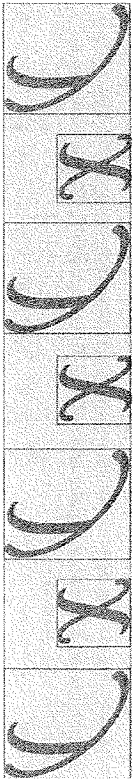


S E X I N G T H E B O D Y

GENDER POLITICS and the  
CONSTRUCTION of SEXUALITY

A N N E F A U S T O - S T E R L I N G



2 P 0 0



A MEMBER OF THE PERSEUS BOOKS GROUP

OCCIDENTAL COLLEGE LIBRARY  
1600 CAMPUS ROAD  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90041

## DUELING DUALISMS

*Male or Female?*

IN THE RUSH AND EXCITEMENT OF LEAVING FOR THE 1988 OLYMPICS, Maria Patiño, Spain's top woman hurdler, forgot the requisite doctor's certificate stating, for the benefit of Olympic officials, what seemed patently obvious to anyone who looked at her: she was female. But the International Olympic Committee (IOC) had anticipated the possibility that some competitors would forget their certificates of femininity; Patiño had only to report to the "femininity control head office,"<sup>1</sup> scrape some cells off the side of her cheek, and all would be in order—or so she thought.

A few hours after the cheek scraping she got a call. Something was wrong. She went for a second examination, but the doctors were mum. Then, as she rode to the Olympic stadium to start her first race, track officials broke the news: she had failed the sex test. She may have looked like a woman, had a woman's strength, and never had reason to suspect that she wasn't a woman, but the examinations revealed that Patiño's cells sported a Y chromosome, and that her labia hid testes within. Furthermore, she had neither ovaries nor a uterus.<sup>2</sup> According to the IOC's definition, Patiño was not a woman. She was barred from competing on Spain's Olympic team.

Spanish athletic officials told Patiño to fake an injury and withdraw without publicizing the embarrassing facts. When she refused, the European press heard about it and the secret was out. Within months after returning to Spain, Patiño's life fell apart. Spanish officials stripped her of past titles and barred her from further competition. Her boyfriend deserted her. She was evicted from the national athletic residence, her scholarship was revoked, and suddenly she had to struggle to make a living. The national press had a field day at her expense. As she later said, "I was erased from the map, as if I had never existed. I gave twelve years to sports."<sup>3</sup>

Down but not out, Patiño spent thousands of dollars consulting doctors about her situation. They explained that she had been born with a condition called *androgen insensitivity*. This meant that, although she had a Y chromosome and her testes made plenty of testosterone, her cells couldn't detect this masculinizing hormone. As a result, her body had never developed male characteristics. But at puberty her testes produced estrogen (as do the testes of all men), which, because of her body's inability to respond to its testosterone, caused her breasts to grow, her waist to narrow, and her hips to widen. Despite a Y chromosome and testes, she had grown up as a female and developed a female form.

Patiño resolved to fight the IOC ruling. "I knew I was a woman," she insisted to one reporter, "in the eyes of medicine, God and most of all, in my own eyes."<sup>4</sup> She enlisted the help of Alison Carlson, a former Stanford University tennis player and biologist opposed to sex testing, and together they began to build a case. Patiño underwent examinations in which doctors "checked out her pelvic structures and shoulders to decide if she was feminine enough to compete."<sup>5</sup> After two and a half years the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) reinstated her, and by 1992 Patiño had rejoined the Spanish Olympic squad, going down in history as the first woman ever to challenge sex testing for female athletes. Despite the IAAF's flexibility, however, the IOC has remained adamant: even if looking for a Y chromosome wasn't the most scientific approach to sex testing, testing *must* be done.

The members of the International Olympic Committee remain convinced that a more scientifically advanced method of testing will be able to reveal the true sex of each athlete. But why is the IOC so worried about sex testing? In part, IOC rules reflect cold war political anxieties: during the 1968 Olympics, for instance, the IOC instituted "scientific" sex testing in response to rumors that some Eastern European competitors were trying to win glory for the Communist cause by cheating—having men masquerade as women to gain unfair advantage. The only known case of a man infiltrating women's competition occurred back in 1936 when Hermann Ratjen, a member of the Nazi Youth, entered the women's high-jump competition as "Dora." His maleness didn't translate into much of an advantage: he made it to the finals, but came in fourth, behind three women.

Although the IOC didn't require modern chromosome screening in the interest of international politics until 1968, it had long policed the sex of Olympic competitors in an effort to mollify those who feared that women's participation in sports threatened to turn them into manly creatures. In 1912, Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympics (from which women were originally banned), argued that "women's sports are all against the law

of nature."<sup>6</sup> If women were *by nature* not athletic competitors, then what was one to make of the sportswomen who pushed their way onto the Olympic scene? Olympic officials rushed to certify the femininity of the women they let through the door, because the very act of competing seemed to imply that they could not be true women.<sup>7</sup> In the context of gender politics, employing sex police made a great deal of sense.<sup>8</sup>

### *Sex or Gender?*

Until 1968 female Olympic competitors were often asked to parade naked in front of a board of examiners. Breasts and a vagina were all one needed to certify one's femininity. But many women complained that this procedure was degrading. Partly because such complaints mounted, the IOC decided to make use of the modern "scientific" chromosome test. The problem, though, is that this test, and the more sophisticated polymerase chain reaction to detect small regions of DNA associated with testes development that the IOC uses today, cannot do the work the IOC wants it to do. A body's sex is simply too complex. There is no either/or. Rather, there are shades of difference. In chapters 2–4 I'll address how scientists, medical professionals, and the wider public have made sense of (or ought to make sense of) bodies that present themselves as neither entirely male nor entirely female. One of the major claims I make in this book is that labeling someone a man or a woman is a social decision. We may use scientific knowledge to help us make the decision, but only our beliefs about gender—not science—can define our sex. Furthermore, our beliefs about gender affect what kinds of knowledge scientists produce about sex in the first place.

Over the last few decades, the relation between *social expression* of masculinity and femininity and their *physical underpinnings* has been hotly debated in scientific and social arenas. In 1972 the sexologists John Money and Anke Ehrhardt popularized the idea that sex and gender are separate categories. *Sex*, they argued, refers to physical attributes and is anatomically and physiologically determined. *Gender* they saw as a psychological transformation of the self—the internal conviction that one is either male or female (gender identity) and the behavioral expressions of that conviction.<sup>9</sup>

Meanwhile, the second-wave feminists of the 1970s also argued that sex is distinct from gender—that social institutions, themselves designed to perpetuate gender inequality, produce most of the differences between men and women.<sup>10</sup> Feminists argued that although men's and women's bodies serve different reproductive functions, few other sex differences come with the territory; unchangeable by life's vicissitudes. If girls couldn't learn math as easily

as boys, the problem wasn't built into their brains. The difficulty resulted from gender norms—different expectations and opportunities for boys and girls. Having a penis rather than a vagina is a sex difference. Boys performing better than girls on math exams is a gender difference. Presumably, the latter could be changed even if the former could not.

Money, Ehrhardt, and feminists set the terms so that *sex* represented the body's anatomy and physiological workings and *gender* represented social forces that molded behavior.<sup>11</sup> Feminists did not question the realm of physical sex; it was the psychological and cultural meanings of these differences—gender—that was at issue. But feminist definitions of sex and gender left open the possibility that male/female differences in cognitive function and behavior<sup>12</sup> could result from sex differences, and thus, in some circles, the matter of sex versus gender became a debate about how "hardwired" intelligence and a variety of behaviors are in the brain,<sup>13</sup> while in others there seemed no choice but to ignore many of the findings of contemporary neurobiology.

In ceding the territory of physical sex, feminists left themselves open to renewed attack on the grounds of biological difference.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, feminism has encountered massive resistance from the domains of biology, medicine, and significant components of social science. Despite many positive social changes, the 1970s optimism that women would achieve full economic and social equality once gender inequity was addressed in the social sphere has faded in the face of a seemingly recalcitrant inequality.<sup>15</sup> All of which has prompted feminist scholars, on the one hand, to question the notion of sex itself,<sup>16</sup> while on the other to deepen their inquiry into what we might mean by words such as *gender*, *culture*, and *experience*. The anthropologist Henrietta A. Moore, for example, argues against reducing accounts of gender, culture, and experience to their "linguistic and cognitive elements." In this book (especially in chapter 9) I argue, as does Moore, that "what is at issue is the embodied nature of identities and experience. Experience . . . is not individual and fixed, but irredeemably social and processual."<sup>17</sup>

Our bodies are too complex to provide clear-cut answers about sexual difference. The more we look for a simple physical basis for "sex," the more it becomes clear that "sex" is not a pure physical category. What bodily signals and functions we define as male or female come already entangled in our ideas about gender. Consider the problem facing the International Olympic Committee. Committee members want to decide definitively who is male and who is female. But how? If Pierre de Coubertin were still around, the answer would be simple: anybody who desired to compete could not, by definition, be a female. But those days are past. Could the IOC use muscle strength as some

measure of sex? In some cases. But the strengths of men and women, especially highly trained athletes, overlap. (Remember that three women beat Hermann Ratjen's high jump). And although Maria Patiño fit a commonsense definition of femininity in terms of looks and strength, she also had testes and a Y chromosome. But why should these be the deciding factors?

The IOC may use chromosome or DNA tests or inspection of the breasts and genitals to ascertain the sex of a competitor, but doctors faced with uncertainty about a child's sex use different criteria. They focus primarily on reproductive abilities (in the case of a potential girl) or penis size (in the case of a prospective boy). If a child is born with two X chromosomes, oviducts, ovaries, and a uterus on the inside, but a penis and scrotum on the outside, for instance, is the child a boy or a girl? Most doctors declare the child a girl, despite the penis, because of her potential to give birth, and intervene using surgery and hormones to carry out the decision. Choosing which criteria to use in determining sex, and choosing to make the determination at all, are social decisions for which scientists can offer no absolute guidelines.

### *Real or Constructed?*

I enter the debates about sex and gender as a biologist and a social activist.<sup>18</sup> Daily, my life weaves in and out of a web of conflict over the politics of sexuality and the making and using of knowledge about the biology of human behavior. The central tenet of this book is that truths about human sexuality created by scholars in general and by biologists in particular are one component of political, social, and moral struggles about our cultures and economies.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, components of our political, social, and moral struggles become, quite literally, embodied, incorporated into our very physiological being. My intent is to show how these mutually dependent claims work, in part by addressing such issues as how—through their daily lives, experiments, and medical practices—scientists create truths about sexuality; how our bodies incorporate and confirm these truths; and how these truths, sculpted by the social milieu in which biologists practice their trade, in turn refashion our cultural environment.

My take on the problem is idiosyncratic, and for good reason. Intellectually, I inhabit three seemingly incompatible worlds. In my home department I interact with molecular biologists, scientists who examine living beings from the perspective of the molecules from which they are built. They describe a microscopic world in which cause and effect remain mostly inside a single cell. Molecular biologists rarely think about interacting organs within an indi-

4

5

vidual body, and even less often about how a body bounded by skin interacts with the world on the other side of the skin. Their vision of what makes an organism tick is decidedly bottom up, small to large, inside to outside.

I also interact with a virtual community—a group of scholars drawn together by a common interest in sexuality—and connected by something called a listserv. On a listserv, one can pose questions, think out loud, comment on relevant news items, argue about theories of human sexuality, and report the latest research findings. The comments are read by a group of people hooked together via electronic mail. My listserv (which I call “Loveweb”) consists of a diverse group of scholars—psychologists, animal behaviorists, hormone biologists, sociologists, anthropologists, and philosophers. Although many points of view coexist in this group, the vocal majority favor body-based, biological explanations of human sexual behavior. Loveweb members have technical names for preferences they believe to be immutable. In addition to homosexual, heterosexual, and bisexual, for example, they speak of *hebeophilia* (attracted primarily to pubescent girls), *ephebeophilia* (aroused by young males in their late teens or early twenties), *pedophilia* (aroused by children), *gynophilia* (aroused by adult women), and *androphilia* (attracted to adult men). Many Loveweb members believe that we acquire our sexual essence before birth and that it unfolds as we grow and develop.<sup>20</sup>

Unlike molecular biologists and Loveweb members, feminist theorists view the body not as essence, but as a bare scaffolding on which discourse and performance build a completely acculturated being. Feminist theorists write persuasively and often imaginatively about the processes by which culture molds and effectively creates the body. Furthermore, they have an eye on politics (writ large), which neither molecular biologists nor Loveweb participants have. Most feminist scholars concern themselves with real-world power relationships. They have often come to their theoretical work because they want to understand (and change) social, political, and economic inequality. Unlike the inhabitants of my other two worlds, feminist theorists reject what Donna Haraway, a leading feminist theoretician, calls “the God-trick”—producing knowledge from above, from a place that denies the individual scholar’s location in a real and troubled world. Instead, they understand that all scholarship adds threads to a web that positions racialized bodies, sexes, genders, and preferences in relationship to one another. New or differently spun threads change our relationships, change how we are in the world.<sup>21</sup>

Traveling among these varied intellectual worlds produces more than a little discomfort. When Ilark on Loveweb, I put up with gratuitous feminist-bashing aimed at some mythic feminist who derides biology and seems to have a patently stupid view of how the world works. When I attend feminist

conferences, people howl in disbelief at the ideas debated on Loveweb. And the molecular biologists don’t think much of either of the other worlds. The questions asked by feminists and Loveweb participants seem too complicated; studying sex in bacteria or yeast is the only way to go.

To my molecular biology, Loveweb, and feminist colleagues, then, I say the following: as a biologist, I believe in the material world. As a scientist, I believe in building specific knowledge by conducting experiments. But as a feminist Witness (in the Quaker sense of the word) and in recent years as a historian, I also believe that what we call “facts” about the living world are not universal truths. Rather, as Haraway writes, they “are rooted in specific histories, practices, languages and peoples.”<sup>22</sup> Ever since the field of biology emerged in the United States and Europe at the start of the nineteenth century, it has been bound up in debates over sexual, racial, and national politics.<sup>23</sup> And as our social viewpoints have shifted, so has the science of the body.<sup>24</sup>

Many historians mark the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as periods of great change in our concepts of sex and sexuality.<sup>25</sup> During this period a notion of legal equality replaced the feudal exercise of arbitrary and violent power given by divine right. As the historian Michel Foucault saw it, society still required some form of discipline. A growing capitalism needed new methods to control the “insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes.”<sup>26</sup> Foucault divided this power over living bodies (*bio-power*) into two forms. The first centered on the individual body. The role of many science professionals (including the so-called human sciences—psychology, sociology, and economics) became to optimize and standardize the body’s function.<sup>27</sup> In Europe and North America, Foucault’s standardized body has, traditionally, been male and Caucasian. And although this book focuses on gender, I regularly discuss the ways in which the ideas of both race and gender emerge from underlying assumptions about the body’s physical nature.<sup>28</sup> Understanding how race and gender work—together and independently—helps us learn more about how the social becomes embodied.

Foucault’s second form of bio-power—“*a biopolitics of the population*”—emerged during the early nineteenth century as pioneer social scientists began to develop the survey and statistical methods needed to supervise and manage “births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity.”<sup>30</sup> For Foucault, “discipline” had a double meaning. On the one hand, it implied a form of control or punishment; on the other, it referred to an academic body of knowledge—the discipline of history or biology. The disciplinary knowledge developed in the fields of embryology, endocrinology, surgery,

psychology, and biochemistry have encouraged physicians to attempt to control the very gender of the body—including “its capacities, gestures, movements, location and behaviors.”<sup>31</sup>

By helping the normal take precedence over the natural, physicians have also contributed to populational biopolitics. We have become, Foucault writes, “a society of normalization.”<sup>32</sup> One important mid-twentieth-century sexologist went so far as to name the male and female models in his anatomy text Norma and Normman (*sic*).<sup>33</sup> Today we see the notion of pathology applied in many settings—from the sick, diseased, or different body,<sup>34</sup> to the single-parent family in the urban ghetto.<sup>35</sup> But imposing a gender norm is socially, not scientifically, driven. The lack of research into the normal distributions of genital anatomy, as well as many surgeons’ lack of interest in using such data when they do exist (discussed in chapters 3 and 4), clearly illustrate this claim. From the viewpoint of medical practitioners, progress in the handling of intersexuality involves maintaining the normal. Accordingly, there ought to be only two boxes: male and female. The knowledge developed by the medical disciplines empowers doctors to maintain a mythology of the normal by changing the intersexual body to fit, as nearly as possible, into one or the other cubbyhole.

One person’s medical progress, however, can be another’s discipline and control. Intersexuals such as Maria Patiño have unruly—even heretical—bodies. They do not fall naturally into a binary classification; only a surgical shoehorn can put them there. But why should we care if a “woman” (defined as having breasts, a vagina, uterus, ovaries, and menstruation) has a “clitoris” large enough to penetrate the vagina of another woman? Why should we care if there are individuals whose “natural biological equipment” enables them to have sex “naturally” with both men and women? Why must we amputate or surgically hide that “offending shaft” found on an especially large clitoris? The answer: to maintain gender divisions, we must control those bodies that are so unruly as to blur the borders. Since intersexuals quite literally embody both sexes, they weaken claims about sexual difference.

This book reflects a shifting politics of science and of the body. I am deeply committed to the ideas of the modern movements of gay and women’s liberation, which argue that the way we traditionally conceptualize gender and sexual identity narrows life’s possibilities while perpetuating gender inequality. In order to shift the politics of the body, one must change the politics of science itself. Feminists (and others) who study how scientists create empirical knowledge have begun to reconceptualize the very nature of the scientific process.<sup>36</sup> As with other social arenas, such scholars understand practical, empirical knowledge to be imbued with the social and political issues of its

time. I stand at the intersection of these several traditions. On the one hand, scientific and popular debates about intersexuals and homosexuals—bodies that defy the norms of our two-sex system—are deeply intertwined. On the other, beneath the debates about what these bodies mean and how to treat them lie struggles over the meaning of objectivity and the timeless nature of scientific knowledge.

Perhaps nowhere are these struggles more visible than in the biological accounts of what we would today call sexual orientation or sexual preference. Consider, for instance, a television newsmagazine segment about married women who “discovered,” often in their forties, that they were lesbian. The show framed the discussion around the idea that a woman who has sex with men must be heterosexual, while a woman who falls in love with another woman must be lesbian.<sup>37</sup> On this show there seemed to be only these two possibilities. Even though the women interviewed had had active and satisfying sex lives with their husbands and produced and raised families, they knew that they must “be” lesbian the minute they found themselves attracted to a woman. Furthermore, they felt it likely that they must always have been lesbian without knowing it.

The show portrayed sexual identity as a fundamental reality: a woman is either inherently heterosexual or inherently lesbian. And the act of coming out as a lesbian can negate an entire lifetime of heterosexual activity! Put this way, the show’s depiction of sexuality sounds absurdly oversimplified. And yet, it reflects some of our most deeply held beliefs—so deeply held, in fact, that a great deal of scientific research (on animals as well as humans) is designed around this dichotomous formulation (as I discuss in some detail in chapters 6–8).<sup>38</sup>

Many scholars mark the start of modern scientific studies of human homosexuality with the work of Alfred C. Kinsey and colleagues, first published in 1948. Their surveys of sexual behavior in men and women provided modern sex researchers with a set of categories useful for measuring and analyzing sexual behaviors.<sup>39</sup> For both men and women, they used a rating scale of 0 to 6, with 0 being 100 percent heterosexual, 6 being 100 percent homosexual. (An eighth category—“X”—was for individuals who experienced no erotic attractions or activities.) Although they designed a scale with discrete categories, Kinsey and co-workers stressed that “the reality includes individuals of every intermediate type, lying in a continuum between the two extremes and between each and every category on the scale.”<sup>40</sup>

The Kinsey studies offered new categories defined in terms of sexual arousal—especially orgasm—rather than allowing terms such as *affection*, *marriage*, or *relationship* to contribute to definitions of human sexuality.<sup>41</sup> Sexu-

ality remained an individual characteristic, not something produced within relationships in particular social settings. Exemplifying my claim that with the very act of measuring, scientists can change the social reality they set out to quantify, I note that today Kinsey's categories have taken on a life of their own. Not only do sophisticated gays and lesbians occasionally refer to themselves by a Kinsey number (such as in a personal ad that might begin "tall, muscular Kinsey 6 seeks . . ."), but many scientific studies use the Kinsey scale to define their study population.<sup>42</sup>

Although many social scientists understand the inadequacy of using the single word *homosexual* to describe same-sex desire, identity, and practice, the linear Kinsey scale still reigns supreme in scholarly work. In studies that search for genetic links to homosexuality, for example, the middle of the Kinsey scale disappears; researchers seek to compare the extreme ends of the spectrum in hopes of maximizing the chance that they will find something of interest.<sup>43</sup> Multidimensional models of homosexuality exist. Fritz Klein, for example, created a grid with seven variables (sexual attraction, sexual behavior, sexual fantasies, emotional preference, social preference, self-identification, hetero/homo lifestyle) superimposed on a time scale (past, present, future).<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, one research team, reporting on 144 studies of sexual orientation published in the *Journal of Homosexuality* from 1974 to 1993, found that only 10 percent of these studies used a multidimensional scale to assess homosexuality. About 13 percent used a single scale, usually some version of the Kinsey numbers, while the rest used self-identification (33 percent), sexual preference (4 percent), behavior (9 percent), or, most shockingly for an academic publication, never clearly described their methods (31 percent).<sup>45</sup>

Just as these examples from contemporary sociology show that the categories used to define, measure, and analyze human sexual behavior change with time, so too has a recent explosion of scholarship on the social history of human sexuality shown that the social organization and expression of human sexuality are neither timeless nor universal. Historians are just beginning to pry loose information from the historical record, and any new overviews written are sure to differ,<sup>46</sup> but I offer a cartoon summary of some of this work in figure 1.1.

As historians gather information, they also argue about the nature of history itself. The historian David Halperin writes: "The real issue confronting any cultural historian of antiquity, and any critic of contemporary culture, is . . . how to recover the terms in which the experiences of individuals belonging to past societies were actually constituted."<sup>47</sup> The feminist historian Joan Scott makes a similar argument, suggesting that historians must not assume

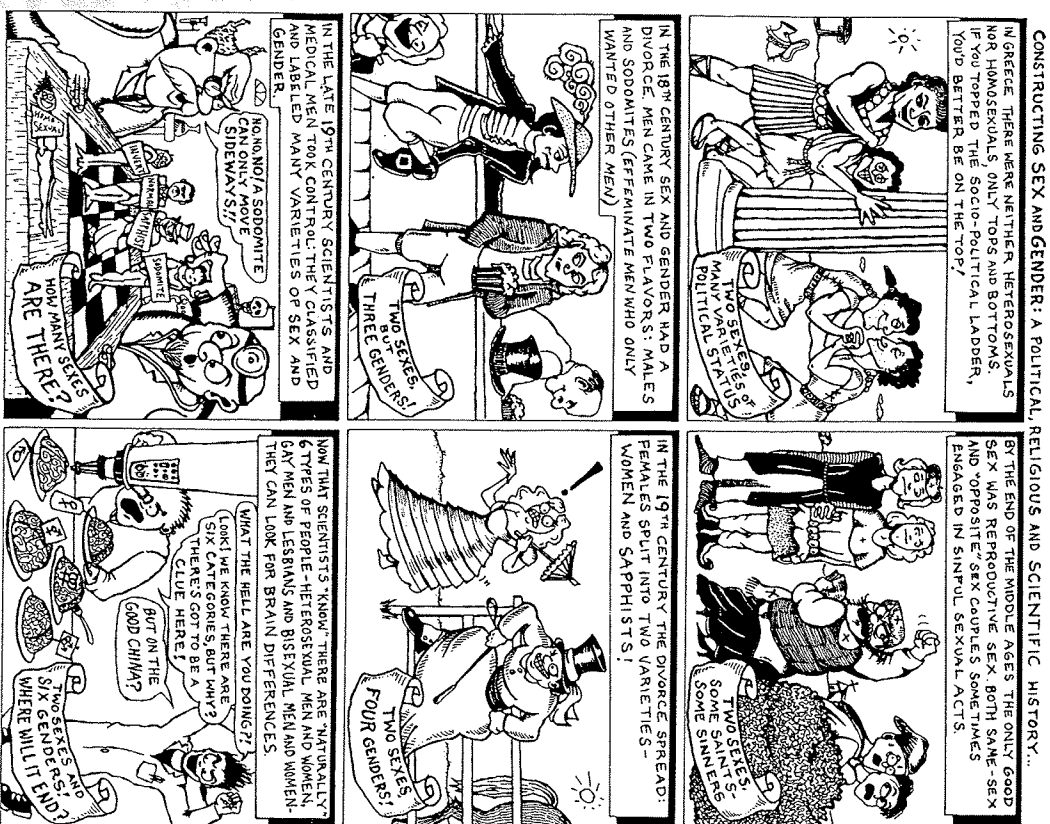


FIGURE 1.1: A cartoon history of sex and gender. (Source: Diane DiMassa, for the author)

that the term *experience* contains a self-evident meaning. Instead, they must try to understand the workings of the complex and changing processes "by which identities are ascribed, resisted, or embraced and 'to note' which processes themselves are unremarked and indeed achieve their effect because they are not noticed."<sup>48</sup>

For example, in her book *The Woman Beneath the Skin*, the historian of science Barbara Duden describes coming upon an eight-volume medical text.

Written in the eighteenth century by a practicing physician, the books describe over 1,800 cases involving diseases of women. Duden found herself unable to use twentieth-century medical terms to reconstruct what illnesses these women had. Instead she noticed "bits and pieces of medical theories that would have been circulating, combined with elements from popular culture; self-evident bodily perceptions appear alongside things that struck [her] as utterly improbable." Duden describes her intellectual anguish as she became more and more determined to understand these eighteenth-century German female bodies on their own terms:

To gain access to the inner, invisible bodily existence of these ailing women, I had to venture across the boundary that separates . . . the inner body beneath the skin, from the world around it . . . the body and its environment have been consigned to opposing realms: on the one side are the body, nature, and biology; stable and unchanging phenomena; on the other side are the social environment and history, realms of constant change. With the drawing of this boundary the body was expelled from history.<sup>49</sup>

In contrast to Duden's anguish, many historians of sexuality have leaped enthusiastically into their new field, debating with one another as they dug into their freshly discovered resources. They delighted in shocking the reader with sentences such as: "The year 1992 marked the 100th anniversary of heterosexuality in America"<sup>50</sup> and "From 1700–1900 the citizens of London made a transition from three sexes to four genders."<sup>51</sup> What do historians mean by such statements? Their essential point is that for as far back as one can gather historical evidence (from primitive artwork to the written word), humans have engaged in a variety of sexual practices, but that this sexual activity is bound to historical contexts. That is, sexual practices and societal understandings of them vary not only across cultures but over time as well.

The social scientist Mary McIntosh's 1968 article, "The Homosexual Role," provided the touchstone that pushed scholars to consider sexuality as a historical phenomenon.<sup>52</sup> Most Westerners, she pointed out, assumed that people's sexuality could be classified two or three ways: homosexual, heterosexual, and bisexual.<sup>53</sup> McIntosh argued that this perspective wasn't very informative. A static view of homosexuality as a timeless, physical trait, for instance, didn't tell us much about why different cultures defined homosexuality differently, or why homosexuality seemed more acceptable in certain

times and places than in others.<sup>54</sup> An important corollary to McIntosh's insistence on a history of homosexuality is that heterosexuality, and indeed all forms of human sexuality, have a history.

Many scholars embraced McIntosh's challenge to give human sexual expression a past. But disagreement about the implications of this past abounds.<sup>55</sup> The authors of books such as *Gay American History* and *Surpassing the Love of Men* eagerly searched the past for role models that could offer psychological affirmation to members of the nascent gay liberation movement.<sup>56</sup> Just as with the initial impulses of the women's movement to find heroines worthy of emulation, early "gay" histories looked to the past in order to make a case for social change in the present. Homosexuality, they argued, has always been with us; we should finally bring it into the cultural mainstream.

The initial euphoria induced by these scholars' discovery of a gay past was soon complicated by heated debates about the meanings and functions of history. Were our contemporary categories of sexuality inappropriate for analyzing different times and places? If gay people, in the present-day sense, had always existed, did that mean that the condition is inherited in some portion of the population? Could the fact that historians found evidence of homosexuality in whatever era they studied be seen as evidence that homosexuality is a biologically determined trait? Or could history only show us how cultures organize sexual expression differently in particular times and places?<sup>57</sup> Some found the latter possibility liberating. They maintained that behaviors that might seem to be constant actually had totally different meanings in different times and places. Could the apparent fact that in ancient Greece, love between older and younger men was an expected component of the development of free male citizens mean that biology had nothing to do with human sexual expression?<sup>58</sup> If history helped prove that sexuality was a social construction, it could also show how we had arrived at our present arrangements and, most important, offer insights into how to achieve the social and political change for which the gay liberation movement was battling.

Many historians believe that our modern concepts of sex and desire first made their appearance in the nineteenth century. Some point symbolically to the year 1869, when a German legal reformer seeking to change antisodomy laws first publicly used the word *homosexuality*.<sup>59</sup> Merely coining a new term did not magically create twentieth-century categories of sexuality, but the moment does seem to mark the beginning of their gradual emergence. It was during those years that physicians began to publish case reports of homosexuality—the first in 1869 in a German publication specializing in psychiatric



and nervous illness.<sup>60</sup> As the scientific literature grew, specialists emerged to collect and systematize the narratives. The now-classic works of Krafft-Ebing and Havelock Ellis completed the transfer of homosexual behaviors from publicly accessible activities to ones managed at least in part by medicine.<sup>61</sup>

The emerging definitions of homo- and heterosexuality were built on a two-sex model of masculinity and femininity.<sup>62</sup> The Victorians, for example, contrasted the sexually aggressive male with the sexually indifferent female. But this created a mystery. If only men felt active desire, how could two women develop a mutual sexual interest? The answer: one of the women had to be an *invert*, someone with markedly masculine attributes. This same logic applied to male homosexuals, who were seen as more effeminate than heterosexual men.<sup>63</sup> As we will see in chapter 8, these concepts linger in late-twentieth-century studies of homosexual behaviors in rodents. A lesbian rat is she who mounts; a gay male rat is he who responds to being mounted.<sup>64</sup>

In ancient Greece, males who engaged in same-sex acts changed, as they aged, from feminine to masculine roles.<sup>65</sup> In contrast, by the early part of the twentieth century, someone engaging in homosexual acts was, like the married lesbians on the TV news show, a homosexual, a person constitutionally disposed to homosexuality. Historians attribute the emergence of this new homosexual body to widespread social, demographic, and economic changes occurring in the nineteenth century. In America, many men and eventually some women who had in previous generations remained on the family farm found urban spaces in which to gather. Away from the family's eyes, they were freer to pursue their sexual interests. Men seeking same-sex interactions gathered in bars or in particular outdoor spots; as their presence became more obvious, so too did attempts to control their behavior. In response to police and moral reformers, self-consciousness about their sexual behaviors emerged—a budding sense of identity.<sup>66</sup>

This forming identity contributed to its own medical rendering. Men (and later women) who identified themselves as homosexual now sought medical help and understanding. And as medical reports proliferated, homosexuals used them to paint their own self-descriptions. "By helping to give large numbers of people an identity and a name, medicine also helped to shape these people's experience and change their behavior, creating not just a new disease, but a new species of person, 'the modern homosexual.'"<sup>67</sup>

Homosexuality may have been born in 1869, but the modern heterosexual required another decade of gestation. In Germany in 1880 the word *heterosexual* made its public debut in a work defending homosexuality.<sup>68</sup> In 1892, heterosexuality crossed the ocean to America, where, after some period of

debate, a consensus developed among medical men that "heterosexual referred to a normal 'other-sex' Eros. [The doctors] proclaimed a new heterosexual separatism—an erotic apartheid that forcefully segregated the sex normals from the sex pervers." <sup>69</sup>

Through the 1930s the concept of heterosexuality fought its way into the public consciousness, and by World War II, heterosexuality seemed a permanent feature of the sexual landscape. Now, the concept has come under heavy fire. Feminists daily challenge the two-sex model, while a strongly self-identified gay and lesbian community demands the right to be thoroughly normal. Transsexuals, transgendered people, and, as we shall see in the next three chapters, a blossoming organization of intersexuals all have formed social movements to include diverse sexual beings under the umbrella of normality.

The historians whose work I've just recounted emphasize discontinuity. They believe that looking "for general laws about sexuality and its historical evolution will be defeated by the sheer variety of past thought and behavior."<sup>70</sup> But some disagree. The historian John Boswell, for instance, applies Kinsey's classification scheme to ancient Greece. How the Greeks interpreted the *molle* (feminine man) or the *tribade* (masculine woman), in Boswell's view, did not necessarily matter. The existence of these two categories, which Boswell might consider to be Kinsey 6s, shows that homosexual bodies or essences have existed across the centuries. Boswell acknowledges that humans organized and interpreted sexual behaviors differently in different historical eras. But he suggests that a similar range of bodies predisposed to particular sexual activities existed then and now. "Constructions and context shape the articulation of sexuality," he insists, "but they do not efface recognition of erotic preference as a potential category."<sup>71</sup> Boswell regards sexuality as "real" rather than "socially constructed." While Halperin sees desire as a product of cultural norms, Boswell implies we are quite possibly born with particular sexual inclinations wired into our bodies. Growth, development, and the acquisition of culture show us how to express our inborn desires, he argues, but do not wholly create them.

Scholars have yet to resolve the debate about the implications of a history of sexuality. The historian Robert Nye compares historians to anthropologists. Both groups catalogue "curious habits and beliefs" and try, Nye writes, "to find in them some common pattern of resemblance."<sup>72</sup> But what we conclude about people's past experiences depends to a large extent on how much we believe that our categories of analysis transcend time and place. Suppose for a minute that we had a few time-traveling clones—genetically identical humans living in ancient Greece, in seventeenth-century Europe, and in the

contemporary United States. Boswell would say that if a particular clone was homosexual in ancient Greece, he would also be homosexual in the seventeenth century or today (figure 1.2, Model A). The fact that gender structures differ in different times and places might shape the invert's defiance, but would not create it. Halperin, however, would argue that there is no guarantee that the modern clone of an ancient Greek heterosexual would also be heterosexual (figure 1.2, Model B). The identical body might express different forms of desire in different eras.

There is no way to decide whose interpretation is right. Despite surface similarities, we cannot know whether yesterday's *tribade* is today's butch or whether the middle-aged Greek male lover is today's pedophile.<sup>73</sup>

### Nature or Nurture?

While historians have looked to the past for evidence of whether human sexuality is inborn or socially constructed, anthropologists have pursued the same questions in their studies of sexual behaviors, roles, and expressions found in contemporary cultures around the globe. Those examining data from a wide variety of non-Western cultures have discerned two general patterns.<sup>74</sup> Some cultures, like our own, define a permanent role for those who engage in same-sex coupling—"institutionalized homosexuality," in Mary McIntosh's terminology.<sup>75</sup>

In contrast are those societies in which all adolescent boys, as part of an expected growth process, engage in genital acts with older men. These associations may be brief and highly ritualized or may last for several years. Here oral-genital contact between two males does not signify a permanent condition or special category of being. What defines sexual expression in such cultures is not so much the sex of one's partner as the age and status of the person with whom one couples.<sup>76</sup>

Anthropologists study vastly differing peoples and cultures with two goals in mind. First, they want to understand human variation—the diverse ways in which human beings organize society in order to eat and reproduce. Second, many anthropologists look for human universals. Like historians, anthropologists are divided about what information drawn from any one culture can tell them about another, or whether underlying differences in the expression of sexuality matter more or less than apparent commonalities.<sup>77</sup> In the midst of such disagreements, anthropological data are, nevertheless, often deployed in arguments about the nature of human sexual behavior.<sup>78</sup>

The anthropologist Carol Vance writes that the field of anthropology today reflects two contradictory strains of thought. The first she refers to as the

16

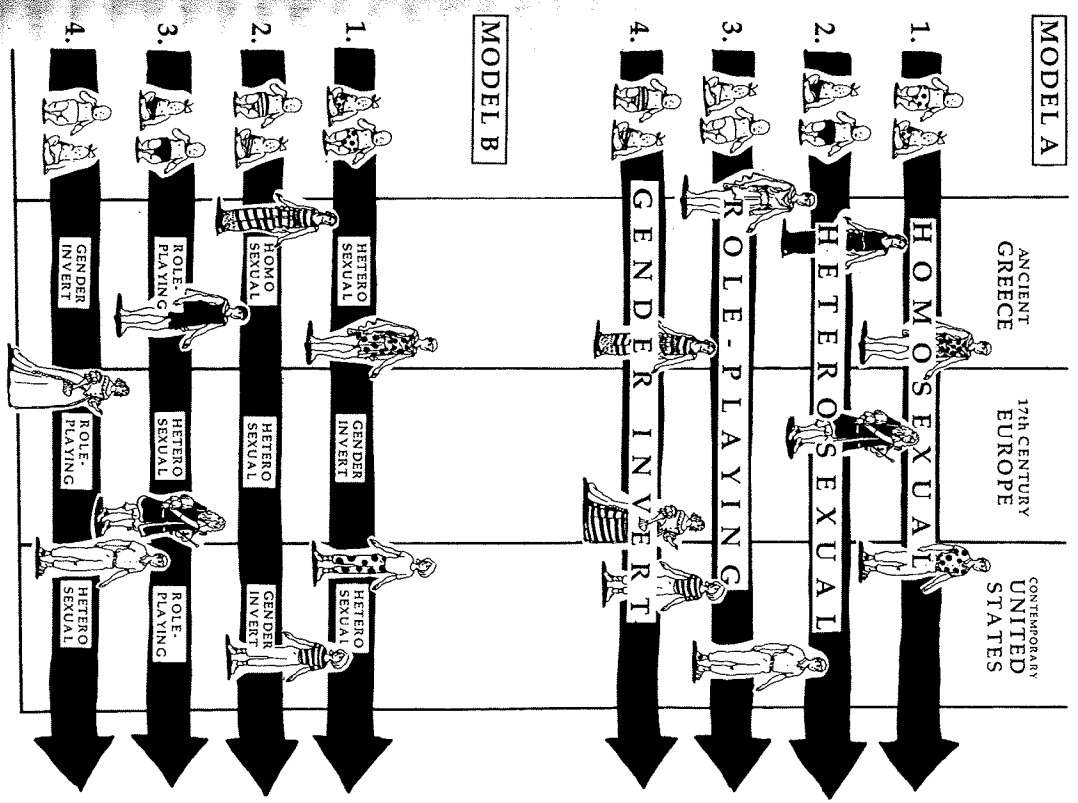


FIGURE 1.2: *Model A: Reading essentialism from the historical record. A person with inborn homosexual tendencies would be homosexual, no matter what historical era. Model B: Reading constructionism from the historical record. A person of a particular genetic make-up might or might not become homosexual, depending on the culture and historical period in which he or she was raised.* (Source: Alyce Santoro, for the author)

TABLE 3.1 Some Common Types of Intersexuality

NAME	CAUSE	BASIC CLINICAL FEATURES
Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia (CAH)	Genetically inherited malfunction of one or more of six enzymes involved in making steroid hormones	In XX children, can cause mild to severe masculinization of genitalia at birth or later; if untreated, can cause masculinization at puberty and early puberty. Some forms drastically disrupt salt metabolism and are life-threatening if not treated with cortisone.
Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome (AIS)	Genetically inherited change in the cell surface receptor for testosterone	XY children born with highly feminized genitalia. The body is "blind" to the presence of testosterone, since cells cannot capture it and use it to move development in a male direction. At puberty these children develop breasts and a feminine body shape.
Gonadal Dysgenesis	Various causes, not all genetic; a catch-all category	Refers to individuals (mostly XY) whose gonads do not develop properly. Clinical features are heterogeneous.
Hypospadias	Various causes, including alterations in testosterone metabolism <sup>a</sup>	The urethra does not run to the tip of the penis. In mild forms, the opening is just shy of the tip; in moderate forms, it is along the shaft; and in severe forms, it may open at the base of the penis.
Turner Syndrome	Females lacking a second X chromosome. (XO) <sup>b</sup>	A form of gonadal dysgenesis in females. Ovaries do not develop; stature is short; lack of secondary sex characteristics; treatment includes estrogen and growth hormone.
Klinefelter Syndrome	Males with an extra X chromosome (XXY) <sup>c</sup>	A form of gonadal dysgenesis causing infertility; after puberty there is often breast enlargement; treatments include testosterone therapy.

a. Aaronson et al. 1997.  
 b. The story is, of course, more complicated. For some recent studies, see Jacobs, Dalton, et al. 1997; Boman et al. 1998.  
 c. There are a great many chromosomal variations classified as Klinefelter (Conte and Grunbach 1989).

52

TABLE 3.2 Frequencies of Various Causes of Nondimorphic Sexual Development

CAUSE	ESTIMATED FREQUENCY/ 100 LIVE BIRTHS
Non-XX or non-XY (except Turner's or Klinefelter's)	0.0639
Turner Syndrome	0.0369
Klinefelter Syndrome	0.0922
Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome	0.0076
Partial Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome	0.00076
Classic CAH (omitting very high-frequency population)	0.00779
Late-onset CAH	1.5
Vaginal agenesis	0.0169
True hermaphrodites	0.0012
Idiopathic	0.0009
TOTAL	1.728

Albino births occur much less frequently than intersexual births—in only about 1 in 20,000 babies.<sup>22</sup>

The figure of 1.7 percent is an average from a wide variety of different populations; the number is not uniform throughout the world. Many forms of intersexuality result from an altered genetic state, and in some populations, the genes involved with intersexuality are very frequent. Consider, for example, the gene for congenital adrenal hyperplasia (CAH). When present in two doses (that is, when an individual is homozygous for the gene), it causes XX females to be born with masculinized external genitalia (although their internal reproductive organs are those of a potentially fertile woman) (see table 3.1). The frequency of the gene for CAH varies widely around the world. One study found that 3.5 per thousand Yupik Eskimos born had a double dose of the CAH gene. In contrast, only 0.005/1,000 New Zealanders express the trait. The frequency of a related genetic change that leaves the genitalia unaffected but can cause premature pubic hair growth in children and symptoms such as unusual hair growth and male pattern baldness in young women, also

53

## NOTES

### Chapter 1: *Dueling Dualisms*

1. Hanley 1983.
2. My description of these events is based on the following reports: de la Chapelle 1986; Simpson 1986; Carlson 1991; Anderson 1992; Grady 1992; Le Fanu 1992; Vines 1992; Wavell and Alderson 1992.
3. Quoted in Carlson 1991 p. 27.
4. *Ibid.*

The technical name for Patiño's condition is Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome. It is one of a number of conditions that leads to bodies having mixtures of male and female parts. Today we call such bodies *intersexes*.

5. Quoted in Vines 1992, p. 41.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
7. The contradiction plagued women's athletics at all levels. See, for example, Verbrugge 1997.
8. The Olympics specifically, and women's sport in general, have built all sorts of gender difference into the heart of its practice. Barring women from certain events or having different rules for the men's and women's games provide obvious examples. For a detailed discussion of gender and sport, see Cahn 1994. For other examples of how gender itself contributes to the construction of different male and female bodies in sports, see Lorber 1993 and Zita 1992.

9. Money and Ehrhardt define "gender role" as "everything that a person says and does to indicate to others or to the self the degree that one is either male, or female, or ambivalent."

They define "gender identity" as "the sameness, unity, and persistence of one's individuality as male, female, or ambivalent. . . . Gender identity is the private experience of gender role, and gender role is the public experience of gender identity" (Money and Ehrhardt 1972, p. 4. For a discussion of Money's separation of "sex" from "gender," see Hausman 1995.

Money and Ehrhardt distinguish between chromosomal sex, fetal gonadal sex, fetal hormonal sex, genital dimorphism, brain dimorphism, the response of adults to the infant's gender, body image, juvenile gender identity, pubertal hormonal sex, pubertal eroticism, pubertal morphology, and adult gender

identity. All of these factors, they believe, work together to define a person's adult gender identity.

10. See, for example, Rubin 1975. Rubin also questions the biological basis of homosexuality and heterosexuality. Note that feminist definitions of gender applied to institutions as well as personal or psychological differences.

11. The sex/gender dichotomy often became a synonym for debates about nature versus nurture, or mind versus body. For a discussion of how to use debated dichotomies as an aid to understanding the intertwining of social and scientific belief systems see, Figlio 1976.

12. Many scientists and their popularizers claim that men are more competitive, more aggressive or assertive, are more sexual, more prone to infidelity and more. See, for example Pool 1994 and Wright 1994. For a critique of such claims, see Fausto-Sterling 1992, 1997a,b.

13. For feminists this debate is very problematic because it pits the authority of science, especially biology, against the authority of social science—and in any battle of this sort, social science is bound to lose. Science in our culture brings with it all the trappings of special access to the truth: the claim of objectivity.

14. Spelman labeled feminist fear of the body "somatophobia." See, Spelman 1988. Recently a colleague commented to me that I seem scared of biological theories of behavior. This puzzled him because at the same time he could see that I am devoted to biological studies as one way of gaining interesting and useful information about the world. He was right. Like many feminists, I have good reason to be scared of bringing biology into the picture. It is not only my knowledge of centuries of arguments in which the body has been used to justify power inequities. I have also encountered such arguments at a personal level throughout my life. In grade school, a teacher told me that women could be nurses but not doctors (after I had announced my intention to become the latter). When, as a young Assistant Professor, I joined the faculty at Brown, a Full Professor in the History Department told me kindly, but with great authority, that history showed that there had never been any women geniuses in either the sciences or the field of letters. We were, it seemed, born to be mediocre. To cap it off, when I returned from scientific meetings, emotionally shaken by my inability to break into the all-male conclaves, where the true scientific exchanges occurred (chatting at the socials and at meals), I read that "men in groups" was a natural outcome of male bonding that had evolved from prehistoric hunting behaviors. Nothing, really, was to be done about it.

I now understand that I experienced the political power of science. This "power is exercised less visibly, less conspicuously (than overt state or institutional power), and *not on but through* the dominant institutional structures, priorities, practices and languages of the sciences" (Harding 1992, p. 567, emphasis in the original). Thus it is no wonder that I and other feminists were

(and are) suspicious of grounding the development of the psyche in some bodily essence. We responded to what came to be called "essentialism." A century ago and today, feminist essentialists argue that women *are* naturally different—and that such difference forms the basis for either social equality or superiority. For entrée into the extensive feminist debates about essentialism, see J. R. Martin 1994 and Bohan 1997.

15. For a discussion of this recalibration in terms of gender schema in adulthood, see Valian 1998a, 1998b.

16. See chapters 1–4 herein; also Feinberg 1996; Kessler and McKenna 1978; Haraway 1989, 1997; Hausman 1995; Rothblatt 1995; Burke 1996; and Dreger 1998b.

One recent sociological account of problems of embodiment considers that "the cutting edge' of contemporary social theorising around the body may in fact be located within feminism itself" (Williams and Bendelow 1998, p. 130).

17. Moore 1994, pp. 2–3.

18. My social activism has included participation in organizations working for civil rights for all people, regardless of race, gender, or sexual orientation. I have also worked on traditionally feminist issues such as shelters for battered women, reproductive rights, and equal access for women in the academy.

19. I am actually willing to broaden this claim to include *all* scientific knowledge, but in this book I make the argument only for biology—the scientific endeavor I best understand. For extended arguments on the topic, see Latour 1987 and Shapin 1994.

20. Some would point to the fact that people express very unpopular sexualities despite strong contrary social pressure, even the threat of bodily harm. Clearly, they say, nothing in the environment encouraged the development of such behavior, but the body will out. Others argue that there must be some prenatally determined disposition that, in interaction with unknown environmental factors, leads to a strongly held, often immutable adult sexuality. Members of this latter group, probably the majority of Loveweb members, call themselves *interactionists*. But their version of interactionism (meaning that the body and the environment interact to produce behavior patterns) calls for a large dose of body and only a little sprinkling of environment. "The real issue," one of the staunchest and most articulate interactionists writes, "is how the body generates behavior" ("Loveweb" discussion).

21. Scholarship is not the sole agent of change; it combines with other agents, including traditional means such as voting and forming consumer preference blocks.

22. Haraway 1997, p. 217. See also Foucault 1970; Gould 1981; Schiebinger 1993 a,b.

23. See, for example, Stocking 1987, 1988; Russett 1989; Poovey 1995.

24. The historian Lorraine Daston notes that the idea of nature or the natural invoked in debates about the body changed between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: "Early modern nature was incapable of 'hard facts'. . . . Modern nature abounded in bitter revelations about the illusions of ethics and social reform, for nature was ruthlessly amoral" (Daston 1992, p. 222).
25. During this time, Foucault maintains, the change from Feudalism to Capitalism required a new concept of the body. Feudal lords applied their power directly. Peasants and serfs obeyed because God and their sovereign told them to (except, of course, when they revolted, as they did from time to time). The punishment for disobedience was, to the modern eye, violent and brutal: drawing and quartering. For a stunning description of this brutality, see the opening chapters of Foucault 1979.
26. Foucault 1978, p. 141.
27. These efforts created "an *anatomy-politics of the human body*" (Foucault 1978 p. 139; emphasis in the original).
28. Because some of the arguments about sex and gender represent the old nature/nurture arguments in modern drag, their resolution (or, as I argue below, their dissolution) is relevant to debates about racial difference. For a discussion of race in terms of modern biological knowledge, see Marks 1994.
29. Foucault 1978, p. 139; emphasis in the original.
30. *Ibid.* In chapter 5 I discuss how the rise of statistics enables twentieth-century scientists to make claims about sex differences in the human brain.
31. Sawicki 1991, p. 67; see also McNay 1993 for specific discussions of "poucault in a feminist context."
32. Foucault 1980, p. 107.
33. Quoted in Moore and Clarke 1995, p. 271.
34. Illustrating the anatomy-politics of the human body.
35. Exemplifying the biopolitics of the population.
36. Harding 1992, 1995; Haraway 1997; Longino 1990; Rose 1994; Nelson and Nelson 1996.
37. See also Strock 1998.
38. Furthermore, the theories derived from such research deeply affect how people live their lives. Recently, for example, a movement to turn homosexuals into "straight" people has garnered a lot of publicity. It matters a lot to individual homosexuals if they and others think they can change or if they believe their homosexual desire is permanent and unchangeable (Leland and Miller 1998; Duberman 1991).
- For further discussion on this point, see Zita 1992.
- For a detailed analysis of bisexuality, see Garber 1995 and Epstein 1991.
- The sociologist Bruno Latour argues that once a scientific finding becomes so thoroughly accepted that we dignify it by calling it a fact, placing it without question in textbooks and scientific dictionaries, it moves out of view, behind

a veil that he refers to as a black box (Latour 1987). Place a fact in a Latourian black box and people stop looking at it. Nobody asks whether, at the time of its origin, it functioned ideologically in the social or political arena or whether it embodied particular cultural practices or ways of seeing the world.

39. Kinsey et al., 1948; Kinsey et al., 1953.

*Kinsey's Eight Categories.* 0: "all psychologic responses and all overt sexual activities directed towards persons of the opposite sex." 1: "psychosexual responses and/or overt experience are almost entirely toward individuals of the opposite sex." 2: "the preponderance of their psychosexual responses and/or overt experiences are heterosexual, although they respond rather differently to homosexual stimuli." 3: Individuals who "stand midway on the heterosexual-homosexual scale." 4: Individuals whose "psychologic responses are more often directed toward other individuals of their own sex." 5: "almost entirely homosexual in their psychologic responses and/or their overt activities." 6: "exclusively homosexual." X: "do not respond erotically to either heterosexual or homosexual stimuli and do not have overt physical contacts" (Kinsey et al. 1953, pp. 471-72).

40. When they looked at accumulated homosexual encounters, from adolescence through age forty, they reported that homosexual responses had reached 28 percent for women and almost 50 percent for men. When they asked about interactions that led to orgasm, the numbers were still high: 13 percent for women and 37 percent for men (*ibid.*, p. 471). Kinsey did not endorse the notion of homosexuality as a natural category. His system, emphatically, did not carve nature at the joints.

41. He did, of course, study these other aspects of human sexual existence, but they were not explicitly part of the 0-6 scale and Kinsey's complexity and subtlety of analysis were often lost in subsequent discussions. As recently as 1989, some researchers complained about the adequacy of the Kinsey scale and proposed more complex grid-like models. One created a grid with seven variables down (sexual attraction, sexual behavior, sexual fantasies, emotional preference, social preference, self-identification, heterosexual lifestyle) and a time scale (past, present, future) across (Klein 1990).

42. See, for example, Bailey et al. 1993; Whitam et al. 1993; Hamer et al. 1993; and Patatucci and Hamer 1995.

From the very beginning Kinsey fell under both political and scientific attack. He lost his funding after certain members of Congress became outraged. Scientists, especially statisticians, attacked his methodology. Kinsey had obtained data from an impressively large number of men and women, but he had collected his overwhelmingly middle class, white, Midwestern population using what sociologists now call a snowball sample. Starting with students as one source, he had branched out to their friends and family, their friends' friends and family, and so on. As word of the study spread (for exam-

ple, through his public speaking engagements), he picked up more people, some volunteering after hearing him speak. Although he actively sought out people from different environments, there seems little doubt that he selected a segment of the population who was especially willing, and in some cases even eager, to talk about sex. Might this have accounted for the high frequencies of homosexual encounters in his reports?

On the positive side, Kinsey and a small number of highly trained co-workers (in a fashion true to the racism and sexism of the period, Kinsey's interviewers had to be male, white, and WASP) conducted all of the interviews. Rather than use preset questionnaires, they followed a memorized procedure and had the leeway to pursue lines of questioning in order to be sure they had gotten complete answers. More modern survey approaches have exchanged this more flexible, but also more idiosyncratic, interview process for a level of standardization that permits using less highly trained interview personnel. It is very hard to know whether important data are lost as a result. I owe this point to James Weinrich (personal communication) (Brecher and Brecher 1986; Irvine 1990a, b).

43. This is a necessary feature of doing molecular linkage studies (for any multifactorial trait) because the power of resolution is so low. (See Larder and Scherk 1994.) If the trait is not narrowed enormously, it is impossible to find statistically significant association. But narrowing the trait makes it inappropriate to generalize a finding to the general population (Pattarucci 1998).

44. For the grid model, see Klein 1990. For one version of an orthogonal model, see Weinrich 1987.

45. Chung and Kayayama 1996.

In the most important recent survey of human sexual practices in the United States, Edward O. Laumann, John H. Gagnon, Robert T. Michael, and Stuart Michaels categorized their results along three axes: same-sex sexual behavior, desire, and identity (Laumann, Gagnon, et al. 1994). For example, Laumann and colleagues found that 59 percent of women with at least some homosexual interest expressed same-sex desire but no other behaviors, and 15 percent reported that they had same-sex desire, behaviors, and self-identity as lesbian. Thirteen percent reported same-sex behaviors (sexual interactions) but without strong homosexual desire and without identifying as lesbian. Although the precise distributions for men differed, the same general conclusion held. There is a "high degree of variability in the way that differing elements of homosexuality are distributed in the population. This variability relates to the way that homosexuality is organized as a set of behaviors and practices and experience subjectively, and it raises provocative questions about the definition of *homosexuality*" (Laumann Gagnon et al. 1994, p. 300). The sample size for these studies was 3,432, age range 18 to 59. There were discrepancies in the data, which the authors note and discuss. Among them:

22 percent of women report being forced into some sexual act, but only 3 percent of men say they have force women into sex. Men say they have more sex partners than women do, so who are the men having all that sex with? See Cotton 1994; see also Reiss 1995.

46. I often hear from my biology colleagues that our compatriots in other fields have an easier time than we because scientific knowledge changes continuously while other fields are static. Hence we need constantly to revise our courses, while a historian or Shakespearean scholar can legitimately give the same old lecture, year after year. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. The field of literature changes all the time as new theories of analysis and new philosophies of language become part of the academic's tools. And an English professor who does not regularly update her lectures or develop new courses to reflect the changing field receives just as much criticism as the biochemistry professor who reads his lectures directly from the textbook. My colleagues' attitudes represent an attempt at boundary maintenance—a method of trying to make scientific work special. The entire thrust of current analyses of science, however, suggests that it is not so different after all. For an overview of work in the social studies of science, see Hess 1997.

47. Halperin 1990, pp. 28–29.

48. Scott 1993, p. 408.

49. Duden 1991, pp. v, vi.

50. Katz 1995.

51. Trumbach 1991a.

52. McIntosh 1968.

53. In philosophy the question of how to categorize human sexuality is usually discussed in terms of "natural kinds." The philosopher John Dupré writes more generally about the difficulties of biological classification of any sort: "There is no God-given, unique way to classify the innumerable and diverse products of the evolutionary process. There are many plausible and defensible ways of doing so, and the best way of doing so will depend on both the purposes of the classification and the peculiarities of the organisms in question" (Dupré 1993, p. 57). For other discussions of natural kinds with regard to classifying human sexuality, see Stein 1999 and Hacking 1992 and 1995.

Even now many of us spend idle moments speculating about whether So and so is "really" straight or "really" a queer just as we "might question whether a certain pain indicated cancer" (McIntosh 1968, p. 182).

54. Only through time travel, Latour argues, can one understand the social construction of a particular scientific fact. Interested parties must journey back to a period just before the fact in question appeared on Earth and follow along as citizens of an earlier time participated in its "discovery," argued about its reality, and finally agreed to place it in the dark box of facticity (see

note 38). Thus we cannot understand modern scientific structure of human sexuality without traveling back in time of origin.

55. There is now a rich and growing literature on the history of sex. For an overview of ideas about masculinity and femininity, see Foucault and Laqueur 1990. For studies of sexuality in Rome and in early modernity, see Boswell 1990 and Brooten 1996. For up-to-date scholarship on the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, see Trumbach 1998 and 1997, 1982; Huussen 1987; and Rey 1987). For changing expressions of sexual the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Park 1990; Jones and Stallon 1991; Trumbach 1991a, b; Faderman 1982; and Vicinus 1989. For additional historical accounts, see Boswell 1995; Bray 1982; Bullough and Brann 1996; Cadden 1993; Cullianu 1991; Dubois and Gordon 1983; Gallagher-Laqueur 1987; Groneman 1994; Jordanova 1980 and 1989; Kinisman-Laqueur 1992; and Mort 1987. For looks at how ideas about health and disease have been linked to our definitions of sex, gender, and morality, see Morison 1990; Murray 1991; Padgug 1979; Payer 1993; Porter and Mikulak 1990; Porter and Hall 1995; Rosario 1997; Smart 1992; and Trumbach 1982 and 1989.

56. Katz 1976 and Faderman 1982.

57. Halwani 1998 provides one example of the ongoing nature of this debate.

58. Sometimes touted as the seat of modern democracy, Athens was in fact, ruled by a small group of elite male citizens. Others—slaves, women, foreigners, and children—had subordinate status. This political structure provided the scaffolding for sex and gender. There were, for example, specific prohibitions against men having sex with one another. What mattered was what *kind* of sex one had. A citizen could have sex with a foreigner, a male slave so long as he actively penetrated and the other passively received. This sort of sex did not violate the political structure or bring into question the masculinity of the active partner. On the other hand, penetrative sex between citizens of equal status “was virtually inconceivable” (Halperin 1990, p. 31). The sex act declared one’s social and political standing. “Sex between social superior and social inferior was a miniature drama of polarization which served to measure and define the social distance between them” (idem 1990, p. 32). Position mattered. In the pattern that emerges from analyzing the variety of sex acts depicted in drawings on Greek vases, male citizens always penetrated women or male slaves from the rear. (No, the missionary position, neither universal nor “natural”!) But in the much-touted relationships between older men and their younger male citizen protégés, sex (without penetration) happened face to face (Keller 1985). Weinrich 1987 distinguishes among three forms of homosexuality identified either in different cultures

or in the same culture. Inversion homosexuality, see structure 1990, p. 190 and 1995. Other authors (Kinisman 1987) note the written word in 1869 by the Hungarian K. M. Benkert. Something must have been in the air.

Hansen 1992 and 1989. French, Italian, and American accounts follow soon after.

Ellis 1913. A number of historians point out that the medical profession's involvement in defining types of human sexuality was only part of the story. For a variety of more nuanced accounts see Krafft-Ebing 1892; Kinisman 1987 and 1994; Hansen 1989 and 1992; D'Emilio 1983 and 1993; and Minton 1996. Duggan writes: “turn-of-century sexologists, far from creating or producing new lesbian identities, drew their ‘cases’ from women’s own stories and newspaper retellings of them as well as from French fiction and pornography as ‘empirical’ bases for their theories” (Duggan 1993, p. 809).

In earlier periods male and female sexuality was understood to lie on a continuum from hot to cold (Laqueur 1990).

The true invert of this period cross-dressed and, when possible, took on an appropriately masculine work. Ellis, writing in 1928, described the invert as “The brusque, energetic movements, the attitude of the arms, the direct speech, . . . the masculine straight-forwardness and sense of honor . . . all suggest the underlying psychic abnormality to a keen observer . . . but also . . . frequently a pronounced taste for smoking cigarettes . . . but also a tolerance for cigars. There is also a dislike and sometimes incapacity for needlework and other domestic occupations, while there is often some aptitude for athletics.” Ellis 1928, p. 250. No single book made this point clearly while affecting the lives of thousands of lesbians well into the twentieth century. See also chapter 8 of Silverman 1992.

Although the notion of the invert strongly influenced turn-of-the-century sex experts (who became known as sexologists), the idea was unstable, changing as strict sex roles weakened and men and women began more often to inhabit the same public spaces. Ellis and then Freud began to note that invert might separate masculine behaviors and roles from same-sex desire. The subject choice (or what we today often call sexual preference) grew in importance as a category for classifying sexuality. A similar division came slowly to women, perhaps not fully emerging until the feminist revolution of the 1970s smashed rigid sex roles into bits. For more on the history of lesbian identity, see Birken 1988; Irvine 1990a, b; Bullough 1994; Robinson 1976; and Willett 1994.

For a fascinating description of this transformation from the point of view of lesbians themselves, see Kennedy and Davis 1993.



65. Although male-male sex did not bother them, the Greeks regarded the existence of *mollies*, unmasculine men who wanted to be penetrated by *tribades*, women who, although engaging in sex with men, preferred to be penetrated by women. They considered both groups mentally troubled. But the *tribades* lay not in same-sex desire. Rather, what worried Greek physicians was that *mollies* and *tribades* were *gender deviants*. They either mysteriously or voluntarily surrendered male power by becoming a passive sex partner, or, intolerant of their condition, by becoming the active partner, to assume male political status. In the *molle* and the *tribade* differed from normal folk by having too much of a good thing. They were understood to be oversexed. (*Mollies* apparently developed the desire to be penetrated because taking the active role did not provide sufficient sexual release.) David Halperin writes: "these gender-deviant men desire sexual pleasure just as most people do, but they have such strong and intense desires that they are driven to devise some unusual and distressing means . . . means of gratifying them" (Halperin 1990, p. 23).

66. The historian Bert Hansen writes: "A tentative sense of identity facilitated further interaction . . . which then facilitated the formation of a homosexual identity for more individuals" (Hansen 1992, p. 109).

67. *Ibid.*, p. 125. See also Minton 1996.

The historian George Chauncey provides impressive evidence for a large and fairly open and accepted social world for urban gay men during the first third of this century. He argues that, in contrast to that period, gay culture encountered a great period of repression from the 1930s through the 1950s (Chauncey 1994). Allan Bérubé (1990) documents the participation of gay men and women in World War II. He suggests that the modern gay movement forms one of the ultimate legacies of their struggles in the armed services. For a fascinating oral history of the postwar gay rights movement, see Marcus 1992. Additional essays on the postwar period may be found in Escoffier et al. 1995. For discussions of historiographical problems in writing histories of sexuality, see Weeks 1981a, b and Duggan 1990.

68. Its English language entrée occurred in 1889 with the English translation of Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis*.

69. Katz 1990 p. 16.

Today the concept of heterosexual appears to us as inexorably natural. But the first 30 years of the twentieth century had passed before it solidified on American shores. In 1901 neither the terms *heterosexual* nor *homosexual* appeared in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. During the teens and 20s novelists, playwrights, and sex educators fought censorship and public disapproval to make a public space for the erotic heterosexual. Only in 1939 did the word *heterosexual* finally emerge from the medical demi-monde to achieve that honor of all honors, publication in the *New York Times*. From there to Broadway, as a lyric in the musical *Pal Joey*, took another decade.

Katz 1990. The full *Pal Joey* lyric is quoted on p. 20; for a more detailed

account of the history of the modern concept of heterosexuality, see Katz 1990. In 1929 the sex educator Mary Ware Dennett was convicted of sending obscene material—a sex education pamphlet for children—through the mails. Her criminal writings declared the joys of sexual passion (of course, within the confines of love and marriage). The author Margaret Jackson argued that the development of the field of sexology undermined feminists of the period "by declaring that those aspects of male sexuality and heterosexual behavior were in fact *natural*, and by constructing a 'scientific' model of sexuality on this basis" (Jackson 1987, p. 55). For further discussion of feminism, sexology, and sexuality in this period, see Jeffreys 1985f.

Nye 1998, p. 4.

Boswell 1990, pp. 22, 26.

Nye 1998, p. 4.

As for example, James Weinrich suggests (Weinrich 1987).

Not all anthropologists agree on the exact number of patterns; some have as six patterns. As with many of the ideas discussed in this chapter, the academy is still in flux as new data pour in and new approaches to analyzing old data proliferate.

McIntosh 1968.

76. In the years since McIntosh's essay, books' worth of scholarship on the topic have been published. See, for example, Dynes and Donaldson 1992a, 1992b, and Murray 1992.

77. For reviews of cross-cultural studies of human sexuality, see Davis and Whitten 1987; Weston 1993; and Morris 1995.

78. See, for example, how Weinrich uses the notion of human universals to infer the biological basis of behavioral traits (Weinrich 1987).

79. Vance 1991, p. 878.

80. Note that such a definition permits Boswell to be a mild social constructionist while still believing that homosexual desire is inborn, transhistorical, and cross-cultural. Indeed, the phrase *social construction* does not refer to a unified body of thought. The meaning of the phrase has changed with time; more modern "constructionists" are generally more sophisticated than early ones. For a detailed discussion of the different forms of constructionism and essentialism, see Halley 1994.

81. Vance 1991, p. 878. Halperin certainly falls into this more radical constructionist category.

82. Herdt 1990a, p. 222.

83. A careful reading of Herdt's account of Melanesian societies reveals three underlying (Western) assumptions: that homosexuality is a lifelong practice, that it is an "identity," and that these definitions of homosexuality may be found worldwide.

84. Elliston 1995, p. 849.

*Ibid.*, p. 852.