Chapter One

Sexuality

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As a field of scholarly investigation, the history of sexuality is about as old as gender history in its modern, social constructionist form, dating from the 1970s and 1980s. Unlike gender history, whose roots reach back into a variety of disciplines and scholarly fields, the history of sexuality was long regarded as at best a catalogue of anthropological curiosities and at worst a pornographic amusement for social elites. In the 1880s medically informed writers such as Iwan Bloch, Paolo Mantegazza, and Richard von Krafft-Ebing tried to fit the spectrum of human sexual expression into an evolutionary scenario, but the foundations of the field's contemporary respectability were laid in the 1920s by British-trained social anthropologists such as Bronislaw Malinowski and the American Margaret Mead, who studied sexuality in social context and speculated on its relationship to socially ascribed gender roles. Though many of the early medical and anthropological works on sex and society as well as the first academic histories were devoted to the variety of sexual behavior and values in human history, many of their authors were also sex reformers who often used this information as weapons in the long cultural struggle with traditional Western sexual ideology. Gordon Rattray Taylor, whose *Story of Society's Changing Attitudes to Sex* (1954) was one of the first serious histories of the subject, was unapologetic about his aim of undermining the vestiges of Victorian sexual beliefs. The Western scholars who have studied the historical and global varieties of sexuality are still tempted to look at the subject through a critical and relativizing lens. Historicizing a topic that has been used both as a "natural" universal to command conformity and as a radical tactic of social rebellion has proven difficult indeed.

As numerous authors have pointed out, a remarkable proportion of contemporary writings on sexuality and its history have taken body dimorphism and male/female gender difference as "givens" and explained variations as exceptions to this rule. Though historical accounts of sexuality, particularly in the West, clearly confirm the

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prevalence of dimorphism and gender difference, much recent work has opted in favor of far more complex schemes for understanding sexual and gendered bodies and practices in the West and elsewhere. This has resulted in an important corrective to the temptation to see sex and gender in exclusively binary terms, endlessly reinvented as a series of polar oppositions. Third sex and third gender models and even more complicated schemata have been developed recently to account for the great diversity of body types, gender identities, and sexual practices that have thrived in the West and throughout the world.

Nonetheless, though we are increasingly critical of the old schemata, the historic persistence in most cultures of binary sex and gender categories, which have also been replicated in religion, culture, language, and science, requires some explanation. It seems clear enough that the mammalian model of reproduction has served as the template for male/female dimorphism in human societies. It seems equally certain that human groups have made powerful investments in fertility in order to ensure survival in a world of conflict and competition for resources. A rich archaeological record of fertility rites and goddesses and the regular equation of planting and harvest activities with human reproduction is testimony to the urgency of these beliefs. However, there is evidence that suggests that even very ancient societies acted to limit fertility when population outstripped prospects. Since in either case the management of procreation was the key to assuring the prosperity of individuals, kinship groups, and entire societies, a high premium was placed on the procreative capacities of males and females and on the sexual practices that ensured or regulated births.

No doubt, genitalia and sexual function have always figured prominently in assessments of these capacities, but though erection and ejaculation in males and menses and pregnancy in women have been necessary features of cultural assessments of reproductive ability, they are only a part of the huge variety of ways that human societies characterize males and females as men and women and as more or less masculine or feminine versions of their gender. It might appear in this schema that sexual capacity is biologically primordial and gender is a secondary, cultural effect, but in fact the opposite is more nearly the case. Despite the many forms it has assumed in human societies, gender appears to be the stable and persistent category while sexuality has been more changeable and adaptive. The gender arrangements of most societies have dictated what is valued and permitted in the domain of sexual identity and sexual behavior and have done so for the most part within binary male/female orders that have reproduced themselves as systems of male dominance. Though they can be studied on their own terms, sexual ideologies, sexual practices, and representations of the sexualized body are deeply influenced by the gendered norms that have prevailed in political, cultural, and economic life of all historical societies. In a sense, gender makes a social virtue out of the necessity of biological sex, policing the boundaries of the sexually permissible, nourishing ideals of sexual love, and dictating norms of sexual aim and object.

The power of the procreative model of sex has been so great that we are encouraged to think of sexuality as an innate force or drive favoring heterosexual sexual relations. Religious prescription and scientific opinion alike have generally endorsed this view. However, the notorious unruliness and apparent unpredictability of sexual desire has continuously destabilized the heterosexual model, producing contrary effects: it has provoked societies to favor theories and moral regimens that channel or repress

sexuality in behalf of accepted norms, but it has also made sexual freedom or emancipation a cause and justification for individual or social rebellion. However, while there is no dismissing the entrenched belief that sexual desire is a natural drive with innate aims and objects, historians of sexuality have found it far more fruitful to think of sexual desire, following the ideas of the French philosopher, Michel Foucault, as a kind of cultural discourse implicated in the "games of power" played by competing discourses of law, religion, folk beliefs, and science. In this view sexuality is a set of negative sanctions and positive incentives enshrined in language, images, and other cultural representations that do not repress or channel desire so much as express it in the form of cultural ideals of love, family, and heterosexual propriety, and as revulsion or distaste for aberrations from these norms. Foucault's aim here is to historicize and denaturalize sex, to make us think of it not as an irresistible drive that owes its truth to an inherent quality it possesses naturally, but as a product of cultural tactics that makes it continuous with power and politics.

Foucault's strategy of thinking about sex as cultural discourse rather than universal instinct allows us to appreciate better the permutations, both subtle and dramatic, that mark the difference in sexual expression between cultures and within cultures over time. It allows historians to analyze sexuality as a form of power that operates on and through individuals, exhorting them to culturally admissible ends, but also occasionally arousing in them resistance to or rejection of mainstream norms. This way of thinking about sexuality does not dismiss the biological and material origins of sexual desire, but it does demand that we consider how individuals experience physiological events – their own and others' – through the lens of culture. One woman's pleasure might be another's pain; an experience of sexual ecstasy at one moment might be a humiliating debacle at some other time. Finally, discourse analysis reveals the connections between the deeply personal experience of sex and the public domains of state and society. It shows us how sexuality reflects changes in government, citizenship, social life, science, and technology, and influences these things in turn.

Much of the evidence we have about the early history of sexuality is deduced from what we know about demography and patterns of marital fertility extending back into human prehistory. Marriage and kinship alliances are ubiquitous institutions in human societies, providing the immediate context for procreation, child rearing, and the transmission of wealth. Historical demographers are convinced that ancient peoples had sufficient understanding of birth control to shape family fertility in significant ways, limiting or spacing births when necessary, expanding family size when prospects improved. The quantity and nature of sexual relations were certainly influenced by the vicissitudes of marital fertility, and we can presume that women's sexual experience and health, in particular, were directly affected by the need to resort to abstinence, prolonged breastfeeding, abortifacients, or abortion to limit births, or by life-threatening multiple pregnancies in times of abundance. In historic times, in the ancient West and Far East alike, knowledge of contraception was widespread and presumably widely employed. Knowledge of body function circulated in official medical practice and oral culture based on theories of humoral dynamics in the West, and in the East on notions of the balance of *yin* and *yang*. In both East and West, medical knowledge was a precious resource for understanding methods of avoiding pregnancy or birth, ensuring fertility or the birth of a boy, and enhancing or anesthetizing sexual feeling. In ancient China and classical Greece and Rome, sexuality was

aligned with profoundly patriarchal gender systems that favored viable male heirs and, with some exceptions, regarded women merely as reproductive vessels. The most prosperous Chinese, Greek, and Roman men fulfilled their conjugal duties but took their sexual pleasures elsewhere, with prostitutes or boys in Greece and Rome, or concubines in China. Marriage was foremost an arrangement between men for producing (male) heirs and transmitting property to the next generation of patriarchs.

In ancient Greece and republican and imperial Rome, remarkably similar sex and gender systems set the foundations for all later developments in the West. The Greek and Roman male citizen exercised complete legal and material dominion over everyone else in society: women, slaves, and minors. Women were regarded as inferior beings and enjoyed little autonomy and few rights. Rigid codes of sexual conduct based on concepts of penetration and "active" or "passive" sexual practices paralleled this hierarchical gender system. An adult male was permitted to penetrate but he risked losing his personal honor if he either allowed himself to be penetrated orally or anally, or willingly assumed the passive, inferior position in intercourse. In ancient Greece an adult male could exercise his right as penetrator on slaves and with boys who did not yet possess their manly honor, especially if the man was a distinguished citizen and the boy from a good family. Scholars have argued that ancient pederasty shared nothing with our modern concept of homosexuality, in which reciprocal penetration occurs between peers, a notion that would have been unthinkable to a Roman *vir* or a citizen of a Greek city-state.

The concept of ancient pederasty and its putative difference with modern homosexuality spawned an important epistemological debate in the 1970s about the meaning and historicity of same-sex love. Historians who favored a social constructionist position, in which the meaning of sexual experience derives from the historical situation, argued it is misleading to apply the word "homosexual" to same-sex sexual relations before the nineteenth-century invention of the term (Halperin, 1990: 29–33). Men or women in such relationships would not have understood the pleasures, the dangers, or the sense of identity of modern homosexuals. "Essentialists," though they concede a host of historical variations, were willing to assume that homosexuals and homosexual love has always been pretty much the same. This debate has now moved into more subtle terrain, but it continues to inform the field by requiring historians to probe beneath the linguistic conventions of sex and situate sexual experience in historical context. This debate is different from, but often conflated with, the debate about whether individuals are genetically or otherwise predisposed to a particular sexual nature. Here the issue is the degree of determinism in biological or environmental influences that confers a sexual identity on individuals which then carries corresponding rights or legal sanctions. The philosopher Ian Hacking has tried to bridge both these debates by proposing a way of thinking about individual actions, identity, and linguistic classifications that stresses reciprocal interaction and rejects purely voluntarist or determinist explanations (Hacking, 1995: 239).

Sexuality in the ancient world was constrained and sanctioned by social expectations and legal codes, but religion did not play an important role in shaping sexual beliefs or practices. The period in world history that followed the flowering of classical antiquity was dominated by the rise of the great world religions: Islam, Buddism, Hinduism, Judaism, and Christianity. In varying degrees, and often in the absence of strong central governments, religious elites intervened forcefully to regulate sexual

behavior, particularly as this related to marriage and legitimacy, but also to acceptable norms of sexual activity. On the whole the great religions undergirded patriarchal gender orders, subordinated or segregated women, devised rituals of purification surrounding menses, and proscribed sexual deviations, especially same-sex sexuality and adultery. From the millennium through the fifteenth century, in both Chinese and Western medicine, special attention was given to women's reproductive disorders in deference to their special status as progenitors.

Holy orders in all religions attempted to seal off devotees to sexual temptation, but Latin Christianity in particular drew on classical ascetic philosophy and the Pauline tradition to nourish an ideal of sexual renunciation that sought to extinguish desire altogether and prepare the body for spiritual salvation (Brown, 1988: 54–5). Marriage and procreation, in this perspective, were a reluctant concession to the laity, a way of confining and channeling sexuality so that neither the clerical nor the secular hierarchy was threatened. Ecclesiastical courts in Islam and in Latin and Byzantine Christianity accused and punished sinners, judging adulterers, fornicators, and sodomites according to the rigorous standards of Qur'an or canon law. Religious and medical authorities also attempted to specify orthodox forms of sexual intercourse that were healthful and procreative, and that positioned women on the bottom. It was not doubted that women experienced sexual pleasure, even orgasm, but medical authorities preferred to think this was not necessary for the release of "seed" and therefore for fertilization. Notwithstanding the necessary cooperation of sinful men, womenfolk were regarded as the gravest threat to the sexual order of the medieval era, tempting husbands and engaging in prostitution. Though we have evidence that nonmarital sex occurred with some regularity, even in the confessional, marriage became an increasingly popular institution in the course of the Middle Ages, serving as a growing bulwark against sexual disorder.

The period from 1500 to 1800 was a great period of dynastic state building in world society. With respect to matters of sexuality, the rise of secular authority did not free sexual regulation from the thrall of religion so much as intensify it in the interest of state authority. In the new Western monarchies and in the Chinese and Ottoman empires, ruling patriarchs exercised absolute sway. Family patriarchs were regarded as virtual extensions of royal power and were given new legal instruments to control their women and children. Rebellious Protestants, meanwhile, went further still in the European and North American domains they controlled, trying and imprisoning adulterers, prostitutes, and (unmarried) fornicators, and burning sodomites at the stake for their crimes. Sodomy was a catch-all term that covered all forms of non-vaginally intromissive sex, including masturbation, bestiality, and especially anal intercourse. Hundreds of putative sodomites were executed in this way during moral panics in the Netherlands between 1690 and 1711. That this absurd word survives today in criminal indictments is testimony to the timorous reluctance of legal officers actually to specify the sex act of which defendants are accused.

The Spanish and Roman branches of the Catholic Inquisition, with the support of Catholic monarchs, were scarcely less harsh in the policing of their own congregants. In the midst of the profound political and religious upheavals of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, sexual deviance became a symptom of social rebellion. The long-term effect of these attempts to purify sexual morality in the early modern West was a deeper reinforcement of the only permissible form of sexual expression – marital,

procreative intercourse – and a new interest in populations and families by nation-building political elites as key elements in the expansion of state power.

Until about the eighteenth century it could be argued that the factors that shaped human sexuality were similar in most human civilizations. Governments were mostly too weak to influence behavior or attitudes effectively. Marriage and sexual relations were still closely linked to the business of making heirs and having children, to economic conditions and family survival, and the transmission of property. Love in its modern, companionate form did not yet exist; indeed, strong expressions of physical or emotional passion were regarded in all cultures as debilitating and disruptive forms of madness or love-sickness. In effect, sexuality was more a public than a private matter, policed by communities and kin, governed by an economic logic, and divided everywhere into two great categories: procreative and non-procreative.

At some point during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a schism appeared that would separate Western and Eastern sexualities for much of the next two centuries. In Europe and North America rapid economic development expanded and diversified prosperous elites, particularly the urban middle classes, causing rapid population growth and improved prospects throughout all levels of society. With sufficient assets, couples could choose careers, marry, and plan families with greater certainty. As child and maternal mortality rates finally began to decline, couples were able to make emotional investments in one another and in their children which strengthened the affective bonds of family life. Romantic love took flower from this more stable soil, and new forms of individualism emerged that encouraged people to cultivate personal distinctiveness in feelings and attachments.

Ironically, as varied individual and private selves, including sexual selves, became more common, scientists and doctors were busy discovering universal laws that ordered and regulated sexual bodies. In this way, too, Western and Eastern societies diverged. Scholars have shown that in premodern times anatomical and physiological representations of male and female bodies in Western and Eastern medicine relied on a common, androgynous body with differently positioned but homologous reproductive organs in each sex, the vagina being an inverted and internalized penis and so forth. Physiological differences were explained by relative humoral balances, heat, or measures of *yin* or *yang*. In the eighteenth century, however, Western scientists amassed evidence appearing to demonstrate that women and men's bodies were decisively different, particularly in skeletal structure and in reproductive function. Women's wider hips, menstrual cycles, and weaker musculature, their changeable emotions and putatively weaker reasoning were regarded as naturally determining women's domestic and procreative functions, while men were believed better equipped for the rigors of social struggle. Male and female bodies were described as incommensurable but complementary, with the strength of physical attraction dependent on the relative differences in masculine and feminine traits.

The rather sudden appearance of a "two-sex" system essentially locked men and women into a form of biological determinism that experts, and, increasingly, individuals throughout society believed to be their sexual destiny. Coincident with this sexual materialization of gendered bodies, women and men's sexualities were held by medical specialists to be markedly different. Unless overcome by abnormal uterine furor, women were characterized as passive, inorgasmic beings, men as aggressive, opportunistic ones. These views confirmed and legitimated women's confinement to the

domestic sphere at a time when greater numbers of middle-class folk could live on the husband's income alone. Though they were enjoined to be punctiliously discreet, far from repressing discourse about sexuality, middle-class people were obsessed with sexual health and hygiene, wrote manuals and tracts, and spoke endlessly about the ways that sexual excess, masturbation, or, contrarily, a misguided abstinence, could lead to weakness, sterility, and "degenerate" offspring. It is not likely that contemporaries thought of these rules as sexual in nature – the word "sexuality" itself did not circulate widely until the end of the nineteenth century – but as hygienic tactics for disciplining bodies, diet, and even desires as a way of maintaining a viable procreative economy.

Inevitably, what began as a regimen for bourgeois self- and class-improvement became, in the course of the nineteenth century, a set of biomoral criteria used by the respectable classes to justify intervention in the lives of sexual "others." These "others" were initially the traditional class rivals of the bourgeoisie: vice-ridden and profligate aristocrats, drunken and disorderly proletarians, and bestial peasants. New public health and educational officials believed each class "type" could profit, in its respective way, from exposure to bourgeois values and hygiene; the earliest welfare state ventures for the poor, single mothers, and abandoned children dished out bourgeois moral precepts along with other forms of support. Sexual segregation and differentially gendered curricula became the rule in the new public schools, paralleling developments in society at large.

Additional sexual "others" were located. Chief among these were prostitutes, who had always been considered a moral scourge, but who were now accused of spreading venereal disease throughout respectable society. Some continental European states regulated and medically segregated prostitutes; even liberal Britain experimented with obligatory inspections in mid-century. Only a few outspoken women, such as Josephine Butler and Christabel Pankhurst, pointed out that there would be no prostitutes if there were no male clients for them. European Jews escaped from the ghetto into citizenship in the nineteenth century only to find that they were demonized as sexual predators with abnormal erotic tastes and appetites. Indeed, ethnic minorities in all populations were presumed to be the most likely recruits for the brothel or perpetrators of violent rape. Finally, to an extent and with a zeal moderns find extraordinary, masturbators were diagnosed as mental or hereditary defectives whose habits were leading them to certain doom, and whose progeny, if they could have any at all, were certain to be born defective. Medical advice in this instance supplemented traditional religious suspicions of sensuality by fiercely indicting this solitary behavior that circumvented "normal" procreation. Doctors were known to prescribe electrified penile rings or clitoridectomies to worried parents as ultimate solutions.

One of the most sinister aspects of the construction of sexual "others" in nineteenth-century Europe was the way that notions of race and ethnicity helped constitute both the ideals of virtuous sexual self-mastery and the negative stereotypes of depravity and loss of control. Western colonialism had been supplying cultural representations from less "civilized" parts of European empires for centuries, but in the nineteenth century, coeval with the development of Darwinian and other biological notions of organic evolution and race, Europeans made racial distinctions part of their conceptions of moral and sexual respectability, selfhood, and citizenship. Ann Laura Stoler has written persuasively about the ways that ideas of sexual purity and the avoidance of

external pollutions – a central feature of bourgeois moral self-discipline – were paired with binary opposites constituted by the presumed depravity and uncontrolled eroticism of colonial people of color. The long Western fascination with the harem, and the actual practice of otherwise respectable colonial officials keeping "native" mistresses, fueled the imaginations of colonizers and European administrators worried about their nationals "going native." They were encouraged to write laws for their colonies that segregated colonizers and colonized peoples, denied citizenship to non-Europeans or people of mixed race, and prescribed family and pedagogical regimes for colonists of an archetypal "Dutchness," "Frenchness," or "Englishness" that existed nowhere in the home country, but that became, for everyone, models for comportment (Stoler, 1995: 107–11).

The materiality of race and its palpable appearance in Europeans of mixed parentage helped establish a representational benchmark in the European imagination of the virtues of purity and the consequences of pollution. When racial stereotypes were conflated together with middle-class notions of sexual self-control, competence, and citizenship, we can better understand why people of color, whom Europeans otherwise reviled as lazy and irresponsible, seemed, as sexual beings, to pose a direct threat to the sexuality of Europeans. The phobic anxieties of Europeans about race and race-mixing, and their resistance to extending full rights to native peoples over the long run of Western imperialism, was an integral aspect of the history of sexuality.

The most important conceptual revolution in the history of sexuality took place in the last decades of the nineteenth and the first decades of the twentieth centuries. We still live today with the consequences of the discovery of the "perversions," as a nomenclature of sexual variations and as identities that possess the power to encompass selfhood. The men who described and catalogued the varieties of sexual life were medical experts whose work coincided with one of the historic crests in the prestige and power of science. The vocabulary they used was the pathological terminology of the clinic, and though many of them were deeply sympathetic with their patients, believing penal sanction inappropriate for most of them, the discourse of pathology and norm they employed exerted a powerful influence over popular belief and usage.

Perverse behavior, obstinate and against the grain, is as old as humankind. Some of this has inevitably taken the form of sexual contrariness, but it was only at the end of the nineteenth century that such behavior came to be regarded as a "perversion" enacted by a "pervert," in other words a behavior that became a kind of natural identity, whether inherited or acquired. Part of the explanation for this development lies in the social history of modern cities, in the explosion of modern consumer culture, and the evolution of new forms of individualism. Tastes, knowledge, and pleasures previously reserved for elites were now available for more general consumption. But the invention of the perversions was not a banal classificationism run amok; it was a systematic effort to distinguish "normal" from abnormal beings and to police the boundaries of respectability.

In the medical schemata of the era, perversions were excesses or deficiencies of normal organic functions. Excessive heterosexual libido led to nymphomania in women, satyriasis in men. Sadism (named by the sexologist Richard von Krafft-Ebing after the Marquis de Sade) was an exaggeration of normal sexual aggression and dominance; masochism – pleasure taken in being dominated – was its contrary, passive expression. Deficiencies in what was believed to be the innate aim of sexual libido – to

have intercourse with the opposite sex – produced attractions to inappropriate objects or bizarre actions that fell well short of full heterosexual intercourse. This list was long indeed, including all varieties of fetishism, exhibitionism, bestiality, and particularly inversion, which was the preferred term for an unnatural attraction to someone of the same sex. Inversion, which eventually came to be known as homosexuality, was the perversion that aroused the greatest concern among specialists and the general public. It is not surprising that the pathologization of same-sex sexuality coincided with its criminalization almost everywhere in the West and, where Western science and medicine were admired, elsewhere as well. Indeed, Japanese and Chinese modernizers in this era lauded Western sexologists like Havelock Ellis and Magnus Hirschfeld and praised the "invaluable impact they had had on the social system, the arts, and the sciences in Western countries" (Frühstück, 2003: 84).

There are two notable things about this classificational system. First is the fact that the desired norm against which all the perversions were measured was procreative heterosexual intercourse, which, as we already know, had an ancient religious and scientific genealogy. Second, the entire logic of the effort to identify and cure the perversions depended on the gender orthodoxies of modernizing societies. The pathologization of the perversions was to a great extent a response to a perceived crisis in gender roles and widespread fears that "normal" sexual drives were being deflected from their rightful ends. Women were taking jobs and entering the professions in increasing numbers, and some were even bold enough to demand equal rights and the vote. In the years leading up to World War I, some European statesmen were convinced that the growth of perversions had lowered birth rates and weakened their nation's defenses. Thus, sadomasochistic perversions that characterized women as whip-wielding dominatrices and men as groveling slaves were a direct inversion of the gender hierarchy. Inversion in either sex was by definition sterile, as was a fetishistic obsession with shoes, nails, bonnets, locks of hair, or any other object that deflected "normal" vaginal intromission and ejaculation. The entire family of fetishes violated the gender order by focusing the love that men and women owed spouses and children on objects, or on the "wrong" sex.

We often hear more about women's than men's roles in challenging traditional gender boundaries at the turn of the century. But the decline in birth rates, the new attention given to homosexuality, the retreat of many young men into their clubs or colonial service rather than into marriage and family life provoked questions about the quality of masculinity and raised the specter of impotence. In an essay entitled "The Most Prevalent Form of Degradation in Erotic Life," written in 1912, Sigmund Freud offered the explanation that, ironically, men were often impotent with their wives and only virile with prostitutes or servants precisely because they and society had overidealized women as wives and mothers and could not imagine them as objects of lust (Freud, 1953, vol. IV: 210–12). From this perspective, neither the woman who adhered closely to the traditional image of the "angel in the house" nor the feminist who challenged it could engage the sexual attentions of the conflicted men of the age!

By 1900 or so the entire range of what we still take to be "perversions" were integrated into clinical practice and came gradually into discursive use in the broader culture. The word "heterosexual" was also introduced at about this time as a deceivingly neutral description of "normal" sexual aim. Scholars have speculated that the fact of giving a name and symptomatology to a feeling or disposition that was only

vaguely understood might have helped shape self-consciousness about personal identity, making people who engaged in homosexual behavior into homosexuals, lovers of pain into masochists, and so forth. No doubt the sexual scripts of the new medical discourse shaped, to some degree, actions and expectations in individuals, but scholars have persuasively argued for a complex way of thinking about how new socially constructed identities and tastes interacted reciprocally with medical terminology. This reciprocity seems particularly clear in the case of homosexuality. The medical correspondence that the psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing had with his patients reveals a range of reactions to the medicalization of homosexuality from outright resistance to grateful acknowledgment (Oosterhuis, 2000: 223–30).

In the course of the twentieth century, science had an even more important effect on our understanding of sexuality than at any earlier time, confirming existing prejudices in some cases, unsettling them in others. Evolutionary biologists sorted out the nature of genetic inheritance around the turn of the century and began to speculate that sexual reproduction and sexual dimorphism played important roles in organic evolution by ensuring natural variability and thus adaptability in the "higher" species. To some observers this confirmed the advantages of contemporary gender arrangements, though there was some disquieting evidence that female choice in courtship and reproduction was far greater throughout the natural world than once thought. On the "micro" level of scientific discovery, scientists in the 1920s and 1930s gradually pieced together the powerful role hormones played in human sexuality. Dubbed the "sex hormones" for their influence on sexual development and libido, synthetic estrogen and later testosterone were developed and manufactured in laboratories. As scholars of these developments have pointed out, it made no sense to gender testosterone "male" and estrogen "female" as we still do today, because they do not originate exclusively in the male or female gonads and, in any event, exist naturally in both sexes.

There is no doubt that the discovery of the complex chemical and genetic underpinnings of sexual desire and the sexual body have markedly weakened the gender orthodoxies inherited from the past by drawing our attention to the extraordinary variability in the anatomy and physiology of sex. We must also note, on the other hand, that in the late twentieth century, hormone therapy is used principally to reinforce the "typical" sexual characteristics of gender, and transsexual operations are permitted in individuals who are believed to suffer from "gender dysphoria", where "true" gender does not correspond to anatomy.

Thus, despite some growing uncertainty about nature's plan for the human species, experts continued to find evidence that confirms the natural distinctiveness of men and women and the advantages of heterosexual sexuality. Social scientists discovered child sexuality and "adolescence" in the first decades of the century, but their response was to treat the tumultuous uncertainty of youthful sexuality as a problem to be solved, disciplined, and turned to "healthy" ends. Schemata for "normal" childhood development permeated public health and hygiene activities and youth organizations such as scouting and church groups, putting adults on guard against aberrant behavior. Menarche was converted from a private family matter to a public and hygienic rite and was integrated smoothly into consumer culture.

Sexual radicalism nonetheless flourished in this more open atmosphere. Members of the literary avant-garde like H.G. Wells and the London Bloomsbury group formed

serial heterosexual or homosexual attachments outside marriage. In America, Margaret Sanger became an international celebrity by combining feminism with an international crusade in favor of birth control, not least in order to allow women the opportunity to experience sexual relations while avoiding the dangers of childbirth. Finally, following World War I, pioneers like the Englishwoman Marie Stopes and the Dutch sexologist Theodor Van de Velde wrote explicit self-help manuals on "married love" that broke with convention and offered visions of sexual fulfillment, pleasure, and orgasmic bliss for couples. Their advice surely brought many husbands around to a greater consideration for their wives, but it also fetishized sexual happiness, male initiative, and the all-important orgasmic consummation, and thus almost certainly helped to popularize a set of erotic standards that were harder to attain than before.

The progressive eroticization of marriage signaled by these developments had two apparently contradictory inspirations: a libertarian desire to provide sexual alternatives to marital, procreative intercourse, and another which aimed to make marriage a more attractive site for the efficient state control of reproduction. There is more overlap in these positions than is generally appreciated. Throughout the West, state interest in the reproductive health of national populations encouraged public figures to consider eugenic measures that limited the birth rate in the lower orders and expanded it in the better-off classes. Birth control and sterilization thus went hand in hand with cultural and fiscal incentives for satisfactory marriages, greater hygienic accountability, and an active discouragement of non-procreative sex, especially homosexuality. The most extreme application of these various goals occurred in Nazi Germany, though some Scandinavian countries and American states had practiced the sterilization of "sex criminals" since the 1920s.

It was at this historical juncture that the sexual histories of the West and the East and parts of the southern hemisphere began to reconverge. The modernization process in China, Southeast Asia, and much of the colonized world appropriated some of the conceptual elements of Western efforts to regulate reproduction in the national interest. Intellectuals in Revolutionary China sought support for their campaigns to eliminate arranged marriages, promote maternal health and hygiene, and fight against prostitution and venereal disease. But they did much of this out of eugenic concerns for healthy births and national fitness, not simply from enlightened motives. By 1950s and the onset of the Communist Revolution, direct state intervention in reproduction became a brutal fact. Non-procreative sexuality was severely sanctioned and a one-child limit was put on family size in order to make the most efficient use of natural resources. Elsewhere in the developing world reproductive technologies were often summarily employed to regulate births or to end pregnancies when an undesired female fetus was discovered, sometimes in the name of individual rights, sometimes in direct opposition to them.

In Catholic countries with a Latin heritage or new nations on the rim of the Mediterranean, twentieth-century government intervention in the private sphere of family and sexuality has often taken the form of the enforcement of sexual honor. Honor cultures have traditionally prized the virginity of daughters and the marital chastity of wives. Women, in these cultures, live under an umbrella of protection assured by fathers, husbands, and brothers, for whom women are a source of dowry revenue or lucrative kinship alliance, which had to be defended like any form of property. Where honor cultures have been historically strong, there has been a very close

correlation between gender structures and what is permitted in the domain of sexuality. In the modern era, the states of Mediterranean Europe and North Africa, Spanish South America, and especially Brazil have forcefully intervened to bolster sexual honor. In Brazil, sexual crimes against virgins were harshly punished, as were adulterers, especially wives. Crimes of passion, on the other hand, where personal or family honor were at stake, were often excused in law or jury decisions. In some Arab lands, law and custom support to this day the killing by brothers of a sister who has dishonored the family through premarital intercourse.

The last forty years of the twentieth century were witness to a series of changes in sexual beliefs and practices that have transformed modern societies in dramatic and permanent ways. It is important to note that the new attitudes and new reproductive technologies that have marked this "sexual revolution" are simply more radical or more effective versions of earlier developments. The birth-control pill, introduced in 1960, made contraception foolproof for many women; it permitted a truly secure and decisive psychological separation of reproduction from sexual pleasure, freeing women to pursue jobs and careers while encouraging sexual experimentation. But forms of somewhat efficacious birth control have been in use since the rise of human civilizations, and sexual relations for the sake of pleasure have a long and celebrated past. Now, however, contraception and sexual pleasure were far more widely available. Even the female orgasm was freed from its inferior status. In their 1966 book, *The Human Sexual Response*, William Masters and Virginia Johnson demonstrated women's powerful, multiorgasmic capacity in convincing physiological detail.

We may take all this for granted nowadays, but for those who came of age sexually on the cusp of that change – the late 1960s and 1970s – it was a brave new world. However, the drive for personal sexual emancipation that occurred in that era was inseparable, ideologically and practically, from liberationist movements for blacks, women, and the poor, and from nationalist struggles throughout the world against the vestiges of colonialism. For white, middle-class college students in Europe and America, sympathy with these movements and the adoption of a defiantly "countercultural" sexual lifestyle was a logical application of the contemporary belief that "the personal is the political." Utopian communities featuring sexual experimentation sprang up throughout the 1970s, pornography and public nudity flourished as never before, and live-in couples increasingly put marriage and family on the back burner.

The last of the liberationist movements to burst on the scene was the revolt of sexual minorities. Gay and lesbian liberation exploded with dramatic force in the summer of 1969 at the Stonewall bar in New York City, when a routine police raid on a neighborhood bar provoked violent resistance from the gay clientele. Word spread quickly in gay communities throughout urban America and Europe, setting in motion gay liberation movements that were unafraid to threaten or use radical means for achieving the decriminalization of homosexuality and other meaningful legal reforms. Urbanites in cities with long-established gay communities, and the educated readers of Alfred Kinsey's influential publications on human sexuality in the late 1940s and early 1950s knew about the existence of homosexual minorities, but until the 1970s punitive legislation, police surveillance, and widespread discrimination kept most gay men and lesbians on the defensive. The youthful explosiveness of the "coming out" process created generational splits in the gay community that have been slow to heal.

The shock that all this sexual rebelliousness administered to traditional, marital, heterosexual, and missionary-position sexuality was damaging. But if the stranglehold of sexual orthodoxy was broken forever, the world of sexual liberation remained a very gendered place. Female militants from the political action of the 1960s and 1970s bitterly recall the macho sexual posturing of male radicals. Many of the women who have been frontline feminists have written that the sexual revolution was "for men," in the sense that it did less to emancipate women from sexual servitude than to complete their "sensualization" and "objectification" for the delectation of men. In practice, many women found that though sexual and reproductive autonomy were significant advantages, they did not erase the gender discrimination that persisted in the workplace, in the division of labor in the domestic sphere, or in the political world. Many feminists also found to their chagrin that prostitution, and pornography that degrades women, have prospered in the new era of relative decriminalization, not disappeared.

The deadly appearance of HIV/AIDS in the 1980s initially cut a terrible swath through gay communities throughout the world, raising the specter of a "gay" disease spread by homosexual sexual relations. Conservative and religious defenders of traditional moral norms seemed initially desperate to characterize the scourge as God's punishment for deviations from heterosexuality, but this proved to be an entirely rearguard defense. Later events proved that any sexual contact, or infected needles could spread the disease just as well. By the turn of the century, HIV/AIDS was making the greatest headway in sub-Saharan Africa among heterosexual populations. In the wake of the epidemic, sexual behavior has been slow to change. In the gay communities in the West that have been devastated by HIV/AIDS, some gay men have embraced monogamy or safe sex, but many others have maintained the sexual practices and dating patterns of the 1970s as a way of affirming what they have come to think of as constitutive of their identity as gay men.

The epidemic illustrates the extraordinary capacity that sexual deviance has always possessed as a symbol in moral panics and purity crusades against minorities or exotic sexual practices. In modern times, as Angus McLaren has pointed out, social upheavals or rapid changes of any kind are often *read* as sexual rebellions or as crises in sexuality (McLaren, 1999: 45). This was so with the fears of masturbation when adolescence emerged as a distinct new phase of childhood, with the challenges of both first- and second-wave feminism, with the linking of communist subversion with [homo]sexual deviance in the 1950s, or the obsession with the innocence of children in our increasingly sexually explicit society that has led to the persecution of day-care workers and Sunday school teachers.

As a set of attitudes and practices, desires and inhibitions, we have been able to trace sexuality though the ages and across cultures. Sexual variations are as manifold as the variations in human societies, which reminds us of the truth that the past is indeed a foreign country. However, we have also seen that within any society at some point in time there is a remarkable correlation between gender systems and the sexual cultures that shape the behavior and expectations of individuals who live within them. Sexual attitudes and practices frequently test the limits of the gender system, but are constrained by the cultural and legal barriers that have historically protected gender hierarchies, gendered work, and gendered spaces from the threat of rapid change. Sexual discourses have always possessed the power to persuade us of the possibilities

of pleasure or the dangers of transgression, but historically they have followed a master script dictated by the gender arrangements of society. It may be that emerging transgender and gender-fluid identities may eventually destabilize dominant gender hierarchies, but that moment has not yet arrived. LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer/questioning) people are still "minorities."

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