

This week's lecture was on the invention of homosexuality and given by Howard Chiang. The views of the three main categories of sexologists were discussed as well as the contributions of individual members. The lecture then went on to discuss the societal reactions to each of these theories and how social views on homosexuality shifted throughout time. The lecture ended with a critique on the various ways of studying homosexuality and the role of reverse discourse in our research.

The readings this week included *The Psychogenesis of a Case of Female Homosexuality*, by Sigmund Freud. In this work Freud tells the story of a young lesbian to highlight how homosexuality in females has been ignored both in the social and science communities. Freud then attempts to explain the causes and potential treatments for lesbianism. The second source this week was *Community Empowerment and the Medicalization of Homosexuality* by Henry L. Minton. Minton stressed the importance of the homosexual community's contributions to the scientific investigations on sexual variants.

This report will aim to argue that the growth of medical authority on homosexuality was vital to the growing social acceptance of homosexuality. The scientific community, through interview based studies made public discussion of homosexuality more socially acceptable. By searching for the causes of homosexuality, the medicalization of homosexuality helped to migrate away from the notion that it was a crime to be punished.

The medicalization of homosexuality was characterized by many widespread studies resulting in publications. Prior to medicalization judgments on homosexuality had been based on Judeo-Christian religious doctrines which stated it was a sin. By relying on religious doctrine all discussion about sexual variants was squashed. Medicalization allowed scholarly discussion about such topics due to the "intimate proximity between the doctor and patient", to quote Chiang's lecture. Other works incorporated stories from members of the homosexual community such as the works of Alfred Kinsey. His works, collectively referred to as *The Kinsey Reports* became immensely popular with the public and are credited with influencing the sexual revolution. With the pervasiveness of modern social media

we can see the dramatic changes public discussion can enact with the current battles for reproductive and transsexual rights. Had religion remained the main authority on sexuality, such conversations would not have happened, as can be seen in more conservative areas such as the middle east and the southern states. By opening the doors to public discussion, scientific inquiry enable great social change.

The medicalization greatly influenced the public view of homosexuality by treating it as an illness. Prior to the medicalization of homosexuality, religion had held dominance over views on sexuality. Abrahamic religions held the most sway and contained divine condemnation of homosexual acts such as sodomy. This lead to many laws punishing homosexual acts and the treatment of sexual variants as criminals and sinners. The efforts of scientists to understand homosexuality lead to a change in perception leading homosexuals being pitied as those with an illness or genetic deformation. This can be seen in a letter by Freud which states “homosexuality is assuredly no advantage, but it is nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, no degradation” he goes on to say that “It is a great injustice to persecute homosexuality as a crime and cruelty too”. We can see that this is a very different view than that of the church that labeled homosexuals as sinners.

The medicalization of homosexuality dramatically changed how the public viewed sexual variants and added a context to discuss socially unacceptable topics openly. Without both of these changes the current view of sexual variants would have remained religion based. Although homosexual rights still has a long way to go the medicalization of homosexuality jump started the movement.