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QUEERING *the* COLOR LINE

Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture

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Introduction

In 1892 Homer Plessy defied a Louisiana law that required railroad companies carrying passengers within the state to "provide equal but separate accommodations for the white, and colored, races."[1] Fully aware of the law and intending to challenge it, Plessy took a seat in a train car designated for white passengers, announced that he was a "Negro" to the conductor, and refused to move. As he expected, Plessy was promptly arrested. In a series of trials and appeals, Plessy and his lawyers eventually took the case to the United States Supreme Court, which, despite a vigorous dissent by Justice Harlan, upheld the segregationist Louisiana law through its infamous "separate but equal" pronouncement in 1896. In the aftermath of the failures of Reconstruction, the Supreme Court ruling marked a moment when the racialization of American culture had been dramatically articulated and reconfigured. Although racial segregation had long been entrenched as a de facto practice in many regions of the United States, the 1896 ruling formally and explicitly hardened racialized boundaries in new ways. This legalized system of segregation recalled slavery's racialized distinctions between "slave" and "free" but reconfigured this binary by articulating it in exclusively racial terms, the imagined division between "black" and "white" bodies. In effect, *Plessy v. Ferguson* ushered in a nationwide and brutal era of "Jim Crow" segregation, an institutionalized apartheid that lasted well into the twentieth century.[2]

The *Plessy* decision was only one of many sites at which antiblack violence, symbolic and embodied, was enacted during this period. The ruling legitimated the white-supremacist logic that also accounted for the unprecedented numbers of lynchings that took place between 1889 and 1930.[3] Foreign policy mirrored the racialized violence taking place internally. During this same period, the United States pursued expansionism in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Panama, and the Philippines, justifying such domination through the discourse of a "civilizing mission"

to enlighten the "darker" races. Social anxieties about racial identity during this period led to a deluge of Jim Crow and antimiscegenation laws, laws that can be understood as an aggressive attempt to classify, separate, and racialize bodies as either "black" or "white."[4]

Meanwhile, as racialized social boundaries were increasingly policed, so too were emerging categories of sexual identity. In 1892, exploited by a sensationalist press, the highly publicized trial of Alice Mitchell, who had murdered her female lover Freda Ward, focused public attention on the meanings of sexual attachments between women.[5] Although Mitchell's case hinged on whether or not she was insane, its effect was to increase public consciousness of and to criminalize a new type of woman, the female "invert." This public consciousness of homosexuality was piqued further three years later during the trial of Oscar Wilde, which was covered widely in the popular press in the United States and Europe. Wilde was charged with "gross indecency" between men, which had been outlawed in England by the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, known as the Labouchère Amendment.[6] After a series of trials, Wilde was found guilty and sentenced to the maximum punishment, two years' imprisonment with hard labor.[7] Although Wilde's trial and imprisonment took place in England, he became a transatlantic icon of homosexuality and decadence. According to one report, between 1895 and 1900, more than nine hundred sermons were preached against him in churches in the United States.[8]

The larger context for the cases of Wilde and Mitchell was the shift in understandings of sexual identity that occurred during the late nineteenth century. One of the most important and, by now, familiar insights developed in the fields of lesbian and gay studies and the history of sexuality is the notion that homosexuality and, by extension, heterosexuality are relatively recent inventions in Western culture, rather than transhistorical or "natural" categories of human beings. As Michel Foucault and other historians of sexuality have argued, although sexual acts between two people of the same sex had been punishable during earlier periods through legal and religious sanctions, these sexual practices did not necessarily define individuals as homosexual per se.[9] Only in the late nineteenth century did a new understanding of sexuality emerge, in which sexual acts and desires became constitutive of identity. Homosexuality as the condition, and therefore the identity, of particular bodies was thus a historically specific production. In Foucault's much quoted words, "Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphrodism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration, the homosexual was now a species."[10] This shift brought about changes in the organization of not only bodies but knowledge itself. As Eve Sedgwick has claimed, "many of the major nodes of thought and knowledge in twentieth-century Western culture as a whole are structured—indeed, fractured—by a chronic, now endemic crisis of homo/heterosexual definition."[11]

In this book, I ask what this "crisis of homo/heterosexual definition," which emerged in the United States in the late nineteenth century, had to do with concurrent conflicts over racial definition and the presumed boundary between "black" and "white." Although some scholarship has drawn parallels between discourses of racial difference and sexuality, their particular relationship and potentially mutual effects remain largely unexplored. I am interested in interrogating how negotiations of the color line, which W. E. B. Du Bois pronounced to be the "problem of the Twentieth Century,"[12] shaped and were shaped by the emergence of notions of sexual identity and the corresponding epistemological uncertainties surrounding them. I show that it was not merely a historical coincidence that the classification of bodies as either "homosexual" or "heterosexual" emerged at the same time that the United States was aggressively constructing and policing the boundary between "black" and "white" bodies. In doing so, this study responds to and challenges a persistent critical tendency to treat late-nineteenth-century shifts in the cultural understanding and deployment of race and sexuality as separate and unrelated. Through the study of a range of literary, scientific, and cinematic texts that foreground the problems of delineating and interpreting racial and sexual identity, I argue instead that the simultaneous efforts to shore up and bifurcate categories of race and sexuality in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were deeply intertwined.

By historicizing and denaturalizing the interconnections between late-nineteenth-century discourses of race and sexuality, I hope to rethink what have been seen as separate strands of American culture. This separation is often unintentionally reproduced through analogies be-

tween race and sexuality and between racialized and sexualized bodies. I show that these analogies have a specific history and became mobilized at the turn of the century: the formation of notions of heterosexuality and homosexuality emerged in the United States through (and not merely parallel to) a discourse saturated with assumptions about the racialization of bodies. These assumptions and the heightened surveillance of bodies in a racially segregated culture demanded a specific kind of logic, which, as I will argue, gave coherence to the new concepts of homo- and heterosexuality.

This project is directed also more broadly at a number of theoretical and disciplinary questions, including the ways in which scholarship on questions of race and sexuality has been organized institutionally. To date, the field that has sustained and produced some of the most vital work on ideologies of race and racial segregation in the United States is African American studies. Likewise, the field of lesbian and gay studies has more recently developed a rich body of scholarship on the discourses of homo- and heterosexuality. Both of these interdisciplinary areas have grown as a response to the absence of inquiry into race and sexuality in traditionally bounded disciplines. African American studies and lesbian and gay studies have been constituted out of a similar logic of identity-based scholarship and are, for me and others, the location of some of the most exciting and productive inquiry of the last two decades. Yet at this theoretical and historical juncture, the analogy often drawn between lesbian/gay and African American studies has produced unfortunate effects, including the illusion that they are parallel, rather than intersecting, bodies of scholarship. In lesbian/gay studies, questions of race and racialization tend to be subordinate to analyses of sexuality. In scholarship on race, with a few notable exceptions, there has been a general critical tendency to minimize the role of sexuality, and particularly homosexuality. The relative absence of questions of race until recently in existing work in lesbian and gay studies is partly a function of its historical position. In establishing the field, scholars have been preoccupied with distinguishing and separating categories of gender, race, and sexuality from one another. But it is now necessary to account for the ways in which these formulations have often depended on fixing other categories of difference. Biddy Martin, for example, in critiquing work that has attempted to explore the epis-

temological specificities of the homo/hetero divide, has registered her concern that "these kinds of formulations project fixity onto race and gender."[13] The challenge is to recognize the instability of multiple categories of difference simultaneously rather than to assume the fixity of one to establish the complexity of another.

My work builds on the analytical insights articulated most fully and consistently by critics who have challenged the tendency within dominant critical discourses to treat race and gender separately.[14] Their insistence on the importance of understanding the *intersectionality* of race and gender has opened up space in turn to ask how sexuality might also intersect with multiple categories of identification and difference. Kobena Mercer and Isaac Julien, for instance, have offered suggestive comments about the historical and theoretical links between race and sexuality:

> The prevailing Western concept of sexuality . . . *already contains racism.* Historically, the European construction of sexuality coincides with the epoch of imperialism and the two inter-connect. . . . The personage of the savage was developed as the Other of civilisation and one of the first "proofs" of this otherness was the nakedness of the savage, the visibility of its sex.[15]

Building on these preliminary insights, my study attempts to show that questions of race—in particular the formation of notions of "whiteness" and "blackness"—must be understood as a crucial part of the history and representation of sexual formations, including lesbian and gay identity and compulsory heterosexuality in the United States. I use methodologies from both African American studies and lesbian/gay studies in my readings of texts and engage them critically in perhaps unexpected ways. For instance, I focus a critical lens on constructions of race in my readings of texts that have been discussed primarily as sites for the analysis of gender and sexuality. Correspondingly, I foreground questions of (homo)sexuality in texts that have been understood previously within the framework of a critical emphasis on race. My aim is not to abandon either focus but to understand the ways in which critical questions of race and sexuality are refracted through each other in literary, scientific, and visual representation.

My methodology draws on and reformulates recent developments

loosely gathered under the approach of queer studies. "Queer" may be understood as pointedly critiquing notions of stable lesbian and gay (or "straight") identification. Building on and simultaneously challenging earlier work that called itself lesbian and gay studies, queer theory has emerged as a site at which the very assumption of the utility of stable sexual orientations, such as "gay" or "lesbian," has undergone critique. "Queer" approaches also bring into question received notions of evidence, proof, and argumentation. Rather than asserting its own authenticity as a discrete field of study, at its best, queer studies has implicitly and explicitly challenged the seemingly "natural" status of epistemological assumptions of established disciplines.[16] However, as I will show, queer approaches have not yet been fully responsive to the ways in which these methodologies might be useful in addressing questions of race. This responsiveness is part of the goal of this study and is enabled by my training in literary and cultural studies, fields whose notions of evidence have historically been receptive to some degree of ambiguity and connotation. My method perhaps demands an even wider berth for doubt and skepticism because I ask readers to see what may be counterintuitive, given the ways in which we have grown accustomed to dividing texts—like bodies—according to a mistaken logic of transparent racial or sexual identity. My readings, therefore, listen for "the inexplicable presence of the thing not named"[17] and are attuned to the queer and racial presences and implications in texts that do not otherwise name them. I employ the techniques of queer reading but modulate my analysis from a singular focus on sexuality to one equally alert to the resonances of racialization.

Before I describe the organization of the chapters that follow, it is necessary to define two key terms that are used throughout my analysis. "Sexuality" is used throughout this study to refer to a historically and culturally contingent category of identity. As such, "sexuality" means much more than sexual practice per se. One's sexual identity, while at times linked directly to one's sexual activities, more often describes a complex ideological position, into which one is interpellated based partly on the culture's mapping of bodies and desires and partly on one's response to that interpellation.[18] Thus there is no strict relationship between one's sexual desire or behavior and one's sexual identity, although the two are closely intertwined.

The term "race" in this study refers to a historical, ideological process rather than to fixed transhistorical or biological characteristics: one's racial identity is contingent on one's cultural and historical location. Concepts of race in Brazil, South Africa, and the United States, for example, are all embedded within histories of imperialism and slavery, but each nation uses a different (and contradictory) logic of racial classification to determine who is "white," "black," or "colored."[19] Similarly, even within national cultures, racial meanings change over time: Irish immigrants in the early-nineteenth-century United States were not considered part of the "white" population, but were seen as a distinct and savagelike racial other.[20] Although popular notions of race often assume that it refers to self-evident and visible characteristics, there exist no discrete markers of racial difference, in scientific discourse or otherwise, uniformly distinguishing one "race" from another. To avoid fixing race as a transhistorical or natural category of identity, I foreground instead processes of "racialization," which Michael Omi and Howard Winant explain as "the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice or group. Racialization is an ideological process, an historically specific one."[21] This crucial notion of racialization enables me to connect the ideological work of race to the historical emergence of models of homo- and heterosexuality at the turn of the century.

Although I trace the intersections of these two discourses of race and sexuality, I also resist erasing the important distinctions between them and the often starkly irreconcilable aspects of their cultural deployment. It is important to emphasize that I do not posit simple analogies between racial and sexual identities but rather attempt to historicize and therefore denaturalize their relationship. All too often, it is assumed that being a person of color is "like" being gay and that sexual orientation is "like" racial identity. Yet these analogies have a history and perform specific kinds of cultural work, often with contradictory political effects. In the ongoing debates about the right to same-sex marriage in the United States, for instance, activists often invoke legal precedents granting the right to interracial marriage.[22] Proponents argue that the legal system eventually recognized that it was unconstitutional to prohibit interracial marriage and that, by the same logic, the courts should recognize the unconstitutionality of prohibiting same-sex marriage. On

the other hand, the analogy may be used to demonize "minority" populations, as became all too evident in the tendency to link and pathologize gay and black populations as "high-risk" groups in governmental responses to AIDS in the 1980s. In either case, whatever its other effects, the analogy obscures those who inhabit both identifications. As bell hooks has noted, "to make synonymous experience of homophobic aggression with racial oppression deflects attention away from the particular dual dilemma that non-white gay people face, as individuals who confront both racism and homophobia."[23] Further, such analogies implicitly posit whiteness and heterosexuality as the norm. To say that gay people are "like" black people is to suggest that those same gay people are not black. The underlying assumption is that white homosexuality is like heterosexual blackness. Rather than suggesting that race, gender, and sexual orientation are somehow "natural" analogies, then, this study offers an analysis of the historical construction of intersections among these categories of identity at a particular cultural moment.

To return to that moment and the juridical landscape of the 1890s, the juxtaposition of the Plessy, Mitchell, and Wilde trials points undeniably to the institutional efforts undertaken during this period to bifurcate identity into "black" or "white," "heterosexual" or "homosexual," and thus to simplify socially constructed boundaries of race and sexual orientation. Importantly, these shifts were embedded in anxieties over the control of language and representation. Albion Tourgée, who oversaw Plessy's challenge, argued that the primary question in the case was "not as to the *equality* of the privileges enjoyed, but *the right of the State to label one citizen as white and another as colored.*"[24] Unwilling to allow individuals to determine the racial status of their own bodies, the Supreme Court reinforced a cultural fiction of racial opposites and authorized the individual states to define and separate any bodies in question. Contests over language similarly vexed the court proceedings of the Wilde trial, a trial that revolved around the central problem of the "Love that dared not speak its name."[25] As Neil Bartlett has written:

> What Wilde and the court were contesting was not the evidence, but who had the right to *interpret* that evidence. It is no accident that the line *the Love that dare not speak its name* haunted the trial, and has stayed with us ever since. It is not the love itself which was on trial. . . . What was on trial was the right to speak (invent and articulate) the name of that love.[26]

These trials, then, reveal the existence of a cultural desperation regarding rights in language and the control of language over the social construction of identity. As Wilde himself wrote after the trial, "I saw then at once that what is said of a man is nothing. The point is, who says it."[27]

While racial and sexual identities were being contested discursively, their construction, of course, dramatically shaped and depended on the ways in which those identities were embodied. Plessy's lawyers understood the problem of their case as a struggle over the control of both language and property rights. As Tourgée noted, "in any mixed community, the reputation of belonging to the dominant race, in this instance the white race, is *property,* in the same sense that a right of action, or of inheritance, is property."[28] Although unsuccessful as a legal argument, Tourgée's emphasis on the connection between racial identity and property refigured the assumptions about ownership and bodies embedded in slavery. His evocation of property rights underscores the ways in which profound material effects were and continue to be at stake in the social construction of identities. Those whose bodies were culturally marked as nonnormative lost their claim to the same rights as those whose racial or sexual reputation invested them with cultural legitimacy, or the property of a "good name."

The following chapters foreground my concerns with understanding how a range of discourses constructed the divisions between "blackness" and "whiteness" and homo- and heterosexuality. These discourses had varying degrees of power to shape cultural understandings of bodies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the first part, I consider questions of race and sexuality in two nascent cultural institutions, sexology and cinema. That the physical body offers transparent evidence of its history, identity, and behavior is a deeply held cultural fiction in the United States, one that seems a necessary starting point for this study. During the nineteenth century, human anatomy was treated as a legible text, over which various fields of science, including the nascent field of sexology, competed for authority as literate readers and interpreters of its meaning. As an emerging (and self-consciously) "expert" discourse, sexology became a privileged, though not exclusive, site

for the explicit articulation of newly emerging models of homo- and heterosexuality. Although most of the population may not have had direct knowledge of the texts produced by sexologists and the earlier "experts" of scientific racism (comparative anatomists), their theories and conclusions increasingly assumed enormous cultural power to organize and pathologize those marked as sexually deviant or racially "other." In chapter 1, I analyze works by late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century sexologists in order to consider the relationship between the emergent scientific discourse on homosexuality and existing scientific discourses on racial difference. My discussion centers on the rhetorical strategies and structures of important sexological works such as Havelock Ellis's *Sexual Inversion,* volume 2 of his *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (1897). This early work in sexology, poised at the crossroads of anthropometry and psychoanalysis, illustrates the ways in which the development of new sexual categories was mediated by methodologies and conclusions borrowed from previous studies of racial difference.

The emphasis on the surveillance of bodies that was embedded in expert discourses such as sexology was part of the profound reorganization of vision and knowledge in American culture between the 1890s and the 1920s. This period saw the emergence of a number of new visual technologies, particularly the development of cinema as a popular medium. Because race and sexuality pose representational problems centered on the possibilities and impossibilities of the physical legibility of identity, chapter 2 explores the ways in which the emergent film industry in the United States articulated and simultaneously evaded links between racial difference and homosexuality. Although recent work in feminist and early film criticism and history has begun to address questions of race and sexual orientation, there exists surprisingly little work that draws together these analytical categories in order to understand their intersections. I consider these questions through a comparison of the film comedy *A Florida Enchantment* (Vitagraph, 1914) with its literary and stage sources, asking how and why the film masks its underlying racial narrative within its overt fascination with sexual transformation and boundaries of gender and sexuality. I situate these questions in the context of the shifts that occurred in the construction of categories of black/white, female/male, and homosexual/heterosexual during the

period, and within a discussion of the vexed cultural status of the emergent film industry of the 1910s.

Stuart Hall points out that "the ideologies of racism remain contradictory structures, which can function both as the vehicles for the imposition of dominant ideologies, and as the elementary forms for the cultures of resistance."[29] The second half of this book turns from the culturally dominant discourses of scientific racism and cinema to literary texts, a crucial site of African American self-representation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, particularly as the "New Negro" movement gained momentum through the 1920s. Virtually absent as subjects in dominant discourses such as sexology and the emerging film industry, African Americans found in fiction an important medium for instantiating political agency and for contesting dominant cultural stereotypes. These texts demonstrate the stakes of the emerging discourse of homosexuality/heterosexuality for African Americans in both stark and subtle ways. Because existing cultural stereotypes of African Americans were largely sexualized, the new discourse of sexual pathology was intertwined with these racialized images. To varying degrees, these authors were able to resist, contest, and appropriate these dominant cultural discourses. At the same time, they often reinscribed them. It is important to emphasize that I do not see the authors (or readers) of these texts necessarily offering heroic resistance to the pathologizing discourses of race or sexuality. Instead, what interests me is the extent to which the discourse of homosexuality began to shape their texts, and the often contradictory ways in which these writers registered its effects.

Chapter 3 shows how the discourses of homosexuality circulated in significant ways in Pauline E. Hopkins's attempts to revise cultural constructions of black womanhood in her novels *Contending Forces* and *Winona.* As recent scholarship has demonstrated, Hopkins played an important part in the development of African American literature and an African American reading audience in the early twentieth century.[30] I place her work within the historical contexts not only of racial segregation but also of emerging categories of sexual identity during this period in the United States. My discussion considers how the often unstable division between homosexuality and heterosexuality circulates as part of Hopkins's exploration of the barriers to desire imposed by the color line.

Antiblack discrimination and violence reached alarming heights in the two decades before World War I, and in response, many African Americans chose to migrate in unprecedented numbers toward northern urban centers. The anonymity resulting from this mobility made it possible for many light-complexioned African Americans to "cross the color line" into the white population at rates unparalleled during any other period, making this era "the great age of passing."[31] In chapter 4, I discuss one of the most important novels of passing written during this period, James Weldon Johnson's *Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man,* a text that enacted even as it narrated the phenomenon of passing. First published anonymously in 1912, the novel raised crucial questions about the epistemology of identity: just as the text's status as truth or fiction could not be detected by its readers, so the "ex-coloured man's" movement across the color line demonstrated that race had no ontological certainty. I show that Johnson's innovative revisions of the genre of the novel of racial passing had to do as much with the circulation of a discourse of forbidden sexuality as with the protagonist's liminal racial status.

In chapter 5, I focus on writing by and about Jean Toomer, whose refusal to be identified as "black" or "white" after the publication of *Cane* (1923) has tended to set the terms for the critical discussion of his life and writing. This critical focus on race has created a blind spot around the possibility that questions of sexuality circulated simultaneously with race within Toomer's writing and life. Drawing on published and unpublished biographies, autobiographies, and short stories, I discuss first the ways in which queer theoretical approaches open up new directions for understanding Toomer's representational strategies with regard to racial questions, and in turn how Toomer and his work demonstrate the need to resituate questions of racialization at the center of queer approaches.

It is crucial to the integrity of the arguments put forward in this study that I acknowledge their limitations, which I have either chosen in an effort to manage the scope of this project or have as yet been unable to overcome. First, I emphasize that my conclusions hold only for a specific historical period in the United States. Thus whereas some of my discussions may resonate with or even accurately describe the intersections of race and sexuality during other historical moments, the work

of characterizing the particular formations of those periods remains to be completed. Although some of the more disturbing current invocations of links between racial and sexual discourses have propelled me in this project, I would resist applying my arguments uncritically to our own historical moment (or others).

Next, the range of texts analyzed here is highly selective and is not necessarily representative of the entire historical period or the entire United States. What I have sacrificed in terms of "coverage" I hope to have compensated for in depth. My goal is to provide productive new readings of a variety of texts rather than to assert a single story that each text discretely supports. I have put a number of texts into conversation, but it is important to remember that they commanded varying degrees of cultural authority during the period under study. In limiting my study to these particular texts and to sexology, fiction, and cinema, I have attempted to be vigilant about their differing means of production and cultural authority, a vigilance that has frequently prevented me from generalizing more broadly about related medical, literary, or cinematic movements.

Further, my analysis of "race" in this study is limited to constructions of "blackness" and "whiteness," primarily because prevailing discourses of race and racial segregation in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century American culture deployed this bifurcation more pervasively than other models of racial diversity. This framework is an obvious limitation, resulting in the omission of racial distinctions erased by the black/white divide. Significant and urgent questions remain about how those who identified as neither "white" nor "black" were situated in relation to the emergence of a discourse of homo- and heterosexuality. I do not specifically interrogate the cultural constructions of Asian, Jewish, or Native American bodies, for instance, but recent work by scholars such as Lisa Lowe, Sander Gilman, and others suggests that this line of inquiry deserves further research.[32] My hope is that my focus on the black/white bifurcation, while admittedly circumscribed, will usefully inform future studies that complicate the intersecting representational histories of sexuality and race in—and perhaps even beyond—American culture.

Despite the increasingly pervasive cultural authority of the socially constructed dichotomies "black" versus "white" and "homosexual" ver-

sus "heterosexual" during the period of this study, ideological boundaries of race, sexuality, and gender were and continue to be sites of ongoing contestation. The marked proliferation of medical and scientific texts that investigated homosexuality during this period, for example, suggests that categories of sexual identity were far from self-evident. It is important to see that the particular meanings of socially constructed identities gain currency through repetition, resistance, and appropriation. The emergence of "new" sexual identities and the reconfiguration of racialized identities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were not singular "events" through which those meanings were simply established once and for all but rather ongoing processes of contestation and accumulation.

I

Scientific Racism and the Invention of the Homosexual Body

"I regard sex as the central problem of life," wrote Havelock Ellis in the general preface to the first volume of *Studies in the Psychology of Sex,* one of the most important texts of the late-nineteenth-century medical and scientific discourse on homosexuality in the United States and Europe. Justifying such unprecedented boldness toward the study of sex, Ellis explained:

> And now that the problem of religion has practically been settled, and that the problem of labour has at least been placed on a practical foundation, the question of sex—*with the racial questions that rest on it*—stands before the coming generations as the chief problem for solution.[1]

In spite of Ellis's oddly breezy dismissal of the problems of labor and religion, which were far from settled at the time, this passage points suggestively to a link between sexual and racial anxieties. Yet what exactly did Ellis mean by "racial questions"? More significantly, what was his sense of the relationship between racial questions and the "question of sex"? Although Ellis himself left these issues unresolved, his elliptical declaration nevertheless suggested that a discourse of race—however elusive—somehow hovered around or within the study of sexuality.

This chapter begins with Ellis's provocative linkage between "racial questions" and "the question of sex" and explores the various ways in which they were intertwined in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century medical literature on sexuality. I focus on "expert" literature about sexuality, broadly defined to include the writings of physicians, sexologists, and psychiatrists, because it has been integral to the project

of situating the "invention" of homo- and heterosexuality historically.[2] Although medical discourse was by no means the only—or necessarily the most powerful—site of the emergence of new sexual identities, it does nevertheless offer rich sources for understanding the complex development of these sexual categories in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Medical and sexological literature not only became one of the few sites of explicit engagement with questions of sexuality but also held substantial definitional power within a culture that sanctioned science to discover and tell the truth about bodies.

Previous literary, historical, and theoretical work on the emergence of notions of homosexuality in the late nineteenth century has drawn primarily on theories and histories of gender. George Chauncey, for instance, has provided an invaluable discussion of the ways in which medical paradigms of sexuality shifted according to changing ideologies of gender between 1880 and 1930.[3] He notes a gradual change in medical models of sexual deviance, from a notion of sexual inversion, understood as a reversal of one's sex role, to a model of homosexuality, defined as deviant sexual object choice. These categories and their transformations, argues Chauncey, reflected concurrent shifts in the cultural organization of sex and gender roles and participated in prescribing acceptable behavior, especially within a context of white middle-class gender ideologies.

Although gender insubordination offers a powerful explanatory model for the "invention" of homosexuality, ideologies of gender also, of course, shaped and were shaped by dominant constructions of race. Indeed, although rarely acknowledged, it is striking that the emergence of a discourse on homosexuality in the United States occurred at roughly the same time that boundaries between "black" and "white" were being policed and enforced in unprecedented ways, particularly through institutionalized racial segregation.

Although some historians of the scientific discourse on sexuality have included brief acknowledgment of nineteenth-century discourses of racial difference in their work, the particular relationship and potentially mutual effects of discourses of homosexuality and race remain unexplored.[4] This silence may be due in part to the relative lack of explicit attention to race in medical and sexological literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These writers did not self-

consciously interrogate race, nor were those whose gender insubordination and sexual transgression brought them under the medical gaze generally identified by race in these accounts.[5] Yet the lack of explicit attention to race in these texts does not mean that it was irrelevant to sexologists' endeavors. On the contrary, given the upheavals surrounding racial definition during this period, it is reasonable to claim that these texts were as embedded within contemporary racial ideologies as they were within ideologies of gender. My aim is not to replace a focus on gender with that of race but rather to understand how discourses of race and gender buttressed one another, often competing, often overlapping, in shaping emerging models of homosexuality. I suggest that the structures and methodologies that drove dominant ideologies of race also fueled the pursuit of knowledge about the homosexual body: both sympathetic and hostile accounts of homosexuality were steeped in assumptions that had driven previous scientific studies of race.

My approach is both literary and historical in method, relying on a combination of close reading and contextual analysis. I am particularly interested in the discursive strategies of those who sought to explain and naturalize the categories of "black" and "white," "heterosexual" and "homosexual." My goal, however, is not to garner and display unequivocal evidence of the direct influence of racial science on those who were developing scientific models of homosexuality. Further, although the texts that I study here reproduce the culturally dominant racist ideologies of the nineteenth century, identifying the racism of these writers as individuals is not the goal of this chapter. Rather, my focus here is on how these writers and thinkers conceptualized sexuality through a reliance on, and deployment of, racial ideologies, that is, the cultural assumptions and systems of representation about race through which individuals understood their relationships within the world.[6]

I begin with an overview of the history of sexology and scientific racism in the United States. I then suggest three broadly defined ways in which discourses of sexuality seem to have been particularly engaged—sometimes overtly, but largely implicitly—with the discourse of scientific racism. All these models constructed both the nonwhite body and the nonheterosexual body as pathological to greater or lesser extents. Although I discuss these models in separate sections here, they often coexisted despite their contradictions. These models are speculative and

are intended as a first step toward understanding the myriad and historically specific ways in which racial and sexual discourses shaped each other at the moment in which medical and scientific discourse articulated a notion of homosexuality.

The Emergence of Sexology in the United States

The field of sexology in the United States developed in conversation with slightly earlier developments in Europe, particularly in Germany in the late nineteenth century. What characterized the growth of sexology as a field was its attempt to wrest authority for diagnosing and defining sexual "abnormalities" away from juridical discourse and to place it firmly within the purview of medical science.[7] Thus what was once considered criminal behavior gradually came to be described in terms of disease, as the title of the German sexologist and psychologist Richard von Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) made clear. Same-sex attraction was one of many such sexual "pathologies," which also included pedophilia, necrophilia, fetishism, sadism, and masochism, among others. Part of Krafft-Ebing's work first appeared in the United States in 1888, when a selection from his *Psychopathia Sexualis* entitled "Perversion of the Sexual Instinct" was translated into English and published as an article in an American medical journal.[8] During the 1880s and 1890s, American medical journals also began to devote attention to "Urnings" and "Uranism," terms that had first been used by Karl Heinrich Ulrichs in 1864, to describe the model of a female soul in a male body.[9] Another term, "contrary sexual feeling," adapted from the German *Konträre Sexualempfindung*, first used by Carl von Westphal in 1869, also began to appear in medical journals of the 1880s and 1890s. Although these texts used differing terms, they shared the assertion that medicine, not law or religion, should be the primary site for determining society's response to those who practiced such behaviors.[10]

In the 1890s, the work of the British sexologist Havelock Ellis became perhaps the most widely influential and authoritative source in American discourses on sexuality. Prominent in the medical community, he was an honorary member of the Chicago Academy of Medicine, a member of the Medico-Legal Society of New York, and vice president of the International Medical and Legal Congress of New York in 1895.[11]

His work first appeared in the United States in 1895, when his article "Sexual Inversion in Women" was published in an American medical journal.[12] Apparently the first study of such depth to be published in the United States, this article was included in Ellis's subsequent book, *Sexual Inversion,* published in the United States in 1900. Initially appearing as the first volume of *Studies in the Psychology of Sex, Sexual Inversion* became a definitive text in late-nineteenth-century investigations of homosexuality.[13] Despite the series's titular focus on the psychology of sex, *Sexual Inversion* was a hybrid text, poised in methodology between the earlier field of comparative anatomy, with its procedures of bodily measurement, and the nascent techniques of psychology, with its focus on mental development.[14] Like Ulrichs, Krafft-Ebing, and Westphal, Ellis hoped to provide scientific authority for the position that homosexuality should be considered not a crime but rather a congenital (and thus involuntary) physiological abnormality. Writing *Sexual Inversion* in the wake of England's 1885 Labouchère Amendment, which prohibited "any act of gross indecency" between men, Ellis intended in large part to defend homosexuality from "law and public opinion," which, in his view, combined "to place a heavy penal burden and a severe social stigma on the manifestations of an instinct which to those persons who possess it frequently appears natural and normal."[15] In doing so, Ellis attempted to drape himself in the cultural authority of a naturalist, eager to exert his powers of observation in an attempt to classify and codify understandings of homosexuality.[16]

Ellis's *Sexual Inversion* gained attention in the United States partly because of the censorship scandal that surrounded it. On publication in England in 1897, *Sexual Inversion* was judged to be not a scientific work but "a certain lewd, wicked, bawdy, scandalous libel"; effectively banned in England, subsequent copies were published only in the United States.[17] Yet the importance of Ellis's *Sexual Inversion* to American understandings of homosexuality lay not only in its reception but also in Ellis's reliance on American sources for his case studies, many of which were provided by Dr. James G. Kiernan, then secretary of the Chicago Academy of Medicine.[18] Although medical and legal practitioners were the primary audience of *Sexual Inversion,* there is abundant evidence that the book also became an important source for nonexpert readers attempting to find representations of themselves. Letters written by the American lit-

erary critic F. O. Matthiessen to his companion Russell Cheney in the 1920s, for instance, mention having read Ellis's works, which apparently had profound effects on Matthiessen's understanding of his own sexuality: "For the first time it was completely brought home to me that I was what I was by *nature.*"[19]

Matthiessen's letter also mentioned that he had "marked and checked some passages that struck me particularly" in the works of another writer, Edward Carpenter.[20] Not medically trained, but widely influential among sexologists in the United States and Europe, Carpenter, a British socialist, proposed understanding those who had same-sex desires through a model of intermediate types. Like Ellis's work, though with a slightly different approach, Carpenter's influential essay "The Intermediate Sex" was first published in the United States in 1911. Carpenter, who had long-term sexual relationships with men, offered an idealized model of inverts as "intermediate types" on a continuum of male and female characteristics, reversing the pervasive pathologization of homosexuality in medical discourses. Responding to negative characterizations such as Krafft-Ebing's, Carpenter wrote, "Nor does it appear that persons of this class are usually of a gross or specially low type, but if anything rather the opposite—being most of refined, sensitive nature."[21] This characterization struck a chord among readers such as Matthiessen, who remarked on the "beautiful pictures [Carpenter] gives of love between men."[22]

The early sexological model of inversion prevailed in the United States until the 1920s, when a notion of homosexuality as "abnormal" sexual object choice began to emerge.[23] By that time, Sigmund Freud's views on sexuality, which had been widely circulated since the 1910s, began to be popularized. Psychoanalytic discourse defined itself in part through its differences from sexology, which had relied largely on physiological models. Freud viewed the debates about whether homosexuality was congenital or acquired as specious and instead argued that homosexuality played a part, to differing degrees, in everyone's sexuality. Thus, in contrast to the earlier sexologists, he refuted models that set "homosexuals" apart as a discrete group.[24] Yet the older model of inverts as a special type did not disappear altogether, from either expert or popular discourse. As Eve Sedgwick has noted, "universalizing" models (such as Freud's) and "minoritizing" models (articulated by Ellis, Krafft-Ebing, and others), while contradictory, have both continued to coexist simultaneously as explanatory frameworks for homosexuality in American culture.[25]

Part of the reason that Freud's views did not fully supersede the models of the early sexologists, as my discussion will suggest, may be that minoritizing accounts resonated with and reinforced prevailing American models of racialized bodies. Psychoanalysis did not incorporate an explicit discourse of race, perhaps intentionally as a response to growing anti-Semitism in Europe. As Sander Gilman has suggested, "As virtually all of Freud's early disciples were Jews, the lure of psychoanalysis for them may well have been its claims for a universalization of human experience and an active exclusion of the importance of race from its theoretical framework."[26] In contrast, with their emphasis on physiological models, sexologists appealed to those invested in somatic theories, reinforced in the United States by concurrent discourses about racial difference.

It is worth noting here that although my discussion focuses on medical and sexological texts, the delineation of that genre of writing as separate from other spheres is, of course, highly unstable. Despite their claims to scientific objectivity and truth, these writers' investigations were inevitably shaped by contemporary political and cultural ideologies. Further, as Lisa Duggan has demonstrated, some of these writers, particularly Ellis, drew on newspapers and popular accounts both for the "data" of their work (i.e., case studies) and for the subsequent interpretation of those "data."[27] There was considerable overlap between the sensationalistic accounts of "lady lovers" that appeared in newspapers and the supposedly "scientific" studies of writers like Ellis. Popular and scientific representations should be considered with equal skepticism; each was inextricable from the ideological biases of the day.

Nineteenth-Century Scientific Racism

Before turning to my readings of particular sexological studies, it is useful to discuss briefly the history of scientific studies of race in the nineteenth century. In the United States, the term "race" has always been contested. In nineteenth-century scientific usage, it might refer to groupings based variously on geography, religion, class, or color.[28]

Scientific studies of race before Darwin tended to fall into two general schools of thought, monogeny and polygeny, both of which foregrounded the question of racial origins.[29]

Monogeny, which had been the prevailing theory in eighteenth-century studies of racial difference, held that all of the so-called races were members of the same species and that they had descended from common ancestry. Racial differences were thought to be caused primarily by environmental conditions. Conveniently, monogenist theories meshed with the standard Christian origin narrative, in which, at the moment of the Fall in the Garden of Eden, humankind had begun to disperse and degenerate into multiple races from a single original source represented by Adam and Eve. Some proponents of this theory of degeneration believed that these differences were fixed and irreversible; others held that degeneration might be reversed in appropriate climates. Although monogenists emphasized environmental factors as the key explanation for racial differences, it is important to emphasize that monogenists did not generally advocate racial equality. Samuel Stanhope Smith, a major authority among monogenists, held that whites were the pure and original race from which others had degenerated. His ideas, developed primarily in his *Essay on the Causes of the Variety of Complexion and Figure in the Human Species,* first published in 1787, held sway until the 1830s.

The other major theory of racial origins, polygeny, held that different races were actually different species with distinct biological and geographic origins. Although theories of polygenesis had begun to be developed in the early nineteenth century, it was not until the 1840s and 1850s that this view came to be accepted widely among scientists. Polygeny was a predominantly American theoretical development and was widely referred to as the "American school" of anthropology. As George Fredrickson has pointed out, the emergence and greater acceptance of polygenesis rather than monogenesis among scientists during these decades cannot be divorced from political and cultural debates about slavery in the United States: "The full scientific assault on environmentalism came at a time . . . when it was bound to have some influence on the discussion of slavery and Negro prospects."[30] Polygenists such as Samuel George Morton, Josiah Nott, and Louis Agassiz held that blacks were permanently inferior to whites and that racial mixture would have dangerous social and biological consequences. According to polygenist models, the mulatto was a hybrid that would eventually die out of existence.

However they differed, adherents to both polygeny and monogeny nevertheless shared many epistemological assumptions and relied on the same empiricist methodologies, comparative anatomy and anthropometry.[31] Behind these anatomical measurements lay the assumption that the body was a legible text, with various keys or languages available for reading its symbolic codes. In the logic of biological determinism, the surface and interior of the individual body rather than its social characteristics, such as language, behavior, or clothing, became the primary sites of its meaning. "Every peculiarity of the body has probably some corresponding significance in the mind, and the causes of the former are the remoter causes of the latter," wrote Edward Drinker Cope, a well-known American paleontologist, summarizing the assumptions that fueled the science of comparative anatomy.[32] Although scientists debated which particular anatomical features carried racial meanings (skin, facial angle, pelvis, skull, brain mass, genitalia), the theory that anatomy predicted intelligence and behavior remained remarkably constant. As Nancy Stepan and Sander Gilman have noted, "The concepts within racial science were so congruent with social and political life (with power relations, that is) as to be virtually uncontested from inside the mainstream of science."[33]

Supported by the cultural authority of an ostensibly objective scientific method, these readings of the body became a powerful instrument for those seeking to justify the economic and political disenfranchisement of various racial groups within systems of slavery and colonialism. As Barbara Fields has noted, however, "Try as they would, the scientific racists of the past failed to discover any objective criterion upon which to classify people; to their chagrin, every criterion they tried varied more within so-called races than between them."[34] Although the methods of science were considered to be outside the political and economic realm, in fact, as we know, these anatomical investigations, however professedly innocent their intentions, were driven by racial ideologies already firmly in place.[35]

With the publication of Darwin's *Origin of the Species* in 1859, prevailing theories of polygeny had to be reformulated in light of the

theory of evolution. Darwin's controversial innovation was an emphasis on the continuity between animals and human beings. Evolutionary theory held out the possibility that the physical, mental, and moral characteristics of human beings had evolved gradually over time from apelike ancestors.[36] Although the idea of continuity depended logically on the blurring of boundaries within hierarchies, it did not necessarily invalidate the methods of comparative anatomy or polygenist theories. The Darwinian model might seem to contradict the belief that different races originated separately, but believers in polygeny modified their theories to make them compatible with evolutionary models. Thus they argued that blacks were an "incipient species," holding that there had been no racial progress or intellectual development of blacks in recorded history, and that, by the tenets of natural selection, blacks remained biologically inferior.

Evolutionary theory also tended to reinforce the notion of racial hierarchies through the method of ranking and ordering bodies according to stages of evolutionary "progress." The theory of recapitulation, often summed up by the phrase "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny," emerged as a crucial concept, holding that in its individual maturation, each organism proceeds through stages that are equivalent to adult forms of organisms that have preceded it in evolutionary development.[37] Thus the children of "superior" groups embodied phases equivalent to the mature adult phases of "inferior" groups. Importantly, analogies between gender and race structured the logic of hierarchal rankings of bodies. According to the logic of recapitulation, adult African Americans and white women were at the same stage as white male children and therefore represented an ancestral stage in the evolution of adult white males.[38] These types of analogies had already been mobilized earlier in the nineteenth century by comparative anatomists such as Carl Vogt, who in his study of brains argued that "the grown-up Negro partakes, as regards his intellectual faculties, of the nature of the child, the female, and the senile white."[39] As Robyn Wiegman comments, "Such an analogy simultaneously differentiated and linked two of the nineteenth century's primary forms of social difference, instantiating and perpetuating the visible economies of race and gender by locating their signification on bodies that could not claim the disembodied abstraction accorded those both white and male."[40] The powerful analogies

that structured the theory of recapitulation, as I will show, became crucial for later characterizations of homosexuality.

Visible Differences: Sexology and Comparative Anatomy

Comparative anatomy, which had been the chief methodology of nineteenth-century racial science, gave sexologists a ready-made set of procedures and assumptions with which to scan the body visually for discrete markers of difference. Race, in fact, became an explicit, though ambiguous, structural element in Ellis's *Sexual Inversion*. In chapter 5, titled "The Nature of Sexual Inversion," Ellis attempted to collate the evidence contained in his collection of case studies, dividing his general conclusions into various analytic categories. Significantly, "Race" was the first category he listed, under which he wrote, "All my cases, 80 in number, are British and American, 20 living in the United States and the rest being British. Ancestry, from the point of view of race, was not made a matter of special investigation" (264). He then listed the ancestries of the individuals whose case studies he included, which he identified as "English . . . Scotch . . . Irish . . . German . . . French . . . Portuguese . . . [and] more or less Jewish" (264). He concluded that "except in the apparently frequent presence of the German element, there is nothing remarkable in this ancestry" (264). Ellis used the term "race" in this passage interchangeably with national origin, with the possible exception of Jewish identity. These national identities were perceived to be at least partially biological and certainly hereditary in Ellis's account, though subordinate to the categories "British" and "American." Although he dismissed "ancestry, from the point of view of race," as a significant category, its place as the first topic within the chapter suggested its importance to the structure of Ellis's analysis.[41]

As scholars such as Nancy Stepan, Londa Schiebinger, and Sander Gilman have pointed out, scientific assertions about racial difference were often articulated through gender.[42] Gilman has commented that "any attempt to establish that the races were inherently different rested to no little extent on the sexual difference of the black."[43] This association was made not only in scientific discourses but also in popular racist mythology as well. However, although nineteenth-century American popular cultural forms such as blackface minstrelsy focused on the sup-

posed differences in size between African American and white men's genitalia, the male body was not necessarily the primary site of medical inquiry into racial difference.[44] Instead, as a number of medical journals from the 1870s demonstrate, comparative anatomists repeatedly located racial difference through the sexual characteristics of the female body.[45]

In exploring the influence of scientific studies of race on the emerging discourse of sexuality, it is useful to look closely at a study from the genre of comparative anatomy. In 1867 W. H. Flower and James Murie published an "Account of the Dissection of a Bushwoman," which carefully cataloged the "more perishable soft structures of the body" of a young Bushwoman.[46] They placed their study in a line of inquiry concerning the African woman's body that had begun at least a half century earlier with French naturalist Georges Cuvier's description of the woman popularly known as the "Hottentot Venus," or Saartje Baartman, who was displayed to European audiences fascinated by her "steatopygia" (protruding buttocks).[47] Significantly, starting with Cuvier, this tradition of comparative anatomy located the boundaries of race through the sexual and reproductive anatomy of the African female body, ignoring altogether the problematic absence of male bodies from these studies.

Flower and Murie's account lingered on two specific sites of difference: the "protuberance of the buttocks, so peculiar to the Bushman race," and "the remarkable development of the labia minora," which were "sufficiently well marked to distinguish these parts from those of any ordinary varieties of the human species" (208). The racial difference of the African body, implied Flower and Murie, was located in its literal excess, a specifically sexual excess that placed her body outside the boundaries of the "normal" female. To support their conclusion, Flower and Murie included corroborating "evidence" in the final part of their account. They quoted a secondhand report, "received from a scientific friend residing at the Cape of Good Hope," describing the anatomy of "two pure bred Hottentots, mother and daughter" (208). This account also focused on the women's genitalia, which they referred to as "appendages" (208). Although their account ostensibly foregrounded boundaries of race, their portrayal of the sexual characteristics of the Bushwoman betrayed Flower and Murie's anxieties about gender boundaries. The characteristics singled out as "peculiar" to this race—

the (double) "appendages"—fluttered between genders, at one moment masculine, at the next moment exaggeratedly feminine. Flower and Murie constructed the site of *racial* difference by marking the sexual and reproductive anatomy of the African woman as "peculiar"; in their characterization, sexual ambiguity delineated the boundaries of race.

Sexologists writing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries inherited this tendency to racialize perceived sexual ambiguity, but they used a new framework to interpret its meaning. Producing "data" about their newly created object of study, the invert, they also routinely included physical examinations in their accounts, reproducing the methodologies employed by comparative anatomists such as Flower and Murie. Many of the case histories in Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis,* for instance, included a paragraph detailing any anatomical peculiarities of the body in question.[48] Krafft-Ebing could not draw any conclusions about somatic indicators of "abnormal" sexuality, but physical examinations nevertheless remained a staple of the genre. In Ellis's *Sexual Inversion,* as I will show, case studies often focused more intently on the bodies of female "inverts" than on those of their male counterparts.[49] Although the specific sites of anatomical inspection (hymen, clitoris, labia, vagina) differed in various sexological texts, the underlying theory remained constant: women's genitalia and reproductive anatomy held a valuable and presumably visual key to ranking bodies according to norms of sexuality.

Sexologists reproduced not only the methodologies of the comparative anatomy of races but also its iconography. One of the most consistent medical characterizations of the anatomy of both African American women and lesbians was the myth of an unusually large clitoris.[50] As late as 1921, medical journals contained articles declaring that "a physical examination of [female homosexuals] will in practically every instance disclose an abnormally prominent clitoris." Significantly, this author added, "This is particularly so in colored women."[51] In an earlier account of racial differences between white and African American women, one gynecologist had also focused on the size and visibility of the clitoris; in his examinations, he had perceived a distinction between the "free" clitoris of "negresses" and the "imprisonment" of the clitoris of the "Aryan American woman."[52] In constructing these oppositions, such characterizations literalized the sexual and racial ideologies of the nineteenth-

century "Cult of True Womanhood," which explicitly privileged white women's sexual "purity" while implicitly suggesting African American women's sexual accessibility.[53]

Like the studies of comparative anatomists, the case histories in Ellis's *Sexual Inversion* differed markedly according to gender in the amount and degree of attention given to the examination of anatomical details. "As regards the sexual organs it seems possible," Ellis wrote, "so far as my observations go, to speak more definitely of inverted women than of inverted men" (256). Ellis justified his more zealous inspection of women's bodies in part by invoking the ambiguity surrounding women's sexuality in general: "We are accustomed to a much greater familiarity and intimacy between women than between men, and we are less apt to suspect the existence of any abnormal passion" (204). To Ellis, the seemingly imperceptible differences between "normal" and "abnormal" intimacies between women called for greater scrutiny into the subtleties of their anatomy. He included the following detailed account as potential evidence for understanding the fine line between the female invert and the "normal" woman:

> *Sexual Organs.*—(a) Internal: Uterus and ovaries appear normal. (b) External: Small clitoris, with this irregularity, that the lower folds of the labia minora, instead of uniting one with the other and forming the frenum, are extended upward along the sides of the clitoris, while the upper folds are poorly developed, furnishing the clitoris with a scant hood. The labia majora depart from normal conformation in being fuller in their posterior half than in their anterior part, so that when the subject is in the supine position they sag, as it were, presenting a slight resemblance to fleshy sacs, but in substance and structure they feel normal. (136)

This extraordinary taxonomy, performed for Ellis by an unnamed "obstetric physician of high standing," echoed earlier anatomical catalogs of African women. The exacting eye (and hand) of the investigating physician highlighted every possible detail as meaningful evidence. Through the triple repetition of "normal" and the use of evaluative language such as "irregularity" and "poorly developed," the physician reinforced his position of judgment. Without providing criteria for what constituted "normal" anatomy, the physician simply proclaimed irregularity based on his own powers of sight and touch. Moreover, his characterization of what he perceived as abnormal echoed the anxious account by Flower and Murie. Although the description of the clitoris in this account is a notable exception to the tendency to exaggerate its size, the account nevertheless scrutinized another site of genital excess. The "fleshy sacs" of this woman, like the "appendages" fetishized in the earlier account, invoked the anatomy of a phantom male body inhabiting the lesbian's anatomical features.

The attention given to the apparent gender ambiguity in these accounts took on specific significance in the context of evolutionary theory. One of the basic assumptions within the Darwinian model was the belief that, as organisms evolved through a process of natural selection, they also showed greater signs of sexual differentiation. Following this logic, various writers used sexual characteristics as indicators of evolutionary progress toward civilization. In *Man and Woman,* for instance, Ellis himself cautiously suggested that since the "beginnings of industrialism, . . . more marked sexual differences in physical development seem (we cannot speak definitely) to have developed than are usually to be found in savage societies."[54] In articulating this idea, Ellis drew from theories developed by biologists such as Patrick Geddes and J. Arthur Thomson, who stated in their important work *The Evolution of Sex* that "hermaphroditism is primitive; the unisexual state is a subsequent differentiation. The present cases of normal hermaphroditism imply either persistence or reversion."[55] In characterizing either lesbians' or African American women's bodies as less sexually differentiated than the norm (always posited as white heterosexual women's bodies), anatomists and sexologists drew on notions of natural selection to dismiss these bodies as anomalous "throwbacks" within a scheme of cultural and anatomical progress.

Eugenics, Sexology, and the Mixed Body

Evolutionary assumptions played a significant role in the development of eugenics, a form of racial science explicitly entwined with questions of sexuality and reproduction. Francis Galton (a cousin of Charles Darwin) introduced and defined the term "eugenics" in his *Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development* (1883) as "the cultivation of the race"

and "the science of improving stock, which . . . takes cognisance of all influences that tend in however remote a degree to give to the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable than they otherwise would have had."[56] In the United States, eugenics advocated selective reproduction and "race hygiene," a political and scientific response to the growth of a population beginning to challenge the dominance of white political interests. The widespread scientific and social interest in eugenics was fueled by anxieties expressed through the popularized notion of (white) "race suicide." This phrase, invoked most famously by Theodore Roosevelt, summed up nativist fears about a perceived decline in reproduction among white Americans. The new field of eugenics worked hand in hand with growing antimiscegenation sentiment and policy, provoked not only by attempts for political representation among African Americans but also by the influx of large populations of immigrants.[57] As Mark Haller has pointed out, "Racists and [immigration] restrictionists . . . found in eugenics the scientific reassurances they needed that heredity shaped man's personality and that their assumptions rested on biological facts."[58]

As American culture became increasingly racially segregated at the turn of the century, the figure of the mulatto carried contradictory meanings in relation to the discourse of eugenics and the larger field of racial science. Edward Byron Reuter's *The Mulatto in the United States,* for instance, pursued an exhaustive quantitative and comparative study of the "mulatto" population and its achievements in relation to those of "pure" white or African ancestry. Reuter traced the presence of a distinct group of mixed-race people back to early American history: "Their physical appearance, though markedly different from that of the pure blooded race, was sufficiently marked to set them off as a peculiar people."[59] Reuter, of course, was willing to admit the viability of "mulattoes" only within a framework that emphasized the separation of races. Far from using the notion of the biracial body to refute the belief in discrete markers of racial difference, Reuter perpetuated the notion by focusing on the distinctiveness of this "peculiar people." In contrast, others denied any positive (or neutral) effects of race mixture. Arguing that any intermixture was a threat to "white" purity, Charles Davenport, who dominated the early eugenic movement in the United States, claimed that "miscegenation commonly spells disharmony—disharmony of physical, mental and temperamental qualities. . . . A hybridized people are a badly put together people and a dissatisfied, restless, ineffective people."[60] The mulatto, as an embodiment of the object of eugenist efforts, also became an important, if contradictory, figure in sexologists' attempts to characterize the sexual invert.

In its emphasis on sexual reproduction, eugenics was tied to the concerns of sexology, even though most eugenicists did not generally emphasize questions of homosexuality. Sexologists, however, invoked the concerns of eugenicists in pathologizing homosexuality. William Robinson, a doctor who was a prominent sexologist and editor of two medical journals concerning sex research, used the unmistakable rhetoric of eugenics to describe homosexuality. In 1914, in an article entitled "My Views on Homosexuality," he wrote that he considered homosexuality "a sign of degeneracy" and that it was "a sad, deplorable, pathological phenomenon. Every sexual deviation or disorder which has for its result an inability to perpetuate the race is *ipso facto* pathologic, *ipso facto* an abnormality, and this is pre-eminently true of homosexuality."[61] Some sexologists who developed models of homosexuality also participated directly in the eugenics movement.[62] Ellis's sense of the "racial questions" inherent in sex, for instance, was surely informed by his own involvement with eugenics. On behalf of the British National Council for Public Morals, Ellis wrote several essays concerning eugenics, including *The Problem of Race Regeneration,* a pamphlet advocating "voluntary" sterilization of the unfit as a policy in the best interest of "the race."[63] He was also active in the Eugenics Education Society in England.[64] Further, in a letter to Francis Galton in 1907, Ellis wrote, "In the concluding volume of my Sex 'Studies' I shall do what I can to insinuate the eugenic attitude."[65]

The beginnings of sexology, then, circulated within and perhaps depended on a pervasive climate of eugenicist and antimiscegenation sentiment and legislation. Even at the level of nomenclature, anxieties about miscegenation shaped sexologists' attempts to find an appropriate and scientific name for the newly visible object of their study. Introduced into English through the 1892 English translation of Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis,* the term "homosexuality" stimulated a great deal of uneasiness. In the 1915 edition of *Sexual Inversion,* Ellis reported that "most investigators have been much puzzled in coming to a

conclusion as to the best, most exact, and at the same time most colorless names [for same-sex desire]" (2). Giving an account of the various names proposed, such as Ulrichs's "Uranian" and Westphal's "contrary sexual feeling," Ellis admitted that "homosexuality" was the most widely used term. Far from the ideal "colorless" term, however, "homosexuality" evoked Ellis's distaste for its mixed origins; in a regretful aside, he noted that "it has, philologically, the awkward disadvantage of being a bastard term compounded of Greek and Latin elements" (2). In the first edition of *Sexual Inversion,* Ellis stated his alarm more directly: " 'Homosexual' is a barbarously hybrid word."[66]

A similar view was expressed by Edward Carpenter, who, like Ellis, winced at the connotations of illegitimacy in the word: " 'Homosexual,' generally used in scientific works, is of course a bastard word. 'Homogenic' has been suggested, as being from two roots, both Greek, i.e., 'homos,' same, and 'genos,' sex."[67] Carpenter's suggestion, of course, resonated both against and within the vocabularies of eugenics and miscegenation. Performing these etymological gyrations with almost comic literalism, Ellis and Carpenter expressed pervasive cultural anxieties about questions of racial origins and purity. Concerned above all else with legitimacy, they attempted to remove and rewrite the mixed origins of "homosexuality." Ironically, despite their suggestions for alternatives, the "bastard" term took hold among sexologists, thus yoking together, at least rhetorically, two kinds of mixed bodies—the racial "hybrid" and the invert.

Although Ellis exhibited anxieties about biracial bodies, for others who sought to naturalize and recuperate homosexuality, the evolutionary emphasis on continuity and the figure of the mulatto offered potentially useful analogies. Edward Stevenson, who wrote pseudonymously as Xavier Mayne, one of the earliest American advocates of homosexual rights, stated, "Between whitest of men and the blackest negro stretches out a vast line of intermediary races as to their colours: brown, olive, red tawny, yellow."[68] He then invoked this model of race to envision a continuous spectrum of gender and sexuality: "Nature abhors the absolute, delights in the fractional. . . . Intersexes express the half-steps, the between-beings."[69] In this analogy, Mayne reversed dominant cultural hierarchies that privileged purity over mixture. Drawing on irrefutable evidence of the "natural" existence of biracial people, Mayne posited a direct analogy to a similarly mixed body, the intersex, which he positioned as a necessary presence within the natural order.

Despite Carpenter's complaint about "bastard" terminology, he, like Mayne, also occasionally appropriated the scientific language of racial mixing in order to resist the association between homosexuality and degeneration. In *The Intermediate Sex,* Carpenter attempted to theorize homosexuality outside of the discourse of pathology or abnormality; he too suggested a continuum of genders, with "intermediate types" occupying a place between the poles of exclusively heterosexual male and female. In an appendix to *The Intermediate Sex,* Carpenter offered a series of quotations supporting his ideas, some of which drew on racial analogies:

> Anatomically and mentally we find all shades existing from the pure genus man to the pure genus woman. Thus there has been constituted what is well named by an illustrious exponent of the science "The Third Sex." . . . As we are continually meeting in cities women who are one-quarter, or one-eighth, or so on, *male* . . . so there are in the Inner Self similar half-breeds, all adapting themselves to circumstances with perfect ease.[70]

Through notions of "shades" of gender and sexual "half-breeds," Carpenter appropriated dominant scientific models of race to construct and embody what he called the intermediate sex. The analogy between the sexual invert and the mixed racial body was thus mobilized in contradictory ways within sexological discourse: it could exhibit this body as evidence either of degeneration or of a legitimate place within the natural order.

Sexual "Perversion" and Racialized Desire

By the early twentieth century, medical models of sexuality had begun to shift and incorporate a notion of homosexuality based on sexual object choice rather than inversion. It seems significant that this shift took place within a period that also saw a transformation of scientific notions about race. As historians have suggested, in the early twentieth century, scientific claims for exclusively biological models of racial difference were beginning to be undermined by scientists such as Franz

Boas, although, of course, these models have persisted in popular understandings of race.[71]

In what ways were these shifts away from biologized notions of sexuality and race related in scientific literature? One area in which they overlapped and perhaps shaped one another was through models of interracial and homosexual desire. Whereas previously two bodies, the mulatto and the invert, had been linked together in a visual economy, now two tabooed types of desire—interracial and homosexual—became linked in sexological and psychological discourse through the model of "abnormal" sexual object choice.

This convergence of theories of "perverse" racial and sexual desire is evident in the assumptions of psychologists such as Margaret Otis, whose analysis of "A Perversion Not Commonly Noted" appeared in a medical journal in 1913. Otis noted that in all-girl institutions, including reform schools and boarding schools, she had observed widespread "love-making between the white and colored girls."[72] Otis's explicit discussion of racial difference and homosexuality was relatively rare amid the burgeoning medical literature on sexuality in the early twentieth century.[73] Both fascinated and alarmed, Otis remarked that this perversion was "well known in reform schools and institutions for delinquent girls," but that "this particular form of the homosexual relation has perhaps not been brought to the attention of scientists" (113). Performing her ostensible duty to science, Otis carefully described these rituals of interracial romance and the girls' "peculiar moral code." In particular, she noted that the girls incorporated racial difference into courtship rituals self-consciously patterned on traditional gender roles: "One white girl . . . admitted that the colored girl she loved seemed the man, and thought it was so in the case of the others" (114). In Otis's account, the actions of the girls clearly threatened the keepers of the institutions, who responded to the perceived danger with efforts to racially segregate their charges (who were, of course, already segregated by gender). Otis, however, left open the motivation for segregation: Did the girls' intimacy trouble the authorities because it was homosexual or because it was interracial? Otis avoided exploring this question and offered a succinct theory instead: "The difference in color, in this case, takes the place of difference in sex" (113). She used a simple analogy between race and gender to understand their desire: black was to white as masculine was to feminine.

Racial difference performed an important visual function in Otis's account. In turn-of-the-century American culture, where Jim Crow segregation erected a structure of taboos against any kind of public (non-work-related) interracial relationship, racial difference visually marked the alliances between the schoolgirls as anomalous and therefore the object of scientific scrutiny. In a culture in which Ellis could remark that he was accustomed to women being on intimate terms, race became a marker for the sexual nature of that liaison. As Kathryn Hinojosa Baker has noted, "Had the 'love-making' been intraracial rather than interracial, Otis might not have seen any need to write an article detailing these relationships; race makes the situation notable."[74] In effect, the institution of racial segregation and its cultural fiction of "black" and "white" produced a framework in which the girls' interracial romances became legible as "perverse."

Otis's account also demonstrates the ways in which the color line was fundamentally eroticized in the early twentieth century. We might recall here that the supposed need for racial segregation, as it was formalized by the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case in the 1890s, was articulated through a discourse of panic about sexual mobility. One strategy was to demonize all black men as a sexual threat to white women. As an editorial in a Louisiana newspaper in favor of racially segregated train cars put it, "A man that would be horrified at the idea of his wife or daughter seated by the side of a burly negro in the parlor of a hotel or at a restaurant cannot see her occupying a crowded seat in a car next to a negro without the same feeling of disgust."[75] The assumption driving this reasoning reveals a racial fantasy inextricably tied to the logic of compulsory heterosexuality. Both legalized and de facto racial segregation served not only to demand constant adherence to the fictions of racial identity but also to police sexual mobility. In the context of the all-girls' spaces of reform schools, this eroticization of the color line remained in force, from both Otis's perspective and perhaps those of the girls themselves. Otis's case reveals that the imposition of segregation marked the "white" and "colored" girls as differently gendered, even in the space of a supposedly single-sex institution.

Otis's statement that "the difference in color, in this case, takes the place of difference in sex" resonates with recent critical discussions of lesbian desire and identification, which have invoked similar analogies between the visual function of butch-femme roles and racial difference. For instance, film critic Ruby Rich has suggested that "racial difference operates for lesbians in the same way as, let's say, butch-femme, or s&m roles do, that is, as a form of differentiation between two people of the same gender."[76] Elsewhere, Rich has speculated further that "race occupies the place vacated by gender. The non-sameness of color, language, or culture is a marker of difference in relationships otherwise defined by the sameness of gender."[77] Commenting on Rich's analysis, however, Biddy Martin points out that "race does not operate just like butch-femme . . . it also operates to secure butch-femme roles."[78] Although it is important to emphasize that "butch-femme" as a particular construction of lesbian desire is anachronistic in the context of Otis's article, Martin's comments point usefully to an analysis of the scopic function of racial difference in this account. Martin adds, "Making lesbian desire visible as desire, rather than identification, requires an added measure of difference, figured racially."[79] Thus, within prevailing models that assumed that sexual desire depended on difference, homosexual desire was made legible through the girls' transgression of the color line.

It is also possible that a corollary process was at work in Otis's account: that the figure of the color line itself instantiated desire, regardless of gender. Otis admitted that "the separation seemed to enhance the value of the loved one, and that she was to a degree inaccessible, added to her charms" (113). Regarding a different historical and cultural context, that of nineteenth-century Orientalist painting, art historian Linda Nochlin has asserted that "the conjunction of black and white, or dark and light female bodies, whether naked or in the guise of mistress and maidservant, traditionally signified lesbianism."[80] Although Nochlin does not elaborate further on this assertion, it resonates with Otis's account of the American institution. The proximity of "white" and "colored" girls attracted the pathologizing gaze of Otis's clinical eye and made this "particular form of the homosexual relation" worth noting.

The discourse of sexual pathology, in turn, seems to have informed scientific understandings of race as well. In 1903, for instance, a southern physician drew on the language of sexology to legitimate a particularly

racist fear: "A perversion from which most races are exempt, prompts the negro's inclinations towards the white woman, whereas other races incline toward the females of their own."[81] Using the medical language of perversion to naturalize and legitimate the dominant cultural myth of the black rapist, this account characterized interracial desire as a type of congenital abnormal sexual object choice. In the writer's terms, the desire of African American men for white women (though not the desire of white men for African American women) could be understood and pathologized by drawing on emergent models of sexual orientation.[82]

This chapter has focused on the various ways in which late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century scientific discourses on race provided a logic through which sexologists and other medical "experts" articulated emerging models of homosexuality in the United States. These interconnections fall into three broad areas. Methodologies and iconographies of comparative anatomy attempted to locate discrete physiological markers of difference by which to classify and separate races. Sexologists drew on these techniques to try to position the "homosexual" body as anatomically distinguishable from the "normal" body. Likewise, medical discourses on sexuality appear to have been steeped in pervasive cultural anxieties about "mixed" bodies, particularly the mulatto, whose symbolic position as a mixture of black and white bodies was literalized in scientific accounts. Sexologists and others writing about homosexuality borrowed the model of the racially mixed body as a way to make sense of the "invert," an individual who appeared to be neither completely masculine nor completely feminine. Finally, racial and sexual discourses converged in psychological models that understood "unnatural" desire as perversion: in these cases, interracial and same-sex sexuality became analogous within later conceptions of sexual object choice. As in Otis's account, the proximity of "white" and "colored" bodies under segregation elicited expert scrutiny and provided a visual marker of transgressive sexual desire.

At about the same time that the first articles on sexual inversion appeared in medical journals in the United States, experiments with a new visual technology—the cinema—were just beginning to change the landscape of American popular culture. In April 1896 the first public exhibitions of Thomas Edison's vitascope, which projected motion

pictures "upon a white screen in a darkened hall," took place in New York City.[83] Although expert discourses on sexuality and race asserted enormous cultural authority during this time, as the new medium of cinema emerged in the next three decades, it would also hold increasing power to shape cultural assumptions about the visibility of sexual and racial identities. As the next chapter will explore, racial and sexual discourses became deeply intertwined in the popular imagination as the new medium reinforced and reinterpreted scientific emphases on the visualization and embodiment of racial and sexual identities.