

Chapter 2

SEXOLOGY AND THE SINGLE WOMAN



Old maids have a long history. Prior to the late nineteenth century, condemnations of single women were based upon a simple premise: unwed women threatened the prevailing economic and social order. Indeed, fear of the unattached woman as a destabilizing force had contributed to the condemnation of widows during the witch craze of early modern Europe. By the turn of the twentieth century, as educational and professional opportunities became more accessible for middle-class single women, one might have been able to hope for the eradication of discrimination against the unwed. Yet a 1911 essay asserted otherwise: “The old maid, that brutal social malformation, was about to disappear ... but suddenly in the last few years, she has emerged again.”¹

A review of sexual scholarship indicates that representations of the *alte Jungfer* (old maid) took on new characteristics just when one might have expected the hackneyed stereotype to fade away. The emerging field of *Sexualwissenschaft* (sexology) at the turn-of-the-century offered fresh insights into the category of old maidenhood by openly discussing female sexuality and affirming the existence and importance of the female sex drive. Sexual scientists offered an interpretation of single women supporting Michel Foucault’s contention that “the society that emerged in the nineteenth century—bourgeois, capitalist, or industrial society ... set out to formulate the uniform truth of sex ... as if it was essential that sex be inscribed not only in an economy of pleasure but in an ordered system of knowledge.”² In pursuit of a uniform truth, *scientia sexualis* established controlling norms of sexual health and deviance. Yet, as historians Edward R. Dickinson and Richard Wetzell have observed regarding the historiography of German sexuality, “the field of sexual power/knowledge is constructed within a complex social environment ... it is not the property of a few academically trained doctors or

servants.”³ The sexologists addressed in this chapter responded and further contributed to a discourse on sexuality that reflected contemporary concerns about gender roles, women’s rights, separate spheres, and the meaning of marriage. The surplus woman stood at the nexus of those anxieties. Sexological examination of the female unwed rendered readings that were embedded in an era of cultural and social apprehension, even as they attempted to create a modern, scientific understanding of womanhood.

Richard Krafft-Ebing, the Viennese neurologist who pioneered Central European sexology,⁴ established in the late nineteenth century the paradigmatic view of sexologists on single marital status: “Mental illness is much more frequent among the single than among the married, a fact that ... is explained in that the ages of the single are more strongly represented in the population which exhibits a greater predisposition to illness ... [and] that the more hygienic conditions of married life and regular sexual intercourse have prophylactic effects.”⁵ The greater likelihood of mental illness befalling the unwed, combined with the belief that women in general exhibited “a greater disposition to mental illness than men,” meant a much higher likelihood of instability among single women: “If the female must bear alone the struggle for existence—as in the case of widows—then she succumbs more easily and rapidly than the man.” Beyond the psychic stress of solitary life, unmarried women suffered due to celibacy: “The female, by nature as much in need of sex as the man, at least in the ideal sense, knows no other respectable satisfaction of this need than marriage ... Through countless generations, her character is developed in this direction.” Thus, Krafft-Ebing and the generation of sexologists that followed him viewed the female surplus as a serious threat to female mental health: “Modern life with its increasing demands offers ever fewer prospects of fulfillment in marriage. This is especially true for the higher classes, in which marriages take place later and more seldomly.”⁶

Bourgeois surplus women emerged as objects of case studies among the early sexologists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Krafft-Ebing described the female proclivity toward mental illness in contrast to men:

As the stronger, through their greater intellectual and physical strength and their free social position, men can procure for themselves sexual satisfaction without trouble or can easily find an equivalent in a vocation which calls for their entire energy. But these paths are closed to the single females of the better classes. This initially leads to conscious or unconscious dissatisfactions with themselves and the world, to abnormal brooding. For some time, many sought a surrogate in religion, but in vain. Religious zeal, with or without masturbation, has brought forth a host of neuropathies, among which hysteria and mental illness are not infrequent. Only realize the fact that the greatest frequency of insanity among single females occurs in the time of the 25th to the 35th years of life, the time where the prime of life disappears and life’s hopes along with it.⁷

Naturally inferior to men, weakened by forsaken dreams, and sickened by sexual abstinence, single women occupied a precarious realm of mental health. Elite social status further imperiled them and the historical sanctuary of religious faith

could well make them even more ill. The female surplus thus provided fertile cases of dysfunction for the emerging field of sexual science to examine. The *Kaiserreich* bore witness to the reinvention of the alte Jungfer as new deviant.⁸

Lapdogs and Libidos

The field of *Sexualwissenschaft* emerged in the early twentieth century.⁹ The designation of the field marked a culmination of important work on the subject of sex, which had been conducted in the previous decades by psychologists, anthropologists, and physicians. Sexologists sought both to raise the understanding of the importance of sex to the human condition and to make the study of sex an important category of scientific knowledge. At the same time, as historian Harry Oosterhuis has argued, “nineteenth-century medical interest in sexuality was dictated by wider social anxieties.”¹⁰ Debate surrounding women’s rights informed the ways in which sexual scientists approached female sexuality in general as well as the sexuality of unwed females in particular. An examination of the work of Central European sexologists, including Iwan Bloch, August Forel, Sigmund Freud, Magnus Hirschfeld, Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Max Marcuse, Hermann Ploss, Hermann Rohleder, Wilhelm Stekel, and Otto Weininger, demonstrates that the stereotype of the *alte Jungfer* received new vigor as unmarried women came under the lens of sexual science.¹¹

While scientific examination of sexuality was relatively new, conjecture about the single woman’s sensual life was not. The mockery that pervaded cultural depictions of unwed women also penetrated discussions about the *alte Jungfer* as sexually abnormal. The keystone of such lampooning was the alleged attachment of the spinster to her pets. The association of unmarried women and animals has an extensive history and was a central feature of the persecution of women as witches.¹² Most turn-of-the-century accounts did not exhibit such a diabolical component; in fact, many justified the perceived affection of old maids for animals as a consequence of their lonely lives. Amalie Baisch’s advice book for maturing girls observed that most unwed women were “too proud to admit their unsatisfying existence and as a result take on a more and more unpleasant life of ambiguity. Everything good, loving, and heartfelt that remains in them is mainly wasted on dogs, cats, parrots, other pets; in such a way they resign themselves to a bad situation and add to it the horrible reward of ridiculousness.”¹³ Another account featured the loyal poodle and canary as the only friends an old maid ultimately could trust in a monotonous life.¹⁴

In his extensive biological and anthropological study of women, physician and ethnologist Hermann Heinrich Ploss implied a deeper relationship between single woman and household pet:

She is left with nothing to hope for and remains yet again excluded by the unfeeling male world ... Thus [she] retires into herself. She has only one who belongs to her heart, who

endures all of her moods, in whose devotedly silent bosom she can pour all of her life's sorrow and grief, and who, in the same way that the hostile world stands opposed to her, stands by her: that is her loyal roommate and bedmate: her lapdog. With him the withered rose sits desolately behind the ivy trellis that adorns her window and remembers with quiet wistfulness the days when she was still a fresh bud.¹⁵

The lapdog is the most familiar symbol in the iconography of the *alte Jungfer*. In cartoons parodying single women, the dog is a mainstay. Ploss' rendition of this well-known image was made vivid by the physical yearning latent in the description. The male world and all of its comforts have rejected her. Seeking relief, she comforts herself in the dog's bosom, sharing her life and even—especially—her bed.

Ploss hinted at bestiality; sexologists would be more explicit. Krafft-Ebing succinctly noted in *Psychopathia Sexualis* that, “The intercourse of females with beasts is limited to dogs.”¹⁶ In 1908, Iwan Bloch provided the following description of female bestiality:

The peculiar zoöphily of many city women ... is due not to any diseased predisposition but to the influences of continued intimate association with the animal. The role which dogs have always played in this connection is well known, not less known is the fact that they are trained by women to carry out the most perverse practices ... [It has been reported] that women train dogs, cats, and at times even monkeys *genitalia lambere* by smearing these parts with honey or putting sugar in them ... The “lap dog” is [not] the consoler only of old maids yearning for love; it is to be found at least as frequently in the possession of married women, to whom the pleasures of normal sexual gratification are by no means unknown.¹⁷

This characterization of the literal love between females and pets made three significant assumptions. First, Bloch situated the phenomenon among urban women, adding perverse particulars to fears about the proliferation of unwed women in cities. Second, Bloch took for granted that his audience had an inkling of his subject and thus relied on standing presumptions about women and their pets. Third, Bloch paused to establish the fact that married women joined and perhaps even exceeded single women in this base means of gratification. Yet the very need for such a clarification reveals the extent to which Bloch's discussion was founded upon conventional stereotypes of the old maid. Bloch offered no case studies to support his assertions. Instead, his findings regarding female bestiality were based upon the perception of shared assumptions about unwed women and their associated perversities.

Old maids preceded sexology. Indeed, the iconography of the antiquated spinster provided a wealth of traditional views for sexologists to examine. Some sexologists were more sympathetic than Bloch in regard to pets; August Forel saw the problem as being more psychological than physical: “Having lost [out on] love, all her mental power shrinks up. Her cat, her little dog, and the daily care of her person and small household occupy her whole mind. It is not surprising

that such persons generally create a pitiable and ridiculous impression.”¹⁸ But whether one explained the unnatural attachment in Forel’s compassionate terms or demonstrated the debauchery in Bloch’s dreadful detail, the paradigm of the odd and perhaps dangerous old maid remained. The topic of bestiality provided a conventional and simultaneously shocking means for sexologists to commence their consideration of surplus women as sexually abnormal.

Turn-of-the-century scientists sought to verify the existence of the old maid as well as to define her pathology. Max Marcuse took an interdisciplinary approach, observing that “the *alte Jungfer* [is] an anthropologically well-defined type to be regarded solely as the outcome of sexual abstinence and whose pathological characteristics quickly would be eliminated if regular sexual intercourse took place”; moreover, the work of neurologists, sexologists, and gynecologists “confirm that this *alte Jungfer* is not . . . simply a product of indolence and lack of responsibility.”¹⁹ Another account placed the onset of old maidenhood in the mid twenties: “this seems to be the critical age [when young women] fall physically and mentally ill due to half-unconscious sexual arousal and the frustrated yearning for love and motherhood: mild mental disturbances with erotic overtones, sexual visions, fantasies and hallucinations emerge.”²⁰ The unspent potential for sexual activity, romance, and reproduction dominated such classifications of the *alte Jungfern*.

Ultimately, the scientific essence of the old maid could be verified only in the physical realm. If a woman did not meet her natural, biological calling, she joined the ranks of a group that was alternatively vilified, satirized, and pitied. The physician Julius Weiss argued that the phrase *alte Jungfer* could only be defined in sexual terms: “*Alte Jungfer*—the concept really must be more distinctly expressed . . . The virgin is old if she comes to the thirtieth year and she has a right to the designation ‘*alte Jungfer*’ as long as her sexual maturity lasts, as long as she ovulates and can become a birth mother, as long as she menstruates.”²¹ The old virgin—the basic essence of the *alte Jungfer*—merited the status of maiden only as long as she was capable of reproduction. According to Weiss, once she passed through menopause, the sexual nature of the female was defunct and the status of her virginity was no longer relevant. The potential for sexual activity and reproduction thus dominated any classification of old maidenhood. The fact that unmarried females might also be sexually active did not enter Weiss’ discussion—further securing the image of unwed women as unsexed.

Iwan Bloch agreed that fertility was the kernel of female sexuality; it followed that sexually inactive single women necessarily fell outside of the norm. A member of the *Bund für Mutterschutz* (BfM; Federation for the Protection of Mothers),²² Bloch believed that women were more organically sexual than men due to their reproductive capacity. In *The Sexual Life of our Time* (1907), Bloch cited a passage from a contemporary novel in describing the sexual nature of women:

Women are in fact pure sex from knees to neck. We men have concentrated our apparatus in a single place . . . They are sexual surface, we have only sexual arrow. Procreation is their

proper element, and when they are engaged in it they remain at home in their own sphere ... We may devote to the matter barely ten minutes; women give as many months ... They procreate unceasingly, they stand continually at the witches' cauldron, boiling and brewing; while we lend a hand merely in passing, and do no more than throw one or two fragments into the vessel.²³

Eminently sexual, the woman also was utterly dependent on a partner, if only for those few indispensable minutes. Bloch's accounts of female sexuality had women immersed in sex and enjoying it too,²⁴ but their particular biology nonetheless served to define them—indeed, from knees to neck. This remarkable passage at once frees women from the confines of bourgeois morality by celebrating their sexual selves, yet at the same time it reinvigorates the reproductive and domestic spheres by affirming them as the essential female haven.

August Forel also cited procreative drive as the sexual essence of the female:

The unsatiated desires of the normal woman are less inclined toward coitus than toward the assemblage of consequences of this act ... When the sight of a certain man awakes in a young girl sympathetic desires ... she aspires to procreate children with this man only, to give herself to him as a slave, to receive his caresses, to be loved by him only, that he may become both the support and master of her whole life. It is a question of ... a powerful desire to become a mother and enjoy domestic comfort, to realize a poetic and chivalrous ideal in man, to gratify a general sensual need distributed over the whole body and in no way concentrated in the sexual organs or in the desire for coitus.²⁵

Forel's females needed to have sex not in order to satisfy libidinous desires, but rather to achieve their true calling. That the calling was rooted in biology more than religion or civics did not change the fact that the female nature placed women in essentially the same role as church and state had assigned to them for centuries. Such views echoed traditional morality in asserting the inviolability of motherhood as the female *Beruf* (vocation, calling). Sexology made the calling more vital and earthy, less spiritual and transcendent. But the childless, unattached, and unsexed woman remained superfluous.

Sex and the Single Woman

But was she truly unsexed? If procreation was the root of the female, celibacy was the spoiler. At least one sexologist argued that true sexual abstinence was impossible. Hermann Rohleder asserted that, "the sex drive is a natural occurrence. Abstinence is the opposite ... Everyone must know that perpetual abstinence is unnatural and that there is no such thing and there can be no such thing."²⁶ Forel, too, assailed celibacy: "Without love woman abjures her nature and ceases to be normal ... Still more than men [old maids] have need of compensation for sexual love, to avoid losing their natural qualities and becoming dried-up beings or useless egoists."²⁷ Science offered an important inversion of cause and

effect: instead of old maids resulting from inadequate sex appeal, insufficient (or non-existent) sex created old maids. Sexology thus challenged the many marriage manuals that exhorted maturing girls to become beautiful and deferential spousal candidates or instead face the specter of old maidenhood.²⁸ Still, the cause did not matter much if you were a single woman suffering the effects. And the effects, as described by sexologists, were dire. For if the sex drive was natural and abstinence debilitating (if not impossible), what happened to one who was denied monogamous heterosexuality and had no partiality for pets? Turn-of-the-century sexologists offered three answers: as a sexual anaesthetic, the single woman suffered from the ravages of repression; as a sexual hyperaesthetic, she was either sexually promiscuous or a rampant masturbator; or as a homosexual, she sought fulfillment with other women.²⁹

Sexual Anaesthesia

Wilhelm Stekel saw the *alte Jungfer* as the embodiment of sexual stagnation: “We need only cast one look at the abstinent, dried up, soured old maid and then at the joyous, blooming woman of the same age who enjoys the fruits of love to be convinced of the great value of properly indulging the normal sexual function.”³⁰ Celibate female bodies could cease to function in a feminine way: “among women who very seldomly”—or never?—“have had sexual satisfaction granted to them, there is frequently an extraordinary scarcity of menstruation.”³¹ Julius Weiss cited the old maid’s body as evidence of abstinence: “The unmarried girl who goes without sexual relations for her entire life ages earlier than the woman who is once, twice, or thrice married, bears a number of children, raises them and does all the work of a mother and wife. If exhausting demands are not made, the sex life in certain ways has a rejuvenating influence on the female.”³² Assuming that such a prolific mother survived multiple births (an increasing likelihood at the turn of the twentieth century), it followed that sexually active women enjoyed better health than the celibate. An editorial in the journal *Sexual-Probleme* compared the vibrant sexuality of ardent young women with their vacant counterparts: “girls who have a naturally fiery temperament ... feel the awakening of the sex drive earlier and stronger than phlegmatic grown *Jungfrauen* separated from the world of men.”³³

Iwan Bloch lamented the fate of those women who stood outside of matrimony and thus, regrettably, renounced the joys of sexuality: “How was it possible that to hundreds and thousands the simple right to love was refused, so that they were condemned to a joyless existence, in which all the beautiful blossoms of life withered away?”³⁴ His 1907 foray into the language of flora provided interesting similitude to an anonymous author who described more than fifty years earlier the bereavement of life without marriage: “As the natural form becomes stunted when it is ... hindered from its normal growth, so the spiritual life will also be marred by deformity if it cannot develop naturally. The solitary *alte Jungfrau* does not stand in the blessed ground in which the female nature carries its most beautiful bloom; is it not natural that she withers?”³⁵

According to Sigmund Freud, modern culture created the conditions for such withering: “Under the domination of a civilized sexual morality the health and efficiency of single individuals may be liable to impairment.”³⁶ The early Freudian writings on sexuality had enormous influence on the ways in which *Sexualwissenschaftler* assessed the female experience of nervous illnesses.³⁷ In an 1895 text on anxiety neurosis, Freud asserted that the condition “also occurs in widows and intentionally abstinent women, not seldom in a typical combination with obsessional ideas.”³⁸ Intentional repression intensified the struggle initiated by developmental repression; in the Freudian worldview, the abstinent woman was custom-made for anxiety neurosis, or—worse yet—hysteria.³⁹

The view of hysteria as rooted in the female body clearly is not unique to this era—the etymology reveals as much. But central European sexologists brought academic authentication to the category of hysteria by developing an association between hysterics and case studies of sexual repression. Historian of psychiatry Franziska Lamott has summarized the turn-of-the-century view of hysteria as one in which “frigidity is the hallmark of the *violation of the boundaries of female normality*. It is the sign of a pathology and represents the inversion of ideal femininity: the Non-Mother—the Hysteric.”⁴⁰ The pathology of hysteria emerged from a scientific framework, but the oddball status of the hysteric remained unchanged. Sexology provided a new causality for the centuries-old status of outcast. Early in his work on sexuality, Freud declared its centrality to the diagnosis of hysteria: “Whatever case and whatever symptom we take as our point of departure, in the end we infallibly come to the field of sexual experience. So here for the first time we seem to have discovered an aetiological precondition for hysterical symptoms.”⁴¹

The sexological argument went like this: without the opportunity to follow a more ‘natural’ life course of marriage, sex, and children, the unmarried woman repressed her urges in a noxious mix of tedium and chastity: “The monotony of daily life seems to us to be the real enemy of bachelors and *alten Jungfern*. It manifests itself into an overwhelming awareness of one’s own person and one’s petty concerns, which leads to hypochondria and hysteria.”⁴² Wilhelm Stekel provided the link between celibacy and hysteric behavior: “In consequence of the renunciation of sexual delights [girls] lose the ability to love. Disgust, modesty, and bashfulness have done away with desire ... Sexual yearnings and sexual inhibitions are in conflict with one another and the result is a more or less severe hysteria.”⁴³

Austrian philosopher Otto Weininger shared the view that hysteria was brought about mainly by a woman’s inability to admit to herself the reality of sexual desire latent within. In his disturbing yet nonetheless influential *Sex and Character* (1903),⁴⁴ Weininger criticized Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud’s 1895 *Studies on Hysteria* for presenting “hysterics in particular as eminently moral individuals. All that hysterics have done is to allow morality, which was originally alien to them, to take them over from outside more completely than other people.”⁴⁵ Hysterical fits resulted when “sexual desire threatens to prevail against the seeming restraint ... Their reaction is always their last untruthful defense against the tremendous

eruption of their own constitution: the *attitudes passionelles* of hysterical women are nothing but this demonstrative rejection of the sexual act.⁴⁶ While he did not link hysteria specifically to a woman's marital status, Weininger's typology of hysterics connoted singlehood through the well-worn stereotypes of the maid and the shrew. Historian Chandak Sengoopta interprets Weininger's use of the dyad in the following manner: "The hysterical woman belonged to the psychological type 'Maid.' She was born, not made ... The Maid was opposed to the Shrew, who represented the type of woman least susceptible to hysteria. The Shrew vented her wrath (deriving from lack of sexual satisfaction) on others; the Maid vented it on herself."⁴⁷ Desire—or more precisely, fear of desire—impelled the mind of the Maid toward hysterical disturbances.

Freud also tapped into this fear of desire in the case history of Katharina, a "rather sulky-looking girl of perhaps eighteen."⁴⁸ While hiking in the Alps, Freud met a girl who complained of a nervous affliction. Since he could not conduct a full psychotherapeutic investigation while in the midst of his trek, Freud was forced to try "a lucky guess. I had found often enough that in girls anxiety was a consequence of the horror by which a virginal mind is overcome when it is faced for the first time with the world of sexuality."⁴⁹ Freud termed this condition as 'virginal anxiety': "The anxiety from which Katharina suffered in her attacks was a hysterical one ... a mere suspicion of sexual relations calls up the affect of anxiety in virginal individuals."⁵⁰ Freudian thought held that sexual apprehension could bring forth hysterical illness and frigidity among both girls and women.

Johannes Rutgers, a Dutch birth control pioneer, elicited the aura of *Altjungferntum* in describing the symptoms of his hysterical patients: "The absent sexual life reveals itself even more in the vascular system ... The blood, which in this period of life should be actively stimulating the reproductive organs, obviously takes an inverted turn in the case of abstinence! ... Muscle tone can become flaccid; the lymphatic circulation can become inertial. The clinical case will emerge as indolent, lymphatic, even scrofulous."⁵¹ The blood betrays the maiden; the body becomes barren. Neither child nor bride, this woman is destined to be a specimen. Rutgers saw her as an all too familiar character: "Who does not know a host of these *suchenden Seelen* [searching souls]?" The more normal or elevated a person's disposition, all the more has she the desire and the need for love in its fullest fruition."⁵² Hysteria emerged from an empty and asexual life, conditions sexologists widely ascribed to unmarried women, especially those of the middle- and upper-classes.⁵³

Freud presented just such an elevated disposition in reporting the case history of 24-year-old Fräulein Elisabeth von R. One of five cases in Freud and Breuer's *Studies on Hysteria*, this text offers a fine demonstration of the sexological link between marital status and hysteria. Freud described Elisabeth as exhibiting great giftedness and ambition, traits he recognized among many hysterics.⁵⁴ Her positive nature belied her physical afflictions: "She seemed intelligent and mentally normal and bore her troubles ... with a cheerful air—the *belle indifférence* of a hysteric."⁵⁵ In noting such *belle indifférence*, even as he attempted to provide

a modern and scientific understanding of hysteria, Freud affirmed his readers' prejudices regarding the nature of the condition and in so doing revealed his own as well.⁵⁶

Freud's patient had a troubled history: in the space of just a few years, Elisabeth had nursed her beloved father through an ultimately fatal illness; her mother subsequently fell ill; Elisabeth's own health problems soon followed; her married sister then died after giving birth to her second child; and family tensions arose among the survivors of these tragic events.⁵⁷ An unhappy story, indeed—but how did this chain of misfortune lead to hysterical pain? Freud diagnosed the conversion as involving several factors: the worry produced through prolonged sick-nursing,⁵⁸ the confusion stimulated by Elisabeth's emerging sexuality,⁵⁹ and the anxiety created over the uncertainty of her future.⁶⁰ Myriad elements characterized Elisabeth's case, yet neither grief over her father's declining health, wistfulness for her fleeting youth, nor the frustrated misery of being unable to fall in carefree love were factors that emerged as most critical in Freud's evaluation. Instead, sex formed the centerpiece of this single woman's story, as inhibited sexual desire was the Freudian path toward affliction.

Thwarted love persecuted Elisabeth. After months of therapy, Freud realized a startling fact: his patient was in love with her dead sister's husband, and had been so long before her sister had passed away. The "psychical excitations" occasioned by her attraction to her brother-in-law and the extraordinary reservoir of will that enabled Elisabeth to "fend them off" created a mental strain her body could not bear.⁶¹ These excitations were caused neither by the impossibility of her affectionate inclination nor by the pure horror at the fleeting thought inspired by viewing her sister's deathbed—"Now he is free again and I can be his wife!"⁶² Sexual attraction prevailed: "A circle of ideas of an erotic kind ... came into conflict with all her moral ideas ... The coldness of her nature began to yield and she admitted to herself her need for a man's love. During the several weeks which she passed in his company ... her erotic feelings as well as her pains reached their full height."⁶³ Sexual desire and hysterical pain went hand-in-hand. Of course, the extreme circumstances of Elisabeth's case served as significant contributing factors to her pathology. But the Freudian diagnosis of hysteria mandated the existence of sexual repression; other circumstances were merely predispositional.

Yet not even erotic ideas could explain the particular physical manifestation of Elisabeth's hysteria. When she could no longer fend off the excitations created by sexual desire, she experienced such severe leg pain that, at times, she could not walk. Why? One factor was the fact that while nursing her father, Elisabeth's legs touched those of the ill man's, forming "an artificial hysterogenic zone."⁶⁴ This precipitating event was intensified by the great mental strain caused by Elisabeth's uncertainty and anxiety over her future; as Elisabeth moved out of girlhood, she was "overcome by a sense of her weakness as a woman and by a longing for love in which, to quote her own words, her frozen nature began to melt."⁶⁵ After a walk with her brother-in-law during a period of self-doubt, Elisabeth again experi-

enced excruciating leg pains. In hearing of this episode, Freud began to divine an answer to the question occasioned by the peculiar location of her pain: Elisabeth was loathe to become an *alleinstehende Frau*—a woman standing alone.

Fear of never marrying helped to make Elisabeth hysterical. The means of this process was a mechanism Freud termed ‘symbolization’: “She found ... a somatic expression for her lack of an independent position and her inability to make any alteration in her circumstances ... such phrases as ‘not being able to take a single step forward’, ‘not having anything to lean upon’, served as the bridge for this fresh act of conversion.”⁶⁶ Elisabeth had told Freud as much during a therapeutic session: “The patient ended her description of a whole series of episodes by complaining that they had made the fact of her ‘standing alone’ painful to her.” Freud observed that, “I could not help thinking that the patient had done nothing more nor less than look for a symbolic expression of her painful thoughts and that she had found it in the intensification of her sufferings.”⁶⁷ He did not consider the fact that marriage itself offered little promise to Elisabeth, a woman who had watched her sister be destroyed by its fruits.⁶⁸ Freudian diagnosis settled on a view of Elisabeth as frozen in time—her family ill and dying, her prospects for love obstructed by the most difficult circumstances, and her former self-assurance fading. It is no wonder that her body should freeze as well, her legs unable to take a step and no support to prop her up. How could she possibly stand alone?

Freud’s assessment of this case foreshadowed his 1905 *Fragment of a Case of Hysteria*, the case history of Dora. The symbiotic relationship between Freud’s female patients and the Freudian theory of hysteria has been described by literary scholar Evelyne Ender as a dynamic in which the patient “‘produces’ in her hysteria that which needs to be brought to consciousness and which stands in the place of consciousness. The spoils will be *his*, just as this knowledge extracted from *her* will constitute the foundation of *his* science of the mind,” resulting in a “simultaneous valorization and negation of the woman’s experience.”⁶⁹ Elisabeth’s marital status was central to Freud’s diagnosis, yet any autonomy she may have had in choosing this path was nullified by the psychotherapist’s account that left her entirely a passive victim to both her singleness and her sexual anxiety. Much like the later case of Dora, Freud’s own personhood is omnipresent in the hysterical narrative.⁷⁰ A modern psychoanalytical appraisal of the case of Elisabeth von R. has described the interaction of doctor and patient as “more like unfeeling interrogations or ... efficient paternalistic forms of taking control.”⁷¹ The paternalistic formulation of Elisabeth’s narrative manifests itself in the supererogatory role of the deceased father in the case history, while the living mother exists as only a pale presence.⁷² Father, first love, and brother-in-law acted upon Elisabeth’s weak psyche (despite her sharp intellect) to form her hysteria. Only a male hero, equipped with the valiant weapons of science, could rescue Elisabeth and provide her with the strength to stand.

In a feminist analysis of Freud’s case studies, Susan Katz has argued that when Freud “drew on traditional narrative forms, particularly the nineteenth-century

novel, in shaping the lives and case histories of his women patients, Freud perpetuated the belief in marriage as a standard for mental health.” Central to the literary typologies Freud inherited was “an equation of marriage with health, and, conversely, spinsterhood with illness.”⁷³ Such a narrative insisted that a spinster could only enjoy mental health if she “learn[ed] her place.”⁷⁴ Mental instability emerged when a single woman struggled with her social status. The illness of Elisabeth von R., “Freud implies, is brought on by her grandiose ambition to master her situation single-handedly.”⁷⁵ Indeed, Freud asserted that he was able to cure Elisabeth von R. by his revolutionary method of cathartic therapy;⁷⁶ a few years later, “by her own inclination, she . . . married someone unknown to me.”⁷⁷ These nuptials provided for Freud with both literary closure and therapeutic success, for “marriage indicates mental recovery.”⁷⁸

But not all hysterics and neurasthenics would marry. And not all sexologists, doctors, and psychologists of the early twentieth century shared Freud’s opinion of the giftedness exhibited by hysterics. But many, eventually most, did adopt his unshakeable conviction as to the centrality of sex to mental health. Freud wrote in 1905 that, “Anyone who knows how to interpret the language of hysteria will recognize that the neurosis is concerned only with the patient’s repressed sexuality.”⁷⁹ In the eyes of Freud and most other sexologists, single women became a scientifically problematic category due to the ravages of sexual repression and anxiety about ‘standing alone.’ Socially aberrant and sometimes hysterical, the repressed old maid remained a conspicuous character in imperial German society; *Sexualwissenschaft* added darker contours to the picture of her existence.

Sexual Hyperaesthesia

Imagine the options confronted by a middle-class, unmarried young woman at the dawn of the twentieth century. Science had revealed that she possessed an innate and scientifically validated sexual drive, the repression of which might lead to hysteria or at the very least an embittered fate. Erich Lilienthal, a turn-of-the-century novelist and one of the most scathing observers of *Altjungferntum*, offered this summary of the effects of life without sex: “The eternally barren . . . give away nothing of their worm-eaten treasures, their thin, wilted lips pointed at constant vigilance, fearful, petty weighing and haggling . . . They do not become old and gray and silent, they do not become benevolent and understanding, they . . . talk and agitate with their bitter sophisms and [they] accomplish nothing at all. They are completely useless.”⁸⁰ Anticipating such a fate, replete with “thin, wilted lips,” a rational woman might elect other options. Free love was one of them.

Or at least this was the dread of many contemporary observers who feared the damage that could be wrought upon society by sexually active single women. The claims of sexology fueled this type of anxiety. August Forel observed that, “it is a real pity to see so many healthy, active and intelligent girls become old maids, simply because they have no money and do not wish to throw themselves at the first scamp who comes.” His solution? “A little free polygamy.”⁸¹ Iwan Bloch and the BfM also proposed that the sexual and cultural landscape could be trans-

formed by responsible and committed relationships outside of marriage.⁸² Bloch believed that the epoch of the old maid would only end when the contours of marriage were changed. He condemned:

The heartlessness ... of modern European society, which *simultaneously* makes fun of the "old maid" and condemns the unmarried mother to infamy. This double-faced, putrescent "morality" is profoundly *immoral*, it is *radically evil*. It is moral and good to contest it with all our energy ... Let us make a clearance of this medieval bugbear of coercive marriage morality, which is a disgrace in respect of our state of civilization ... Two million women in a condition of *compulsory* celibacy and coercive marriage morality. It is merely necessary to place these two facts side by side, in order to display before our eyes the complete ethical bankruptcy of our time in the province of sexual morality.⁸³

Bloch proposed instead that all adults should counter "putrescent morality" by finding and enjoying love, companionship, and sex. Wilhelm Stekel used the example of prostitution to make the case for active female sexuality: "Love, regular sexual intercourse ... keep 'immoral' women fresh and healthy."⁸⁴ Stekel's argument did not facilitate unambiguously the cause of sexual reform. Based upon weak substantiation, Stekel's position that "compulsory abstinence is more injurious than immoderate indulgence"⁸⁵ might justifiably have raised queries of just what types of indulgence, and at how immoderate a rate?

In fact, most sexual scientists placed the topic of active sexuality among the female unwed under the rubric of sexual dysfunction, centered on the notion of hyperaesthesia. The notion of the natural female sexual desire had problematic implications. As Michael Hau has argued in *The Cult of Health and Beauty in Germany*, "female desires ... could be the basis for the independent articulation of female interests. Furthermore, if women were capable of experiencing lust, whose fault was it if they did not?"⁸⁶ Would they seek fulfillment of that lust outside of the confines of marriage? Bourgeois morality held that the most frightening path an unmarried woman could elect was the pursuit of extramarital sexual fulfillment. Max Marcuse used the work of British sexologist Havelock Ellis to articulate the nature of the threat: "A great many women who are healthy, chaste, and modest, feel at times such a powerful sexual desire that they can scarcely resist the temptation to go into the street and solicit the first man they meet. Not a few such women, often of good breeding, do actually offer themselves to men with whom they may have perhaps only the slightest acquaintance."⁸⁷ The emphasis on good breeding was the great threat created by the sexually free woman—uncontrolled reproduction and uncertain paternity: "under the influence of Malthusianism, sexuality outside of marriage was viewed as the source of [social] depletion."⁸⁸ Fears regarding single women's sexuality abounded during an age of eugenic science.

Sexual overindulgence informed the Freudian understanding of hysteria as well. One of Freud's goals in describing the pathology of the disease was to "clear up the enigmatic contradiction which hysteria presents, by revealing the pair of opposites by which it is characterized—exaggerated sexual craving and excessive aversion to sexuality."⁸⁹ An exaggerated sex drive among females was a perilous

prospect, one that could be considered dangerous if single women were the ones doing the craving. Freud identified this link in the early sexual lives of people who would later be diagnosed as neurotics: “Their sexual life begins like that of perverts, and a considerable part of their childhood is occupied with perverse sexual activity ... (usually before puberty, but now and then even long afterwards), and from that time onwards neurosis takes the place of perversion ... We are reminded of the proverb ‘*Junge Hure, alte Betschwester* [A young whore makes an old nun]’, only that here youth has lasted all too short a time.”⁹⁰ While Freud used gender-neutral language to describe the psychological evolution of these perverts-*cum*-neurotics, female deviance nonetheless was latent in the archetypal iconography of whore and nun. Even as he attempted to provide a scientific profile of the female psyche, Freud relied upon well-worn images that would resonate to his audience.

Hermann Rohleder ruled out extramarital sex as a source of relief for the unmarried woman. In a 1908 article on “*Abstinentia sexualis*,” Rohleder asked himself rhetorically, “Are the consequences of abstinence so severe ... that they warrant the recommendation of therapeutic extramarital intercourse among the unmarried? ... Today I will again answer no ... It is not the consequences of abstinence that have led me to this, but much more important things, prevention of a much greater unhappiness.”⁹¹ In this diagnosis without remedy, Rohleder sighed at the ill fortunes of those who suffered outside of marriage, yet the distanced air of resignation provided little alternative to a life without sexual companionship—other than getting married in the first place!

Perhaps the “much greater unhappiness” Rohleder hinted at can be found in the work of August Forel. Forel speculated on the enormous, untapped female sexual appetite:

Some women ... from their first youth experience violent sexual desire, causing them to masturbate or to throw themselves onto men. Such excesses in woman take on a more pathological character than in man, and go under the name of nymphomania ... Although in the normal state woman is naturally full of delicacy and sentiments of modesty, nothing is easier than to make these disappear completely by training her systematically to sexual immodesty or to prostitution. Here we observe the effects of the routine and suggestible character of feminine psychology, of the tendency of woman to become the slave of habit and custom.⁹²

This description of the hyperaesthetic female offers a dichotomy: the nymphomaniac who is likely pathological and certainly abnormal, and the obedient woman who, as victim of her own malleable psyche, is led down a path of dissolution. Forel did not resolve this tension between nature and nurture, drawing instead a portrait of a creature both plagued by inherent aberrance and hoodwinked by her own weak character and the diabolical suggestions of others.

The unwed woman was precisely the type most likely to fall into Forel’s trap. Because she could not exercise her natural urges, any innate perversity would manifest itself. In an era of such pronounced discussion of sexuality, “*The alte*

Jungfer in particular has become wild. The general pity, the general interest in these innocently unhappy victims of difficult social circumstances has gone to the heads of some of them, and they now show off everywhere in downright dangerous manners."⁹³ One case study examined the case of an unmarried hyperaesthetic, portraying the dangers uninhibited sexuality could create: "At eleven she was tempted to masturbation and always suffered from a pathologically increased sex drive ... at fifteen she craved sexual intercourse, since then she has had the opportunity to associate sexually with a series of men, without ever having had sexual satisfaction ... while she could procure the same for herself through masturbation anytime."⁹⁴ This study categorized masturbation as both a form and a catalyst of sexual perversion, a pursuit that could stifle other forms of sexual response.⁹⁵ Another sexologist went so far as to claim that in the early twentieth century, there existed a veritable "onanistic cult of *Jungfräulichkeit* [the virginal]."⁹⁶ Reflecting on this passion of the times, Max Marcuse asserted that the cult "applied not only to *Jungfräulichkeit*, but also to ascetics in general, whose goal ... is to declare sexual abstinence as absolutely harmless and thus presume for the unmarried (that is for hundreds of thousands in Germany) the requirement of lifelong abstinence."⁹⁷ Abstinence, masturbation, singleness; all were conflated in an intractable cultural and psychological miasma.

Thomas Laqueur has argued that the problematization of masturbation in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries reflected a desire to secure "new boundaries for heterosexuality ... the solitary vice was associated ... not only with sodomy but with every other sort of sexual and moral deviance as well."⁹⁸ The "onanistic cult" of virgins offered just such an enclave of deviance. August Forel believed that masturbation could actually create female aversion to marriage: "The effect of sexual hyperaesthesia is to direct the appetite toward any object capable of satisfying it. When the other sex is wanting, masturbation is generally resorted to; onanism does [women] generally as much harm as men."⁹⁹ If overindulged, the consequences could be severe: "[Some] women are driven to masturbation by a purely peripheral excitation; they have erotic dreams with venereal orgasms which torment rather than please them; but they do not fall in love easily, and may have difficulty in the choice of a husband. Their mind alone remains feminine, full of tact and delicacy in its sentiments, while their lower nerve centers react in a more masculine and at the same time more pathological manner."¹⁰⁰ Just as the female onanist might falter in the marriage market, the sexual hyperaesthetic served as a threatening presence in German society, due to her libidinous instincts or self-indulgent excesses. And perhaps she also risked the danger of developing emergent masculine characteristics—symptoms of incipient female homosexuality.

Homosexuality

The association of homosexuality with *jungfräulich* status was widespread in the literature of sexual scientists. In his seminal 1913 study of homosexuality, Magnus Hirschfeld offered a clear causal link between homosexuality and singlehood:

“Not through the unmarried status or impotency of persons does their same-sex orientation arise, but rather the latter is the reason for their unmarried status; likewise, the aversion of women to men is not the cause but rather the effect of their homosexual nature.”¹⁰¹ Hirschfeld suggested that a high proportion of solitary women were homosexual: “Of the intact virgins over the age of thirty whom I had the opportunity to examine, almost without exception all were themselves homosexual or had homosexual husbands.”¹⁰² Another *Kaiserreich*-era account of female homosexuality suggested that good news could be found for those heterosexuals still hoping to marry: “Because the number of single women approximately matches that of homosexual women, the unwed states of homosexuals offers to heterosexuals a greater probability of marriage.” Still, the author emphasized that, “it certainly should not be asserted that in this lies a universal means against *alte Jungfernschaft*.”¹⁰³ While not a solution to the old maid problem, the contrast to Hirschfeld does raise an important question: were old maids to be conflated with or distinguished from homosexuals? Since most sexologists were not willing to relinquish the category of the old maid, the link to homosexuality begged exploration.

Other commentators could or would not deal directly with the subject, only hinting at an unspeakable abnormality that existed among the ranks of single women. Julius Weiss suggested that, “Now and then one finds in the female sex an innate aversion toward the male realm. The physical urge remains strangely undeveloped. The cause sometimes lies in an abnormal developmental failure of the female sexual parts ... Occasionally this aversion is based in mental causes. The clever, thinking girl sees in her environment or among her relations some examples of unhappy marriages, deserted brides, wives who became ill, and so in her youthful soul she implants a type of hate that she completely controls.”¹⁰⁴ The single woman’s essential aberrance might have stemmed from a dysfunctional body or she might have consciously decided to reject marriage and men, thus making her a willful threat to the social order. Without explicitly identifying homosexuality, Weiss nonetheless asserted the deviance of such women, leaving the reader to conclude whether its origins were physical or mental.

Richard Krafft-Ebing was more direct. Krafft-Ebing enumerated what he believed to be the key causes of female homosexuality, including among them: “Constitutional hypersexuality impelling to auto-masturbation. This leads to neurasthenia and its pernicious consequences.”¹⁰⁵ Krafft-Ebing identified the most extreme cases as *Mannweiber*, androgynous figures who dressed and acted like men.¹⁰⁶ He described *Mannweiber* as aggressively homosexual and identified their abnormality as largely resulting from environmental and biological causes. The women to whom *Mannweiber* were most attractive included “inmates of prison [and] daughters of the higher classes of society who are carefully guarded in their relations with men, or who are afraid of impregnation—this latter group is commonly seen.”¹⁰⁷ A striking contrast between the least and most favored members of society! Krafft-Ebing’s view held that these extremes characterized the women most likely to become homosexual. Seduced by *Mannweiber*, includ-

ing “female servants, female friends with perverse sexual inclinations or female teachers in seminaries,” unattached women found themselves vulnerable to the worst kinds of dissolution.¹⁰⁸

Bleak fates awaited those innocent prey who succumbed to the lure of their pursuers. The trap, according to Max Marcuse, had been formed by the ravages of abstinence and would lead from experimentation to authentic homosexuality: “There are young people of both sexes, indeed up until not long ago young men, but in recent years also large numbers of women and girls, [who engage in what is] at first is only a pseudo-homosexuality, that is they are ensnared into homosexual activity that wears them down . . . then eventually becomes genuine homosexuality.”¹⁰⁹ The perversity of female homosexuality could lead to threats of suicide or other dark consequences:¹¹⁰ “Lesbianism is often the precursor to sodomy and bestiality, the fornication with animals, especially with the very beloved lap dogs.”¹¹¹ The specter of such desperate, yearning, and ultimately perverse creatures—again with their pets—permeated the imagery of sexology.

The 1909 proposal to expand German criminalization of homosexuality to include female acts demonstrates a political consequence of the mounting sexological portrayal of female-to-female love as aberrant behavior. The 1909 Proposal for a new German Criminal Code was put forward in order to supersede the Code that had been in place since 1871, though the onset of World War I prevented the proposal from becoming law. In particular, the law would have extended the extant criminalization of male homosexuality (Paragraph 175) by adding Paragraph 250, intended to criminalize female homosexual acts as well.¹¹² In an assessment of feminist arguments against Paragraph 250, Tracie Matysik has noted the “difficulty of differentiating legally the sexual act from the social act.”¹¹³ Helene Stöcker worried that single women especially would suffer because of the undue scrutiny of lifelong friendships and living communities: “Precisely those women who greatly need tenderness when fate has denied them children and a husband wish at least to have an inner community, a common home. This recourse, pursued for economic reasons, often also involves a common bedroom. Hundreds of thousands of our educated women, teachers, artists, and employees in other professions live calmly and peacefully with one another.”¹¹⁴ Such calm and peaceful lives were represented in the leadership of the German women’s movement by Helene Lange and Gertrud Bäumer as well as by Anita Augspurg and Lida Gustava Heymann.¹¹⁵ In its bourgeois orientation and its reflection of the quiet despair of the surplus woman, Stöcker’s argument against §250 conveyed well the *Frauenüberschuß* and linked it to the increasing vigilance of an age of sexual anxiety. *Scientia sexualis* threatened to box the leaders of the German women’s movement into a dysfunctional corner.

In a 1904 speech given to the Scientific Humanitarian Committee established by Magnus Hirschfeld, Anna Rueling addressed the theme, “What Interest does the Women’s Movement have in the Homosexual Question?” Rueling directly tied the involvement of female homosexuals in the women’s movement to the female surplus:

The women's movement strives for long-neglected women's rights; it is fighting especially for the greatest possible independence for women and their legal equality with men both in and out of marriage. The latter is of particular importance, first of all because of present economic conditions, and second, because the statistically proven surplus of women in the population of our country means that a large number of women simply cannot get married. Since only 10% of these women inherit sufficient means to live, the other 90% are forced to enter the labor market ... The position and participation of homosexual women the women's movement and the movement's attempts to solve these problems are significant and deserve extensive, universal attention.¹¹⁶

Yet the leaders of the women's movements did not answer Rueling's call; in an era of debate regarding sexuality, their silence on the topic is noteworthy. Facing the sort of anti-feminist arguments asserting that, "what one generally calls the woman question is really only a spinster question,"¹¹⁷ women's rights advocates were loathe to engage in a discourse that portrayed those spinsters as sexual aberrants. It is little wonder that, as historian Margit Göttert has argued, women of the *Kaiserreich* who lived with and loved other women "sought to factor out of their self-portrayal their physicality and (homo- und hetero-) sexual desires because, among other reasons, they feared being reduced anew to natural and sexual beings."¹¹⁸ Sexology attempted to cast both single women and the women's movement into a defensive posture of having to disprove deviance by adopting asexuality, its lesser sister.

Most sexological literature followed the model established by Krafft-Ebing, whose work assessed homosexuality "as a pathological manifestation of the sexual life."¹¹⁹ His paradigmatic categorization of female homosexuals was essentially dualistic: the biologically and sociologically determined *Mannweiber* along with their prey, the protected and cautious females of the elite classes who viewed men with trepidation. Such a differentiation both minimized the need for any serious consideration of female homosexuality as elected or natural while also offering a simplified vision of women as aggressor or dupe, active or passive.¹²⁰ In the prevailing representation of female homosexuality, the unmarried *bürgerlich* woman still remained a victim—if she was the seducer, she was a *Mannweib* and the object of her genetic makeup or aberrant socialization; if she was the object of seduction, then she most likely had been an easy target because of previous unfortunate experiences with or rejections by men. Even as these women attempted escape through lesbian behavior, in the eyes of male observers, the realm of marriage and men still ruled the homosexual single woman. Her true calling remained a siren in the distance, forever signifying her as failure, outcast, and victim.

* * *

The signification of the unmarried woman as a cultural pariah gained a new tone and a deeper urgency during the *Kaiserreich*. The new form of denigration energized prejudice against the individual single woman. Organizations either run by or featuring a predominance of single women also could be cast as harbors for the dysfunctional. Historian Leila Rupp has demonstrated that at the turn of

the century, “as the barriers between women’s and men’s public worlds began to break down . . . women without men—whether ‘spinsters’ or women in same-sex couples—came more frequently to earn the label ‘deviant’ . . . These moves had consequences for the politics of women’s single-sex organizing.”¹²¹ During the *Kaiserreich*, both solitary women and the women’s movement as a whole came under a form of scientific scrutiny, an examination which judged them as certainly marginal and potentially pathological. It also attempted to tuck them safely away in a corner of deviance where they could not pose a threat to society.

The revitalized image of the *alte Jungfer* reflected the ways in which Germans struggled to grapple with the increasing relevance of sexuality in social discourse. *Sexualwissenschaft* appropriated the archaic *alte Jungfer* and made her new again. By identifying the pitiable nature of the old maid, providing a scientific explanation for her existence, and establishing a rich new language detailing her aberrance, sexologists transformed a stock character in the cultural panorama from caricature to deviant. As Erich Lilienthal put the resulting outcome: “Lusty old men have always been disgusting and many *alte Jungfern* have always been venomous. But a not insignificant part of the work of sexual reformers was to surmount precisely these types and dispose of them, not, however, to reveal to them new spheres of activity.”¹²² Lilienthal’s concerns centered on untapped arenas of licentiousness being opened to the unmarried, but far more problematic were the ways in which the study of sexuality provided fresh ground for condemnation of the unwed. The developing field of sexual studies delivered new and varied verdicts on the nature of single women: many repressed, some oversexed, others dissolute—and, at their worst, fonts of contamination to the broader society.

Notes

1. Erich Lilienthal, “Die skandalösen alten Jungfer,” *Sexual-Probleme* 7(6) (June 1911): 389.
2. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1 *Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York, 1990), 69.
3. Edward R. Dickinson and Richard F. Wetzell, “The Historiography of Sexuality in Modern Germany,” *German History* 23(3) (2005): 302.
4. On Krafft-Ebing (1840–1902), see Harry Oosterhuis, *Stepchildren of Nature: Krafft-Ebing, Psychiatry, and the Making of Sexual Identity* (Chicago, 2000).
5. Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Lehrbuch der Psychiatrie*, 2d ed. (Stuttgart, 1883), 156–157; many thanks to Lisabeth Hock, Wayne State University, for bringing this discussion to my attention.
6. *Ibid.*, 154–155.
7. *Ibid.*, 155; in this same passage, Krafft-Ebing links the rise of the women’s movement to the female surplus.
8. See part 3 of Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York, 1985), on the ways in which the New Woman similarly was cast by the rhetoric of the American Progressive age as an “unnatural’ . . . symptom of a diseased society” (1985, 245).

9. The term “*Sexualwissenschaft*” was originated by Iwan Bloch in 1906; see Oosterhuis, *Stepchildren*, 58.
10. Oosterhuis, *Stepchildren*, 27.
11. On Bloch (1872–1922), Hirschfeld (1868–1935), Ploss (1819–1885), Rohleder (1866–1934), and Stekel (1868–1940), see Vern Bullough, *Science in the Bedroom: A History of Sex Research* (New York, 1994); on Forel (1848–1931), see Heiko Weber, “Der Monismus als Theorie einer einheitlichen Weltanschauung am Beispiel der Positionen Ernst Haeckel and August Forel,” in *Monismus um 1900: Wissenschaftskultur und Weltanschauung*, ed. Paul Ziche (Berlin, 2000), 81–127; for an assessment of Freud (1856–1939) on women, see Teresa Brennan, *The Interpretation of the Flesh: Freud and Femininity* (New York, 1992); on Marcuse (1877–1963), see Erwin J. Haeberle, “Sexology: Conception, Birth, and Growth of a Science,” in *Emerging Dimensions of Sexology*, eds. R. Taylor Segraves and Erwin J. Haeberle (New York, 1983), 9–28; on Weininger (1880–1903), see Chandak Sengoopta, *Otto Weininger: Sex, Science, and Self in Imperial Vienna* (Chicago, 2000).
12. Bonnie S. Anderson and Judith P. Zinsser, *A History of their Own*, vol. 1 (New York, 1988), 166; see Susanna Burghartz, “The Equation of Women and Witches: A Case Study of Witchcraft Trials in Lucerne and Lausanne in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries,” in *The German Underworld*, ed. Richard J. Evans (New York, 1988), 57–74, for a case study that suggests that “age was a more important distinguishing characteristic of the accused than their civil status” (1988, 65).
13. Amalie Baisch, *Aus der Töchterschule ins Leben* (Stuttgart, 1890), 8.
14. Carl Reclam, *Des Weibes Gesundheit und Schönheit*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig, 1883), 265.
15. Hermann Heinrich Ploss, *Das Weib in der Natur- und Völkerkunde*, 7th ed. (Leipzig, 1902), 588; on the influence of Ploss’ landmark work, see Paula Weideger, “Introduction: A Double Portrait,” in *History’s Mistress: A New Interpretation of a Nineteenth-Century Classic* (New York, 1986), 13–34.
16. Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, 12th ed., trans. F.J. Rebman (New York, 1906; reprint, Burbank, CA, 1999), 470 (page citations are to reprint edition).
17. Iwan Bloch, *Anthropological Studies in the Strange Sexual Practices of All Races in All Ages*, trans. Keene Wallis, 1933 ed. (New York, 1933; reprint, New York, 1974), 184–185 (page citations are to reprint edition).
18. August Forel, *The Sexual Question*, trans. C.F. Marshall adapted from 2nd ed. (1906) (New York, 1925), 129.
19. Max Marcuse, *Die Gefahren der sexuellen Abstinenz für die Gesundheit* (Leipzig, 1910), 40.
20. Wilhelm Erb, “Bemerkungen über die Folgen der sexuellen Abstinenz,” *Zeitschrift für Bekämpfung der Geschlechtskrankheiten* (1904), 1; quoted in Marcuse, *Gefahren*, 39.
21. Julius Weiss and R. Kossman. *Mann und Weib in ihren Beziehungen zur Kultur der Gegenwart* (Stuttgart, 1908), 420.
22. See chapter 6.
23. Spinner, quoted in Bloch, *The Sexual Life of Our Time in its Relations to Modern Civilization*, trans. M. Eden Paul from 2nd ed. (New York, 1910), 84.
24. *Ibid.*, 86.
25. Forel, *Sexual Question*, 93.
26. Hermann Rohleder, “Die Abstinencia sexualis,” *Zeitschrift für Sexualwissenschaft* 1 (1908): 630.
27. Forel, *Sexual Question*, 129.
28. See chapter 1.
29. See Robert Nye, *Sexuality* (New York, 1999), 122–126, 137–144, on how turn-of-the-century sexology linked hysteria and medical neuroses to cases of sexual repression, sexual overindulgence, and masturbation.
30. Wilhelm Stekel, “Sexual Abstinence and Health” (1909), in *Twelve Essays on Sex and Psychoanalysis*, trans. and ed. S.A. Tannenbaum (New York, 1922), 6.
31. Marcuse, *Gefahren*, 59.

32. Weiss and Kossmann, *Mann und Weib*, 417.
33. "Zur Frage der Abstinenz," *Sexual-Probleme* 7(2) (February 1911): 152.
34. Bloch, *Sexual Life*, 249.
35. *Die Frauenfrage und ihr Kern: Das Leben einer alten Jungfrau* (Gütersloh, 1873), 30.
36. Sigmund Freud, "'Civilized' Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness" (1908), in *The Standard Edition (SE) of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 9, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London, 1953–1959; reprint, 1968), 181.
37. The first use of the term 'verdrängt' (repressed) in its psychoanalytical sense linked repression to "hysterical deliria in saints and nuns"; Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud, "Preliminary Communication," (1893–1895) *SE* vol. 2 *Studies on Hysteria*, 10–11.
38. Sigmund Freud, "On the Grounds for Detaching a Particular Syndrome from Neurasthenia under the Description 'Anxiety Neurosis,'" (1895) *SE*, vol. 3, 100–101.
39. *Ibid.*, 111.
40. Franziska Lamott, *Die vermessene Frau: Hysterien um 1900* (Munich, 2001), 85; emphasis in text.
41. Sigmund Freud, "The Aetiology of Hysteria," (1896) *SE* vol. 3, 199.
42. Reclam, *Weibes Gesundheit*, 265.
43. Stekel, "Sexual Abstinence," 44.
44. Weininger committed suicide shortly after completing *Sex and Character*, an extended version of his dissertation. Philosopher Steven Burns has summed up the impact of *Sex and Character* as "notorious, not for its author's dramatic demise or for what strikes us today as its anti-feminism and anti-Semitism, but for its deep and systematic critique of Viennese modernism and for its embodiment of what struck *fin-de-siècle* Vienna as genius"; Burns, "Sex and Solipsism: Weininger's *On Last Things*," in *Wittgenstein reads Weininger*, eds. David G. Stern and Béla Szabados (New York, 2004), 89.
45. Otto Weininger, *Sex and Character*, ed. and trans. Ladislaus Löb (Bloomington, IN, 2005), 243.
46. *Ibid.*, 244–245.
47. Sengoopta, *Otto Weininger*, 114.
48. Sigmund Freud, "Case 4: Katharina," *Studies on Hysteria*, 125.
49. *Ibid.*, 127.
50. *Ibid.*, 134; Katharina's case went beyond suspicion; Freud noted in a 1924 footnote to the case that Katharina had been sexually abused by her father.
51. Johannes Rutgers, quoted in Marcuse, *Gefahren*, 37–38.
52. *Ibid.*, 37.
53. On the bourgeois orientation of Freudian hysterics, see Brennan, *Interpretation*, 90.
54. Sigmund Freud, "Case 5: Fräulein Elisabeth von R.," *Studies on Hysteria*, 161.
55. *Ibid.*, 135.
56. See Jennifer L. Pierce, "The Relation between Emotion Work and Hysteria: A Feminist Reinterpretation of Freud's *Studies on Hysteria*," *Women's Studies* 16(3/4) (1989): 255–270; Pierce argues that Freud especially was reluctant to "delve further into the relationship between hysteria, predominantly a women's disorder, and intelligence, an 'unladylike quality.'" (1989, 266)
57. Freud, "Elisabeth von R.," 135.
58. *Ibid.*, 161–162.
59. *Ibid.*, 146; Brennan, *Interpretation*, argues that Elisabeth von R.'s case offers a prefiguration "of what Freud would subsequently identify as the basic bisexuality of hysteria," 104.
60. Freud, "Elisabeth von R.," 140, 155.
61. *Ibid.*, 157.
62. *Ibid.*, 156; Ian Parker, in "The Unconscious Love of Elisabeth von R: Notes on Freud's First Full-Length Analysis," *Psychodynamic Practice* 9(2) (2003): 146–147, finds that comparing Freud's subsequent accounts of Elisabeth's case reveals different variations on Elisabeth's expression of "I can be his wife" to "He can marry me" and Freud's own observation, "Now you

- can be his wife.” Parker suggests that this “could be read as a thought that relays other people’s [Freud’s?] expectations of her rather than something she would directly express herself.” (2003, 147).
63. Freud, “Elisabeth von R.,” 164–165.
 64. *Ibid.*, 145.
 65. *Ibid.*, 175.
 66. *Ibid.*, 176; original text reads: “*die Redensarten: Nicht von der Stelle kommen, keinen Anhalt haben, u. dgl.*”, in Sigmund Freud, *Gesammelte Werke*, 6th ed., vol. 1, (Frankfurt a.M., 1991), 244.
 67. *Ibid.*, 152; original text reads: “*Wenn die Kranke die Erzählung einer ganzen Reihe von Begebenheiten mit der Klage schloss, sie habe dabei ihr „Alleinstehen“ schmerzlich empfunden...*,” Freud, *Werke*, 217.
 68. Susan Katz, “Speaking out against the ‘Talking Cure’: Unmarried Women in Freud’s Early Case Studies,” *Women’s Studies* 13(4) (1987): 312.
 69. Evelyne Ender, *Sexing the Mind: Nineteenth-Century Fictions of Hysteria* (Ithaca, NY, 1995), 161; emphasis in text.
 70. On the construction of the Freudian hysterical narrative, Madelon Sprengnether, “Enforcing Oedipus: Freud and Dora,” in *In Dora’s Case: Freud-Hysteria-Feminism*, eds. Charles Bernheimer and Claire Kahane (New York, 1985), 268.
 71. Roy Schafer, “Conversations with Elisabeth von R.,” in *Storms in her Head: Freud and the Construction of Hysteria*, eds. Muriel Dimen and Adrienne Harris (New York, 2001), 328.
 72. *Ibid.*, 330.
 73. Katz, “Speaking Out,” 297.
 74. *Ibid.*, 303; Katz links this emphasis on ‘learning one’s place’ to social class as well as marital status. Regarding the case of “Miss Lucy R.,” an accompanying patient history in the *Studies on Hysteria*, Katz asserts that because Lucy was a governess, Freud’s narrative of her case and treatment of her as a patient emphasized the necessity of “submit[ing] with grace to [her] limited prospects” (1987, 308). Katz also suggests that the case of Dora might be read in terms of marital status because of the role of female governesses in the case history and because the prospect of staying single may have offered the only way for Dora to triumph “over middle-class sex-roles and morality” (1987, 315).
 75. *Ibid.*, 311.
 76. Freud, “Elisabeth von R.,” 138–160.
 77. *Ibid.*, 160.
 78. Katz, “Speaking Out,” 298.
 79. Sigmund Freud, “My Views on the Part Played by Sexuality in the Aetiology of the Neuroses,” *SE* vol. 7, 278.
 80. Lilienthal, “Skandalös,” 390.
 81. Forel, *Sexual Question*, 515.
 82. See for example Bloch, *Sexual Life*, 236–278; on the BfM, see Chapter 6.
 83. Bloch, *Sexual Life*, 276; emphasis in text.
 84. Stekel, “Sexual Abstinence,” 39.
 85. *Ibid.*, 40.
 86. Michael Hau, *The Cult of Health and Beauty in Germany: A Social History, 1890–1930* (Chicago, 2003), 78.
 87. Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: F.A. Davis, 1906), 186; quoted in Marcuse, *Gefahren*, 39.
 88. Peter Borscheid, in “Von Jungfern, Hagestolzen, and Singles: Die historische Entwicklung des Alleinlebens,” in *Lebensform Einpersonenhaushalt*, ed. Sylvia Gräbe (New York, 1994), 40.
 89. Sigmund Freud, “Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality,” *SE*, vol. 7, (1905): 165.
 90. *Ibid.*, 238; Strachey uses the German aphorism in the text with the footnoted translation as indicated.

91. Rohleder, "Abstinentia sexualis," 655–656.
92. Forel, *Sexual Question*, 97.
93. Erich Lilienthal, "Die Unverschämtheiten des schüchternen Jünglings," *Sexual-Probleme* 7(5) (May, 1911): 312–313.
94. Carl Laker, "Über eine besondere Form von verkehrter Richtung ("Perversion") des weiblichen Geschlechtstreibes," *Archiv für Gynäkologie* 34(2) (1889): 295–296.
95. *Ibid.*, 297–300.
96. Freidrich Siebert, *Sexuelle Moral und sexuelle Hygiene* (Frankfurt a.M, 1901); quoted in Marcuse, *Gefahren*, 76.
97. Marcuse, *Gefahren*, 76.
98. Thomas Laqueur, *Solitary Sex: A Cultural History of Masturbation* (New York: Zone, 2003), 267.
99. Forel, *Sexual Question*, 226, 234.
100. *Ibid.*, 226.
101. Magnus Hirschfeld, *The Homosexuality of Men and Women*, trans. Michael Lombardi-Nash (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2000), 386.
102. *Ibid.*, 131.
103. Catullus, "Homosexuality und Frauenbewegung," *Das Neue Magazine* 73 (18) (1904): 565.
104. Weiss and Kossmann, *Mann und Weib*, 418–419.
105. Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia*, 327.
106. *Mannweib* is literally male/female or man/woman, connotes virago; Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia*, 64–79.
107. *Ibid.*, 327.
108. *Ibid.*
109. Marcuse, *Gefahren*, 82–83.
110. *Ibid.*
111. "Was heisst widernatürliche Unzucht beim weiblichen Geschlecht?," *Geschlecht und Gesellschaft* (1911), 272.
112. Tracie Matysik, "In the Name of the Law: The 'Female Homosexual' and the Criminal Code in Fin de Siècle Germany," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 13(1) (2004): 28.
113. *Ibid.*, 43.
114. Helene Stöcker, "Die beabsichtigte Ausdehnung des §175 auf die Frau," *Die neue Generation* 7(3) (1911): 111, quoted in Matysik, 43; see chapter 6 on Stöcker's views on the *Frauenüberschuß*.
115. Life partners Lange and Bäumer were leaders of the *Bund deutscher Frauenvereine*, see chapters 3 and 5; Anita Augspurg (1857–1943) and Lida Gustava Heymann (1868–1943) founded the The German Association for Women's Voting Rights and were leaders in the international women's movement; on their partnership and an analysis of same-sex relationships in the international women's movement, see Leila Rupp, "Sexuality and Politics in the Early Twentieth Century: The Case of the International Women's Movement," *Feminist Studies* 23(3) (1997): 577–605.
116. Anna Rueling, "What Interest does the Women's Movement have in the Homosexual Question?," in *Lesbians in Germany: 1890's–1920's*, eds. Lillian Fadermann and Brigitte Eriksson (Tallahassee, FL, 1990), 84.
117. Eduard von Hartmann, "Die Jungfernfrage," *Die Gegenwart* 40(34): 113.
118. Margit Göttert, *Macht und Eros: Frauenbeziehungen und weibliche Kultur um 1900* (Königstein, 2000), 16.
119. Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia*, x.
120. Gudrun Schwarz, "'Mannweiber' in Männer Theorien," in *Frauen suchen ihre Geschichte*, ed. Karin Hausen (Munich, 1987), 76.
121. Rupp, "Sexuality," 578.
122. Lilienthal, "Unverschämtheiten," 313.