

EDITED BY SUSAN HILLOCK
AND NICK J. MULÉ

QUEERING SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION



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Preface

SUSAN HILLOCK AND NICK J. MULÉ

In Canada, there has been a failure to address queer individuals and communities, queer-based theories, and queer issues in social work education and the social work profession. The co-editors of this volume, Susan Hillock and Nick Mulé (both social work professors who are queer-identified), decided to collaboratively organize the book in the hope that it will be a catalyst to begin the dialogue, scholarship, and research aimed at addressing these gaps in social work education. Where did our collaboration begin? We met in 2012 at the Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE) annual National Conference at the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario. Nick, a gay white man and chair of the CASWE Queer Caucus, was sitting patiently, waiting for interested social work educators to join him for the caucus meeting. Susan, a bisexual white woman, wandered in, laughed out loud, and expressed her (ironic) surprise that there looked to be only two queer people at the conference. After we waited awhile, another woman entered the room. She quickly clarified that she was straight but wanted to be a queer ally. A gay male social work graduate student eventually joined us. After discussing caucus business, Susan mentioned her frustration and disappointment that at her school of social work, and at the national CASWE conference, queer people and queer issues seemed to be invisible and absent from the discourse. Nick agreed, recounting his yearly efforts to motivate people to become involved in the queer caucus. We then wondered what happens to queer social work students, colleagues, and service users who must cope with this type of silence and vacuum every day. From this recognition

– the lack of presence and visibility of queers in social work – grew the idea for this volume.

When we began to research this topic, we found obvious and disturbing gaps in queer social work knowledge, scholarship, research, and literature. In particular, we noted a lack of current Canadian content and context regarding these issues in the social work discipline and education. To fill these gaps, this volume of original works highlights the queering of social work education and its potential impact on theory, classrooms and curriculum, andragogy and pedagogy, research, and policy. As such, it is the first book in North America to address these issues in social work education. Celebrating the voices, stories, and resistance of queer social work faculty, administrators, colleagues, and students, diverse authors from across Canada present their thinking, stories, and recommendations related to queering social work education. This volume also emphasizes a contemporary, progressive, and innovative approach, utilizes a critical and anti-oppressive social work lens that sheds light on the current realities of social work education and queer communities, and demonstrates how queering social work education contributes to an enlightening of the discipline. Although the ideas, themes, issues, and andragogy discussed here are specifically situated in Canada, we believe they will be of relevance to social work education and other related fields outside our borders.

This book is organized in three thematic parts. Part 1 provides the context for the volume by engaging readers to discover and analyze historical and contemporary background information on all major aspects of queer social work – theories, social activism and movements, histories, communities, resistance, victories, and issues – and how they relate to a queered perspective. Part 2 presents first-person accounts of queer-identified people’s experiences in social work education and addresses themes such as coming out, silencing/closeting/passing, safety, identity, expression, sexuality, gender, resistance, and intersectionality (i.e., the intersections of privilege and oppression where people are geographically, institutionally, socially, economically, and culturally situated regarding social work and social work education). Part 3 questions and challenges the current state of Canadian social work education. It presents alternative perspectives and highlights that social work education can be queered without jettisoning the principles and standards of practice of the profession. In this part of the book, we argue for the queering project – the queering of social work education: why queer social work education is important; how it is congruent with the profession’s code of ethics, standards of practice, and academic freedom; and how a queer lens and sensibility will contribute positively to social work theory, andragogy/pedagogy, research, policy, and by extension, practice.

We hope that this book will be useful and of interest to those who engage in research and teaching not only in social work, but in sexuality/queer/gender studies, andragogy, anthropology, psychology, sociology, human rights, counselling, mental health, corrections, human services, health care, and/or higher education. Its major contribution to these disciplines of study is the focused look at queer perspectives in the social work profession in the Canadian academic environment, with potential for broader influences, as an untapped contribution to knowledge and research.

We would like to thank the contributors. We have appreciated their hard work and refreshing openness to editorial critique. For more information about the authors, please refer to the Contributors' section on page 251. We would also like to thank Darcy Cullen at UBC Press, who was especially helpful in offering feedback and support through the publishing process. Additionally, we thank UBC Press for its support of this important issue and willingness to publish this unique contribution to the literature. Also, both editors thank each other for the shared passionate concern with illuminating queer issues in social work education and the hard work and dedication required to complete this book. The intent on all our parts – the contributors, Darcy Cullen, UBC Press, and the co-editors – is to both broaden and deepen social work education so that it becomes inclusive of queer issues and better serves queer individuals and communities.

Introduction

SUSAN HILLOCK

A comprehensive review of the literature illustrates a dearth of scholarship and research regarding lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, and polysexual (LGBTQIP) people, communities, theories, and related issues. This is true in Canadian academic literature generally and social work practice, research, and education specifically (Bacon, 2006; Bird, 2004; Ford, 2004; Ruffolo, 2006; Walker, 2004). The acronym LGBTQIP captures the great diversity of queer experiences and identities, but this volume will use LGBTQ. Although some literature does discuss queering the broader academy, it does not examine social work (Bacon, 2006; Bird, 2004; Ford, 2004; Ruffolo, 2006; Walker, 2004). And yet, social work is rooted in the work of Jane Addams, who lived and worked alongside same-sex partners, supported female-centred practice, and was key to the creation of progressive social work and the development of community practice.

Furthermore, the queer literature that does exist in Western academia tends to be divided into three main thematic areas. The first summarizes the rise of gay and lesbian liberation movements over time and provides historical reviews of gay and lesbian social and political activism (Adam, 1995; Fish, 2012; Kinsman and Gentile, 2010; Knegt, 2011; McLeod, 1996; Q-team, 2011; Smith, 1999; Warner, 2002). These works are significant as they help us to understand the origins of queer-based oppression and how queer communities organized into powerful resistance movements.

The second type of literature attempts to teach “straight” people and students in mainstream society and social work, mental health, criminal justice,

and human services programs how to be sensitive to and work with queer-identified individuals and communities (and other diverse “oppressed” groups). This literature is based on what have been called anti-oppressive practice (AOP), minority sensitivity, and human rights approaches (Logie, Bridge, and Bridge, 2007; Messenger and Morrow, 2006; Moore, Dietz, and Jenkins, 1996; Willis, 2007).

In the third thematic area, queer-based theories question, resist, and challenge hegemonic notions of normalcy, gender, and sexuality, and attempt to deconstruct the artificial binaries of straight and homosexual, normal and abnormal, male and female, and so on. Queer-based theorists and writers critique minority approaches, choosing instead to interrogate the status quo and work toward dismantling homophobia and heterosexist and cisgender privilege. According to MacKinnon (2011), queer theory invites “a questioning of all sexuality and a critical unpacking of how we know what we think we know” (p. 141). This genre of progressive, critical, queer sexuality-based theoretical literature includes works by Angelides (2006), Edwards (1998), Fryer (2012), Hart and Richardson (1981), Jagose (1996), Jones and Ward (2009), Kirsch (2006), Lovaas, Elia, and Yep (2006), and Wishik and Pierce (1995).

Although these works are important, it is clear that we know very little about what individual social work academics, students, and practitioners actually know about queer-based theories, communities, people, and issues, how they learn, articulate, and use knowledge about the LGBTQ community members and their issues, or how they choose to teach and practise in these areas. Overall, LGBTQ issues, discussion, and theorizing are absent from the social work literature (Mallon, 1998; Trotter, 2000, as cited in Willis, 2007; Van Voorhis and Wagner, 2001). Due to these gaps in social work research, education, and practice, social work educators, field instructors, and practitioners have limited knowledge and understanding of queer people, their communities, histories, theories, and issues. Since, for the most part, these understandings often start in the social work classroom and field practicum, we believe that social work educators have a responsibility to assist students to develop their understanding, sensitivity, and analytical, assessment, and practice skills with LGBTQ individuals and communities. This volume has been compiled to assist both educators and students to begin to build and/or further their knowledge, develop skills, and work toward completing these essential tasks.

As the first book of its kind in North America, *Queering Social Work Education* moves readers along a trajectory: Part 1 provides a contextual historical background for LGBTQ history, activism, and theories; Part 2 examines first-person lived experiences of oppression (such as harassment, silencing, and

discrimination), resistance, and celebration; and Part 3 reflects on the challenge of mapping social change in social work education to make it more inclusive of queers and their sensibilities. In addition, academics, social work educators, practitioners, field instructors, administrators, and students, as well as criminal justice, psychology, and human services, mental health practitioners, faculty, and students, will gain valuable insight to inform their practical skills and aid their work.

Although we recognize that debates, tensions, and variance regarding language preferences exist across queer individuals, theorists, activists, and communities, we have chosen to use the word “queer” in this volume because it serves as an umbrella term for the range and diversity of our communities and because it most closely fits our theoretical and political understandings of queer communities, theories, and social work. For us, the word meets four important goals: it comes closer than any other term in describing our own sexual orientation and gender expression; in using it, we reclaim it, transitioning it from meaning weird, unusual, and abnormal to celebrating diversity, resistance, and uniqueness; it recognizes queer contributions to Canadian society; and it serves to destabilize and deconstruct the notion of fixed identities such as male/female, homosexual/heterosexual, normal/abnormal, and so on. In addition, as white academics, contributors, editors, and authors, we recognize that our experiences and what we know as a gay man and a bisexual woman are necessarily situated, shaped, and limited by our particular social, economic, race, gender, class, and political locations and identities.

Thus, we endeavoured to include and reflect multiple Canadian perspectives, experiences, and narratives. We sought out diverse and divergent opinions among social work educators, students, administrators, and practitioners about what queering social work might look like. We also wanted to encourage social work education to engage more fully with a wide range of theoretical, personal, and political projects and perspectives that queer activists, theorists, and social workers have developed and are currently developing. Thus, there is deliberate variation across chapters in terms of conceptual and theoretical complexity, with some authors engaging with queer-based theories and others distancing themselves from theory in favour of queer politics and/or personal narratives. The book interweaves thoughtful, engaged, academic reflection in a collective project, sometimes dipping into a politicized and polarizing voice from those who have been silenced and marginalized. Some authors speak to allies who are interested in furthering the project of queering social work. Other authors focus on educating and consciousness-raising for people who are new to these issues. Still others launch a strong

critique of the establishment and traditional social work education. In addition, this range of content, tone, and analysis means that some chapters grapple with teasing apart complicated theoretical tensions and intensely unpacking the queering project, whereas others offer a more general scan and introduction to the topic and current issues. In many ways, this collection reflects the vastness of the possible positions in the project of queering social work education, and thus, it appeals to readers at all stages in that continuum. These debates, twists and turns, and contradictions are seen as invaluable to help deepen understanding, thinking, and dialogue. Moreover, it is important for social work not to have a singular template or definition of queering the education project, but rather to engage with fluidity.

As social work educators, we recognize that academia often requires in-depth knowledge rather than broad generalist knowledge. Even so, social work educators attempt to address a broad range of issues, and their ability to navigate every area (whether queerness, spirituality, sexuality, race, or income inequality) will always be uneven. In addition, though we tried to recruit and discuss as many aspects of the queer community as possible, we accept that bisexuality has not been covered in great detail. Although we focus on social work education, we believe that some of the thinking, dialogue, analyses, and suggestions provided in the following chapters can be applied to practice situations. We also recognize that our recommendations may not be suitable for every social worker or classroom or student. However, we hope that this book provides new knowledge and perspectives, and that it will be a valuable contribution to social work theory and education, here in Canada and internationally.

This volume is structured to articulate a clear conceptualization and application of queering social work education. Part 1: From Absence to Presence, is the contextual section of the book, and it provides a historical overview of Canadian LGBTQ communities, issues, movements, rights, theories, critiques, and presence/absence in social work education. It also reviews the use of terminology over time. The social work profession's understanding and positions on LGBTQ populations and their implications for theory, andragogy/pedagogy, policy, and practice are also highlighted.

To build on past gains and ensure that queer people are fully present, participating and/or appropriately represented, and actively engaged in critical social work thinking, discussion, teaching, research, services, curriculum, and policy making, we need to review their past efforts and struggles. To accomplish this, we need to understand the history of a once stigmatized and shamed hidden existence and how it transformed through activism and resistance into diverse queer communities and movements. In Chapter 1, Susan Hillock

provides an overview of the history of queer absence and presence from the early seventh century BC to current times. She discusses the evolving views of homosexuality (as sin, crime, or sickness) and corresponding patterns of judgment, punishment, and persecution. She also critiques the relative absence of LGBTQ issues and those identified as “other” in mainstream history, literature, and scholarship. This chapter also gives a synopsis of Canadian LGBTQ communities, issues, movements, rights, and evolving absence/presence in society, historical records, activism, and social movements.

In Chapter 2, Nick J. Mulé focuses on broadening the theoretical horizons of social work. For the most part, it has managed to sidestep the debates between past concepts of gay and lesbian studies and queer theory, the latter of which is becoming increasingly dominant in sexuality studies. Yet the implications of such debates are incalculable for social work and all its aspects. Is theory adequately serving practice and vice versa when it comes to gender, sexual diversity, and social work? In addressing this question, Mulé compares current social work theories and concepts with those of sexuality studies debates. In addition, he politicizes the terminology that differentiates LGBTs from queers and that distinguishes their respective social agendas, all toward a critical, progressive understanding of LGBTQ populations and communities and the social work discipline’s relationship to them. In seeking to broaden the theoretical horizons that uphold social work’s commitment to social justice, Mulé finds queer theory unequal to the task. He highlights its limiting effects and suggests that a return to and resurrection of the principles of gay liberation would better aid the development of a modernized queer liberation theory.

Chapter 3, by Jake Pyne, takes us into the world of the classroom. In social work education, queer and trans subjects are often discussed as inhabiting a shared minority subject position. When trans is selected for specific treatment, it is often to celebrate the transgender figure as a symbol of queer transgression. Yet more than a decade of debate in gender and sexuality studies has raised serious concerns regarding queer theory readings of trans subjectivity. Most prominent is the charge that queer theory has functioned to roll back recognition for (some) trans subjects by casting a sex-change trajectory as the uncritical antithesis of a more politically desirable gender queer performance. Indeed, in the drama of the queer academe, the transsexual has played the unfashionable and antiquated foil to the more enlightened, cosmopolitan queer. Despite important analyses offered up by queer theory, this chapter argues that overreliance on a queer theory framework for gendered difference makes insiders of some trans subjects and outsiders of others. In the project of queering social

work, Pyne calls for a pause. If some trans bodies and narratives are not examples of queer transgression, what are they examples of? What does the queer theory movement make possible and impossible for trans subjects? What alternative analyses are available? Recalling the historical context of the queer eye for transgender, this chapter reviews key ontological and epistemological debates over the gendered self, medical meaning, and the authority of the speaking subject. Ultimately, Pyne explores how queer theory and trans subjectivities may collide in the social work classroom, and in response, the theoretical doors we are called upon to open.

In Chapter 4, Susan Hillock examines the introduction and development of LGBTQ studies in North America and discusses issues related to and attempts directed at queering the academy and social work education. Her review of the current literature on queering educational systems reveals an emphasis on school bullying and uncovers specific gaps in professional teacher and social work training, education, and research. This chapter posits that social workers tend to be homophobic and to demonstrate high levels of heterosexism; thus, social work educators need to find ways of assisting students to challenge and transform these traditional beliefs. Finally, the chapter highlights the social work profession's literature, understanding, positions, and tensions related to queering social work practice, social workers, schools of social work, students, and research.

Part 2: Coming Out and the Academic Closet, presents first-person narratives that address queer themes as they impact personal lives, such as coming out, silencing/closeting/passing, identity, sexuality, resistance, and intersectionality. In-depth analyses of topics such as subjectivity are addressed, and stories of being queer in social work education and working with straight and queer students, colleagues, and administrators are shared.

In Chapter 5, Norma Jean Profitt and Brenda Richard discuss their experiences of being queer in social work practice and education. Their analyses interweave personal experience with the history of the feminist and queer rights movements and what they see as social work values and ethics. In presenting their experiences as white queer social workers and faculty, this chapter highlights the pivotal place of political movements in making meaning in their lives. In addition, directions for retheorizing gender, sexuality, and sex in social work are explored. The authors also critique current social work theories, knowledges, and approaches to LGBTQs in social work practice and education, and they recommend strategies to queer social work.

Currently, social work education perpetuates heterosexism. In Chapter 6, queer-identified social work students Karolyn Martin and Robyn Lippett

recount their experiences in an Atlantic Canada social work program. In their classrooms and learning community, they encountered tokenization and minoritization (though perhaps not intentional) during discussions of sexualities. They advocate for the adoption of a queer approach to social work education – one rooted in social constructionism and queer theory – that would enable investigation of the privileging of heterosexuality and the dismantling of binary approaches to sexualities. Thus, a queer approach promotes an understanding of sexualities and identities as fluid, diverse, and socially constructed. Martin and Lippett offer two recommendations for implementing a queer approach to social work education: emphasis on self-reflexivity in the social work program and promotion of student opportunities for praxis beyond the classroom.

In Chapter 7, Maryam Khan suggests that exploration of religion and spirituality is warranted in social work courses when such dimensions comprise the social identities of both faculty and student constituencies. She argues that if social work is to be inclusive of queer Muslims and other religious queers, it must examine the nexus of religiosity, spirituality, and sexuality. This chapter debunks conceptions of a secular queer identity and challenges contemporary notions of secular spirituality. The author discusses her experiences, as a student and a part-time post-secondary educator, of incorporating a faith-based spirituality in social work andragogy and practice.

Chapter 8, by Jade Pichette, focuses on transmisogyny – the interaction between transphobia and misogyny that particularly targets trans women. Even in anti-oppressive social work education, this topic is rarely addressed. If trans women are mentioned at all in social work, it is usually by authors who appropriate their lives. Increasingly, there is a need to address gaps in education that render trans women an invisible part of the LGBTQ community. Pichette discusses her own experiences as a trans woman social worker and offers suggestions on addressing transmisogyny in the classroom. Transmisogyny breeds in social work in many forms, such as not mentioning the lives of trans women, listening to cis authors talk about trans women, and expressing micro-aggression or outright bigotry toward trans women. Pichette sheds some light on the exclusion of trans women in social work and provides constructive solutions.

Part 3: The Queering Project, challenges the current state of Canadian social work academe. It focuses on the queering project – providing alternative perspectives and exploring diverse ways in which social work education can be queered while remaining true to the profession's principles and standards of practice. Thus, this project is very much aligned with the values of social work itself: the celebration of diversity; the pursuit of social justice; and

engagement with praxis. This part of the book discusses how social work education and the discipline can better assist queer-identified academics and students to be safely out. In terms of community and collective action, it also examines how to connect the queering project and interested stakeholders (i.e., service users, academics and students, field instructors and social workers, administrators, policy makers, researchers, and activists). This is congruent with social work education's commitment to community collaboration in the ongoing development of the profession, one that will be inclusive of queers and their sensibilities.

In Chapter 9, Shelley L. Craig, Lauren B. McInroy, and Christopher Doiron note that negative experiences remain relatively common for LGBTQ students on post-secondary campuses, yet the perceptions of LGBTQ social work students at their institutions and in their programs have received little consideration, particularly in Canada. Assessment of these educational climates is essential to encourage safe and productive classrooms for LGBTQ students and to ensure that their identities are adequately represented in the social work profession. This chapter describes a recent study of the educational climates for LGBTQ students in the bachelor of social work and master of social work programs at English-language Canadian institutions. Participants generally reported that their institutions were at least somewhat accepting of LGBTQ issues, yet a third of them also encountered homophobia in their programs. Many stated that their instructors were poorly informed regarding non-discrimination policies and that LGBTQ issues were underrepresented in curriculum content. Students felt that their classmates and faculty were uncomfortable with their LGBTQ identities and noted that faculty was often unsupportive: 19 percent reported that faculty expressed homophobia, and 22 percent indicated that faculty expressed transphobia. The authors offer systemic recommendations to address these challenges.

Recent societal gains for LGBTQ people have led to an increasing emphasis on aligning anti-homophobia advocacy with social work's core values and embracing cultural competence approaches in curriculum and practice. These approaches encourage practitioners to challenge their own homophobic and heterosexist beliefs and attitudes, and offer them resources to work confidently with LGBTQ service users. In Chapter 10, Becky Idems builds on queer and postmodern scholarship to challenge the normalizing and conservatizing function of shifts toward competency and traces their alignment with the neo-liberal project. Furthermore, Idems argues for a deliberate and politicized queered approach to social work within neo-liberal contexts. Thus, she explores the potential of using queerness as a mode of inquiry, rather than as a practice

outcome or a knowable certainty. Outlining the politicized emergence of poly-amorous communities, and discussing three principles at the heart of poly ethics, Idems explores polyamory as an “outlaw theory” that has the potential to broaden student notions of inclusion and exclusion while simultaneously challenging and expanding andragogical strategies to help students explore tensions between social control and social justice. In doing so, the chapter traces a path for the adoption of all manner of queering inquiries in classrooms.

In Chapter 11, Delores Mullings focuses on older black LGBTQ adults. Social workers remain largely unaware of the concerns, potential interventions, and practices relating to this population, from both a research and an andragogical perspective. Although ongoing dialogue and research increasingly attempt to engage LGBTQ communities in discussions about aging-related concerns, black queer people have been largely excluded from this discussion in Canada. Nor do they tend to figure in research, which means that they are virtually non-existent in the educational content of social work schools. Mullings adds to the discussion about queer older adults from a black perspective, emphasizing gaps in social work education and offering teaching strategies and recommendations to help prepare students to engage in ethical and socially just field work with this population.

Rural and northern experiences for LGBTQ individuals are frequently isolating and fraught with abuse, sexual prejudice, sexual stigma, and homonegativity, experiences that can be seen as paralleling those of other non-dominant groups. Bringing the concerns and needs of LGBTQ communities to the forefront in rural areas can be challenging and may take efforts on a number of fronts. Queering social work has an important role to play in this regard. With this in mind, Chapter 12, written by Jan Yorke, Ligaya Byrch, Marlene Ham, Matthew Craggs, and Tanya Shute, explores the barriers, opportunities, and contexts that face LGBTQ communities in the rural and northern setting of Simcoe County, Ontario, including a discussion of socio-cultural, political, and ideological factors. The chapter also examines the relationship between rural and northern educational institutions and the queer community, and it uncovers how academia has legitimized queerness in Simcoe County and transformed “queerful” (fearful) to “queerious” (curious). Finally, through the examination of LGBTQ history in Simcoe County and the use of a community engagement model, the authors demonstrate how social work students and academics have used community-level knowledge to work toward local LGBTQ policy development and implementation.

It is the position of this book, and of its contributors, that social work educators have an ethical obligation and responsibility to support students in the

following ways: developing awareness of heterosexist cisgendered privilege; strengthening their knowledge and use of analytical, assessment, practice, and research skills with LGBTQ individuals and communities; working toward dismantling heterosexism, homophobia, and cisgenderism; and creating the conditions necessary for social change. Although Canadian LGBTQ communities and individuals have made some gains in terms of public education, legal rights, and Pride organizing, “homophobia and heterosexism remain dominant, both officially – such as in the Canadian education and health systems – and even more unofficially” (Knecht, 2011, p. 128). If we do not act to queer social work and academia, we run the risk of harming queer-identified colleagues, students, service users, and their allies. Supporting this conclusion, Logie, Bridge, and Bridge (2007) emphasize that “it is imperative that social workers address personal biases in order to prevent perpetuating the oppression and further marginalizing the LGBT populations” (p. 201). They also suggest that failure to remedy these gaps in the research, education, literature, and practice can negatively affect care, empathy, and service delivery, and can decrease the quality of education that students receive. The failure to address these issues has also resulted in the relative obscurity of queer-based theories, issues, and people in the Canadian social work profession. This makes inquiring about and queering social work a virtually untapped topic in Canada. Our hope is that this volume will begin the dialogue, scholarship, and research aimed at addressing these gaps in social work education.

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PART 1

**From Absence to Presence –
Queers Positioning Themselves in Social Work**

A Queer History

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Social work administrators, educators, and field instructors have a responsibility to assist students to develop awareness of heterosexist cisgendered privilege, strengthen their knowledge and use of analytical, assessment, practice, and research skills with lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer (LGBTQ) individuals and communities, work toward dismantling heterosexism, homophobia, and cisgenderism, and create social change. To do this, social workers, educators, and students need to understand queer history and past struggles and victories, including the history of queer communities, resistance, activism, and social movements. To this end, I present a brief history of LGBTQs over time; describe evolving views of homosexuality and corresponding patterns of judgment, punishment, and persecution; and analyze the absence of LGBTQ issues and those identified as “other” in mainstream history, literature, scholarship, and research. I also provide an overview of Canadian LGBTQ communities, their issues and movements, sought-after and achieved rights, and their changing absence/presence in society, archived historical records, and activism resulting from their engagement in social movements.

Historical Presence and Absence

As early as the seventh century BC, there is mention of same-sex attraction in the women-to-women love poems of Sappho on the Greek island of Lesbos (Miller, 1995). According to Adam (1995), ancient Greek and Roman literature frequently describes behaviours that are deemed homosexual today. However,

most of this literature and history focuses exclusively on male relationships. He argues that, in the classical era, “it was common for many (sometimes all) males to have homosexual relationships, at least for a period of their lives” (p. 1). There is little documentation about same-sex relationships through the Dark Ages and the Christian crusades, but one might assume that they did continue. Monter (1981) claims that “a continuous homosexual subculture has existed since as early as the 12th century” (p. 42). Moreover, Sylvestre (1983) argues that same-sex relationships between males were common, especially in monasteries, armies, and colleges. Thus, a tradition of same-sex relationships survived in gender-segregated monastic life over the twelfth to fifteenth centuries. With an emphasis on punishment for what was seen as immoral, fifteenth-century records report same-sex behaviours in the Venetian mercantile elite, and the sixteenth-century Spanish Inquisition also documented same-sex behaviours (Miller, 1995). Similarly, sodomy trials involving noblemen and their servants were recorded in the seventeenth century (Adam, 1995).

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the industrial revolution and a massive rural-to-urban migration brought networks of people together who shared common interests and sexual orientations. Interesting questions have been asked regarding how sexual behaviours and identities intersect to transform urban landscapes and vice versa (Houlbrook and Cocks, 2006). This period of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in gay history is often called the “Belle Époque” (Miller, 1995, p. 76). Indeed, there are indications that at this time same-sex relationships, at least in the upper classes, seemed almost fashionable in England and France. This is evidenced by the proliferation of Molly houses (same-sex gathering places) and the recorded practices of club members who participated in same-sex relationships and behaviours, androgyny, drag, and cross dressing (Miller, 1995). In fact, in 1791, the penal code of France actually decriminalized homosexuality (Miller, 1995). The Belle Époque also embodies a long history of queer individuals and communities resisting heterosexist societal norms by gathering together in ways that defied cultural, religious, and social mores.

In 1869, Karl Maria Kertbeny was the first to use the word “homosexuality” in print (as cited in Miller, 1995, p. 13). A Hungarian doctor, K.M. Benkart, initially defined homosexuality as a “congenital condition” (Warner, 2002, p. 22). In addition, at this same time in Western Europe, there were signs that a male homosexual underground was being established, which demonstrated the beginnings of a burgeoning gay semi-public presence and resistance to heterosexist dictates and expectations (Adam, 1995; Miller, 1995). By 1891, early inquiry, research, and scholarship related to same-sex relationships and

behaviours had also begun. For instance, John Addington Symonds, an English scholar, wrote and printed fifty copies of *A Problem in Modern Ethics*, which offered “a systematic review of the existing scholarly literature on homosexuality” (Adam, 1995, p. 17). The new field of sexology – the study of sexuality and sexual behaviours – also arose during this period (Houlbrook and Cocks, 2006). Furthermore, British sexologist Havelock Ellis famously outed several exceptional men in history, including “Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, ... and Cellini” (Miller, 1995, p. 16). Miller (1995) suggests that homosexuality was fairly common in English prep schools, colleges, and universities. Gay society and culture continued to grow and strengthen through the early to mid-twentieth century. The Institute for Sex Research was founded, films with gay subject material were being made and shown (though censored), gay bars and clubs were flourishing in major urban centres, and the World League for Sexual Reform was created (Adam, 1995; Hirschfeld, 1975a, 1975b). In the United States, these gains culminated in 1924, with the incorporation of the first gay rights group – the Society for Human Rights (Adam, 1995, p. 46). Space does not permit a full discussion of how queer sexuality has been practised and taken up in the broader realm of sexuality across the ages, but it is worth noting that it has always had, and will continue to have, a place in the social, cultural, and historical phenomenon of sexuality (Houlbrook and Cocks, 2006).

Homosexuality as Sin and Crime

Clearly, same-sex relationships, behaviours, activities, communities, activism, and resistance have been present for a long time. They have also been accompanied by long-standing and corresponding patterns of judgment, punishment, and persecution. These patterns evolved in societies, religions, and states that viewed homosexuality “as a sin, as a crime, and more recently, as a sickness” (Vogel and North, 2012, p. 127). For centuries, the churches and states that labelled homosexuality as a sin and/or a crime went to great lengths to repress and punish it (Warner, 2002). As early as 527 A.D., Emperor Justinian “introduced the first civil law against homosexuality,” which was based on the Mosaic laws of the ancient Hebrews (p. 17). In Europe, from as early as the twelfth century, individuals who were accused of sodomy were persecuted and put to death (Adam, 1995). Later, during the Inquisition, those accused of or found to participate in same-sex relationships were burned at the stake as witches. In the sixteenth century, Britain formalized a statute prescribing death as the penalty for the “Abominable Act of Buggery” (Warner, 2002, p. 18).

In 1885, England also added laws against oral sex, which was called “indecent behavior” (Miller, 1995, p. 47). In 1895, famous flamboyant playwright and poet Oscar Wilde was charged for indecent behaviour (Miller, 1995). After a trial that resulted in a hung jury and a subsequent retrial, he was convicted and served two years of hard labour in prison. English society was simultaneously shocked and titillated by the uncovering of Wilde’s same-sex behaviours. He became the symbol of masculine homosexuality in the Western world, and his trials epitomized negative nineteenth-century social attitudes about homosexuality (Miller, 1995).

In Canada, the first documentation of punitive law regarding homosexuality dates from 1648, when a male in New France, which later became Canada, was convicted for same-sex activity (Kinsman, 1987). In addition, homosexuality, masturbation, prostitution, bawdy houses, and pornography were added to the Canadian Criminal Code during the nineteenth century (Warner, 2002). In 1890, a new offence of gross indecency was enshrined in the Criminal Code to punish male-on-male sex acts. However, in 1892, Canada changed the laws and reclassified buggery as an offence against morality, no longer punished by death (Warner, 2002). Homosexuality remained a crime in Canada until the late 1960s, when many of these unjust laws were finally repealed. In contrast, anti-sodomy laws in the United States were repealed in all states only as late as 2003 (Fields, 2004).

Homosexuality as Sickness

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw the rise of psychiatry, Victorian attitudes, the social sciences, the Christian, Social Purity, and public health movements, and McCarthyism (Adam, 1995; Miller, 1995; Warner, 2002). From the long-standing state practice of criminalizing same-sex relationships, it was not a major transition, in more modern times, to move from viewing homosexuality as sin and crime to labelling it as disease and deviance. According to Warner (2002), by medicalizing same-sex behaviours and desires as illness, the developing health professions acted to support church and state battles “to suppress homosexual acts and simultaneously define them in clinical terms” (p. 22). As mentioned previously, K.M. Benkart defined homosexuality as a medical condition. In 1886, Richard von Krafft-Ebing’s book *Psychopathia Sexualis* described it as “a physiologically based psychiatric pathology ... a weakness of the nervous system” (as cited in Warner, 2002, p. 22). Pursuant to this, homosexual males were labelled as “Inverts” (men who, for congenital reasons, behaved like women). In a peculiar social twist, this label

soon changed in popular culture to “Perverts,” and homosexual men were seen as abnormal and unnatural. Warner (2002) states that the writings of Sigmund Freud connected homosexuality with arrested sexual development. According to him, Freud believed that all people were born with innate bisexuality but that they matured into monosexuality as adults. In contrast, Hodges (2011) contends that Freud’s explanations of normative sexual desire may not be so straightforward and are more complicated than Warner suggests. Indeed, Hodges hypothesizes that a queer reading of Freud’s work can challenge heteronormativity in psychoanalytic theory.

The framing of homosexuality as illness was met with resistance, particularly from gay men who attempted to shift the scientific discourse away from illness and psychiatric disorders. Nonetheless, by the 1950s, the psychiatric profession had chosen to diagnose homosexuality as a “mental disorder caused by environmental and psychological conditions” (Warner, 2002, p. 24). Indeed, psychiatry’s first *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) classified homosexuality as “sexual deviance” (Warner, 2002, p. 24). This definition soon became prevalent in the social and behavioural sciences, and in medical circles; it was institutionalized in 1968, when homosexuality was listed as a mental disorder in the DSM3 (Ivey, D’Andrea, and Ivey, 2012; Warner, 2002). In the name of medical science, attempts were then made to cure these “mentally ill” people. These misguided (and often heinous) interventions included “psychoanalysis, drugs, aversion therapy, and even lobotomies” (Warner, 2002, p. 24). After much social protest, civil unrest, and direct action by gay and lesbian activists in the early 1970s, homosexuality was finally removed from the DSM in 1973 (Jagose, 1996).

The Absence of Lesbian Women

Other than the poems of Sappho (mentioned above), female same-sex relationships have received scant attention in the literature. Since the study of history usually consists of men writing about other men, documentation has typically overlooked women. Furthermore, in terms of social mores and beliefs, especially related to civil law and property rights, women have usually been deemed as non-persons and therefore non-sexual, so their sexual activities have largely been ignored (Warner, 2002). As well, because no penis is involved, “women’s relationships were usually thought not to be sexual by definition” (Adam, 1995, p. 5). Indeed, it is rare to find historical records in which gay and lesbian people speak for themselves, and for centuries women had been forbidden to read or write.

Although for the most part, women-attracted women have been ignored in historical records, there are a few exceptions. Of course, Sappho's poems are one example. There is also some evidence that, during the Belle Époque, female-to-female sexual relationships were common among some upper-class groups. Adam (1995) highlights another rare example of queer women being mentioned in history. He describes the unique situation of Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby, known as the ladies of Llangollen, Wales. Eighteenth-century correspondence and diaries reveal that wealthy upper-class women were expected to marry, but they chose to live with each other instead. In Britain, there were also documented cases of women living together as "husband and wife" (Jennings, 2007). Since women were seen as non-sexual beings, "there was little reason for such relationships to be called sexual or homosexual and no warrant for women to identify themselves in terms of sexual orientation" (p. 5).

Interestingly, the period of the American Revolution produced some instances of gender bending or women passing as men (Miller, 1995). As well, documented acknowledgment of female same-sex relationships exists for a brief period in early-nineteenth-century America, when bright young privileged women left home to pursue education and chose to participate in same-sex relationships (Miller, 1995, p. 57). These relationships were known as Boston marriages, and their same-sex proclivities were called "smashing." Indeed, they became so prevalent on university and college campuses that the US Association of Collegiate Alumnae appointed a research committee in the 1880s to study the phenomenon (Miller, 1995).

Except for these infrequent examples, lesbian and bisexual women have largely been absent from society's view, historical records, research, and literature. This has made finding evidence of their existence as well as tracing and documenting the many and varied expressions of their sexuality very challenging (Jennings, 2007). Such is the case even in social work, which could be called the queerest of the helping professions as it was founded on Jane Addams's female-centred community development work at Hull House. Although Addams would not have been seen as a lesbian in her day, her long-term living arrangements with same-sex partners, female friendships, intimate relationships, and work with and on behalf of women could be described as the beginning of queer social work. According to Stebner (1997), in a world of nineteenth-century ideals related to femininity and womanhood, Addams (along with six female colleagues) was revolutionary in producing woman-centred spaces and woman-identified practices. Indeed, their contributions and sexualities were not acknowledged for many years, partially because they