

*From Bisexuality to Intersexuality  
Rethinking Gender Categories*

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- *No Disclosures*

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# *From Bisexuality to Intersexuality Rethinking Gender Categories*

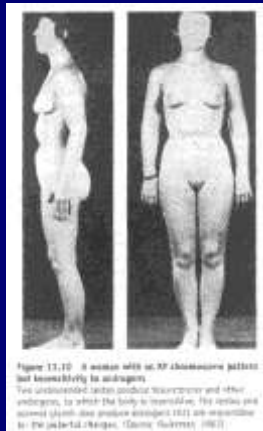
- I. Queer Theory
- II. Bisexuality
- III. Hierarchies
- IV. Nature
- V. Gender

## *I. Queer Theory*

## *Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome (AIS)*

- ⊕ Intersex condition
- ⊕ Genetic transmission (X-linked recessive)
- ⊕ Developing, in utero cells unresponsive to masculinizing effects of prenatal androgens
- ⊕ Child with XY chromosomes born with outer appearance of a girl

## *Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome (AIS) (Male Pseudohermaphroditism)*



## *I. Queer Theory*



Male Pseudohermaphrodite

?  
=



Girl

## *I. Queer Theory* *Outgrowth of Gender/Gay & Lesbian* *Studies*

- ⊕ Play on double meaning of “queer,” historically disparaging term for gay people.
- ⊕ “Queer” appropriated as marker of a unique, outsider’s take on cultural conventions.

## *I. Queer Theory* *Outgrowth of Gender/Gay & Lesbian* *Studies*

- ⊕ Challenges assumptions underlying binary categories like “masculinity/femininity,” or “homosexuality/heterosexuality.”
- ⊕ Challenges cultural norms, seen as oppressive, “deconstructing” the implicit assumptions upon which such norms are based.
- ⊕ Draws attention to how identities are socially constructed through history, language and custom, arguing that these identities do not arise from biological (essentialist) factors.

## *Anne Fausto-Sterling* *The Five Sexes (1993)*

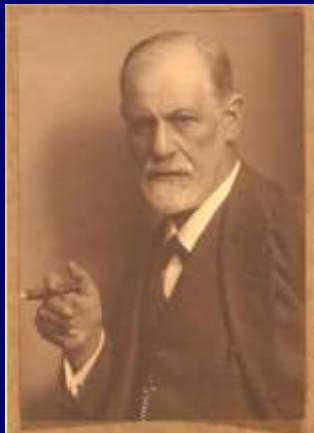
- ⊕ Males
- ⊕ Merms (Male Pseudohermaphrodites)
- ⊕ (True) Hermaphrodites
- ⊕ Ferms (Female Pseudohermaphrodites)
- ⊕ Females



## *II. Bisexuality*

Tea For Two?

### *Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)*



- ⊕ Physical Bisexuality—  
ability of organism to  
develop as either male *or*  
female
- ⊕ Ontogeny repeats  
phylogeny
- ⊕ Metaphorical leap from  
physical bisexuality to  
psychological bisexuality

## *II. Bisexuality*

### Presumes Only Two Sexes (Gender Binary)

- ⊕ Females: Sugar and Spice and Everything Nice
- ⊕ Males: Snips and Snails and Puppy Dog Tails

## *II. Bisexuality*

### Gender Binary:

Human sexual diversity is a  
hybrid of two basic ingredients

- ⊕ Gay men identify with their mothers
- ⊕ Lesbians act like men



## *Gender Binaries in Clinical Practice*

### *II. Bisexuality*

#### Gender Binaries

- ⊕ Routine patient concerns about masculinity and femininity
- ⊕ Clinical data from transgender and transexual Individuals

## *II. Bisexuality*

- ⊕ Intersexuality (ambiguous genitalia; hermaphroditism)
- ⊕ Fausto-Sterling *Sexing The Body* (2000)
- ⊕ The case of Daniel Burghammer

## *II. Bisexuality*

- ⊕ Authority of the Church
- ⊕ Bible only acknowledges two sexes
- ⊕ Giving birth trumps a lifetime of living as a man

## *II. Bisexuality*

- ⊕ Power of Church eventually ceded to “Therapeutic State” (Szasz)
- ⊕ Scientific and medical classifications of hermaphrodites
- ⊕ Scientists, like religious authorities believe only in two sexes

## *II. Bisexuality*

- ⊕ First distinctions between “true” and “pseduo” hermaphrodities
- ⊕ The organs of sexual reproduction, by shared scientific agreement, arbitrarily became *the* defining factor in determining an individual’s “true” biological sex.

## *II. Bisexuality*

“ . . . a body with two ovaries, no matter how many masculine features it might have was [a] female [pseudohermaphrodite]. No matter if a pair of testes were nonfunctional and the person possessing them had a vagina and a breast, testes make the body [a] male [pseudohermaphrodite]”

(Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body*).

## *II. Bisexuality*

- ⊕ The categories of male and female expanded.
- ⊕ The category of hermaphrodite shrank.
- ⊕ “People of mixed sex all but disappeared, not because they had become rarer, but because scientific methods classified them out of existence” (Fausto-Sterling).

## *Karl Heinrich Ulrichs* (1825-1895)

- ⊕ Early German activist for “gay rights”
- ⊕ 1862: Coins term *Uranismus* for what will eventually be called “homosexuality”
- ⊕ Third sex—neither male nor female
  - urning (woman’s spirit in man’s body)
  - urnind (man’s spirit in woman’s body)

## *Magnus Hirschfeld* (1868-1935)



“Magnus Hirschfeld has left our ranks in Berlin. No great loss, he is a flabby, unappetizing fellow, absolutely incapable of learning anything. Of course he takes your remark at the Congress as a pretext; homosexual touchiness. Not worth a tear.”

*Freud to Jung (1911)*

## *II. Bisexuality*

### ⊕ *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (Freud. 1905)

“Psychoanalytic research is most decidedly opposed to any attempt at separating off homosexuals from the rest of mankind as a group of special character...it has found that all human beings are capable of making a homosexual object-choice and have in fact made one in their unconscious...”

## *II. Bisexuality*

### ⊕ *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (Freud. 1905)

...psycho-analysis considers that a choice of an object independently of its sex-- freedom to range equally over male and female objects ... is the original basis from which, as a result of restriction in one direction or the other, both the normal and the inverted types develop.”

## *II. Bisexuality*

- ⊕ Freud appears affirmative but...  
...actually a rebuke of Third Sex theories  
(and gay rights movement of Freud's time)
- ⊕ Freud believed there could only be two sexes  
with everyone having some capacity to  
express, either consciously or unconsciously,  
both masculine and feminine instincts.

## *II. Bisexuality*

- ⊕ *Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman* (Freud, 1920)

“ . . . homosexual men have experienced a specially strong fixation on their mother . . . in addition to their manifest homosexuality, a very considerable measure of latent or unconscious homosexuality can be detected in all normal people. If these [two] findings are taken into account, then, clearly, the supposition that nature in a freakish mood created a ‘third sex’ falls to the ground.”

### *III. Hierarchies*

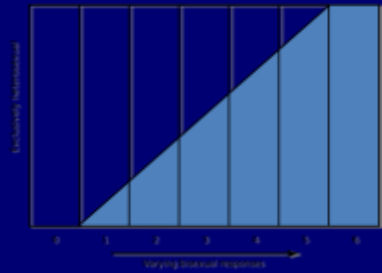
Who's on First?  
What's on Second?

#### *Alfred Kinsey (1894-1956)*

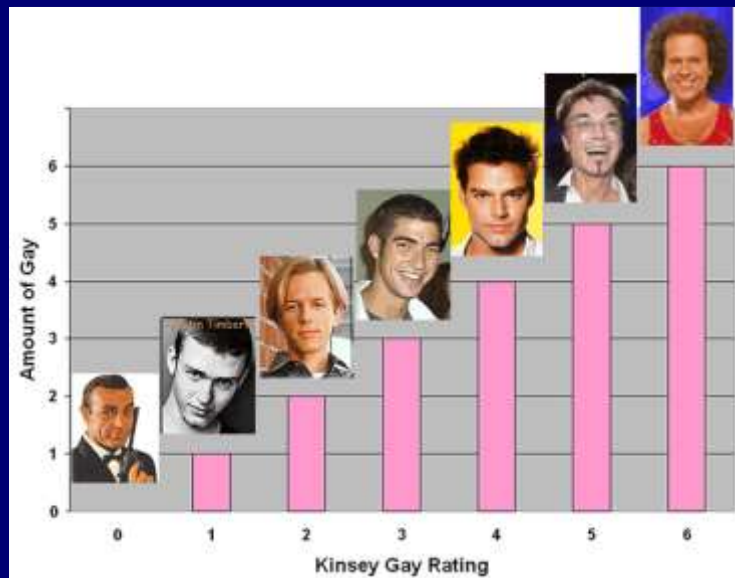
- ⊕ Insect taxonomy
- ⊕ Evolutionary importance of variations within a species
- ⊕ Thousands of detailed interviews about people's sexual practices (non-patients)
- ⊕ Kinsey scale (0-6)
- ⊕ High rates of homosexuality (10-37%) argued in favor of normal variation



# Kinsey Scale



- ⊕ Kinsey 0: Exclusive Heterosexuality
- ⊕ Kinsey 6: Exclusive Homosexuality
- ⊕ Five Grades of Bisexuality (Kinsey 1-5)



### *III. Hierarchies*

#### Kinsey Homosexuality/Heterosexuality Continuum

- ⊕ Polarizes human sexual experience while arbitrarily designating the two ends as essential categories
- ⊕ Categories and continua can be “deconstructed”

### *III. Hierarchies*

In the beginning, God created man.

- ⊕ First gender category: Man
- ⊕ Second gender category: Woman

## *Which gender is better?*

- ⊕ Man came first (Patriarchy)
- ⊕ Second model (woman) improvement on the first (Feminism)

## *III. Hierarchies*

- ⊕ Gender ranking is a common way to organize experience.
- ⊕ The existence of categories leads to hierarchies.
- ⊕ Deconstructing categories and hierarchies offers a way to understand a patient's value system(s).

### *III. Hierarchies*

#### Sexual Hierarchies

The ordering of sexual practices as *better* or *worse* in terms of implicit or explicit values.

### *III. Hierarchies*

*Gayle Rubin (Thinking Sex, 1984)*  
*Sexuality in the “Charmed Circle”*

- ⊕ “good,” “normal,” and “natural”
- ⊕ heterosexual, marital, monogamous, reproductive and non-commercial
- ⊕ coupled, relational, intragenerational, and occurs at home
- ⊕ no pornography, fetish objects, sex toys of any sort, or roles other than male or female

### *III. Hierarchies*

*Gayle Rubin (Thinking Sex, 1984)*  
*Sexuality outside the “Charmed Circle”*

- ⊕ “bad,” “abnormal,” or “unnatural”
- ⊕ homosexual, unmarried, promiscuous, non-procreative, or commercial
- ⊕ masturbatory or orgiastic, casual, crosses generational lines, takes place in “public” (in the bushes or in the baths)
- ⊕ involve the use of pornography, fetish objects, sex toys, or unusual roles

*Sexual Hierarchies  
in Clinical Practice*

## *B's Sexual Hierarchy*

- ⊕ wait on sex until after many dates >
- ⊕ having sex on the first date >
- ⊕ having paid sexual relationships
- ⊕ being approached by a hustler for sex >
- ⊕ approaching a hustler for sex

## *III. Hierarchies*

- ⊕ The ordering of categories serves the purpose of telling a story that offers insights into what patients value or devalue in themselves and in others.
- ⊕ Patient accounts can be heard as *moral narratives*, stories about what they believe to be good or bad about themselves or others.

### *III. Hierarchies*

- ⊕ Therapists have their own hierarchy of values.
- ⊕ Countertransference.

### *III. Hierarchies*

Freud

#### *Three Essays on Sexuality (1905)*

- ⊕ Draws a “charmed circle” called “genital sexuality”: insertion of penis into vagina
- ⊕ Homosexuality bundled with pedophilia and bestiality as “deviation” in respect to the object
- ⊕ Non-genital activities (cunnilingus, fellatio, anal sex) reflect either fixations or regressions

*“Civilized” sexual morality and  
modern mental illness (Freud, 1908)*

“ . . . the perverse forms of intercourse between the two sexes, in which other parts of the body take over the role of the genitals, have undoubtedly increased in social importance. These activities cannot, however, be regarded as being as harmless as analogous extensions [of the sexual aim] in love relationships. They are ethically objectionable, for they degrade the relationships of love between two human beings from a serious matter to a convenient game, attended by no risk and no spiritual participation.”

*IV. Nature*

Doing What Comes Naturally



## St. Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225 - 1274)

- ⊕ sins according to nature (*peccata secundum naturam*)
- ⊕ the sin is determined as being “contrary to right reason”: e.g., fornication, rape, incest, adultery, sacrilege

## St. Thomas Aquinas

- ⊕ sins against nature (*peccata contra naturam*)
- ⊕ the sin contains an *additional* aspect; it is not only against reason but it is also inconsistent with reproduction, e.g., masturbation, bestiality, homosexual activity, contraception

## *IV. Nature*

- ⊕ The “natural” is given greater hierarchical value than the “unnatural”
- ⊕ Calling something “natural” is another way of saying it is “good,” or at least better than something which is not natural
- ⊕ To say one is “born gay” or “born trans” is another way of saying it is a natural occurrence, rather than a moral failing

## *IV. Nature*

Moral perspectives can embed themselves in “scientific” discussions of nature

- ⊕ von Krafft-Ebing
- ⊕ Freud

## *Richard von Krafft-Ebing* *(1840-1902)*

### *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886)

“The propagation of the human race is not left to mere accident or the caprices of the individuals, but is guaranteed by the hidden laws of nature which are enforced by a mighty, irresistible impulse. . . . Man puts himself at once on a level with the beast if he seeks to gratify lust alone, but he elevates his superior position when by curbing the animal desire he combines with the sexual functions ideas of morality, of the sublime, and the beautiful.”

## Joseph Wortis

### *Fragment of an Analysis with Freud*

“Normal people have a certain homosexual component and a very strong heterosexual component. The homosexual component should be sublimated as it now is in society; it is one of the most valuable human assets, and should be put to social uses. One cannot give one's impulses free rein. Your attitude reminds me of a child who just discovered everybody defecates and who then demands that everybody ought to defecate in public; that cannot be.”

## *On Narcissism* (Freud, 1914)

“Women, especially if they grow up with good looks, develop a certain self-contentment which compensates them for the social restrictions that are imposed upon them in their choice of object ... Nor does their need lie in the direction of loving, but of being loved;/ and the man who fulfills this condition is the one who finds favor with them.”

## *IV. Nature*

- ⊕ Freud's bisexual theories informed by gender stereotypes
- ⊕ Activity is masculine and passivity is feminine
- ⊕ Women are objects and men are subjects

## *V. Gender*

Is It a Boy or a Girl?

## *V. Gender*

- ⊕ Human beings, “by nature,” create categories.
- ⊕ Bisexuality is an artifact of cultural assumptions about masculinity and femininity.

## *Symposium* (Plato)

“Each [of the original three sexes] when separated, having one side only...is always looking for his [sic] other half. Men who are a section of that double nature which was once called Androgynous are lovers of women... the women who are a section of the woman do not care for men, but have female attachments... they who are a section of the male, follow the male.

## *V. Gender* *Plato's Symposium*

### *Trisexuality*

Male->

Female->

Androgyne->

### *Tetrisexuality*

1) Men who love Men

2) Women who love Women

3) Men who love Women

4) Women who love Men

## *V. Gender*

### Gender Beliefs

- ⊕ Not just about sexuality
- ⊕ Concerned with everyday activities
- ⊕ ☒ Every individual is assigned to the category of either man or woman at birth
- ⊕ Individuals should thereafter conform to the category to which they have been assigned

## *V. Gender*

### Intersex infants

- ⊕ Routinely underwent genital surgery
- ⊕ Surgeries usually not medically necessary
  - ⊕ Boys with micropenises castrated and made into girls
  - ⊕ Girls with congenital adrenal hyperplasia (CAH) have clitoris “reduced” to create a “more normal” appearance
- ⊕ Social necessity of helping the child fit into a culture which only recognizes two genders
- ⊕ Protocols called for surgery and misleading patients to make things “look natural”

## *V. Gender*

### Everyone Contends with Gender Beliefs

- ⊕ “Real” men and women are powerful cultural myths
- ⊕ In the “gender binary,” “man” and “woman” are mutually exclusive categories
- ⊕ In the “gender binary,” all feelings, thoughts and behaviors must fall into either one category or the other

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