STRAIGHT

THE SURPRISINGLY SHORT HISTORY OF HETEROSEXUALITY

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For Malcolm

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INTRODUCTION

Sexual Disorientation

Every time I go to the doctor, I end up questioning my sexual orientation. On some of its forms, the clinic I visit includes five little boxes, a small matter of demographic bookkeeping. Next to the boxes are the options "gay," "lesbian," "bisexual," "transgender," or "heterosexual." You're supposed to check one.

You might not think this would pose a difficulty. I am a fairly garden-variety female human being, after all, and I am in a long-term monogamous relationship, well into our second decade together, with someone who has male genitalia. But does this make us, or our relationship, straight? This turns out to be a good question, because there is more to my relationship—and much, much more to heterosexuality—than easily meets the eye.

There's biology, for one thing. My partner was diagnosed male at birth because he was born with, and indeed still has, a fully functioning penis. But, as the ancient Romans used to say, *barba non facit philosophum*—a beard does not make one a philosopher. Neither does having a genital outie necessarily make one male. Indeed, of the two sex chromosomes—XY—which would be found in the genes of a typical male, and XX, which is the hallmark of the genetically typical female—my partner's DNA has all three: XXY, a pattern that is simultaneously male, female, and neither.

This particular genetic pattern, XXY, is the signature of Kleinfelter Syndrome, one of the most common sex-chromosome anomalies. XXY often goes undiagnosed because the people who have it often look perfectly normal from the outside. In many cases, XXY individuals do not find out about their chromosomal anomaly unless they try to have children and end up seeing a fertility doctor, who ultimately orders an image called a karyotype, essentially a photo of the person's chromosomes made with a very powerful microscope. In a karyotype, the trisomy, or three-chromosome grouping, is instantly revealed. As genetic anomalies go, this particular trisomy is not a cause for major alarm (aside from infertility, it causes few significant problems), which is a good thing, since it is fairly common. The estimates vary, in part because diagnosis is so haphazard, but it is believed that as many as one in every two thousand people who are declared male at birth may in fact be XXY. At minimum, there are about half a million Americans whose genetics are this way, most of whom will never know it.

What does an unusual sexual biology mean for sexual orientation? Is it even *possible* for XXY people to have a sexual orientation in the way we usually think about sexual orientation? What about their lovers, partners, and spouses? "Heterosexual," "homosexual," and "bisexual" are all dependent on the idea that there are two, and only two, biological sexes. What happens when biology refuses to fit neatly into this scheme? If I'm attracted to, and in love with, someone who is technically speaking neither male nor female, does that make me heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, or something else altogether? Who gets to decide? And, more to the point, on what grounds?

Some would argue that genetics aren't as important as anatomy and bodily functions. After all, you can't see chromosomes with the naked eye. But here, too, I run into problems. Part of what makes a man, as we are all taught from childhood, is that he has a penis and testicles that produce sperm, which in turn are necessary to fertilize a female's egg cells and conceive a fetus. The ability to sire a child has been considered proof of masculinity for thousands of years. This is something my partner cannot do. His external plumbing looks and acts pretty much like any genetically typical male's, but, in the words of one of my partner's vasectomied coworkers, "he shoots blanks." In my partner's case, no vasectomy was required. His testicles do not produce viable sperm. They never have and never will. This is part of the territory for most people who have XXY sex chromosomes.

So if heterosexuality is by definition, as some of our right-wing brothers and sisters like to claim, about the making of babies, then there is no possible way for my partner and me to be construed as heterosexual. But even the Bible recognizes that infertility exists. The notoriously procreation-fixated Catholic Church permits marriage, and marital sex, between people known to be infertile. Curiously, whether or not reproduction is a cornerstone of heterosexuality seems to depend on whom you ask, and in what circumstances.

Not that it really matters in practice. At this point in time contraception is more the rule than the exception for sexual activity between different-sex partners throughout the first world. Many people, including members of committed male/female couples, don't have children or plan to have them, yet somehow this doesn't stop them from feeling quite certain that they know what their sexual orientations are. They consider sexual orientation as being rooted in a calculus of subjective attraction and biological sameness. The Greek "hetero" means "other" or "different," after all, and biological men and women do differ from one another. We make use of these biological differences every day without thinking every time we look at people and identify them as either male or female, ask whether a baby or a dog is a boy or a girl, or determine the sexes of the members of a couple we spot on the street and assign them sexual orientations in our minds.

Surely such informal, man-in-the-street diagnostics ought to apply just as well to my partner and me. Or perhaps not. As an XXY individual who has chosen not to take hormone supplements, my partner's naturally occurring sex hormones take a middle path. His estrogen levels hang out a little lower than mine, his testosterone levels a little higher. As a result, my partner, like other XXY people who don't take exogenous hormones, has an androgynous appearance, with little to no facial and body hair, a fine smooth complexion, and a tendency to develop small breasts and slightly rounded hips if he puts on a little weight.[1] When we lived in a LGBT-heavy neighborhood in Boston, my partner and I were often identified by others as lesbians. We were regularly referred to as "ladies" by shopkeepers, door-to-door Mormons, and parents trying to prevent their kids from crowding us at the zoo. Lesbian couples we encountered in passing often shot us little conspiratorial smiles of recognition. (We always smiled back. Still do.) But it wasn't all pleasantries. Once while walking together we had bottles thrown at us from a car, its occupants screaming "Fuckin' dykes!" out the windows as they sped away. Assumptions of sexual orientation are never merely innocent perceptions, because these perceptions shape behavior.

Assumptions about biology and gender are complicated, fraught, and by no means clear or unambiguous. The ways people have identified my partner's biological sex, and therefore not only the nature of our relationship to one another but also our respective sexual orientations, have run an extraordinary gamut that might be distressing if we hadn't long ago learned to laugh at it all. My partner's physical androgyny—the minimal facial hair, refined complexion, and elegant, long-limbed build that are common side effects of his genetic anomaly—has led some people to assume that he is a female-to-male transsexual who is early in the transition process, still more hormonally female than male. I have heard him identified as a "passing butch." Once, at a party, I overheard a woman stating with assurance that my partner was a very feminine gay man who had "made an exception" for me. At other times I have been assumed to be the one making the exception, a "hasbian" who turned from dating women to seeing a gentle, feminine straight man. By the same token, these reactions have changed as we've aged and our styles of dress and grooming have changed. For the past several years, with my partner usually dressing in corporate-office menswear and sporting a dashing haircut modeled on the young Cole Porter's, we have typically, though not always, been read as heterosexual. If the range of responses we've had can tell me anything about what my sexual orientation is supposed to be, it's that other people don't necessarily know what box I should be checking off on those clinic forms either.

My own sense of sexual identity is, incidentally, no help. I have no deep personal attachment to labeling myself in terms of sexual orientation, nor do I have the sensation of "being" heterosexual or homosexual or anything but a human being who loves and desires other human beings. I have been romantically and sexually involved with people of a variety of biological sexes and social genders over

the course of my adult life. When pressed, I am most likely to declare my "sexual identity" as "taken." This option, however much it might be the best fit, is not available to me on most forms that ask this sort of question.

I could, I suppose, resort to legal documents to sort out the question of what my orientation is, and what the orientation of my relationship with my partner might be. Here at last it is uncomplicated. Based on our birth certificates, my partner and I and our relationship could be defined as uncomplicatedly heterosexual. But there's a caveat, and it's a big one: our sexes were diagnosed at birth on the basis of a visual check of our genitals, on the assumption that external genitals are an infallible indicator of biological sex. This is the assumption behind every "it's a boy" or "it's a girl," not just historically but every day around the world. Thanks to the publicity given to cases like that of intersex South African athlete Caster Semenya in 2009, and indeed to the ink I am spilling here, however, mainstream culture is gradually becoming aware that this assumption is not necessarily warranted. Many biologists, including Brown University biologist Anne Fausto-Sterling, have eloquently testified that humans have at least five major sexes—of which typical male and typical female are merely the most numerous—and that furthermore, human chromosomes, gonads, internal sexual organs, external genitals, sex hormones, and secondary sexual characteristics can appear in many different guises.

The law, however, still acknowledges only two sexes. It does not always or necessarily acknowledge sexual orientation at all. On the occasions when it does recognize sexual orientation, it typically acknowledges only two of them as well, heterosexual and homosexual. (Once in a while bisexuality is included, but often not.) All of these sexual orientations are wholly dependent upon—and could not be conceptualized without—the general consensus that there are two and only two human biological sexes. But as we now know, and as is demonstrated so charmingly in the person of my very own beloved, this is not necessarily so. Rather, the convenient sorting of human beings into two biological sexes and a correspondingly limited number of sexual orientations is an artifact of a historical system that was formed at a time when medicine, biology, and social theory were capable of far less than they are now. We are still using a very limited nineteenth-century set of ideas and terminology to talk about a decidedly more expansive twenty-first-century landscape of biology, medicine, law, social theory, and human behavior.

It has, in point of actual fact, only been possible to be a heterosexual since 1869.[2] Prior to that time, men and women got married, had sex, had children, formed families, and sometimes even fell in love, but they were categorically not heterosexuals. They didn't identify themselves as "being" something called "heterosexual." They didn't think of themselves as having a "straight" sexual identity, or indeed have any awareness that something called a "sexual identity" even existed. They couldn't have. Neither the terms nor the ideas that they express existed yet.

"Heterosexual" and "heterosexuality" are creations of a particular, distinct, well-documented time and place. They are words, and ideas, developed by people whose names are known to us and whose handwritten letters we can still read. Their adoption and integration into Western culture was a remarkable process that historian Jonathan Ned Katz, the first to chronicle it, has aptly called "the invention of heterosexuality."

It was an invention whose time had clearly come, for it took less than a century for "heterosexual" and "heterosexuality" to leap out of the honestly rather obscure medical and legal backwaters where they were born and become part of a vast and opaque umbrella sheltering an enormous amount of social, economic, scientific, legal, political, and cultural activity. Exactly how this happened is a complicated, diffuse story that takes place on many different stages at roughly the same time, over a span of time measured in decades.

We need not, however, labor under the delusion that "heterosexual" became such a culture-transforming success because it represented the long-awaited discovery of a vital and inescapable scientific truth. It wasn't. As we shall see, the original creation of "heterosexual" and "homosexual" had nothing to do with scientists or science at all. Nor did it have anything to do with biology or medicine. "Heterosexual" (and "homosexual") originated in a quasi-legal context, a term of art designed to argue a philosophical point of legislature.

Perhaps this should not surprise us. Indeed, it can be argued that the biomedical business of sexuality has nothing to do with sexual orientation or sexual identity anyway. The materials and physiology of sexual activities are, on a strictly mechanical level, a separate problem from the subjective mechanics of attraction or desire, as rape—something that can and does happen to people without regard to biological sex, age, condition, or consent—attests with such brutal efficiency. Separate from human sexual orientation or identity in a different way are the chemistry and alchemy of human conception, which can, after all, take place in a petri dish. There is, biomedically speaking, nothing about what human beings do sexually that requires that something like what we now think of as "sexual orientation" exists. If there were, and the attribute we now call "heterosexuality" were a prerequisite for people to engage in sex acts or procreate, chances are excellent that we would not have waited until the late nineteenth century to figure out that it was there.

"Heterosexual" became a success, in other words, not because it represented a new scientific verity or capital-T Truth. It succeeded because it was *useful*. At a time when moral authority was shifting from religion to the secular society at a precipitous pace, "heterosexual" offered a way to dress old religious priorities in immaculate white coats that looked just like the ones worn among the new power hierarchy of scientists. At a historical moment when the waters of anxiety about family, nation, class, gender, and empire were at a rather hysterical high, "heterosexual" seemed to offer a dry, firm place for authority to stand. This new concept, gussied up in a mangled mix of impressive-sounding dead languages,[3] gave old orthodoxies a new and vibrant lease on life by suggesting, in authoritative tones, that science had effectively pronounced them natural, inevitable, and innate.

What does all this have to do with me, my partner, and the unanswered question of which multiple-choice box I should tick? Plenty. The history of "the heterosexual" lurks unexamined not just in our beliefs about our inmost private selves, but also in our beliefs about our bodies, our social interactions, our romances, our family lives, the way we raise our children, and, of course, in our sex lives. Virtually everyone alive today, especially in the developed world, has lived their entire lives in a culture of sexuality that assumes that "heterosexual" and "homosexual" are objectively real elements of nature.

As a result of this pervasiveness, heterosexuality is like air, all around us and yet invisible. But as we all know, the fact that we can see through air doesn't mean it can't exert force, push things around, and create friction. In the process of asking questions about my own life, I have had to learn to think about heterosexuality like an aircraft pilot thinks about the air: as something with a real, tangible presence, something that is not only capable of but is constantly in the process of influencing if not dictating thoughts, actions, and reactions. If I, or any of us, are to be able to decide whether or not we or our relationships qualify as "heterosexual," it behooves us to understand what that means. This history represents the attempt to begin to comprehend what exactly this invisible wind is, where it comes from, what it's made of, and where it might be pushing you and me and all of us.

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For something that has such a monolithic aura of inevitability and authority about it, it often seems that we have a difficult time saying for sure exactly what, and who, is heterosexual. Recently we have witnessed a wave of loudly, politically heterosexual Larry Craigs, Mark Foleys, and Bob Allens all neck-deep in scandal over secretive same-sex liaisons. In 2004, the phrase "on the down low" entered the national vocabulary thanks to Oprah Winfrey's bully pulpit, instantly familiarizing and frightening a generation with the phenomenon of the heterosexually identified married man who has surreptitious sex with other men.

This shouldn't have shocked anyone, really. We've known full well since Kinsey that a large minority—survey numbers vary, but Kinsey claimed 37 percent, and other surveys have agreed that it is at least that high—of men have at least one same-sex sexual experience in their lives. And even this should have been predictable, given the vast evidence from centuries past of married men who were known to enjoy sexual liaisons with other men. Indeed, they were often punished for it, which is how we know.

There have, in other words, been hundreds of thousands, probably millions of married men whose intimate lives could be characterized as simultaneously straight and not. The question is, Are these husbands heterosexual? And how do we decide?

The answer, of course, depends on where you draw your lines. In turn, where we draw the lines is not a legal question or a medical question or a scientific question or even a moral question. It's a social question. There is no ultimate high council in charge of heterosexuality, not even an *Académie française* whose uniformed experts determine its official usages and rules. No act of Congress or Parliament exists anywhere that defines exactly what heterosexuality is or regulates exactly how it is to be enacted. On the subject of the parameters and qualifications of straightness, the International Standards Organization has been conspicuously silent. What heterosexuality "is" is not handed down to us from on high, and it is far from concrete or monolithic.

Historically, what heterosexuality "is" has been a synonym for "sexually normal." Early in the history of the term, it was even used interchangeably with the term "normal-sexual." And there, as they say, is the rub. "Normal" is not a mode of eternal truth; it's a way to describe commonness and conformity with expectations. But what is most common and expected, in terms of our sexual lives or any other aspect of the human condition, does not always remain the same.

Sexual expectations and behaviors, like all other social expectations and behaviors, change over time. Within living memory there have been massive shifts on questions like whether women were supposed to feel sexual desire or have orgasms, whether sex outside of marriage could ever be openly acceptable, and the permissibility and desirability of sex acts other than penis-in-vagina intercourse. Casting further back in time, historians have tracked major shifts in other aspects of what was considered common or "normal" in sex and relationships: Was marriage ideally an emotional relationship, or an economic and pragmatic one? Was romantic love desirable, and did it even really exist? Should young people choose their own spouses, or should marriage partners be selected by family and friends? Even assuming that we speak only of interactions and relationships between males and females, these relationships have simply not always been the same, nor have the people participating in them been expected to do, think, feel, or experience the same sorts of things. What "normal-sexual" is, above anything else, is *relative*.

A similar situation holds in regard to the beliefs that are held about why it should be that women feel desire for men and vice versa. Beyond the old tired tug-of-war over nature and nurture, there are numerous other contestants vying for pride of place as being The One True Reason that men and women want anything to do with one another in the first place. The religious often make claims that different-sex attractions are "God-given," others that they are "universal." With an eye to sexual dimorphism, some determinists announce that an interest in a different-sex sexual partner is "biological." Dozens of scientists and pseudoscientists in dozens of fields have hurried to supply their own, ever more specialized, hypotheses. The cacophony of opinion on this does not appear to have reduced anyone's faith that there must, inevitably, be a right answer to be found. Having decided that heterosexuality exists, we maintain a correspondingly unshakable faith that it exists for a reason. Hardly anyone seems to notice or care that we go back and forth, and then back and forth some more, about what that reason might be.

Nor do we seem to achieve consensus on where to place heterosexuality's limits, or even how best to police them. Often, points of damage or destruction—the places where a thing becomes not *this* but *that*—are useful places to look for the boundaries that limn definitions. Not here. At various times and in various places, people have believed that heterosexuality (or normal-sexuality) could be destroyed by, among other things, becoming a Catholic monk, reading novels, not moving your bowels often enough, cross-dressing (including women wearing pants), too much education, not enough religion, divorce, improper ejaculation, masturbation, the abolition of slavery, women's working for pay, and too much leisure time for anyone.

Even if we are not inclined to paranoia about heterosexuality's potential destruction by the literary, the constipated, and the apostate, we still have to reckon with situational homosexuality. Sometimes, even the most devoutly heterosexual find themselves in circumstances where their normal pattern of being sexually interested in different-sex partners seems to go right out the window. As unnumbered sailors, prisoners, and boarding-school boys have demonstrated, whether one behaves heterosexually or homosexually sometimes seems like

little more than a matter of circumstance. Does the experience of situational homosexuality fundamentally change whether a person is heterosexual or "normal-sexual"? Unsurprisingly, the answers are all over the map, as are the explanations for why a phenomenon like situational homosexuality should exist in the first place.

Despite the fact that most of us use the term "heterosexual" with enormous (and cavalier!) certainty, there seems to be no aspect of "heterosexual" for which a truly iron-clad definition has been established. There seems to be general agreement that "heterosexual" has to do with men and women and the approved sorts of sexual, emotional, social, familial, and economic attractions and activities that might go on between them, but the overall picture is ambiguous and the details change depending on who you ask and when in time you look. There is a Heisenbergian quality about defining "heterosexual": the more precisely the term is being defined, the more likely it is that the term is only being defined by the lights of a single moment in time and space.

Similarly telling in their grand and vexing ambiguities are two other things we inevitably talk about when we talk about heterosexuality: gender and sex, both in the sense of "having sex" and in terms of biology.

"To have sex" can mean lots of things. It might mean "to be a creature with a biological sex." Or it could mean "to be gendered," as in "androgynous fashions," "male pipe fittings," "chick flicks." It can mean having a libido, in the sense of "oversexed" or "undersexed," or simply having genitals, as when we refer to the vulva and all its parts as "a woman's sex." Colloquially, we most often use it to mean "to engage in sexual activity," but what this in turn denotes is alas far from clear. It could simply mean "to engage in erotic activity," but it could as easily mean "to engage in penis-in-vagina penetration," "to attempt to procreate," or "to engage in erotic activity leading to orgasm." Any, or indeed all, of these things could be true and relevant when talking about heterosexuality. This is why we can't assume that "having sex" only means one thing, even if we're operating on the assumption that we're talking about sexual activity between partners of different biological sexes. Only one of the many sex acts of which our species is capable, after all, requires the simultaneous engagement of both a penis and a vagina.

When it comes to "sex," context is king: its three tiny letters wear an awful lot of hats. This is true even within fairly narrow and strict-seeming fields, such as biology. The thing we call "biological sex" is the diagnosis of physical sex made according to the observation of bodily characteristics, and also the constellation of bodily characteristics that are observed to make that diagnosis. The late Johns Hopkins sexologist John Money identified seven different criteria for a diagnosis of biological sex in humans, including genetic or chromosomal sex, internal anatomy, external anatomy, sex hormones, and the type of gonads an individual possesses. This is extremely useful, as it emphasizes the very real possibility that in any given individual, these criteria will not all necessarily point to the same diagnosis. Sex chromosome anomalies, "ambiguous" genitalia that in some way or other blur the difference between male- and female-typical genitals, hormone levels that are far from textbook, and gonads that are somewhere between ovary and testis are all fairly common and naturally occurring.

There is little agreement, however, about how these atypical biologies should be identified. Nor is there consensus on how they might best fit in, socially and psychologically, to a binary system that traditionally has no space for them. Attempts to force people with nonbinary biology to fit into the binary mold of male and female have had highly mixed results and have created enormous controversy, not least for sexologists like John Money.[4] The usual biological sexes recognized by biomedical science are female, male, and, for conditions like my partner's XXY chromosomes, intersex. But, as should be clear from the fact that my partner's body, neither male nor female in so many major biological ways, was uncontroversially diagnosed as male when he was born, even these lines are frequently blurry.

One reason that biological sex may not be as clear-cut as it may seem it should be is that biology can change. Some changes in sexual biology are spontaneous, such as ejacularche (the onset of the ability to ejaculate) or menopause (the cessation of the ability to menstruate). Others are induced, such as hysterectomy, which is a surgery removing the uterus (and often ovaries as well). Not coincidentally, hysterectomy may also present an incidence of induced menopause if performed on a premenopausal woman.

Biological and bodily changes may—or may not—affect how we diagnose or think of a person's biological sex. We don't think of women as no longer being women just because they have hysterectomies. A man who has his testicles surgically removed because of testicular cancer is still considered male (and will likely be firmly reassured of this by his doctors). On the other hand, if the same surgeries—removal of the uterus/ovaries or testes—are done as part of sex reassignment, then these biological changes suddenly become fundamental in terms of giving a basis to a diagnosis of a new sex. The organs removed may be biologically identical, but the surgeries' effects on "biological sex" can be light years apart. Biology is a science, but it does not exist in a vacuum.

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Gender, or "social sex," is alas no less complex. Gender refers to all the manifestations of masculinity or femininity that are not immediately, demonstrably biological. These include mannerisms, conventions of dress and grooming, social roles, speech patterns, and much more. A useful way to think about it is that we *have* biological sex—it is inherently present in our physical bodies—but we *do* gender.

Beliefs about the relationship between biological sex and gender are varied and complex; our understanding of it is decidedly incomplete. For most of our past, people did not typically perceive any difference between sex and gender at all. The contention was that biological sex created gender because gender was essentially biological—or to put it another way, there was some "essence" associated with being biologically female that generated characteristics we call femininity, and some "essence" of maleness that did the same with regard to masculinity. Until quite recently this was a mainstream, commonly accepted view. In the past century or so, however, the gender essentialism model has been heavily criticized and largely disproven. Whether or not gender is influenced by biology, and to what degree if so, is now the subject of intense scientific debate.

The role of gender socialization, on the other hand, is uncontroversial and can be easily observed. We begin teaching gender beginning at birth, for instance by swaddling baby boys in blue while girls are given pink, by adorning baby girls with frills and lace while baby boys are dressed in less ornamented, more utilitarian clothes. In these and innumerable other ways, people learn how to "do gender" according to the expectations of the cultures and subcultures in which they live. For the most part we are socialized to do gender so that we are "gender typical" or "cisgendered," meaning that the way we do gender matches up with our culture's expectations of what someone of our biological sex is supposed to be like: masculine males and feminine females. But gender is not uniform. "Masculine" and "feminine" can be highly nuanced, with different styles that make social statements about a person's socioeconomic class, ethnicity, religion, education, subcultures, and aesthetics. This is all the more relevant because people often don't perceive themselves as doing gender consciously. Many people believe that their masculinity or femininity, and the ways they express it, is "just who they are."

Gender is indeed part of how we express our personalities. It isn't as automatic or as inevitable as it may feel. One way we can see gender as a mode of self-expression in action is in the ways that styles of gender performance change over time and from one subgroup of people to the next. Masculinity does not look, sound, dress, or act the same for a rapper as for an Orthodox Jewish rabbinical student; a California surfer chick does femininity very differently from a New York City lady-who-lunches. At the same time, these ways of doing gender can be changed . . . and learned. A California surfer chick could learn how to do femininity in ways that would let her fit right in at New York's toniest tables, if she wanted to.

Styles of doing gender are mixable and mutable, and so are genders themselves. Masculinity, femininity, and androgyny are not mutually exclusive characteristics. Being big, burly, and bearded is no barrier, for one of my friends, to also being a tender and caring registered nurse. Being petite and pretty doesn't exclude Danica Patrick from being a ferociously aggressive race-car driver. There are no such things as "opposite" genders, any more than a strawberry is the "opposite" of a plum. They are merely different. Describing any two sexes or genders as "opposite" is not fact; it is merely an outdated and inaccurate custom.

Whether or not we are aware of it, the ways we do gender are

a primary mode of self-expression and social signaling. Our gender performance tells other people a great deal not just about who we are, but who we want other people to perceive us to be. This is particularly relevant because gender is so much a matter of performance, and because it is so separable from biology. A person's gender may or may not have a conventional relationship to his or her biology. There is, after all, no reason it has to.

For all these reasons, we have to look carefully at who and what we're talking about when we discuss heterosexuality. Heterosexuality, as we understand it, is rooted in relationships between people of particular sexes, genders, and biologies. Yet sex and gender and biology encompass a wide variety of things. When we take all this into account, it becomes somewhat easier to understand just why and how it has come to pass that we don't, in fact, have a complete and valid universal definition for "heterosexual."

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Would that defining "heterosexual" were as simple a problem as defining a particular type of sexual desire or activity. Alas, human sexual interests and behaviors are every bit as ambiguous and complicated as biology and gender. Science has not been able, at this point, to supply a definitive answer to the question of why and how our sexual interests and desires arise. What the available evidence suggests is that sexual desires are partly intrinsic to the individual and partly learned or acquired from culture. How intrinsic and learned desires relate to one another, however, and the actual mechanisms that cause a given person to desire one thing or person but not another, remain an utter mystery.

Many of the things that people frequently find sexually desirable can be linked to reproductive success. Clear skin and good teeth are signs of health. Curvy female hips are a signal of sexual maturity and suggest that a woman will bear children easily. But there is huge variety in what can be found sexually appealing, and quite a bit of it has no meaningful bearing on reproductive success whatsoever. Long lean bodies, short fleshy bodies, pale skin, dark skin, blue eyes, brown eyes, red hair, black hair, moustaches, and hands with long thin fingers all have their ardent partisans, although none of these characteristics are necessary in order to make happy, healthy babies. Why should "gentlemen prefer blondes," as some assuredly do? Or redheads? Why should women find cleft chins appealing? What's the percentage in being besotted by freckles? Hard to say. There doesn't appear to be any obvious biological benefit in it. And, of course, sexual desires are not limited to human beings or their bodies. History tells us that people can and sometimes do feel sexual desire for, among rather a lot of other things, shoes, urine, barnyard animals, latex rubber, and trees. The so-called "reproductive imperative," in other words, is not necessarily what is driving the bus when it comes to our experiences of sexual desire, not even when what we desire is a human being of a different biological sex than ourselves.

The staggering variety of things we can and do desire is only exceeded by the number of things we do with them. How do we define a sexual activity as being a sexual activity, and what does it mean to engage in one? Historically, the criteria for what constituted "sexual activity" for most scientific purposes have been remarkably narrow, confined solely to the act of penis-in-vagina intercourse. Philosopher Marilyn Frye, in a 1988 essay entitled "Lesbian 'Sex,'" noted that in most sexological research, this was additionally narrowed to describe only the experiences of males. What this means is that for many decades, for the purposes of biomedical science, the sex act of record consisted of the insertion of an erect penis into a vagina, the thrusting of that penis within the vagina, and the ejaculation of semen from the penis followed by withdrawing the penis from the vagina.

You'd never know it from the insert-thrust-squirt-remove trajectory that serves as a description of this activity, but penis-in-vagina intercourse actually involves two people. Their genitals are very different, they engage in different physical activities during this type of intercourse, and they have different sensory experiences of it. Neither would you guess that human sexual activity included many other options, performable by many different combinations of participants of various biological sexes. This has been a very real problem in both the study and the popular discussion of sexual activity: a single lopsided model of a single activity is held up not just as the baseline from which all else departs, but as the alpha and omega of human sexual behavior.

The resulting picture we have developed of sexuality and its workings has historically been severely biased. Surely if we are trying to understand just what sexual activity and heterosexuality have to do with one another, and how that relationship might work, it is incumbent upon us likewise to consider that "sexual activity" doesn't look the same for everyone. As Lisa Diamond and Michael Bailey have begun to argue, the narrowly male-oriented focus of so much sexological research means that when it comes to sexual orientation, models developed on the basis of male-oriented research might not even be appropriate tools to use to help figure out how sexuality works for women.[5] The implications, insofar as the applicability of our current system of understanding and classifying sexuality, are staggering.

Another way in which our understanding-sexuality toolbox is often lacking concerns the variety of functions that sexual activity fulfills. People often attempt to justify the heterosexual/homosexual scheme on the basis of the fact that while different-sex couples can engage in reproductive sex, same-sex couples cannot. But reproduction is hardly the only reason different-sex couples engage in sexual activity. It cannot be. For purely mechanical reasons—because a specific sexual act must be performed by two fertile people of different biological sexes at the right time of the menstrual cycle for conception to even be possible—procreative sexual activity can only possibly account for a small subset of all sexual activity between women and men.

In truth, sexual activity is social activity. Our culture is often loath to recognize this, although we do embrace the idea that sexual activity can be about the social functions of expressing affection and intensifying social and emotional bonds. Indeed, many people believe that sex is only justified by love. But sexual activity has many other social roles to play. It can be a reward, a mode of exchange, a way to affirm loyalty, or an appeasement. It can be a commodity, a way of providing reassurance, and a rite of passage. As a source of pleasure it has few equals. It's an age-old means of asserting dominance and a visceral mode by which to demonstrate submission. It can furthermore be a means of gaining control, a way to humiliate and violate, and a way to punish. And any given sex act, no matter who engages in it, can and often will involve more than one of these dynamics.

The subjective experience of the erotic and of pleasure is, perhaps unsurprisingly, also enormously variable. It's not just that desires differ from one person to the next, or that some sexual episodes are transcendent and others are only so-so, but that identical objects or actions can provoke entirely different reactions depending on circumstances. Not everything that is potentially desirable is *actually* desirable. Not all "sex" is sexy. A lover we once found irresistible becomes repulsive after a nasty breakup. A sex act we enjoyed with one partner may just not do it for us when we try it with another. Some argue that it may not even be appropriate to call some examples of "sexual acts"—rape, for example—sexual at all.

All of this brings us back around to the issue of heterosexuality and what we must take into account if we are going to illuminate it in any way. Human sexuality, as should be clear by now, encompasses much more than the ways that the biological sex(es) or social gender(s) of the people we fancy compare to our own. Whom we choose as erotic-activity partners is just one aspect of what we do sexually. Words like "heterosexual" may hint at, but do not accurately denote, all the complexities (or vagaries, or ambiguities) of an individual's actual lived experience of sexuality.

Because there is so much inbuilt variability where sexuality is concerned, there are five caveats worth keeping in mind for any exploration of sexual orientation. First, the biological sex and social gender of a prospective partner are only two of many characteristics in which an individual may take a sexual interest, and their relative importance is subjective and variable. Second, sexual desire (what we like or want) and sexual behavior (what we actually do) are not the same thing, and may or may not be related. Third, sexual and/or erotic activity take on considerably more forms than we may be personally accustomed to recognize, and certainly more forms exist overall than are sanctioned by any given culture. Fourth, we have to remember that all sexual activity is social activity, while only a small subset of all sexual activity is also reproductive activity. This means that it behooves us to think about sexual activity first as social, and only consider it as (potentially) reproductive when it actually is. And last, we must bear in mind that the relationships between perception, thought, emotion, and behavior are neither automatic nor consistent. In many cases they

are demonstrably affected or directed by culture and socialization. We don't just want what we want because we want it; we want what we want because that's what we've learned to want.

With this in mind, we can proceed to take a look at the history of heterosexuality. As we should, because whether we like it or not, the idea of heterosexuality is embedded in each of us, in our actions and reactions, our emotional responses, and our intellectual assertions. We can see its distinctive imprint in the things we believe about love, in the ways we pursue pleasure, in the things we expect from our relationships, our work, our government, and our genitals. This concept we call "heterosexuality" doesn't just shape our sex lives; it shapes the ways we understand the world to work and, consequently, the ways it does. Heterosexuality reaches too far beyond the merely personal, and in too many profound and pervasive ways, for us to write it off as a simple matter of biology or nature or even Divine plan. It cannot be reduced to economics, the search for pleasure, or even to true love. It certainly cannot be reduced to a few checkboxes on a clinic form. All of these things may play a part in what we think of when we think about heterosexuality, but none of these things *are* heterosexuality.

CHAPTER ONE

The Love That Could Not Speak Its Name

One of the "top ten new species" of 2007, according to the International Institute for Species Exploration at Arizona State University, was a fish by the delightful name of *Electrolux addisoni*. But was *Electrolux* actually new? The ornate sleeper ray was familiar to the scuba divers and snorkelers who were sometimes greeted by it as they swam its home waters off the South African coast. Doubtless local fishermen had known about it even longer. But in another sense, *Electrolux* was genuinely novel. It became "new" on the day a biologist confirmed that it hadn't previously been documented, gave it a name, and triumphantly added it to the rosters of official, openly shared, systemic human knowledge.

As the case of *Electrolux* demonstrates, there is a difference between simply *being* and *being known*. No one would attempt to argue that this fish had no existence prior to the time it was given a scientific name. Yet suddenly, in 2007, it was "new." Written documentation of a particular kind, by an authority figure of a particular kind, was what turned *Electrolux addisoni* from a thing that just *was*, whether anyone knew about it or not, into a thing that *was known*.

In the nineteenth century, a similar thing happened to heterosexuals. Prior to 1868, there were no heterosexuals. There were no homosexuals either, for that matter. For most of human history, love might have been romantic or platonic, brotherly or maternal, *eros* or *agape*, but it was definitively not heterosexual or homosexual, straight or gay. The names did not exist, nor did the categories they now describe. In the mid-nineteenth century, Western people in general were only beginning to think or speak in terms of there being different types of human beings who were differentiated from one another by the kinds of love or sexual desire they experienced.[1]

Specific sexual behaviors, to be sure, were named, categorized, and judged. This was nothing new. They had been for more than a thousand years. The most famous example of this is the term "sodomy." As a term and an idea, if not as a practice, "sodomy" arose from the Catholic Church, which for much of Western history was the highest authority on matters of behavior and morals (among rather a lot else) in the West. The Catholic Church has historically disapproved, on principle, of all sexual activity that is not potentially procreative. This is the broadest definition of "sodomy."

Sodomy was sodomy no matter whom it involved. Sodomy could take place between a man and a woman, two men, two women, or some other combination of participants. A "sodomite" was not a kind of person but a person who committed a particular type of sin. In the same way that a usurer committed the act of moneylending or a murderer committed the act of killing, a sodomite committed the act of sodomy. It was not an identity label but a rap sheet.

Part of the Catholic understanding of "sodomy" was an awareness that sexual sin was something that could happen to anyone. Simply feeling desire put one at risk. Sexual misbehavior was not a marker of some sort of constitutional difference but merely evidence of temptation unsuccessfully resisted.

This sensibility is a large part of why, prior to the nineteenth century, Western culture did not include the concept that all people were split into two sexual camps. It is also why there does not seem to have been much sense, prior to the eighteenth century, of people thinking in terms of a hierarchy of sexual "types." The tendency instead was to think in terms of people who, openly or covertly, occasionally or habitually, engaged in a variety of sexual acts. Some of those acts were more sinful than others. The only sex act that was not considered sinful in the eyes of the Catholic Church was potentially procreative

penis-in-vagina intercourse performed within the context of a valid marriage, and even that had to be performed in particular ways and limited to specific times.

Much has changed. We are now so used to thinking of sexuality in terms of orientations and identities, "deviant" versus "normal," that it hardly occurs to us that there might be workable alternatives to our customary ways of thinking. But history shows that there are actually many such alternatives. The desire for sexual activity has been thought about, as in classic Catholic dogma, as a manifestation of the unruly appetites of the earthly body, possibly goaded on by forces of evil. But the desire for sexual activity has also been imagined simply as a biological function, like eating or elimination, a common concept in both Classical thought and in the neoclassical thought of the intellectual eighteenth century.

Our modern habit of interpreting sexual desire as a manifestation of our identities, part and parcel of our individual human selves, is merely one more option. But since the nineteenth century, this has been the option our culture has chosen more than any other. As French philosopher Michel Foucault famously put it in his *History of Sexuality,* a particular sexual type became "a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form, and a morphology. . . . It was consubstantial with him, less as a habitual sin than as a singular nature." This is the view upon which the existence of "heterosexual" depends.

This was not an overnight shift but a process. Although it had its roots in earlier changes in philosophy and science and law, the nineteenth century became the era in which the decisive shift occurred. By the end of the nineteenth century, Western culture had learned to view sexual desire and activity not as a unified field on its own, but as a collection of specific and distinctive desires and activities, each of which had a role to play in helping to define a specific and distinctive subtype of human being. Many different desires and acts were given official names in this period, making the momentous shift from merely *being* to *being known.* As these desires and acts were defined and characterized and written down in the right authoritative ways by the right authoritative people, they were used to help create another set of known entities: sexual types. Of these, the most powerful and important, and certainly the most enduring and culture-altering, were "homosexual" and "heterosexual."

Because the terms have become ubiquitous, we forget that "homosexual" and "heterosexual" come from this very particular time and place. Every era has its own catchphrases and neologisms. Our world is not static, and as new ideas and objects enter the culture so do new words and phrases, even as old ways of thinking and outmoded vocabulary fade. We happily and knowledgeably chat about computer geeks and geneticists, but no longer about alchemists or natural philosophers. We would consider it rather stilted to speak of bluestockings, jesters, and foundlings, but we are quite comfortable speaking of women intellectuals, comedians, and children who have been put up for adoption. Such changes in language can convey far more than just dictionary meanings. For instance, "Negro," "colored," "black," "African American," and "person of color" could all technically be used to refer to the same person. But their historical freight gives each of these words different associations, so much so that we have strong preferences about which ones we would willingly choose. Words and the ways we use them are always rooted in time and in place.

This is particularly important when we consider "heterosexual." What Jonathan Ned Katz has called "the invention of heterosexuality" took place at a specific point in history, in a unique intertwining of historical and cultural streams. Put simply, these terms came to exist because a need was perceived to identify people as representatives of generic types distinguished on the basis of their tendencies to behave sexually in particular ways. The story of how this need arose is a story of industrialization and urbanization, the rise of the middle classes, the complications of empire, and the scientific and philosophical legacies of the Enlightenment, all of which contributed to creating a world in which the idea of a type of human being called "heterosexual" made a specific and useful kind of sense.

SEX AND SIN IN THE NEW CITY

In the nineteenth century, the cities of Europe and North America began to swell at a previously unimaginable pace. By 1835 London reached a population of one million, while its nearest Continental rival, Paris, hit the million mark in 1846. Urban growth took place at exponential rates: New York City boasted 60,515 residents in the 1800 census . . . and a whopping 3,437,202 in 1900.

Behind the urban explosion lay newly mechanized and rapidly growing industry and its rapacious appetite for laborers—not to mention all the goods and services that a swelling population requires. The promise of steady work and steady pay lured the rural working classes out of the hinterlands by the hundreds of thousands in a twin process of urbanization and corresponding rural population drain that continues around the world even today. It is impossible to overstate, and nearly impossible to imagine for those of us who have always lived in a world with enormous industrialized cities, how dramatically the modern metropolis has altered human culture.

These hugely increased, unprecedentedly dense populations transformed urban experience. All sorts of common but unorthodox sexual activities like prostitution, sexual violence, and same-sex eroticism seemed suddenly more frequent, more random, and more out of control than they had been when the cities and their populations were both much smaller. Certainly, by comparison to rural towns and villages, the cities seemed like hotbeds of sexual misconduct and excess. It also appeared to many that people not only engaged in more sexual misconduct in the cities, but that they were more likely to get away with it. This was often true, since city populations frequently lacked the social unity and interdependence of the smaller villages and towns, making community enforcement of proper behavior both less possible and less likely. Some rural modes of policing sexual behavior survived in the cities, at least for a while. The charivari, a gritty mob of people banging pots and pans, tooting horns, and singing gleefully filthy songs under the windows of an illicit couple, for instance, survived in both the United Kingdom and the United States until at least the First World War. But neither rowdy noisemaking nor shotgun weddings, nor even the odd spot of vigilante justice, could conceivably address all of the sexual crimes that took place in a big city.

This might, in theory, have been a job for the police. In reality, policing as a branch of civil service was still in its infancy, with City of London police chartered by statute in 1839 and New York City forming a police force only in 1845. The responsibilities and reach of city police forces took time to work themselves out, and the law and the courts would similarly scramble for decades to catch up with the regulatory and disciplinary needs of the swelling cities. To those who lived in cities—and even to those who only heard stories about them—the urban world was a frightening, dirty, dangerous place, especially from a sexual standpoint, full of prostitutes and predators.

Urban sexual misconduct was typically, if inaccurately, blamed on the lower classes. Because the fastest-growing groups in the new city were the working class and the poor, it often appeared that the rising rates of sexual misconduct reflected the socioeconomic class of these new urbanites rather than merely the larger overall population. The middle and upper classes, who prided themselves on their moral rectitude (and had the additional advantage of enjoying all the discretion money could buy), had no trouble ascribing disproportionate, even innate, degeneracy to their socioeconomic inferiors.

This was not a new idea. Western Europe had long held to the idea that all creatures belonged to a grand overarching hierarchy. Since the medieval era, a central notion of Western thought was the idea of the *scala naturae* or Great Chain of Being, the concept that all living beings had a place in a strict hierarchy that led inexorably upward from dirt to plants to animals to humans to the angels and ultimately to God. As one ascended this natural ladder, one ascended in perfection. Wealth, health, moral uprightness, and social dominance were all considered proofs of superiority, while inferiority betrayed itself in poverty, sickness, immorality, and powerlessness. All men were automatically higher than all women, white-skinned people automatically higher than dark-skinned, and Christians above those of other faiths. The Great Chain thus furnished a conceptual framework that would be important later: the idea that inherent or quasi-inherent "imperfections," such as particular sexual habits, could be part of the intrinsic makeup of whole classes of people.

As the nineteenth century wore on, the Great Chain of Being acquired a sort of slantwise sibling in evolutionary theory. Charles Darwin himself never asserted that evolution represented the same sort of grand ladder of ascending perfection. Indeed, the fact that the notion of progress toward an ultimate Godly perfection was entirely excluded from Darwin's characterization of natural selection was part

of what made his theories so controversial. But this did not stop people from applying the teleology of the Great Chain to the principles of natural selection and evolution. In particular, the "science" of eugenics recasts the basic principles of the Great Chain onto natural selection in a particularly poisonous way. (Eugenics and Darwinism were related in a literal way as well as a figurative one: as a field, eugenics was pioneered by Darwin's cousin, Sir Francis Galton.) Eugenicists believed that human evolution had a goal, and that this goal was to produce ever better and fitter human beings. Therefore, they reasoned, a lack of moral or physical virtue directly reflected a hereditary deficit. For instance, the "moral imbecile." "Moral imbeciles," in the eyes of eugenicists, were simply born without the ability to feel or act morally, just as an imbecile—what we would now call a developmentally disabled person—was born without the ability to think or reason normally. Eugenicists saw both kinds of imbeciles as examples of evolutionary error, and of undesirable clutter in the gene pool.

At the same time as Darwin's theories were enthusiastically seized upon by eugenicists, "social Darwinists," and other champions of the hierarchy of life encapsulated in the Great Chain of Being, they also helped to facilitate a wholesale questioning of the whole notion of a fixed human hierarchy. Egalitarianism and universal human rights were relatively new concepts at the turn of the nineteenth century, brought to the attention of most as a result of the French and American revolutions of the late eighteenth century. At the time of the rise of the monster cities of the West, these progressive ideas by no means dominated the scene. The idea that birth was worth, and that one's place in the Great Chain was not really something one could change, was still common even as people began to simultaneously entertain the notions that perhaps this should not matter and that a civil society might have an interest in behaving as if it mattered less, or perhaps not at all.

As the cities grew, the pragmatic value of civil egalitarianism became increasingly evident. Whether a country was headed by a king or a president, whether it maintained a formal aristocracy or insisted upon equality of citizenship, the intense population pressure of the cities made it increasingly apparent that the masses required some sort of management. Merely asserting old hierarchies of class was not going to get the job done either, because in the new industrial economy hierarchies of class were changing, too. What was required were systematic, reproducible, universally applicable systems for social management that could be implemented on a large scale.

It is no coincidence that we first see this happening with regard to sex in early Napoleonic France. Beginning as early as 1802, when the French government began regulating and registering Parisian prostitutes via the Bureau des Moeurs (Bureau of Morals) and Bureau Sanitaire (Bureau of Health), the policing of the sexual activity of the general public increasingly became a problem for the state. Many efforts focused on specific problem behaviors like prostitution, or health problems like venereal diseases. In England, the infamous Contagious Diseases Acts (enacted in 1864) attempted to stem the tide of the latter by rigidly controlling the former, complete with compulsory gynecological exams. Other early attempts at managing the sexuality of the masses were more philosophical in nature, such as the campaign to raise the age of consent that became such a hot-button issue in the English 1870s.[2]

The law was integral to this effort to impose greater control over the sexual behavior of citizens. Central to this legal effort, in turn, was the process of creating a body of work that helped to support the law and aid it in doing its managerial work. The new secular state required secular justification for its laws, and professionals in many fields began to apply themselves to the task of providing it. Physicians like Richard von Krafft-Ebing would do this in a particular and distinctive way. Drawing on an Enlightenment legacy of scientific naming, a variety of sexual behaviors and characteristics were suddenly made both "new" and "known" thanks to Krafft-Ebing's classification and assignment of scholarly names. Krafft-Ebing's book *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) was a pioneering, and highly problematic, index to disorders of the "sexual instinct" and the human types subject to them.

As with the ornate sleeper ray that became *Electrolux addisoni* in 2007, none of the actual behaviors Krafft-Ebing catalogued were new to the annals of human experience. Krafft-Ebing no more "discovered" the various sexual peccadilloes of the human race than he could've "discovered" his own grandfather. But he did apply a formal taxonomy to the sexual actions and actors he described. Although he

was not the one who coined the word, his taxonomic vocabulary also included the word "heterosexual," its first adoption in the medical literature.

WHAT'S IN A NAME

Naming and cataloging can be real and powerful science. They can also be real and powerful cultural magic. This is precisely why we have to be wary of who is in charge of naming and cataloging things, what their motivations are in doing so, and how they go about doing it. If the right person with the right qualifications names a thing or a phenomenon in the right way, chances are excellent that other people will accept unquestioningly that that thing or phenomenon is a real scientific (which is to say objective and material) entity. By the mid-nineteenth century, when the word "heterosexual" was first coined—in a letter written May 6, 1868, by a writer named Karl Maria Kertbeny—scientific naming was a ritual that had the weight of more than a hundred years of authority behind it. But the process of scientific naming was not always as objective, or as material, as we often suppose.

Science is at root a social effort. As a discipline, material science—whether physical or biological—is a collective effort carried out by a large, loosely affiliated group of people for the greater good, and it is subject to a certain amount of human bias no matter what we do. We are simply not capable of omniscience, and so we must choose what we will pay attention to at any given instant, what qualities of an object we will decide are important enough to observe, characterize, and record. This alone is enough to show our hand.

The history of taxonomy bears this out to a degree that is frankly astonishing, and which hints at some of the human prejudice to come later in the cataloging and naming of human sexuality. Carolus Linnaeus, the brilliant Swedish father of scientific naming and self-anointed "prince of botanists," was an ardently Christian academic who wrote lengthy compendiums in scholarly Latin. He was also a bit of a sexual obsessive. Once Linnaeus had finished with them, all plants known to him had been classed according to the number and function of their sex organs, and many of them had been named for genitals as well. With a decided knack for the unsavory image, he named a stinkhorn fungus *Phallus daemonicum*, and a perfectly innocuous North American shrub commonly called the Jamaica caper became *Capparis cynophallophora*—the caper that bears a dog's penis. Even during his lifetime, Linnaeus's relentless sexualizing of his subject matter often raised critical eyebrows and occasionally inspired tirades in print. Linnaeus, in turn, immortalized his critics by naming ugly or noxious plants after them. The most famous example of this is the unattractive little relative of the aster called *Siegesbeckia*, named for Johann Siegesbeck, an academic who took strong exception to the "loathsome harlotry" of Linnaeus's work.

We can perhaps understand why others might've been frustrated. Linnaeus's system was more than a little offbeat and decidedly arbitrary in what it chose to describe: the *nuptiae plantarum*, or marriages of plants. He did not mean this as a euphemism. A world of human social and sexual expectations was encoded in his categories. *Monandria* were one-husbanded plants, tidily monogamous, with a single pistil (female sex organ) and a single stamen (male sex organ) in a given flower. *Dodecandria*, on the other hand, had a disturbingly numerous twelve "husbands" per bloom. Linnaeus's assumption was that all plants "married." He did not presume that plants like mosses, whose "weddings" he could not observe, were simply not the "marrying type"; it would take later observers to realize that many mosses actually reproduce asexually. Linnaeus could not bear the thought of it and so consigned them to the class of *cryptogamia*, those who married in secret.

Linnaeus and his sex-obsessed work would almost be laughable if they hadn't been so influential. Linnaeus's taxonomic principles—if not necessarily his sexual focus in applying them—became the basis for a breathtakingly prolific discipline. The 1735 first edition of Linnaeus's *Systema Naturae* was a mere eleven pages, but by the thirteenth and last edition in 1767, the book had grown to over three thousand pages. (Currently, the Species 2000 initiative database project based at University of Reading is working toward a valid checklist of all known species of organism, and their rolls included, as of 2009, more than one million species.)

The cataloging of known things, and the establishment of names for those things, remains a central project of science. The fact that it is

a profoundly human endeavor, saturated with human values and prejudices, is one of science's open secrets, betrayed in the very language that is used to name things. Dead languages cannot remove human fingerprints. "Phallus daemonicum" is as overt a cultural reference as "Electrolux."[3] Or, as we shall soon see, as "heterosexual."

Cataloging and naming human characteristics is but an extension of the principle of cataloging and naming natural objects and phenomena.. When nineteenth-century culture began to perceive a need to manage sexual behavior on a civic level, it also had to devise language and concepts with which to talk about them. The language that already existed for doing this lay mostly within the realm of religion—the syntax of sin and sinners, virtue and saints. Neither that language nor the Church authority on which it rested were terribly desirable to the new secular state. The practice of scientific naming provided a logical place to turn. The physical and biological sciences (including medicine) could claim a politically valuable neutrality: the objects that science investigated were not the works of man but the works of nature. Scientists could claim that they merely looked at what *was*. It was the right tool at the right time. But as we have seen, much might depend on what was chosen for observation and by whom.

It can scarcely come as a surprise that much of what was chosen for observation, when human sexuality became the object of study, was chosen because it was perceived as troublesome. Nor can it come as a surprise that those who decided to take upon themselves the task of cataloging and naming these troublesome sexual behaviors had very strong opinions about the objects of their investigation, opinions that influenced their work. Sexuality had, after all, become a pressing public issue, and it wanted effective handling by people who understood just how serious an issue it was. Nothing less than the fate of the family—and even the nation—was at stake.

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY

If the morally grey, sexually suspect world of the working-class city was the realm of public concern and state regulation, the private and eminently respectable realm of the middle-class family was one of the primary things all that regulation was intended to protect. Beginning in the late eighteenth century, a new "focus on the family" emerged as a primary concern for the newly fledged middle classes whose reach, ranks, and social power were on the rise.

Unlike inherited aristocratic wealth, middle-class money came from work in the professions, from trade, or, increasingly, from ownership and management of industry. Just as with the aristocracy, tight control over marriages, families, and children was key to protecting and increasing this wealth and security. But the middle classes did this in their own distinctive ways. Where the aristocracy (or indeed a traditional rural working household) would base its ideas of family and lineage on the management of hereditary rank and property, the middle classes, as historian Lawrence Stone has explained, organized themselves around four central and distinctively modern features: intense emotional bonds, a brash new emphasis on personal autonomy, an unprecedented interest in privacy, and an intensified interest in sex.[4]

This last point may seem surprising, but it shouldn't. The stereotypical Victorian prude, and the Victorian lady of scrupulous sexual ignorance and passivity, did exist—their modern-day analogues do too—but there was far more to Victorian sexuality than this. Victorians, including women, talked more and in greater detail about sexual issues than any previous generation we know of.

It was an era of wide-ranging and often extreme opinions on all aspects of sex. Some Victorians were indeed sex-phobic, misogynist, and prudish, even priggish. Physicians like William Acton famously made statements like "the majority of women are (happily for them) not very much troubled with sexual feeling of any kind," and British gynecologist Isaac Baker Brown did advocate, and perform, surgical removal of the clitoris as a cure for female masturbation.[5] But even among his colleagues, Acton was known as an illogical extremist, and Baker Brown was eventually drummed out of the profession.

Other Victorians' views of sex were quite progressive. Political publisher Richard Carlile professed a belief that women "had an almost constant desire for copulation," and only social constraints kept them from acting on it. Wishful thinking, perhaps, given the lack of both social approval and reliable contraception, but others were similarly bold about giving sexuality pride of place in human affairs.

"Sexual matters," wrote the popular physician and advisor Henry Guernsey, "are so thoroughly interwoven with the highest destinies of the human race, physically, mentally, and spiritually, there is scarcely any function of higher import."[6]

Most nineteenth-century middle-class individuals struggled to find a sexual middle ground—not as negative and harsh as the views of Acton or Baker Brown, but probably not as openly enthusiastic as those of Carlile or Guernsey either—where they could feel comfortable, respectable, and safe. This was no small task. The bourgeois family, with its hothouse emotions and its pigeon-hole privacies, was supposed to be a fortress and a shield, providing a buffer zone of respectability that protected its members from aristocratic decadence on the one side and the horrors of the teeming city on the other. The purpose of this family was the generation and formation of people—specifically men—who would form an unassailable backbone for the state.

The deliberate formation of a solid, respectable, and powerful middle-class culture was more than a reaction against the aristocracy or, in the New World, an effort to embody the "more perfect union" envisioned by America's founding fathers. It was also an effort to create a strong national core that could survive increasing exposure to the world. By the mid-nineteenth century, the United States, Great Britain, and nearly all of the European states had extended their reach, as well as their armies and economies, to the far corners of the globe. Whether in British India, the Belgian Congo, German East Africa, French Cambodia, or any of the legion other European or American appropriations, successful empires required adept management of far-flung possessions inconveniently populated by vast numbers of people who didn't look, think, or act like their colonial overlords. "Natives" were often thought of as primitive or childlike, in dire need of the civilizing influence of the superior European. (Fear of a brown planet is, in other words, nothing new. Nor is the racist, paternalistic sentiment well summarized as "what these people need is a honky.") But the elite and the aristocracy did not have the numbers to provide more than the uppermost layer of top brass. The majority of colonial personnel came out of the middle classes. A powerful middle class allowed European and European-descended whites to maintain their sense of themselves as standard-bearers, those whose "fitness to rule" equipped them for empire.

The question on everyone's mind was whether the middle classes would prove equal to the task. There was a pervasive fear that the bourgeoisie, with their comfortable houses and citified ways, were creating men who were hopelessly enervated, dissipated, weak, and diseased. Neurasthenia was a rather vague "illness" first characterized in 1869 by American physician George Miller Beard. It afflicted men with fatigue, anxiety, headache, depression, and sexual impotence, to which they succumbed when an insufficiently sturdy constitution was subjected to an overly stressful and stimulating world. To many it seemed as if "respectable," strong, competent white masculinity was disappearing, creating the looming specter of what Theodore Roosevelt would later call "race suicide." As Darwin's evolutionary theory became popular, some began to wonder if perhaps it was happening backwards, the respectable classes eroding generation by generation, perhaps to the point where they might become indistinguishable from those troublesome teeming masses. When British army major-general Sir Frederick Maurice worried publicly about the problem of "where to get Men,"[7] it wasn't the problem of finding males that concerned him. Paranoia and pessimism about manhood were so intense that Daniel Carter Beard, the highly influential founder of the American Boy Scouts, entitled his 1939 autobiography *Hardly a Man Is Now Alive.*

Manliness, in turn, was tightly linked to sexuality. "Real men" were virile, but virility meant both sexual potency and its strict and well-socialized control. Any form of "deviance," including masturbation, was not only morally wrong; it was also believed to drain men's bodies of vital essences and cause illness. Sylvester Graham, he of the eponymous health-food cracker, claimed that a man who could make it to the age of thirty without giving in to the temptations of his sexual urges would be a veritable god. Historian Angus McLaren devotes an entire book, *The Trials of Masculinity,* to looking at the ways in which unorthodox sexuality—whether real or imagined, harmless or hurtful—was used from the mid-nineteenth century through the 1930s as a way to separate the "real men" from the "degenerates" and

"perverts." It was a terrifically effective strategy. As William James noted an 1895 essay entitled "Degeneration and Genius," "Call a man a 'cad' and you've settled his social status. Call him a 'degenerate,' and you've grouped him with the most loathsome specimens of the race."[8]

Sexual degeneracy became a yardstick with which to take the measure of a man. Pimps and procurers, exhibitionists, effeminates, pornographers, and bigamists, as well as more exotic creatures like sadists, fetishists, and necrophiles, came under intense scrutiny. So too, notably, did men who had sex with other men. Rapists and those who preyed sexually on young women, however, were often ignored on the basis that they were more unmannerly or uncivil than they were abnormal or "degenerate." Journalistic muckraker W. T. Stead noted with some truth during the 1895 Oscar Wilde trial that if Wilde, "instead of indulging in dirty tricks with boys and men, had ruined the lives of half a dozen simpletons of girls, or had broken up the home of his friend's wife, no one would have laid a finger on him."

The desire to identify and weed out these "degenerates" and "deviants" had, by the middle third of the nineteenth century, become a pressing one. How it was to be done, on the other hand, and how exactly to describe and define the kinds of "degeneracy" in question, was far from clear. Laws concerning sexuality, mostly inherited from the canon law of the Catholic Church, tended to be vaguely worded and imprecise. Other disciplines were no better. Little wonder that the gap was not long left empty, given the pressure on the middle-class male to form the right kind of family, be the right kind of man, and, moreover, be able to specify what made him so.

THE INVENTION OF HETEROSEXUALITY

Had the German-speaking world not been going through some legislative growing pains in the 1860s, we might still live in a world without heterosexuals. Germany came together in 1866 along geographic lines that are more or less familiar to us today, an amalgamation of the multiple German-speaking kingdoms, duchies, and principalities of the North German Confederation joined together under a generally Prussian leadership. Like many civil governments, Germany was still wrestling with the implications of the French Revolution, as well as feeling the aftershocks of its own revolutionary conflicts in 1848. The new ideals of secular and civil government compelled German lawmakers, as they revised their legal codes to suit a new, composite nation, to figure out what to do with inherited collections of sex-related laws that were often more or less identical to old Church decrees.

It was a fraught process. Paragraph 143 of the Prussian Penal Code of April 14, 1851, in particular, provoked significant protest. P. 143 stipulated harsh punishments, consisting of up to five years at hard labor and accompanied by the loss of civil rights during the period of punishment, for anyone convicted of "unnatural fornication between people and animals, as well as between persons of the male sex." The rationale given for this law, and the severity of its consequences, was that "such behavior is a demonstration of especial degeneration and degradation of the person, and is so dangerous to morality."[9] The law, clearly written to sound dispassionate, nonetheless sounds the old familiar religious gong of morality and sin. As befitting a post-Enlightenment, science-respecting culture, the law invoked Nature as both a stand-in for God and a dispassionate secular authority. The addition of degeneracy made it au courant with fears of a decaying race. Taken all together, P. 143 provided highly effective leverage against sexual misconduct for the government. It also, inevitably, provided the same for blackmailers. Officially or unofficially, it was a law to ruin lives with.

Among the individuals who stepped forward to oppose the law were Karl Ulrichs and Karl-Maria Kertbeny. They were not friends, though they corresponded for a while, and only Ulrichs is known to have been attracted to men. But both shared the conviction that P. 143 was unjust, and it is due to their work that we have the word and the concept of the "heterosexual."

Ulrichs's devoted opposition to P. 143 stemmed from his having been sacked from a promising bureaucratic career when his attractions to men were discovered. The injustice led him to devote his life to arguing, as logically and as rigorously as he could, that same-sex sexuality was natural, inborn, and unchangeable, and therefore ought not to be punished. Ulrichs was no scientist, but he scoured the medical literature for insights into his own sexual condition. Impressed by medical literature about hermaphrodites, he developed a theory that he too was a type of hermaphrodite. Where hermaphrodites' bodies

encompassed both male-typical and female-typical organs in the same body, Ulrichs claimed that the *Urning*, or man who loved men, had a male body but a female mind. (The notion that gender—the social aspects of sexuality—might be separable from biological sex did not become widespread until the second half of the twentieth century.) Ulrichs's theory of "sexual inversion," rigorously logical by the standards of the day, was presented in 1864 in a pair of pseudonymously self-published pamphlets. Ulrichs hoped that his pamphlets would persuade German legislators to change their minds, and thus the law.

Austro-Hungarian Karl Maria Kertbeny shared Ulrichs's conviction that the Prussian law was unjust. A friend and coworker's suicide, committed because a blackmailer threatened to expose the young man's "abnormal tastes," had opened Kertbeny's eyes to the problems inherent in a law that made it illegal for two men to engage in activities that a man and a woman could partake of together without consequence. Kertbeny produced two strongly worded, anonymously published pamphlets arguing against Paragraph 143 that employed the notion of human rights as derived from the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen.

Ulrichs's and Kertbeny's approaches differed in many ways. While Ulrichs leaned on the innate femininity of the *Urning* psyche in order to emphasize the involuntary character of same-sex desires, Kertbeny insisted that men who loved men were typically manly and virile and deserving of full citizenship in the modern state. Ulrichs's approach, with its insistence that men who loved men were on some level not male, implicitly endorsed the idea that biological sex could be legitimate grounds for different treatment under the law. Kertbeny, by contrast, took a leaf from English philosopher Jeremy Bentham's book and argued simply that it was wrong to punish actions that harmed no one and all the more unethical to punish them selectively according to the biological sexes of the participants. The two men shared a moderately sized correspondence, but Kertbeny never adopted Ulrichs's models or his terminology. He preferred his own system of classification, first explicated in a letter to Ulrichs on May 6, 1868, in which he opposed "homosexuals" to "heterosexuals" as two parallel and, he implied, equal types of human beings.

As it turned out neither man's argument, nor their associated terminology, made any dent in the law. Paragraph 143 and similar laws were retained through multiple incarnations of the German legal code, later becoming P. 175 in 1871 when Germany was fully united. Later, and infamously, Hitler used this law to legitimize the incarceration and murder of thousands of *Schwülen,* or "faggots," in the concentration camps. The law was not removed from the books until 1969. By that time, the "heterosexual" and "homosexual" terminology of those who had so stalwartly resisted it in the beginning had won out, and so for the most part had the view of sexuality those terms implied.[10] The rise of "heterosexual" was hardly instantaneous, however. Moreover, it had virtually nothing to do with Ulrichs or Kertbeny at all.

A SEXUALITY CALLED NORMAL

Thus we return to Krafft-Ebing and *Psychopathia Sexualis.* The popularization of the word "heterosexual" was far from being Krafft-Ebing's goal in writing his book. Like Kertbeny and Ulrichs, Krafft-Ebing's interests did not really lie with the sexually typical or the heterosexual, but again with the heterodox, the outlier, and the sexual "deviant." Although Krafft-Ebing did inadvertently establish "heterosexual" and "heterosexuality" as biomedical terms in its pages, his actual purpose for creating *Psychopathia Sexualis* was the systematic observation, description, naming, and categorization of sexual deviance for the sake of the law. In the 1886 introduction to the first edition, Krafft-Ebing wrote that he hoped the catalog would be of aid to the judges and legislators compelled to issue rulings in cases of sexual misconduct.

Psychopathia Sexualis was unquestionably groundbreaking. At the same time it was derivative—Krafft-Ebing does not acknowledge his debts to either Ulrichs or Kertbeny, among others—and not very well organized. But it was the earliest known attempt at compiling a comprehensive list of disorders of the "sexual instinct." In the grand Linnaean tradition, it is a compendium of exotic "new" species of human being, classified according to their particular sexual quirks or pathologies and given names predominantly formulated, per the well-established ritual, from bits of dead languages.

If we read between the lines of Krafft-Ebing's terminology, we get a pretty clear idea of what he was willing to characterize as appropriate, healthy sexuality: potentially procreative intercourse and very little else. Krafft-Ebing's views were rather akin to those of the Catholic Church: anything that did not lead to the ultimate goal of procreation was inappropriate, if not outright pathological. Even at that, Krafft-Ebing held, one had to engage in this potentially procreative intercourse at the right time of life. Those who were sexual at the wrong time—during childhood or old age—suffered from *paradoxia.* One additionally had to do it with the right attitude. Too much interest in sex and you had a case of *hyperaesthesia,* too little and it was *anaesthesia.* There seemed to be an endless number of ways in which one could deviate just a bit too much from wholesome sexuality.

Newly christened and described, these and a variety of other heterodox behaviors and characteristics, including sadism, masochism, and fetishism, entered the lexicons and the communal imaginations not just of medicine but also of law, government, and the general public. Krafft-Ebing's book was highly academic, and he went out of his way to pen the really juicy bits in Latin on the theory that it would limit the consumption of potentially titillating information. This diminished the readership not at all, since most middle-class European men of the day were sufficiently well educated that a little bit of Latin posed no obstacle. In any event, there were soon translations aplenty, including the first American English edition in 1893. So much for the old catchalls of sodomy and "crimes against nature"; the increasingly widely understood message was that the modern sexual deviant *specialized.*

None of these specialized behaviors, it bears repeating, were new to the annals of human experience. Many had well-established slang names. "The game at flatts," for instance, was an Enlightenment-era English phrase referring to sex between women, both of whom had "flat" genitals. But a formal taxonomy made these activities, and those who engaged in them, real in a whole new way. Nowhere was this truer than in the case of the word "heterosexual," twenty-four appearances of which are scattered throughout Krafft-Ebing's book.

Like its sibling "homosexual," the word "heterosexual" is a stitched-together Frankenstein's monster of a term, half Latin, half Greek. In Krafft-Ebing, it is used alongside "normal-sexual" without much apparent preference for one over the other. It seems to have been only after *Psychopathia Sexualis* became a standard text, and its terminology began to see further use in the medical literature, that the more scholarly sounding "heterosexual" finally found its niche.

As Jonathan Ned Katz writes in his *The Invention of Heterosexuality,* Krafft-Ebing's "disturbing (and fascinating) examples of a sex called sick began quietly to define a new idea of a sex perceived as healthy." That healthy sexuality centered around reproduction, but Krafft-Ebing grudgingly acknowledged that it also encompassed the desire for and pursuit of erotic pleasure. This was a watershed. After Krafft-Ebing, the "sexual instinct" could refer to erotic desire as well as reproductive potential.

"Heterosexual" did not, however, spring forth as a household word with a single uncontested meaning. For a few years, it was used as a term of pathology. The first time the word appeared in English, predating the English translation of *Psychopathia Sexualis* by a year, was in an 1892 journal article by Chicago physician James G. Kiernan. Kiernan and a few contemporaries employed "heterosexual" using a different understanding of the Greek "hetero," or "different," to mean "both." Kiernan's "heterosexuals" were people we would now call bisexual. *Dorland's Medical Dictionary* of 1901 repeats this, but additionally defines the term to mean an "abnormal or perverted appetite toward the opposite sex." That definition was echoed in the Merriam-Webster *New International Dictionary* of 1923. The early use of "heterosexual" to describe behaviors that were considered pathological reflects, more than anything else, a deep-seated anxiety about sexual desire. It took English sexologist Havelock Ellis to resolve these anxieties and to stabilize "heterosexual" with a meaning that approaches the way we use the word today. By 1915, Ellis had begun to use the word "heterosexual" as shorthand for a type of relationship between male/female pairs that simultaneously included the ennobling emotion of love, the potential for procreation, and the experience of erotic pleasure.

By the time the unabridged second edition of the Merriam-Webster dictionary was published in 1934, "heterosexual" had appeared in mainstream print in both England and the United States.[11] The 1934 definition of the term, according to Merriam-Webster, was "manifestation of sexual passion for one of the opposite sex; normal sexuality." The normal-sexual was the heterosexual, and the heterosexual was normally, typically, acceptably, even laudably sexual. With the help of good old-fashioned scientific taxonomy, a model for sexual desire and activity between men and women had not only been legitimized; it had been made emblematic of an inherent physical and psychological normalcy that suited both respectable middle-class families and the well-regulated secular state. The modern heterosexual had officially been born.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Some XXY people discover that, unlike genotypical men but exactly like many genotypical women, they are sensitive to fluctuations in the hormones of the women around them, tagging along biochemically with the menstrual cycles of nearby women. My partner and I thus suffer through PMS symptoms together—breast tenderness, food cravings, emotional volatility, the works. It makes for some spectacular fights, but typically heterosexual it's not.
2. Or for that matter call someone else one. The same is true of "homosexual." The terms were coined at the same time.
3. "Hetero" and "homo" are both Greek, while "sexual" is from the Latin. The decidedly unorthodox—and terribly uneducated-sounding, to the Classically trained—combinations have been the butt of jokes among dead-language nerds for a long time now.
4. Money became infamous for his mishandling of the David Reimer case, also known as the "John/Joan" case, which ultimately culminated in Reimer's suicide. The case is detailed in Colapinto's biography of Reimer, *As Nature Made Him.*
5. The idea that women and men might operate with different sexual orientation models also offers a big temptation to social Darwinists and evolutionary biologists given, as they sometimes are, to leaps of logic. We would do well to beware the overly tidy explanation. This is messy and largely unexplored stuff.

CHAPTER ONE: THE LOVE THAT COULD NOT SPEAK ITS NAME

1. The idea that there might be something called a "sexual orientation" would not arise until after the turn of the twentieth century.
2. The story behind the increased age of consent in the last quarter of the nineteenth century is a fabulous and lurid tale that includes muckraker journalism, shameless politicking, and the kidnapping of a minor. See my *Virgin: The Untouched History* for an overview.
3. Electrolux brand vacuum cleaners and demonic phalluses are, after all, both members of a class of objects loosely defined as "things invented wholesale by human beings." Expressions of human bias were rampant in other scientific fields besides taxonomy. Schiebinger's *Nature's Body* provides a vivid survey of Enlightenment and nineteenth-century imposition of very human values on the natural world, including claims that female orangutans modestly covered their genitals when approached by human men, and the telling process by which the unusually large and imposing insect that had for generations been attributed with supreme and lordly power as the "king of the hive" became the grotesquely fat, totally passive, brainless, mechanically reproductive "queen bee" as soon as it was realized that it laid eggs.
4. Stone, *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500–1800*.
5. That this happened extremely rarely does not make it less horrifying that it happened at all. Nineteenth-century men and women alike had their genitals operated upon, sometimes disastrously, in the name of curbing masturbation and improper sexual appetites.
6. Guernsey, quoted in Seidman, "The Power of Desire," p. 49.
7. Maurice, "Where to Get Men."
8. James's essay was prompted, as were so many other illuminating writings on the subject of sexual deviance and social order, by the trials of Oscar Wilde. See Ellmann's 1988 biography of Wilde for more on the trials and on their fallout.
9. For the content of the Prussian Penal Code of 1851, see Drage, *The Criminal Code of the German Empire*, p. 225.
10. Ulrichs's essentialist inversion theory was also swiftly embraced. We still see it today in many of the rhetorical and medical strategies that explain and legitimize transsexuality: the "man trapped in a woman's body" trope is undiluted Ulrichs.
11. The debut of the word "hetero-sexual" was in Mary Keyt Isham's review of Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* in the *New York Times Book Review*, September 7, 1924.

CHAPTER TWO: CARNAL KNOWLEDGE

1. From the diary of James Blake, December 27, 1851. Cited in Rotundo, "Romantic Friendship."
2. From a letter written by Daniel Webster to J. Hervey Bingham, January 2, 1805. Cited in ibid.
3. The word "doxa" was first coined and used this way in social anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu's 1972 book *Outline of a Theory of Practice*.
4. Reijneveld et al. "Infant Crying and Abuse."
5. Freud, *A Case of Hysteria*, p. 146.
6. See, for example, Hartmann, "Sigmund Freud and His Impact on Our Understanding of Male Sexual Dysfunction."
7. As British philosopher of science Karl Popper put it in a 1963 essay, "'Clinical observations,' like all other observations, are interpretations in the light of theories; and for this reason alone they are apt to seem to support those theories in the light of which they were interpreted." (See Popper, "Science: Conjectures and Refutations.") The astute Popper also recognized the mythic power of Freudian ideas, writing of the Ego, the Super-Ego, and the Id that "no substantially stronger claim to scientific status can be made for it than for Homer's collected stories from Olympus. These theories describe some facts, but in the manner of myths."
8. See Fredric Wertham's infamous 1954 *Seduction of the Innocent* or, for more context, Wright's *Comic Book Nation*. On "abstinence-only" education, see Valenti, *The Purity Myth*.
9. The theory of marking was first developed by linguist Roman Jakobson and elaborated by other linguists and sociolinguists of the Prague school.
10. Tanenbaum, *Slut*, p. 10.
11. Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, p. 17.
12. "Reparative therapy" is psychotherapy intended to convert a homosexually identified person to heterosexuality. This controversial form of therapy was denounced as harmful in August 2009 by the American Psychological Association.
13. I have always wondered whether people who make these arguments about sexuality feel the same way about religious faith. So far as I am aware, there is no genetic or biological basis for that, either.
14. James Owen, "Homosexual Activity Among Animals Stirs Debate," *National Geographic News*, July 23, 2004, http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/pf/56958719.html.
15. This is called hypodermic insemination, and is reasonably common among invertebrates. The male injects spermatophores, sperm-carrying