

den Report was a landmark in the struggle for the legal toleration of homosexuality in common law countries. Its arguments, grounded in a liberal tradition that harked back to John Stuart Mill, solidly underpinned the impetus to law reform that made possible the gay liberation movement which was to blossom in the 1970s and later throughout the English-speaking world.

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Baron Wolfenden of Westcott, *Turning Points: The Memoirs of Lord Wolfenden*, London: The Bodley Head, 1976; Sir John Wolfenden, et al., *Report of the Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution*, London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1957.

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### WOMEN'S NAMES FOR MALE HOMOSEXUALS

The use of the name Molly for an effeminate homosexual goes back to the early eighteenth century in London where the *molly houses* (male brothels and places of assignation) became notorious. The related form Mary Ann (Molly is a familiar form of the name Mary) seems to belong mainly to nineteenth-century England. Other women's names chosen to refer to gay men have been Cissy (or Sissy), Gussie (Australian), Jessie (British), Margery, Nance/Nancy (common especially after World War I), Nellie, Nola (rare), and Pansy (intersecting with flower terminology). While this list could be extended almost indefinitely, these seem to have been the most common names in the English-speaking world. In America in the 1950s, the word *nellie* (or *nelly*) was a general adjective meaning "obviously effeminate" (the antonym of "butch"), while Mary was often used in the vocative to address any fellow homosexual ("Well, Mary . . .").

Parallels occur in other languages, e.g., Spanish *maricón* and *mariquita* (from María), Portuguese *Adelaida*, and Italian *checca* (from Francesca). In the Flemish-speaking part of Belgium the word

*janet* (from French Jeannette) is a generic term for homosexual.

It is a little-known fact that etymological analysis shows that a number of key slang terms (common nouns and adjectives) for gay men stem from previous use as pejorative appellations for women. Thus before being applied to homosexuals, *faggot* meant "a slatternly woman," while *gay* referred to "a fallen woman; prostitute." The modern slang word *queen* derives from a conflation of standard English *queen*, "consort of a king monarch," and the obsolete *quean*, "prostitute."

The ultimate grounding of all these acts of naming is the widespread acceptance of the idea of *inversion*—that male homosexuals have feminine qualities, while lesbians have masculine ones. Evidence is much slighter for a lesbian counterpart for these procedures of "transnaming." In Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* (1928), however, the heroine is called Stephen.

A question that has received little attention is why a few male names are taken by gay people to be stereotypically suitable for themselves. Until recently at least, Bruce was so regarded in the United States. In Germany Detlev (Detlef) has the same reputation; in France Emile. It may be that these names are a subset of a larger category of given names, such as Algernon and Clarence, considered *sissy*.

Some campy coteries have affected the feminine pronouns *she* and *her* for gay men. When these appellations are extended to straight men, the implication is that their heterosexuality is tainted and may soon crumble. Ultimately, there lurks the covert suggestion that all men are gay. Since those who are engaged in this verbal guerrilla war are usually admirers of the *macho* type they would appear to be cutting the ground out from under their feet. In such coteries male names of group members are regularly changed to female ones, e.g., Charles becomes Charlotte, and Don, Donna. These habits seem to be fading.

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