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tion have been ignored out of fear that the consequences of collegial disapproval might not be confined to misgivings alone. In reality, advances in our knowledge of adult sexual behaviors make developmental considerations not only appropriate but pressing. Both the methods and conclusions of these studies contribute to an overarching body of knowledge that ultimately encompasses all youth.

Consider how briefly, in intellectual terms, our culture has grappled with homosexuality. In the past 35 years, studies by Alfred Kinsey and Evelyn Hooker have been landmark events in our society's efforts to recognize and assimilate adult homosexuality, but even these significant achievements were limited by the ethnocentricity of their study populations. Sexual expression and its cultural underpinnings are interwoven in a richly detailed tapestry of biological, social, and psychological imperatives. Cross-cultural studies are particularly valuable in dividing such complex behaviors into elements that are universal, variable, endowed by nature, encouraged by nurture, accepted or challenged by ambient culture, and formative or incidental in the life of the individual. The studies that follow are significant not only because their findings are directly applicable in a heterogeneous society, but also because of the broad base they provide for future work.

These issues clamor all the more for our attention when we consider that in the United States alone there are 30 million young people between the ages of 10 and 20, 10% of whom are felt to be predominantly or exclusively homosexual. In spite of their large numbers and the profound difficulties that they confront, few groups of young people have been so ignored, and few evoke so poignantly the aura of quiet desperation to which our statistics on adolescent suicide are such disturbing testimony.

The suggestion that adolescent homosexuality and suicide are causally linked is but one of many controversial assertions that have become part of our poorly buttressed working knowledge of this population. It is important because of its implications for mortality, and because it is so starkly revealing of the issues that are crucial in the lives of these young people: acceptance, denial, self-esteem, isolation despite growing needs for intimacy, the pain of reluctant nonconformity, depression, and inaccessible or absent role models. We cannot yet describe how these difficulties are confronted and



the dominated. Homophobia, the fear and hatred of homosexuality, is clearly related to this (Weinberg, 1972). Page and Yee (1985) have recently shown that negative images of homosexuality among American heterosexuals remain, that stronger reactions are manifested toward males, and the *strongest* of all are expressed toward masculine gay males (Laner & Laner, 1979). This confirms a prevailing feeling that gay males are more "visible" in popular culture, and, perhaps, the more despised by heterosexual men for their affluence and for forsaking male privilege.

Not until this phase of inversion of the self is reflected upon can a transformation in gay and lesbian awareness emerge, as hinted by Le Bitoux for the youth of Paris (herein). With such a recognition of a homosexual social world beyond the self, either in gay or lesbian peers or social groups, or even among supportive heterosexual friends and networks, the restrictive image of the invert seems to recede.

The invert image presses the imagination up against a perceived "natural law," wherein homosexuality goes against "nature," as reflected most radically in the invert's behavior (Ponse, 1978; Foucault, 1980; cf. Hoffman, 1968; Scruton, 1986). Here, Ponse reminds us, "homosexuality frequently connotes inversion both in common sense thinking and in scientific theories" (Ponse, 1978, p. 31, n. 14). The recent Supreme Court case (*Bowers v. Hardwick*, 1986) upholding the "unnaturalness" of sodomy in state laws reveals at least one side of public opinion: that the invert is an ogre with the power to subvert those around him, especially the young.<sup>9</sup>

Another expression of the inversion stereotype concerns an exclusionary principle: one can be either homosexual or heterosexual, but not both. During this developmental phase, there is a strong tendency in gender-polarized and restrictive cultures, such as America, to rule out bisexual fantasies or activity (Herdt, 1987c). Such a trend runs counter to the surprisingly high rate of bisexuality Kinsey and his colleagues identified in America (cf. Roestler & Deisher, 1972). However, we are dealing here not with empirical patterns, but with folk models, ideal types, that are dualistic. This may be, in part, why the Australian Altman (1982) has referred to recent symbolic changes in our culture as a "homosexualization" of America.