicate equal preference for the insertive and receptive role, since no allowance is made in that data for frequency or predilection (in other words, there may still be many more tops and bottoms out there than are reflected in the quantitative data on sexual practice). Dr. Sasho Lambevski, a researcher at the National Centre in HIV Social Research at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, writes to me (e-mail message, 13 April 2000) as follows: "I gather from my own empirical research and my colleagues' research that the claims of reciprocity in sexual/gender roles in gay relationships are grossly exaggerated. In the interviews we have done with gay couples, the lip service that the interviewed men pay to the lofty ideals of gay liberation (reciprocity, versatility, etc.) serves as a rhetorical strategy to cover the real tensions between partners caused by various forms of power (mostly gender) imbalances." He refers to Gary Smith and Susan Kippax, "Anal Intercourse and Power in Sex between Men," *Sexualities* 4, no. 4 (2001): 413-34, who argue, however, not that reciprocity has been overreported but that its mere existence does not erase the significance of hierarchies in practices of anal intercourse in gay male relationships, noting that "in Western cultures there remains a conceptual distinction between the insertive and receptive partners that marks the receptive person as feminine and insertive as masculine." Sinfield, "The Production of Gay and the Return of

Power," 27, sees the persistence of social hierarchies in gay relationships as undermining the supposed triumph of the "egalitarian" model of "modern" homosexuality.

67. See, once again, Adam, "Structural Foundations."

68. See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1979), 182-84:

In short, under a regime of disciplinary power, the art of punishing . . . brings five quite distinct operations into play: it refers individual acts, performances, and conducts to a group ensemble that is at once a field of comparison, a space of differentiation, and a source of the rule to be followed. It differentiates individuals in relation to one another and in terms of that group rule, whether the rule be made to function as a minimal threshold, as an average to be looked to, or as an optimum to be approximated. It measures in quantitative terms and hierarchizes in terms of value the abilities, the level of attainment, and the "nature" of individuals. It imposes, through this "valorizing" measurement, the constraint of a conformity to be achieved. Lastly, it traces the limit that will define difference in relation to all other differences, the external frontier of the abnormal. . . . [To recapitulate, it] compares, differentiates, hierarchizes, homogenizes, excludes. In a word, it normalizes. . . . Like surveillance and together with it, normalization becomes one of the great instruments of power at the end of the classical age. The marks that once indicated status, privilege, and group membership come to be replaced, or at least to be supplemented, by a whole range of degrees of normality: these are signs of membership in a homogeneous social body, but they also play a part themselves in classification, in hierarchization, and in the distribution of ranks. In one sense, the power of normalization enforces homogeneity; but it individualizes by making it possible to measure deviations, to set levels, to define specialties, and to render differences useful by calibrating them one to another. The power of the norm functions easily within a system of formal equality, since within a homogeneity that is the rule, the norm introduces, as a useful imperative and as the result of measurement, all the gradations of individual differences.

(The translation has been extensively modified.)

69. For recent historical discussions of the incident Bartlett alludes to here, see William A. Cohen, *Sex Scandal: The Private Parts of Victorian Fiction* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996), 73-129; Morris B. Kaplan, "Who's Afraid of John Saul? Urban Culture and the Politics of Desire in Late Victorian London," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 5, no. 3 (1999): 267-314.

70. Neil Bartlett, *Who Was That Man? A Present for Mr Oscar Wilde* (London: Serpent's Tail, 1988), 223.

#### APPENDIX

1. The three papers referred to here were originally delivered as a panel titled "Homosexual Behavior in the Ancient Mediterranean World" at the conference "At the

