

denal transcripts were published in the 1988 edition of the *Letters* by Eliot's widow, there are said to be others, which are perhaps franker. Eliot's first masterpiece, *The Waste Land* (1922), is dedicated to Verdenal, who was killed on military service not long after the start of World War I. For a long time critics viewed the poem as an impersonal commentary on the sorry state of Western civilization, but it is now known to derive from personal experience, especially Eliot's unhappy relations with his unstable first wife, Vivien. In view of this personal emphasis, the dedication to his deceased male friend may have been more telling than has usually been thought. In any event, the poem contains a homosexual reference, when a levantine merchant invites the narrator to a "weekend at the Metropole," that is, to a homosexual encounter.

Vehemently opposed in principle to any biography of him, Eliot succeeded in wrapping his inner self in a cloud of enigma. Ostensibly this reticence is grounded in his espousal of the doctrine of poetic impersonality. It may, however, have more personal roots. Eliot's first marriage with Vivien Haigh-Wood was undertaken quite suddenly in 1915, ostensibly on the rebound from an unrequited love for an American woman. There were no children, and Vivien spent much of the remainder of her life in mental homes. For many years Eliot shared bachelor quarters with another literary man, John Hayward. The "secret" of Eliot's personality, if such there be, may reside chiefly in his *fear* of being taken as homosexual, since he was not given to manly pursuits such as athletic sports and hunting and the profession of poetry itself tends to be regarded with suspicion in the English-speaking world. Time will tell whether this is the case, or whether there is something more that has been held back by the official guardians of Eliot's reputation.

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Ward Houser

ELLIS, HAVELOCK (1859-1939)

Pioneering British writer on sexual psychology. Descended from a family with many generations of seafarers, Henry Havelock Ellis was named after a distinguished soldier who was the hero of the Indian Mutiny. Early in life he sailed twice around the world and spent some years in Australia. In boarding school he had some unpleasant experiences suggesting a passive element in his character, and his attachments to women were often more friendships than erotic liaisons. At the age of 32 he married Edith Lees, a lesbian; after the first year of their marriage all sexual relations ceased, and both went on to a series of affairs with women. By nature an autodidact, Ellis obtained in 1889 only a licentiate in Medicine, Surgery, and Midwifery from the Society of Apothecaries—a somewhat inferior degree that always embarrassed him. More interested in his literary studies than in the practice of medicine, he nevertheless collected case histories mainly by correspondence, as his autobiography makes no mention of clinical practice.

One of his early correspondents was John Addington Symonds, who discussed with him the possibility of a book on sexual inversion, in which the case histories were the core and empirical foundation. Ellis recognized two conditions: "complete inversion" (= exclusive homosexuality) and "psychosexual hermaphroditism" (= bisexuality). In the midst of the writing Symonds died suddenly, and the book first appeared in German under the title *Das konträre Geschlechtsgefühl* ("Contrary Sexual Feeling"; 1896) with both names on the title page. In the atmosphere that prevailed after the disgrace of Oscar Wilde (May 1895), publication in England was problematic, but under doubt-

ful auspices the English edition was released in November 1897.

Sexual Inversion was the first book in English to treat homosexuality as neither disease nor crime, and if he dismissed the current notion that it was a species of "degeneracy" (in the biological sense), he also maintained that it was inborn and unmodifiable—a view that he never renounced. His book, couched in simple language, urged public toleration for what was then regarded as unnatural and criminal to the highest degree. To a readership conditioned from childhood to regard homosexual behavior with disgust and abhorrence, the book was beyond the limits of comprehension, and a radical publisher and bookseller named George Bedborough was duly prosecuted for issuing "a certain lewd wicked bawdy scandalous and obscene libel"—*Sexual Inversion*. In his defense Ellis maintained that the work aimed at "remedial treatment"—a hypocritical line that was to be followed for many decades thereafter by defenders of the homosexual. The trial caused Ellis and his wife much anxiety, though it ended without a prison sentence for Bedborough.

The book was to appear in two later editions as the second volume of Ellis' *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, which in its final format extended to seven volumes covering the whole of sexual science as it existed in the first three decades of the twentieth century. The most iconoclastic stance in the entire work remained the calm acceptance of homosexuality. Ellis never endorsed the explanations offered by Freud and the psychoanalytic school, so that the third edition of *Sexual Inversion* (1915), which was supplemented by material drawn from Magnus Hirschfeld's *Die Homosexualität des Mannes und des Weibes*, published a year earlier, presented essentially the standpoint of 1904. The next in radical character was the measured discussion of masturbation, which Victorian society had been taught to regard with virtual paranoia as the cause of numberless ills. The mes-

sage of all his writings was that sex was a joy and a boon to mankind that should be embraced with ardor but also with knowledge. If many of the views expressed in his work are dated, the frame of mind in which the author approached his subject, tolerant and condoning rather than vindictive and condemnatory, served to move educated opinion in the English-speaking world in the direction of the reforms that were to be realized only in the wake of the Wolfenden Report of 1957.

Parallel with Magnus Hirschfeld in Germany, Ellis further distinguished transvestism from the homosexuality with which it had been confounded since Westphal's paper of 1869, except that he proposed the name "eonism," from the Chevalier d'Eon, a French nobleman of the eighteenth century who habitually dressed as a woman. *Man and Woman*, first published in 1894, continued to be revised down to 1927; it was a study of "secondary sexual characters," in contemporary terms the problems of gender, of women's rights, and of woman's place in modern society, again in a spirit of sympathy and toleration that has not lost its relevance to the issues debated at the close of the twentieth century.

In addition to his own insights and research, Havelock Ellis helped to diffuse the findings of continental scholars, making accessible to a broad audience—one that hitherto had been subjected to a literature meant to inspire shame and fear—a comprehensive body of knowledge of human sexuality. His enlightened approach to homosexuality marked the first step toward overcoming the Victorian morality that had shrouded the subject in ignorance and opprobrium.

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EMPLOYMENT

See *Discrimination; Economics*.