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II.2 Discovering Sexuality

The Status of Literature as Evidence

Robert Deam Tobin

Today, the study of sexuality brings together scholars from a wide variety of disciplines – history, politics, literature, religion, the arts, psychology, anthropology, medicine, and biology. At its best, this interdisciplinary work promotes critical self-reflection on disciplinary assumptions about sexuality and the data used to test those assumptions: Is there such a thing as a fixed sexuality and how would one prove its existence? Such questions have arisen ever since the emergence of the concept of ‘sexuality’ at the end of the eighteenth century. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, theorists regarded humanistic and literary sources as high quality evidence in analyses of sexuality. By the end of the nineteenth century, literary and humanistic sources seemingly took a back seat to biological data. A more nuanced analysis of this shift in the prioritization of evidence reveals, however, that it accompanied a changing emphasis: biological and medical investigations tended to focus on specific and immutable sexualities, understood as pathological, while humanistic studies tended to concentrate on universal and fluid sexualities, often understood as part of a healthy human experience.

Michel Foucault famously declares that the West replaced the *ars erotica* with a *scientia sexualis.* As Anna Katharina Schaffner has documented, science was always already indebted to the arts, at least in the realm of sexuality. Schaffner’s essay focuses on the sexologists, Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Alfred Binet, Havelock Ellis, and Iwan Bloch, all publishing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The paradigms structuring the thinking of these specialists in sexuality have roots going back to the early nineteenth century, when the distinction between art and science was just emerging. Activists who advocated for the rights of people who sexually desired members of their own sex worked alongside these sexual scientists; their writings provide additional perspectives on the changing social attitude toward the truth claims of the humanities and the natural sciences in the realm of sexuality. A chronological analysis of the approach taken by these activists and scientists suggests that – at least among edu-
cated bourgeois European men – literature came to provide a rhetorical home for a resistance to sexual identities, while the natural sciences bolstered faith in those identities.

The 1830s: Heinrich Hössli and the truth of literature

In the 1830s, the Swiss milliner Heinrich Hössli published a two-volume defense of male-male love called *Eros: Die Männerliebe der Griechen: Ihre Beziehungen zur Geschichte, Erziehung, Literatur und Gesetzgebung aller Zeiten* (*Eros: The Male Love of the Greeks: Its Relationship to the History, Education, Literature and Legislation of All Ages*), which promotes one of the earliest consistent arguments for an innate immutable sexual identity. The horrific execution of François Desgouttes, who was broken at the wheel in 1817 for the murder of his beloved Daniel Hemmeler, deeply shocked Hössli, who understood the murder as a crime of passion. Characteristically, he turned first to a literary author, Heinrich Zschokke, commissioning a short story to explain passionate male-male love, which appeared in 1821 under the title, ‘Der Eros’. Feeling that the result moralistically cemented readers’ prejudices against Greek love, Hössli detested the novella.

Bitterly disappointed, Hössli set to work on his own study. In it, he cites anthropological and historical studies of male-male erotic love, including Christoph Meiners’s 1775 essay, ‘Betrachtungen über die Männerliebe der Griechen’ (‘Observations on the Male Love of the Greeks’). He relies on progressive eighteenth-century medical authorities, such as Johann Georg Zimmermann and Johann Friedrich Zückert. He makes use of the most recent scientific materials, quoting a passage on ‘Sexualität’ from an 1835 issue of *Rusts Magazin für die gesamte Heilkunde* (*Rust’s Magazine for All the Healing Arts*). At that time, the terms *Sexualität, sexualité, and ‘sexuality’, were new, having been introduced by Carl von Linné to botany, as a way of talking about the sex of plants. The passage Hössli cites continues in this tradition, referring to a person’s ‘sexuality’ as his or her masculinity or femininity. The vocabulary clearly carries a medical, biological and scientific inflection.

Much of Hössli’s data, however, comes from more humanistic sources, such as the three-volume study, *Venus Urania: Ueber die Natur der Liebe, über ihre Veredlung und Verschönerung* (*Venus Urania: On the Nature of Love, on Its Refinement and Beautification*), published in 1798 by the diplomat and aestheteicin Friedrich Wilhelm Basilieus Ramdohr, otherwise known for his critiques of Caspar David Friedrich’s paintings. Hössli cites Wolfgang Menzel’s *Literatur-Blatt* frequently, using that literary journal to access the most recent reviews
of dramas such as Sigismund Wiese’s 1836 *Die Freunde (The Friends)*, which seemed overtly sexual to him. For Hössli, literature provides the strongest evidence on human nature:

> [T]he oldest, deepest and purest language, the sacred language of higher humanity, the flowery world of man’s invisible, his heavenly realm, is literature, poetic language, the glowing and thoughtful observation by the soul of itself and of the great phenomena of nature.\(^8\)

Because for Hössli literary language is the most important source of evidence, he fills his apology for male-male love with passages from the classical literature of Persia, Greece, and Rome, including texts from Sādī, Hafiz, Anacreon, Lucian, Theocritus, Horace, and Virgil. He regards these texts as voices and witnesses, ‘scattered in our literary possessions, in the plantings of humanity’, concerned that

> when we run into them individually – each separated from the other – in our wanderings in the realm of research and scholarship [*Wissenschaft*], we kick them into the mud as misunderstood weeds, with the contemptuous, thoughtless, inhuman arrogance of vandals, with derision or with superstitious fear; we don’t realize that they are plants of pure humanity, we don’t realize that they belong to the psychological investigative records [*zu den psychologischen Untersuchungsakten*] of so many thousands of the innocently executed.\(^9\)

Hössli’s extended botanical metaphor may reflect the tradition of discussing sexuality in terms of plants. In any case, it is significant that he envisions a scholar stumbling across poetry while pursuing *Wissenschaft*, which is nowadays often translated as ‘science’. In Hössli’s era, poetry qualifies as a ‘psychological investigative record’, as good as any psychological, forensic or criminalistic evidence.

### Mid-nineteenth-century homosexual emancipationists

Three decades later, in the 1860s and 1870s, the homosexual emancipationists Karl Heinrich Ulrichs and Karl Maria Kertbeny would steer clear of the literary evidence that Hössli finds so convincing. While Ulrichs commends Hössli on his commitment to the belief in the innateness of male-male desire, he objects to his reliance on literary sources, which in his mind prove very little:
the innateness of male love is for him [Hössli], as for me, the foundation upon which he bases his justification. Admittedly, this foundation is only asserted by him, not proven. At least, what he offers is no proof: urning love poetry from Greece, Rome, and Persia, etc. These prove only the uncontested fact that male love exists. The entire scientific side [die ganze naturwissenschaftliche Seite] of the subject, namely the muliebrity [of the urning], is not touched.10

As Ulrichs’s critique of his predecessor suggests, this new generation of activists shared a faith in natural science (Naturwissenschaft) to explain sexuality.

The ‘muliebrity’, or femininity, of the urning is central to Ulrichs’s understanding of sexuality. Ulrichs coined the term ‘urning’ to describe a person with a female soul within a male body (anima muliebris virile corpore inclusa). He also discussed ‘urningins’, whose male soul resides in a female body. In the tradition of the early botanical meaning of the word ‘sexuality’, Ulrichs focused on the femininity of men who desire other men and the masculinity of women who desire other women. Because Ulrichs understood urning desire as a product of innate gender inversion, he was predisposed toward biological explanations of sexuality. He was interested, for instance, in finding out the results of blood transfusions between urnings and non-urnings, suspecting that a change of blood would result in at least a temporary change of orientation.11

Ulrichs avoided heavy reliance on the classical texts because – pace Hössli – they did not support his vision of an innate, immutable sexual identity. Ulrichs was committed to the notion of fixed sexual identities that required society’s reconstruction in order to provide for the rights of people who had no other option but to sexually love members of their own sex. The classical texts, however, often suggest considerable malleability in sexual tastes. Privileged men in antiquity might beget heirs with their wives, consort erotically with alluring courtesans, and also fall passionately in love with attractive young men. Ulrichs knew these texts better than Hössli, having been thoroughly trained in the classics. In fact, after he stopped agitating on behalf of urnings in 1879, he devoted the remainder of his life to the resurrection of Latin.12

Ulrichs’s humanist background did not prevent him from having an impact on the legal and medical communities. In 1867, his public speech as an urning for urning rights at a conference of German legal experts in Munich did not go well – he was booed out of the hall and sodomy remained a crime in Germany for a century afterward. His connections with scientists were more successful, however. Carl Westphal’s 1869 article ‘Die conträre Sexualempfindung’ (‘Contrary Sexual Feelings or Sexual Inversion’), which Michel Foucault cites as a plausible locus for the birth of the homosexual,13 relies heavily on direct quotes from Ulrichs.
Westphal provides thorough case studies of his two patients, but much of his theoretical discussion of gender inversion comes directly from Ulrichs. Early British apologists and advocates of same-sex desire knew of him: John Addington Symonds visited him in Italy in the 1890s, writing to Edward Carpenter, ‘there is a singular charm about the old man, great sweetness, the remains of refined beauty’. As we shall see, both Richard von Krafft-Ebing (who corresponded with the activist until his death) and Sigmund Freud reference Ulrichs.

In 1869, Karl Heinrich Ulrichs’s comrade in arms, Karl Maria Kertbeny, became the first person in any language to combine the Greek prefix homo with the Latin term sexus in order to create a word – ‘homosexual’ – describing a person with a fixed sexual desire for a member of his or her own sex. He did so, not in a biological or medical context, but in a legal context, as an activist fighting for the decriminalization of sodomy in the legal codes proposed for the new North German Confederation, which would become the German Empire. In his open letters calling for the decriminalization of sodomy (where the words homosexual and Homosexualität first appear in print), Kertbeny refrains from citing literary sources as evidence concerning the phenomenon he named ‘homosexuality’. His arguments are legal, his evidence anthropological. Eventually, his terminology gained prominence when the biologist Gustav Jäger printed a number of Kertbeny’s observations about homosexuality in the second edition of his book, Die Entdeckung der Seele (The Discovery of the Soul), which appeared in 1880. It would seem that Kertbeny too rejects literary sources as evidence regarding sexuality.

Although Kertbeny’s vocabulary became famous through sexological texts, he himself was no medical doctor. Instead, he was an homme de lettres who made a precarious living translating, critiquing and promoting Hungarian literature in German-speaking Europe and beyond, arguing that language and culture evinced the ‘national character’ of a people. Although Kertbeny claimed to have ‘a sharp eye for questions of race’, he seems to have believed that language and culture can express nationality in ways that outweigh biology. Thus, Kertbeny, who was born into a German family with the last name of Benkert, could become ‘Hungarian’ through his deep knowledge of Hungarian language and literature. Similarly, while Kertbeny did at times rely on biological explanations for same-sex erotic desire, the essays that he sent to Jäger celebrate the cultural legacy of homosexuality, especially as exemplified by more modern poets, artists and scholars, such as Shakespeare, Michelangelo, Winckelmann and Byron.

Ulrichs and Kertbeny were both humanists, deeply devoted to the study of language and literature. Nevertheless, they stepped back from Hössli’s reliance on literary sources, in part because they found biological explanations of sexuality more compelling. In both cases, their work was repackaged and widely distributed by medical experts and biologists such as Westphal and Jäger. Under the
aegis of science, their thinking about sexuality had wide and lasting resonance, which has led to the belief that homosexuality is a purely scientific, biological and medical category. In fact, however, interests in politics, literature and culture motivated the men who first conceptualized homosexuality.

Richard von Krafft-Ebing and the late-nineteenth-century sexologists

Westphal and Jäger belong to the scientific tradition of sexology that includes Paolo Mantegazza in Italy, Auguste Tardieu in France, Havelock Ellis in England, and Arnold Aletrino in Holland. Probably no sexologist had more impact in spreading a modern vocabulary of sexuality to the most remote corners of the Western world, however, than Richard von Krafft-Ebing, whose *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) informed countless readers of the existence of homosexuals, masochists, sadists and fetishists.

As modern scientists, sexologists relied on empirical data collected in the clinics, rather than literary texts. More than most sexologists, however, Krafft-Ebing devotes time to the question of the value of literary texts as data. While he is remarkably sympathetic to literature, he insists that ‘the poet will not discharge his arduous task adequately without the active cooperation of natural philosophy and, above all, that of medicine, a science which ever seeks to trace all psychological manifestations to their anatomical and physiological sources’. Biology provides the ultimate answer, even for the poets.

When discussing conditions about the existence of which there can be little doubt in the minds of his readers, it doesn’t occur to Krafft-Ebing to mention literary sources. He laments that ‘the pathological love of married women for other men is a phenomenon in the domain of psychopathia sexualis which sadly stands in need of scientific explanation. The author has had the opportunity of observing five cases belonging to this category’. Krafft-Ebing could cite such famous adulterous women as Emma Bovary and Anna Karenina to prove the existence of this phenomenon, but clearly he believes that his readers will not doubt that there are women who love men other than their husbands.

On the other hand, Krafft-Ebing bolsters his arguments concerning homosexuality and masochism with frequent references to literary texts, in case his readership needs more evidence on the existence of the conditions. About homosexuality, he writes: ‘That inversion of the sexual instinct is not uncommon is proved, among other things, by the circumstances that it is frequently the subject in novels. The neuropathic foundation of this sexual perversion does not
escape the writers. As evidence, he lists several German texts, including Adolf Wilbrandt’s *Fridolin’s heimliche Ehe* (*Fridolin’s Secret Marriage*), as well as Petronius’s *Satyricon*. Similarly, brief references to the Bible, ancient Greece, Rome and the Middle Ages serve as ‘proofs that *congressus intersexualis feminarum* took place at all times, the same as it is practiced now-a-days in the harem, in female prisons, brothels and young ladies’ seminaries’. Krafft-Ebing adds a series of contemporary novels to this list of historical sources: ‘It is a remarkable fact that in fiction, lesbic love is frequently used as the leading theme’, whereupon he cites works by Diderot, Balzac, and Flaubert, among others. Apparently abashed about his reliance on literary sources, Krafft-Ebing often hides his references to them in footnotes. Amusingly, the modern novels about male homosexuals are all German, while those about female homosexuals are all French. In both cases it is clear, however, that he cites them explicitly to prove the widespread frequency and historical invariability of the condition, just as Hössli would.

Similarly, Krafft-Ebing augments his evidence on masochism with literary texts, beginning with those by the author Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, after whom Krafft-Ebing named the condition: ‘I feel justified in calling this sexual anomaly ‘Masochism’, because the author Sacher-Masoch frequently made this perversion, which up to his time was quite unknown to the scientific world as such, the substratum of his writings’. In addition to Sacher-Masoch, Krafft-Ebing finds evidence for the existence of masochism in classical Indian and Buddhist literature, Russian literature and folktales, Shakespeare, Jacobsen and Zola.

In the cases of both masochism and homosexuality, Krafft-Ebing makes some methodological observations regarding the limitations of literature as data. He believes that generally literary texts sympathize with their subjects. In his foreword, while praising poetry as better than much other pre-scientific work, he also insists on its weaknesses: ‘The poet [...] is swayed rather by sentiment than by reason, and always treats his subject in a partial fashion. He cannot discern deep shadows, because he is dazed by the blazing light and overcome by the benign heat of the subject’. Krafft-Ebing finds this critique particularly applicable to homosexuality. He brings up classical literary sources in the context of noting that ‘the majority of urnings are happy in their perverse sexual feeling and impulse, and unhappy only in so far as social and legal barriers stand in the way of the satisfaction of their instinct toward their own sex’. Given this acceptance of their situation and lack of interest in a cure, he notes that many urnings cite literature primarily to justify, rather than diagnose, their love. Krafft-Ebing concedes that in much of the classical tradition, homosexuality comes off well: ‘From many other places in the classics the impression may be won that Uranic love attained a higher position even than her sister’. (The
The translator’s term ‘Uranic’ is an adjectival form of ‘Uranian,’ a frequently used translation for ‘urning.’

In the discussion of literature around masochism, Krafft-Ebing takes a slightly different tack — rather than critiquing the literary texts for being too sympathetic with their subjects, he accepts that in this case literary authors frequently delineate the nuances of nonpathological passions, while he as a physician must focus on the pathologically perverse. Thus, in one footnote, he cites a considerable body of literature (including Abbé Prévost’s Manon Lescaut, George Sand’s Leone Leoni, and Heinrich von Kleist’s Käthchen von Heilbronn) dealing with aspects of sexual love that approach masochism, but do not require medical treatment: ‘Sexual bondage, of course, plays a role in all literature. Indeed, for the poet, the extraordinary manifestations of the sexual life that are not perverse form a rich and open field.’

Repeatedly, Krafft-Ebing takes pains to distinguish pathological masochism from the normal travails of love. Discussing a text by Otto Zimmermann called Die Wonne der Liebe (The Bliss of Love), Krafft-Ebing criticizes Zimmermann for failing to make this distinction between normal and abnormal pleasure in suffering: ‘However, the domain of masochism must be sharply differentiated from the principal subject of that work, which is, that love contains an element of suffering. Unrequited love has always been described as ‘sweet, but sorrowful’, and poets speak of ‘blissful pain’ or ‘painful bliss.’ This must not be confounded, as Zimmermann does, with the manifestations of masochism, any more than should be the characterization of an unyielding lover as ‘cruel’.

Krafft-Ebing returns to the topic in one more footnote with a lengthy observation on certain seemingly masochistic expressions that are commonly used to describe love, such as ‘slavery’, ‘to bear chains’, ‘bound’, ‘to hold the whip over’, and ‘to lie at the feet’. He argues that poets operate according to the logic of masochism when they use such metaphors:

Poetry has always recognized, within the general idea of the passion of love, the element of dependence in the lover, who practices self-sacrifice spontaneously out of necessity. The facts of ‘bondage’ have also always presented themselves to the poetical imagination. When the poet chooses such expressions as those mentioned, to picture the dependence of the lover in striking similes, he proceeds exactly on the same lines as does the masochist, that is, to intensify the idea of his dependence (his ultimate aim), he creates such situations in reality.

Profoundly, Krafft-Ebing suggests that the poet and the masochist are engaged in similar activities, both relying on established tropes to create a fantasized reality.
As Schaffner paraphrases this passage, ‘the poet expresses symbolically what the pervert enacts literally’.31 Here too, Krafft-Ebing seems primarily interested in a nonpathological masochism, as his other comments about poetry do not suggest that he believes poetic activity is pathological per se.

Subsequent sexologists and homosexual emancipationists follow in Krafft-Ebing’s footsteps, relying primarily on empirical scientific evidence. Indeed, most spend far less time than Krafft-Ebing considering the potential validity of literary passages as data. Magnus Hirschfeld worked tirelessly on behalf of homosexuals and other sexual minorities, editing one of the first journals devoted to the scientific study of sexuality and homosexuality, Das Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen (Yearbook for Sexual Intermediary Types) (1899-1923) and founding Das wissenschaftlich-humanitäre Komitee (The Scientific-Humanitarian Committee), which advocated for homosexual rights. Importantly, he helped crystallize a homosexual rights canon by reprinting works by and about Hössli, Ulrichs and Kertbeny. Hirschfeld certainly took advantage of the prestige of literary authors, especially from ancient Greece, as indicated by the title of his first book, published in 1898: Sappho und Sokrates, oder Wie erklärt sich die Liebe der Männer und der Frauen zu Personen des eigenen Geschlechtes (Sappho and Socrates, or How Can the Love of Men and Women to Members of Their Own Sex Be Explained). In general, however, Hirschfeld avoided literary texts in favor of case studies that supported his argument for the existence of a biologically based, innate, immutable homosexual orientation.

The masculinists and the early twentieth century

One group of theorists, however, continued to rely primarily on literary texts as evidence in their analysis of sexuality. Members of this school have been called the ‘masculinists’ because of their effort to frame male-male sexual desire as a masculine, rather than a gender-inverted, phenomenon.32 They embraced precisely those assumptions about emerging sexuality from classical literary texts that the sexologists and emancipationists rejected. When they looked at classical Greek and Latin texts, they saw evidence for the universality and the fluidity of masculine desire for other men.

Foremost among these authors was Adolf Brand, who founded a number of institutions that directly contrasted with Hirschfeld’s. Der Eigene (sometimes translated as The Special), a journal for ‘masculine culture’ that ran from 1896 to 1933, stood in opposition to Hirschfeld’s Jahrbuch. Brandt’s organization, Die Gemeinschaft der Eigenen (The Community of the Special) split off from the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee in 1903. While the Jahrbuch featured statistical,
sociological, ethnographic, psychological, biological and medical analyses, *Der Eigene* consisted primarily of short stories, poems, drawings and photographs. In *Der Eigene*, Brand uses literature as data to reject the notion that homosexuals constitute a specific, countable, discrete minority. The *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen* similarly cultivated an approach to sexuality that emphasized literature and the arts, rather than empirical scientific evidence.

John Henry Mackay, who despite his Scottish name lived in Germany and wrote in German, describes this universally fluid sexuality in his literary works, *Die Bücher der namenlosen Liebe* (*The Books of the Nameless Love*) (1913) and *Der Puppenjunge* (*The Hustler*) (1926). Repeatedly he focuses on young men who prostitute themselves in Berlin, without much concern for their own sexual identity or that of their clients. Mackay denounces the medical establishment, de-crying in his 1913 novel, *Fenny Skaller*, that 'physicians took over this love. For physicians, people are only valuable when they are sick'. Interestingly, Mackay’s protagonist Fenny maintains some respect for Krafft-Ebing, and his compendium, *Psychopathia Sexualis*. Fenny was still grateful to him, for what it [*Psychopathia Sexualis*] had told him first of all: that he wasn’t alone. But otherwise he was horrified by these shameless revelations of desperate and poor people, these revelations that a narrow-minded, albeit honest, mind had brought together, packed up, registered and labeled in the name of a new science.

Mackay’s respect for Krafft-Ebing comes from the physician’s airing of same-sex desire, while his contempt comes from the pathologizing impulse. He would certainly appreciate Krafft-Ebing’s endorsement of literary depictions of ‘the extraordinary manifestations of the sexual life that are not perverse’.

Brand’s ally, Hans Blüher, author of the scandalous and wildly successful *Die Rolle der Erotik in der männlichen Gesellschaft* (*The Role of Erotics in Masculine Society*) (1917-1919), insists that ‘in ancient Hellas, it was self-evident for any otherwise woman-loving man that he sometimes took a male youth for the pleasures of love’. Blüher argues that precisely this universal erotic bond between men provides the glue that holds society together. In no way does the sexual love of one man for another impugn the masculinity of either party – in fact, both the lover of men and the male beloved tend to be more masculine than those who eschew such practices. While Blüher does not cite literary sources as frequently as Brand, he does rely heavily on the classical tradition in his arguments. In one essay, Blüher distinguishes between *humanitär* (humanitarian) and *humanistisch* (humanistic), setting apart his humanistic, artistic and literary approach from the humanitarian approach of more scientific sexological and le-
gal activists like Hirschfeld and other members of the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee.  

Perhaps the clearest evidence for the role of literature in the masculinist writings on sexuality appears in Elisas von Kupffer’s collection, *Lieblingminne und Freundesliebe in der Weltliteratur* (*Ardor for Favorites and Love of Friends in World Literature*), which was published in 1900. Kupffer was a Baltic German who settled in Minusio, near Monte Verita and Ascona, in the Italian-speaking district of Switzerland, where he wrote dramas and poetry, painted, and erected the Sanctuarium Artis Elisarion, a temple to beauty, which he believed was most purely incorporated in the image of the young man. The Elisarion featured enormous murals showing idyllic scenes of scantily clad young men playing the flute, swinging, playing ball, holding hands, and generally enjoying each other’s company. Sometimes called the first anthology of gay literature, Kupffer’s collection consists of literary texts from the classical Greeks, Romans and Persians, as well as more modern passages from authors such as Shakespeare, Byron, Platen and Verlaine. Although Kupffer does not see a need to justify his use of literature as evidence, these literary sources are in the service of an argument that male desire for other men is universal and general, not specific to a distinct minority of homosexuals. Moreover, it is masculine and manly, not gender inverted. Kupffer’s introduction to the collection is a manifesto for masculinist beliefs, arguing against gender inversion and for the manliness of man-loving men and rejecting the very term ‘homosexual’ as pathologizing. He dismisses Ulrichs as ‘a brave and honorable character, although not really a circumspect thinker’, while directly denouncing Krafft-Ebing. Referring to Hirschfeld’s organization, he mocks ‘humane-scientific circles’. Kupffer’s thinking was widely influential in his era: according to Marita Keilson-Lauritz, if one takes Hirschfeld’s *Jahrbuch* and Brand’s *Der Eigene* together, Kupffer is the most frequently cited author in the publications of the time devoted to same-sex relations.

**Conclusion**

The sexological emancipatory view of sexual identity took deep root in Western society and has continued to flourish until today. The masculinist humanistic critique of sexual identity has been influential as well, too. A thorough analysis of Sigmund Freud’s use of literature as data is not possible here, but it is clear that psychoanalysis remained open to the use of literary sources as evidence for discussions of sexuality long after psychology and psychiatry had move away from this practice. Freud finds Sophocles’ Oedipus, Shakespeare’s Hamlet and E.T.A. Hoffmann’s ‘Sandman’ to be as valid sources of data about sexuality as
the case studies that he investigates. Arguably, he treats his case studies as literary texts, open to multiple, at times self-contradictory interpretations. Significantly, Freud stands closer to the masculinists than the sexological emancipationists in many ways. Like the masculinists, he rejects the notion of fixed sexual identities:

Psychoanalytic research decisively opposes the efforts to separate homosexuals as a special sort of group from other people. In studying sexual arousal other than the manifestly announced, psychoanalysis learns that all people are capable of same-sex object choice and have already made such a choice in their unconscious.49

He disavows Ulrichs and Krafft-Ebing by name, finding their theories of gender inversion naïve.40

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick asserts that many people in the modern world are comfortable with two, not entirely compatible, conceptions of sexuality: on the one hand, the universalizing notion that everyone — gay or straight — might have a homosexual side; on the other hand, the minoritizing belief that some people really are gay, while others are definitely straight.41 The brief overview in this essay suggests that the dichotomy Sedgwick identifies has roots almost as old as the vocabulary of sexuality itself. At least in nineteenth-century Central Europe, the scientific and medical approach increasingly took a minoritizing view of sexual identity, while the humanistic and literary approach increasingly took a universalizing view of sexuality.

Notes

1 Michel Foucault, Histoire de la sexualité I: La volonté de savoir (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), 76-78.
5 Hössli, Eros, vol. 1, 126.
6 Joseph Herrmann Schmidt, ‘Ueber die relative Stellung des Oertlichen zum Allgemeinen’, Rusts Magazin für die gesammte Heilkunde 45.2 (1835), 166.
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Hössli, *Eros*, vol. 2, 45. All translations my own, except where noted otherwise.

Ibid., vol. 2, 50.


Kennedy, *Ulrichs*, 218.


Ibid., 262.

Ibid., 428, ft. 98.

Ibid., 132.

Ibid., xxi.

Ibid., 224.

Ibid., 224.

Ibid., 421, ft. 54.

Ibid., 420, ft. 41.

Ibid., 422, ft. 56.

Schaffner, ‘Fiction as Evidence’, 175.


Mackay, *Die Bücher*, 222.


40 Ibid., vol. 5, 42.