Sodomitical Subcultures, Sodomitical Roles, and the Gender Revolution of the Eighteenth Century: The Recent Historiography

The history of sodomy in the eighteenth century is not simply the history of repression. It encapsulates the history of all of society. It can provide a key to unlock the mysteries of the history of gender, sexuality, individual identity, human society's relationship to the physical world, and even (it has been claimed) the mysteries of the rise of modern capitalism. It remains however, a history that has just begun to be written, centering, so far, on three themes: the nature of governmental repression, the organization of sodomitical life, and the meaning for gender of the presence or absence of a specific sodomitical role.

The first articles dealing with the history of sodomy appeared in standard historical journals a mere ten years ago. They have come out of at least three intellectual milieus. Some historians who set out to study crime, deviance, and witchcraft have collected and tried to interpret the sodomy trials they found among their materials. Others began with the history of the family and then turned to the history of sexuality, and so of homosexuality. Some historians, as participants in the Gay Liberation movement, have gone looking for their roots. And increasingly, and perhaps most promisingly, the historians of gender have begun to see the importance of the topic. Some of us, of course, have taken up the topic for a combination of reasons. It is, alas, still possible to write an article such as David Rollison's and to have it published in 1981 in a journal of the distinction of Past and Present, in which the story of a charivari directed against a man for sodomizing a boy in 1716 is discussed, with singular obtuseness, from every angle of property, of ideology, and of popular as opposed to elite culture—is discussed, in short, in all the terms provided by the dominant male heterosexual culture—but never in the obvious and blinding light of the history of sodomy.¹

Rollison's failure is especially disappointing since he had available to him a rare form of documentation from a period in which Mary McIntosh had previously proposed that a major cultural shift in these matters had occurred. Rollison's evidence was a series of letters between local agents in Gloucestershire and their landlord in London in which the incident and the local reaction to it were discussed from a number of

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angles. Less fortunate, most historians have as a principal source, especially in England, the accounts of the trials of men for sodomy and attempted sodomy. These trials, of course, can be counted, and some historians have been tempted, with varying degrees of caution, to use a statistical series as a means of relating sodomy to the general history of society. It is a somewhat doubtful method; rashes of trials could be brought on by quite fortuitous circumstances. But some proposals worth considering have been made.

The earliest such series for a European society has been constructed by Guido Ruggiero and is discussed in his new book on Venetian sexuality in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This may seem a great way from the eighteenth century, but I hope eventually to show its relevance. Ruggiero shows that there were a mere eleven convictions for sodomy in the twenty years from 1348 to 1369, but that one hundred years later, between 1448 and 1469, there were 110 convictions, or ten times as many. From this Ruggiero argues that whereas there had been only a rudimentary sexual underground in the fourteenth century, there was by the fifteenth century an open homosexual subculture. He notes further that while in the fourteenth century primarily couples or individuals were prosecuted, in the fifteenth century groups were also arrested and prosecuted and some of the prosecuted individuals were noblemen. Ruggiero argues that this sodomitical milieu was part of a wider illicit sexual subculture in which prostitutes were pursued, pornography was written, and nuns were seduced in ever increasing numbers. This illicit milieu, the obverse of the respectable sexual milieu tied to marriage and childbirth, became a major aspect of western civilization before it was modified in the twentieth century by the changing role of women. According to Ruggiero, sodomy was more severely prosecuted than any other sexual crime; since the incidence of sodomy prosecutions increased as those of other crimes declined, it is likely that Early Modern Europe experienced a sodomy paranoia paralleling the witch-burning craze. 2

Alan Bray, by contrast, uses the absence of large numbers of trials to argue that there was in early seventeenth-century England no homosexual subculture. He argues from this statistical paucity a number of other things as well, to all of which I will return when I consider Mary McIntosh’s thesis on the history of sodomy in the eighteenth century, which employs literary rather than statistical evidence. 3

Some six historians—William Monter, D. A. Coward, Arthur Gilbert, A. D. Harvey, Anthony E. Simpson, and Michel Rey—have used a statistical series as the peg on which to hang an argument about the history of sodomy. Monter’s study of Geneva in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, when it was a city of from 12,000 to 20,000 people, shows that seventy-five people were tried for sodomy, but that sixty-five of these cases occurred before 1700, only five cases were from the eighteenth century. From this he has argued a number of points. First, although large Italian cities of at least 60,000 people had well-developed homosexual subcultures from the High Middle Ages, it was not possible for a northern European city to support a homosexual subculture with a
population of less than 100,000, and it was not really until the seventeenth century, when the great capital cities of the north began to surpass 200,000 people, that in them appeared continuous, well-developed homosexual subcultures. Second, sodomy was punished with greater severity than was any other crime except, perhaps, infanticide. Third, the repression of sodomy was most intense in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when prosecutions for witchcraft were also at their peak; sodomy, like witchcraft, was often confused with heresy in a period when intense religious zeal was fueled by the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. By contrast, in the eighteenth century there were few prosecutions because an enlightened judiciary would not put men to death for sodomy. 4  

D. A. Coward has similarly argued that in eighteenth-century France, especially in Paris, there were only a handful of executions for sodomy. This contrasted sharply with the previous two centuries, when the Parlement of Paris (as Alfred Soman has shown) executed seventy-seven men for sodomy between 1565 and 1640. Coward, however, does not explain the eighteenth century’s mildness in terms of philosophical enlightenment. He makes instead a somewhat arcadian proposal, namely, that in the eighteenth century there was a widespread confusion of sexual roles, in contrast to our own sharp contemporary gender differentiations; he even suggests a collective unconscious urge to androgyny. If this was so, presumably it was a condition that did not exist before or after the eighteenth century. Coward does document that the police, less benignly, kept close watch on sodomites, to the point of maintaining registers of suspects. From these and other documents Claude Corouve, Monter, and Michel Rey have maintained that there was present in Paris from at least the 1720s, a well-developed sodomitical subculture.5  

Michel Rey has more systematically studied the same Paris police records that Coward used. Few men may have been executed, but the police were well informed. First offenders were often let off, but there was no real consistency in punishment. Police arrested men not only for the commission of actual sodomy but also for being in certain places at certain times or for conversation—any of which might establish that an individual was a sodomite. Thus Rey states that it was increasingly a taste or disposition that was punished and that from the 1740s the word pederast rather than sodomite came to be used as a descriptive term. Similarly, from the 1740s police ceased to question individuals about the sin of sodomy. Instead, they were concerned that public decency not be violated by sexual acts in public places, that sexual relations between social classes be limited, especially as it was being recognized that sodomy was not only an aristocratic vice, and finally, that adolescent males be protected from corruption by adult pederasts. This last point is important. It may be that in France it was age rather than effeminacy that determined sexual subordination. Rey does document considerable effeminacy of the new eighteenth-century variety. Nonetheless, the concern over adolescents both points to the emergence of a tripartite division of the male world into men, sodomites, and boys and shows that adolescence was
being recognized as the time in which the formation of sexual identity occurred.\footnote{6}

The English in the eighteenth century, in contrast to the French and the Genevans, were far more bloody-minded about sodomy, as Gilbert, Harvey, and Simpson show from three different statistical series. Arthur Gilbert has studied the courts-martial for sodomy in the British navy over the course of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The evidence is fascinating, and the sexual language recorded is especially vivid. Gilbert found that in wartime, such as during the wars of Queen Anne's reign, the Seven Years' War, and the Napoleonic Wars, there were many trials and executions; in peacetime, by contrast, there were few trials and no executions. His speculations lead him to conclude that these trials were a way of displacing anxiety in times of extreme stress. As he puts it, "Being soft on buggers was somewhat analogous to being soft on Communists in our own day, or soft on witches in an earlier time." He speculates that there may have been an actual increase in sodomy as men of different backgrounds were thrown together and sought through sexuality to affirm life in the face of death. But he also suggests that sodomy made gender definitions ambiguous, whereas the navy prided itself on simple and direct distinctions. Sodomy and the breakdown of order thus became identified in the minds of naval commanders. Finally, he suggests, the anal associations of sodomy were especially disturbing to a Christian society that saw defecation as a persistent reminder of man's fate and his association with the animal world and as a sign of his ultimate death and probable damnation. Gilbert also claims that civilian society similarly acted out its anxiety in wartime, offering as evidence the scandals and raids on the London homosexual subculture in 1810. But he is hard pressed to place the prosecutions of the 1720s into this schema, and so he sweeps them away into a footnote.\footnote{7}

A. D. Harvey, who raises questions about the details of Gilbert's statistical findings and too abruptly dismisses Gilbert's suggestions on the symbolic meanings of anal sex, bases his own paper on government statistics of the number of executions for sodomy in England in the first thirty-five years of the nineteenth century. At least sixty men were hanged for sodomy in that period. While there had only been three such executions in London in the second half of the eighteenth century, in the generation after 1804 there was an execution nearly every year. Harvey explains this wave of executions by examining class and gender relations in the eighteenth century. He suggests (on the basis of the Kinsey Reports) that homosexuality is especially prevalent among the lower middle class and in towns and that in the eighteenth century both towns and this class had grown in size. The increase in executions might therefore be explained partly by an increase in the incidence of the behavior. He also suggests that there was a massive reinforcement of gender stereotypes in the eighteenth century; for example, men felt a need in conversation to boast of their sexual prowess with women. The statistical argument's difficulty is that there certainly had been more executions for sodomy in the early than in the latter part of the eigh-

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teenth century and probably as much gender stereotyping and urban growth before 1750 as after 1750; yet the number of executions for sodomy declined for a half century after 1750. In short, Harvey must try again.8

Antony Simpson has counted the trials for rape and for sodomy at the Old Bailey in London. He finds the treatment of rape to have been lenient and the treatment of sodomy comparatively severe. From 1730 to 1785 most charges of sodomy concerned acts attempted and committed with adolescents; this is similar to Michel Rey's findings for Paris. But from the 1780s the number of cases increased, while prosecutions were now for consensual acts between adult males that often had been performed in public. On this last point, Simpson's material again coincides with Parisian evidence. A second legal action—of blackmail for sodomy—grew in numbers and was made a capital crime. From these series Simpson argues that among working men in London a new code of gender identity had emerged that made manly virtue the basis of masculine domination and defined that virtue in terms of the avoidance of sodomy. It may well have been so. Both Harvey and I have already suggested something along this line. Simpson, however, begins his series in 1730, ignoring cases from the 1720s and before; consequently, his placing of the emergence of the new manly code in the late eighteenth century is probably mistaken.9

Gilbert, Harvey, and Simpson do raise an interesting point, if Bray is right in finding as few trials and executions in the early seventeenth century as he does. The point is that England experienced its sodomy paranoia not in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, when witches were also being prosecuted, but in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when the English elite, at any rate, had given up all belief in witches. It begins to look like another argument for the peculiarity of the English, and Monter has almost suggested as much in the revised version of his paper. Dutch historians save the day and restore the English to the human race by showing that in the three years between 1730 and 1732 Holland experienced a sodomy scare in which 276 men were executed, which matches anything in previous European history.10 It thus appears as though England and Holland, the two most modernizing societies of the early eighteenth century, were also the two to experience the most intense waves of sodomy prosecutions. Some will rush in to point out that these were both Protestant countries, but then so was Geneva; and to the great Casanova's eye, Protestant England and Catholic France and Spain were all of a piece in this matter when compared with tolerant Italy, which apparently had long since put its Renaissance terrors behind it. Italy also had, however, slipped from its position of technological and economic dominance between the fifteenth and the eighteenth centuries. In short, it may be possible that David Greenberg and Marcia Bystryn's argument that the late nineteenth- and twentieth-century stigmatization of homosexual behavior is a consequence of competitive capitalism and bureaucratic organization is applicable to the societies of Early Modern Europe.11

It would be overhasty, however, to use comparisons of Renaissance Italy
with early eighteenth-century France and Holland to leap to the conclusion that sodomy was, relatively speaking, the same phenomenon throughout the Early Modern period if not, indeed, between the twelfth and the eighteenth centuries. Stopping us from making that leap is Mary McIntosh's suggestion that an important reorganization in homosexual behavior and its meaning occurred in England in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. It is a theme with which in our different ways McIntosh, Bray, and I have each tried to deal; we have each based our findings on the evidence of literary sources and the interpretation of particular cases rather than on statistical series. It is clear that those historians who rely primarily on the interpretation of statistical series have tended to ask three interrelated questions: first, whether sodomitical behavior was organized into an urban subculture; second, what the effect of such behavior was for the enactment of gender roles among those who engaged in it and among those who did not; and third, how such behavior was used to construct an overall symbolic universe and to deal with issues of life and death, of man and nature, and of witchcraft, heresy, true religion, science, and enlightenment. These three questions arise naturally out of Western European taboo against all homosexual behavior; a taboo that Derek Bailey, I, and John Boswell, have each maintained was part of Western European tradition since its independent emergence in the twelfth century. The taboo and its attendant questions of interpretation must, in their eighteenth-century habitation, be considered in the light of McIntosh's proposal.

In 1968, in a brief but pithy essay, Mary McIntosh made the following interpretation: all theorizing that began by seeking the causes of homosexuality was doomed to fail, since it asked the wrong question. Instead, it was essential to see that the homosexual is a deviant role created by society and that it serves the same end as all deviant roles, of keeping the rest of society law abiding. In modern societies that recognize a separate homosexual role, it is presumed that homosexuals are exclusively or predominantly homosexual in feelings and behavior, that they are effeminate in manner, personality, and preferred sexual activity, that sexual desire plays a role in all their relations with other men, and that they will be attracted to boys and young men and aim at their seduction. McIntosh argued that there were societies in which homosexual behavior in men did not require any special role. Even in contemporary Western society the presumption that men are exclusively heterosexual or homosexual in desire and action is belied by the statistics of actual practice. Finally—this is the issue crucial to my paper—she maintained that the role of the effeminate, exclusively homosexual male did not appear in Western society until the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, when such individuals can first be documented in the London sodomitical subculture.

I took McIntosh's distinction between homosexual behavior and the homosexual role as a point of departure in my study of the London sodomitical subculture of the 1720s. I sought to show that Western society in the eighteenth century was unique in neither allowing homosexual
behavior nor providing for any approved homosexual role. Other world cultures allowed adult men to take the “dominant” role in homosexual acts without stigmatizing them in any way or denying them access to women. But males who took the passive role were allowed to do so only if in either the temporary status of boy or adolescent or the permanent adult status of tranvestite. In other words, the distinction between males as active and females as passive ruled all sexual acts whether between the same or opposite genders, because the passive male was always conceived of as being female, either from a permanent transvestite condition or from the temporary adolescent condition characterized by slight, hairless bodies. The Western inability to accept these worldwide distinctions seems to have arisen from a Christian taboo first clearly enunciated in the twelfth century. It seemed likely, therefore, that since I could find clear evidence both of homosexuality among European males between the twelfth and the eighteenth centuries, usually in an urban setting, and of descriptions of these males as effeminate, that McIntosh could not be right in thinking that either effeminacy in sodomites or the construction of an urban sodomitical subculture could be phenomena appearing for the first time in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century England. To give weight to this position, I claimed that the published evidence for the cities of Renaissance Italy and Reformation Geneva documented urban sodomitical subcultures.\(^{15}\)

My position as to the enduring presence of urban sodomitical subcultures between the twelfth and the eighteenth centuries has been accepted by some and disputed by others: I would wish to modify it in two important respects. Arthur Gilbert is, in some ways, my most radical sceptic, since he doubts that there was a continuous subculture even in London in the eighteenth century. He may be correct in the sense that it flourished more in some years than in others, but it is impossible to think that known places of sodomitical rendezvous ever disappeared in eighteenth-century London. William Monter, in his revised essay on Geneva, has disagreed with my reading of his earlier presentation. He insists that in a city the size of Geneva it would have been impossible for the consistory not to have known of and destroyed the presence of a homosexual subculture. In private correspondence, however, I returned to the case of Pierre Canal, which I thought would prove my point; I asked Monter whether Canal demonstrated if not the presence of a subculture then at least the presence of a safe sodomitical network. Here was a man who, after his first homosexual experiences as a student in Italy, carried on a bisexual life in Geneva for five or six years; none of his lovers ever gave him away, and he only gave himself and them away when under torture for another crime in 1610 he confessed his sodomy and accused twenty other men. Monter has replied that it is apparent that “there were places and men who were ‘safe’ even in a place like Geneva.”\(^{16}\)

Stephen Murray and Kent Gerard have come partly to my support in a paper surveying the published evidence for the prosecution of sodomy in Europe between the thirteenth and the seventeenth centuries. They have found considerable material from towns of various size, involving both

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large groups and individuals, for Germany, France, England, Switzerland, Holland, Spain, and Italy. They conclude that "during the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, a variety of ruling elites found searching out homosexual relations an effective means of extending social control [and] distracting the frustrations of restive and occasionally riotous masses." They state further that this does not dismiss my hypothesis but that there is an unacknowledged problem of explaining the sudden prominence of effeminate sodomites in the early eighteenth century.17

Wayne Dynes and Warren Johansson, in a commentary on Richard of Davizes' description of homosexual relations in London in 1192, have made a number of interesting points: Johansson shows that Richard distinguishes between passive and active males, while Dynes has proposed a distinction between a subculture in which individuals have "a subjective sense of belonging to a particular group set apart from the rest of society" and an "objective pattern of same-sex networking that has generally arisen in urban settings—outdoor and indoor meeting places; 'semiotics' and other non-verbal gestures and tokens of recognition; consorting with other outcasts such as prostitutes, entertainers, beggars, and soothsayers."18 'This is certainly a distinction worth making, that is, whether the persons in a network have, as a consequence of the network, a sense of separate identity. In the case of eighteenth-century London it can probably be shown that the network gave such an identity to only a few.'

It is necessary also to make a distinction of scale between the networks of small towns and the subcultures of large cities. An unexpected arrest could reveal such a network in Geneva in 1610 or Windsor in the 1690s, Exeter in the 1780s or Warrington in 1806. Bath, in the eighteenth century, according to Polly Morris, had nothing like London's subculture, but it did have "its own topography of sodomy; safe-fields, pick-up streets."19 Kent Gerard hopes to show active sodomitical networks in eighteenth-century Dublin, York, Bristol, Exeter, and Norwich. Sodomitical life in these provincial towns, however, was insufficient for the public parks and taverns of London, Paris, or Amsterdam, while Venice had produced long before the eighteenth century what Ruggiero has called a subculture. Thus Monter is probably right in saying that the amount of public activity was greater in southern than northern cities before the seventeenth century. It is also probable that the sodomitical life of London, Paris, and Amsterdam in the early eighteenth century was conducted on a scale that not even the cities of Renaissance Italy had known.

The principal supporter of McIntosh's position, and therefore my most serious critic (though it has been criticism very discreetly and collegially expressed), has been Alan Bray, and it is to a consideration of his book that I now turn.20 Bray goes to great pains to read the early seventeenth-century evidence in such a way as to deny the existence of a sodomitical subculture in London, although he does not always make clear that that is what he is doing. Along the way, however, he makes a number of highly interesting comments on the satirical and linguistic evidence, as well as a number of less cogent ones on the sodomy trials. He begins with the point
that the words "sodomy" and "buggery" were general terms that might refer to relations with a man, a woman, or an animal. However defined, sodomy was often seen as the final step of a sexual sinner after rape, adultery, and incest. Sodomites were classed also as part of an infernal trio of "sorcerers, sodomites, and heretics," and were not viewed, therefore, as exclusively sexual persons. Sodomy was only one, if the gravest, of the sexual disorders to break out when marriage (the bulwark against debauchery) was ignored. Bray also points out that the word "effeminacy" was in the early seventeenth century similarly protean, sometimes used to describe cross-dressing boys but also to describe men who had become weakened through excessive sexual contact with women. To be a sodomite or effeminate in the early seventeenth century was therefore to be debauched, but such debauchery might be displayed indifferently towards males and females. For these reasons it is hard to understand why Bray dismisses as worthless the descriptions of the young man about town who was to be found with his mistress on one arm and his catamite on the other. It seems to me a likely description of which actual examples may be found; as McIntosh herself says of Pope Julian II, it is only the later theory of exclusive attachment to one gender that leads us to discount descriptions of European men as having male lovers and female mistresses simultaneously. Michel Rey mentions a number of cases of bisexual deviancy, and Natalie Davis has criticized LeRoy Ladurie for anachronistically labeling a man whose sexual life included both boys and girls as a homosexual. Before 1700, this may well have been the pattern of those men who deserted what Ruggiero has called the sexual milieu of marriage for the milieu of libertinism and debauchery.21

It seems that Bray denies the bisexual libertine to provide a precedent for dismissing another, to him more embarrassing, part of the satirical observations, that the sexual world of London was a world apart from the rest of England as far as whoredom and sodomy were concerned. London's size dwarfed all other cities, but it depended on a flow of immigrants from the countryside and its rate of illegitimacy was no higher than elsewhere (it was actually much lower than many places).22 But C. S. Fischer has shown that the modern city can shelter and support equally both a stable, conventional majority and deviant subcultures whose deviancy is reinforced by the experience of urban life.23 The same may well have been true for early seventeenth-century London. Bray does admit (in footnotes) that London's records hold a relatively large number of sodomy cases in comparison to the records for the rest of the country. He circumvents this obstacle in two ways. First, the grounds on which the London cases were brought were similar to those elsewhere: the use of violence, the complaint of a boy or his parents. The same is true, however, of most London cases in the eighteenth century, when Bray agrees that there was a subculture. Second, there were few cases—about one a year—and justices were far more interested in heterosexual immorality. Unfortunately, the same is true for most years in the eighteenth century. The incidence of sodomy cases in eighteenth-century legal material is different from that of the early seventeenth century in only one, very significant,
respect: there were, in a handful of years, mass arrests, when large numbers of sodomites, singly and in groups, were rounded up. It is likely, therefore, that there was more sodomy in London than elsewhere in the early seventeenth century and that people recognized this. When one adds the evidence for boy-prostitution in London that Bray reports honestly is there for the whole century, it becomes very likely that in early seventeenth-century London there was a sodomitical network or subculture that perhaps, because it was not as large as it later became, because policing was not as effective as the Societies for the Reformation of Manners later made it, and, most of all, because sodomy with men was not yet conceived of as excluding sex with women, was not attacked in the early seventeenth century in the way it occasionally was in the eighteenth.

On the other hand, Bray is probably right to presume that male homosexual contact outside of London was made through neighborhood and household ties. But surely it is absurd to argue from this that since there were relatively few prosecutions for sodomy and the age of marriage was late then homosexuality existed “on a massive or ineradicable scale.” It is far more likely, when one considers the expressions of horror against sodomy, to conclude that there were few prosecutions because there was very little sodomy. It is hardly safe to conclude that if men marry late and premarital sex is difficult then they will turn to each other. It seems much more likely that in a Western Christian society, they will sublimate, take to drink, or riot in the streets, pulling down the whores, as London apprentices were wont to do.

Nevertheless, despite these strictures, I would now agree with McIntosh that a profound shift occurred in the conceptualization and practice of male homosexual behavior in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. It was a shift caused by the reorganization of gender identity that was occurring as part of the emergence of a modern Western culture. It left behind the pattern of homosexual behavior that had been produced by the emergence of a traditional Western European culture in the twelfth century. In that older pattern, the debauchee or libertine who denied the relegation of sexuality to marriage had been able to find, especially in cities, women and boys with whom he might indifferently, if sometimes dangerously, enact his desires. In the modern pattern, most men conceived first of all that they were male, because they felt attraction to women, and to women alone. Gender differences were presumed therefore to be founded on an ineradicable difference of experience: men did not know what it was like to desire men, and women did not desire women, though in the minds of men, and perhaps of women, too, the latter was less so. In this culture the sodomite became an individual interested exclusively in his own gender and inveterately effeminate and passive. A man interested in women never risked becoming effeminate as he had once done, since there was never a chance that he might passively submit to another male. In this world it was no slander to say that a man was debauched or a whoremonger—it was a proof of his masculinity—and such cases disappeared from the courts, but adult men could not tolerate a charge that they were sodomites. Adolescent masturbation,
often practiced as a group male activity, was outlawed on medical grounds, and by the early nineteenth century sodomy itself was being categorized as a mental disease. By about 1800, the London house of correction, recognizing perhaps the difficulty of achieving full adult heterosexuality under the trying conditions of prison life, had set up separate wings for boys, for men, and for sodomites. It is also likely that in naval vessels at sea (as a close reading of Gilbert’s Africaine evidence would show) one would have found by 1816 a similar set of distinctions among men who engaged in sodomitical acts. Michel Rey has found in Sade a related tripartite division of man, woman, and sodomite.

However, the distinction that I proposed in 1977 between the illicit relations of adult men who found each other in the urban subcultures of Europe and the licit sexual relations in the rest of the world of men with boys or transvestites was a valid one. It was a distinction already made by Geoffrey Gorer (unknown to me) in an undocumented essay. What I could not see in 1977 was that Europe before 1700 was closer to the rest of the world than it was after. The European libertine before 1700 was still a sinner, although he might not have lost masculine status by having his boy on one arm and his whore on the other. Sodomy before 1700 was still the worst of sexual sins and passive sodomy the most unmanly of acts. Historians who propose models of sexual development, whether they do so for the early seventeenth century (like G. R. Quaife) or more for the early eighteenth century (like J.-L. Flandrin), cannot afford to ignore the central role of sodomy. But even a great philosopher might find it difficult (as does a poor historian) to see all the connections: so that Bentham, might, in an unpublished manuscript, mock the alarm of his contemporaries over sodomy while taking for granted the alarming consequences of onanism.

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14. McIntosh, "Homosexual Role."
15. Trumbach, "London's Sodomities."
19. "Sexual Reputation in Somerset, 1733–1850," unpub. Ph.D. diss. (Univ. of Warwick, 1985), chap. 8. I am grateful to Dr. Morris both for allowing me to see this and for a number of stimulating conversations.
23. To *Dwell Among Friends* (Chicago: 1982).