

# **The Bisexual Option**

Second Edition

**Fritz Klein**

Foreword by Regina U. Reinhardt



# **The Bisexual Option**

## ***Second Edition***

**This page intentionally left blank**

# **The Bisexual Option**

## ***Second Edition***

Fritz Klein, MD

Foreword by  
Regina U. Reinhardt, PhD

 **Routledge**  
Taylor & Francis Group  
New York London

First published by

Harrington Park Press, an imprint of The Haworth Press, Inc., 10 Alice Street, Binghamton, NY  
13904-1580

This edition published 2013 by Routledge  
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017  
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

© 1993 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, microfilm and recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Klein, Fred.

The bisexual option / Fritz Klein.—2nd ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 1-56023-033-9 (acid free paper).

1. Bisexuality—United States. 2. Sex (Psychology) 3. Sex customs—United States. I. Title.

HQ74.K55 1993

92-44323

306.76'5—dc20

CIP

To M. S.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Fritz Klein, MD**, is a psychiatrist in private practice, specializing in sexual orientation and relationship problems, short-term therapy using mainly neuro-linguistic programming and Ericksonian hypnosis, and HIV/AIDS therapy for gays, bisexuals, and drug addicts. He is coauthor of *Man, His Body, His Sex* (Doubleday & Co., 1978) and coeditor of *Bisexualities, Theory and Research* (The Haworth Press, 1986). Dr. Klein has lectured on human sexuality, given workshops on neuro-linguistic programming and hypnosis, and has been a visiting professor I.G.S./F.I.T., Florida. A board-certified psychiatrist, he is a member of the Examining Board of the American College of Sexology and the National Association of Neuro-Linguistic Programming.

# CONTENTS

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>ix</b>
<i>Regina U. Reinhardt, PhD</i>	
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>PART I: WHAT IS BISEXUALITY</b>	
<b>Chapter 1. The Threat</b>	<b>3</b>
<i>Both the heterosexual and the homosexual find the bisexual threatening. The myth of the bisexual's nonexistence and the stance of "either/or" is discussed.</i>	
<b>Chapter 2. Toward a Definition</b>	<b>13</b>
<i>The various dimensions, facets, and aspects of the bisexual's definition are given. The Klein Sexual Orientation Grid is explained. An analysis of cultural and biological factors of sexual orientation.</i>	
<b>Chapter 3. "The Bisexual-Intimacy Level"</b>	<b>29</b>
<i>The difference between emotional and sexual intimacy. The connection between intimacy and hetero- and homophobia. A profile of a heterosexual male who is able to be emotionally intimate with men.</i>	
<b>Chapter 4. Sexuality and the Oedipus Complex: A New Look</b>	<b>39</b>
<i>An explanation of the Oedipus complex. The view that both homosexuals and bisexuals are able to resolve it successfully. An example showing how one bisexual male has resolved it.</i>	
<b>PART II: BISEXUALITY AND HEALTH</b>	
<b>Chapter 5. The Troubled Bisexual—The Healthy Bisexual</b>	<b>53</b>
<i>Definition of neurosis and the various types of troubled bisexuals, as well as the healthy functioning of the bisexual.</i>	



<b>Chapter 6. The Troubled Bisexual–Profiles</b>	<b>63</b>
<i>Four troubled bisexuals: Nora, Walter, Ann, Donald.</i>	
<b>Chapter 7. The Healthy Bisexual–Profiles</b>	<b>83</b>
<i>Three healthy bisexuals: Harold, Hazel, Jane.</i>	
<b>PART III: THE BISEXUAL IN SOCIETY</b>	
<b>Chapter 8. Sociological Findings</b>	<b>107</b>
<i>The lack of a bisexual community or subculture. Sociological findings by various researchers. Results of survey taken of a bisexual social group.</i>	
<b>Chapter 9. The Bisexual in History and the Arts</b>	<b>133</b>
<i>A list of famous bisexuals in past and present. Profiles of Alexander the Great, Oscar Wilde, Somerset Maugham, and Colette. A review of the Greek civilization as well as the Bloomsbury Group. List of examples as well as a discussion of three works in which the bisexual “ideal” and “truth” are portrayed.</i>	
<b>Chapter 10. The Bisexual Future: Present-Day Factors</b>	<b>159</b>
<i>A discussion of the nine factors that will influence bisexuality in the future: AIDS, sex roles and stereotypes, androgyny, friendship and lovers, family, “gay lib,” the women’s movement and feminism, myths, dilemmas.</i>	
<b>APPENDIX A. The Bisexual as Portrayed in the Arts</b>	<b>171</b>
<b>APPENDIX B. Bisexual Survey Results</b>	<b>189</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>201</b>
<b>Index</b>	<b>207</b>

## Foreword

As a bisexual woman and a psychotherapist, it seemed both natural and important for me to research bisexual women because so little work had been done in this field, and of the little that had been researched, there were very few studies on women. When in the course of my work for a PhD, I found the first edition of Dr. Klein's book, it was immediately meaningful to me, both professionally and personally. Since that time, I have used *The Bisexual Option* as a tool for therapy in both individual and group work.

Fourteen years ago, when Dr. Fritz Klein first set out to write *The Bisexual Option*, neither the New York Public Library nor the *Index Medicus* contained any reference to literature on bisexuality. What little there was available largely denied the existence of the bisexual. Individual lifestyle preferences recognized today as "bisexual" were labeled "heterosexual with homosexual tendencies." Many treatments were used to assist in changing behavior, rather than supporting and maintaining a healthy lifestyle integrating all sexual preferences.

Dr. Klein's work presents a continuum of sexual, social, and emotional preferences over time, within which all of us can recognize ourselves and others around us. Self-awareness about one's sexuality is a continuing process, and *The Bisexual Option* is a book we can return to again and again for self-knowledge. I have found it useful myself to return to the book several times over the nine years I have been associated with Dr. Klein in San Diego.

In childhood, I erotically fantasized about and experimented with both boys and girls. My puberty was entirely void of feelings for girls, and these same-sex feelings did not return until my late teens, at which time they brought to me the recognition of my own bisexuality. I have spent my adult life happily married while maintaining secondary relationships with women with the full knowledge and consent of my husband.

Dr. Klein's presentation of the healthy bisexual and the troubled bisexual provides another scale on which we can locate ourselves. Identification on this scale as well changes with time and experience. The description of the healthy bisexual sets a model against which we can compare ourselves and toward which we can strive.

Many people are confused and fearful of recognizing and accepting their sexual preferences. Without direction and counsel they may never proceed beyond the question, "Am I a bisexual?" I recommend this book to my patients who are confused or uncertain about their sexual preferences. They return to therapy knowing they are not alone and with a clearer set of questions about themselves. Bisexuality is much more than a sexual preference. It is a framework of social, emotional, behavioral, and ideal preferences as well. We all have a need to belong, but the first acceptance we must have is our own.

While, as Dr. Klein points out, bisexuals have a high tolerance for ambiguity, they nonetheless represent the most complex state of sexual relatedness. In the end, it is not our preferences that lead us to a rich full life but rather our capacity for intimacy.

As leader, since 1984, of the Bisexual Forum, an organization founded by Dr. Klein, I have had the opportunity to work with individuals along the full spectrum of preferences so well described by the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid.

Meeting several times a month in a variety of group discussions and social settings, we have created in San Diego a social and support environment for a bisexual lifestyle. In the present state of awareness about bisexuality, the next stage of social development in America will appear when we are able to integrate a bisexual lifestyle into the prevalent social fabric, as has already occurred in many European countries. Dr. Klein's work has provided much of the foundation for this growth.

*Regina U. Reinhardt, PhD*

## Acknowledgements

I am most grateful to the many people who have aided me in this work. First I want to thank all those who were kind enough to give of their time and share their histories with me. I have rearranged and changed the details of their stories to ensure confidentiality.

Chuck Mishan, the director of the Bisexual Forum, was most helpful in every way. Both Aphrodite Clamar and Peter B. Field devoted many hours in diligent research. This effort is truly appreciated. I am indebted to Ed Hanlon for his enthusiasm and help. Special thanks go to John DeCecco whose encouragement made this second edition possible.

*The author gratefully acknowledges permission to include material from the following:*

From *THE CITY AND THE PILLAR* by Gore Vidal, Copyright © 1948 by E. P. Dutton & Co., Revised edition Copyright © 1965 by E. P. Dutton & Co., by permission of the author.

From *ESCAPE FROM THE SHADOWS* by Robin Maugham, Copyright © 1972 by Lord Maugham, by permission of the publishers, McGraw-Hill Book Company.

From *THE FOX* by D. H. Lawrence, Copyright © 1923 by Frieda Lawrence, renewed 1951, by permission of The Viking Press.

From *GIOVANNI'S ROOM* by James Baldwin, Copyright © 1956 by James Baldwin, by permission of The Dial Press.

From *THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS* by Ursula K. LeGuin, Copyright © 1969 by Ursula K. LeGuin, by permission of the publishers, Ace Books.

From *MAN & WOMAN, BOY & GIRL* by John Money and Anke Ehrhardt, Copyright © 1972 by The Johns Hopkins University Press, by permission of the publishers.

From *NEUROSIS AND HUMAN GROWTH* by Karen Horney, Copyright © 1950 by W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., by permission of the publishers.

From *ORLANDO* by Virginia Woolf, Copyright © 1928 by Virginia Woolf, Copyright © 1956 by Leonard Woolf, by permission of the publishers, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.

From *OSCAR WILDE: A BIOGRAPHY* by H. Montgomery Hyde, Copyright © 1975 by Harford Productions, Ltd. by permission of the publisher, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Inc. (Note: Apart from a few brief notes, this letter, now in The Pierpont Morgan Library, New

York, is the only one from Wilde to his wife that is known to have survived.)

From *SEXUAL BEHAVIOR IN THE HUMAN FEMALE* by Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardell B. Pomeroy, Clyde E. Martin, and Paul H. Gebhard, Copyright © 1953 by W. B. Saunders & Co., by permission of The Institute for Sex Research, Inc.

From *SEXUAL BEHAVIOR IN THE HUMAN MALE* by Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardell B. Pomeroy, and Clyde E. Martin, Copyright © 1948 by W. B. Saunders & Co., by permission of The Institute for Sex Research, Inc.

From *SEXUAL DEVIANCE AND SEXUAL DEVIANTS* edited by Eric Goode and Richard Troiden, Copyright © 1974 by E. Goode and R. Troiden, by permission of the publisher, Wm. Morrow & Co., Inc.

From *TOWARD A RECOGNITION OF ANDROGYNY* by Carolyn G. Heilbrun, Copyright © 1973 by C. G. Heilbrun, by permission of the publishers, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

From *THE TWO WORLDS OF SOMERSET MAUGHAM* by W. Menard, Copyright © 1965 by W. Menard, by permission of the publisher, Sherbourne Press.

From *WOMEN IN LOVE* by D. H. Lawrence, Copyright © 1920, 1922 by David Herbert Lawrence, renewed 1948, by Frieda Lawrence, by permission of The Viking Press.

**This page intentionally left blank**

*PART I:*  
*WHAT IS BISEXUALITY*



**This page intentionally left blank**

## Chapter 1

### The Threat

The New York Public Library, known for its liberality, has two monographs on bisexuality. No books.

Why?

The *Index Medicus*, which lists all articles appearing in scientific journals on every conceivable medical subject, had 47 pieces on homosexuality. None at all on bisexuality. The category is omitted altogether.

Why?

The New York Psychoanalytic Institute, one of the major organizations of its kind in America and, indeed, in the world, has in its library catalogue over 600 items on the subject of homosexuality—and only 60 on bisexuality.

A few weeks prior to gathering the above information for the first edition of this book, I received a call from a friend asking me to lunch. Liz is the wife of a successful New York designer of women's clothes. There was an urgency in her tone that caused me to respond with an immediate yes, although I was quite busy.

"I'm free tomorrow," I said.

"I need to talk to you today."

"How about a drink around four?"

"Your office?"

"Fine."

When she arrived I poured her a drink. As we sat down she said, "Do you always offer your patients a drink?"

"I hardly consider you a patient."

"Well, I don't know. You'd better turn on the tape. I may never say again what I'm about to say now."

I switched on the machine.

"You know that Bill and I have been married for over twenty years."

"Quite happily, from all appearances."

"In our case appearances are not deceiving. We are very happy."

"So you and Bill are not the problem."

"In a sense, we are. How do I put this?" She sat a while staring into her glass. "About a month ago we were at a dinner party and this psychologist was there, an expert of some kind. He was holding forth on the nature of sexuality and he said that the homosexual and heterosexual were facts of life, and that the bisexual didn't exist. Bill challenged that opinion and the psychologist just took him apart, saying that the bisexual is nothing more than a closet gay. Bill really felt bad when we left. Bill said he didn't believe anything the psychologist said, but still he couldn't come up with an effective rebuttal. Since that incident we've been in constant dialogue over bisexuality. We've talked about little else, and it's begun to affect his work and our lives. There are the children to think about, and . . . oh my God, I don't know where to begin."

"Which of you is bisexual?"

"We both are." She stopped to light a cigarette. "Does that surprise you?"

"It's been rumored for years that Bill is gay and that your marriage is a front."

"Do you believe that?"

"No."

"What do you . . . what have you believed about us?"

"That you are a couple very much in love. That Bill is bisexual and that you are heterosexual."

"You didn't suspect about me?"

"No. I suppose because you haven't been that open about it. Bill has been known to flirt now and then with both men and women."

"He hates the 'gay' label. Not because of the connotation—God, half the people we know are gay—but because it simply isn't true. I feel . . . ah . . . well, that's it. I really don't know how to label myself. Neither does Bill. For years we entertained the possibility that we were superneurotic. But now Bill feels that he's not neurotic but just the opposite. Healthy."

"What do you think?"

"You know that there is a flood of opinion out there that would drown both Bill and me with an army of experts to say that you can't be bisexual and healthy. Bill is better off being thought of as gay, with his marriage as a front, than he is as a bisexual."

"Does Bill know you called me?"

"Yes. We both want to resolve this. We hate being told we don't exist sexually. Do we? Does the bisexual exist outside of being a confused gay, or just sex-mad?"

"Not according to many experts."

"How do *you* feel?"

"One, I think it's a presumption to tell people they do not exist. And two, I think the bisexual not only exists independently of the homosexual label, but exists period."

"Can you prove that?"

"Well," I laughed, "that's a tall order at the moment. I have a patient coming in a few minutes, but give me some time to think about it."

When Liz left I took down a book from my shelves called *Changing Homosexuality in the Male* by Dr. Lawrence J. Hatterer. I had read the book previously and I remembered that the point of view toward the bisexual was on the side of nonexistence.

In a list describing common and uncommon homosexual subcultures, Dr. Hatterer places the bisexual in the "disguised" group—along with closet queens and married males who regularly practice homosexuality. This almost universally held opinion is passed on to the public, both heterosexual and homosexual. And because it is easier to accept and understand the bisexual as a disguised homosexual, public acceptance of expert opinion goes for the most part unchallenged.

As disguised homosexual, the bisexual is by this process "reduced." We tend to categorize people, to put them into the most readily available group. In the worlds of commerce, government, and religion, this is to some degree logical. That this mistaken practice is also adopted by the individual in his or her search for self-identity—and held onto at all costs for lack of a suitable alternative—is tragic.

This is what Liz means when she says that Bill is better off being thought of as gay. Taking it further, if public and expert opinion are

the only guiding standards to self-identity, Bill is "better off" *thinking of himself* as gay. Human beings need to belong. They need to communicate with their peer group. They need to sit around the communal fire not only in warmth but in dignity.

This is especially true in our society when it comes to the business world. In the world of business, banners of visible achievement are flown. Products are manufactured and sold, people are employed, money is made and lost, all in the name of business. Coca-Cola is as internationally known a symbol as the Union Jack or the Stars and Stripes. Buying and selling is most successfully carried on when the people flying the banners know the buyers to whom they are selling. Advertisers know that certain groups of people will remain loyal to a product for a lifetime—if that product can be correctly aimed by means of a direct emotional appeal to the given particular group.

In government, too, the virtue of loyalty can be extolled and exploited for all kinds of personal gain, both good and bad—all the more easily if the exploiters know their targets' place in society and can keep them there. Wars are "sold" this way, just as are worthier propositions, such as that all humans are created equal. As long as human beings can be simply classified as one thing or the other, the possibilities are endless.

It would be absurd to suggest that bisexuals are any more or less evil (or, for that matter, good) than heterosexuals or homosexuals. It is absurd as well to suggest that bisexuals are any more or less loyal than other groups around the communal fire. But the quality of loyalty may be different. What we have failed to see up to this point is that the bisexual may be less loyal to the status quo than to nature. Differences, freedom of choice, have been a threat to the group since before the beginning of recorded time.

One of the classic romantic questions asked of psychiatrists is, can one love two women or two men at the same time? My answer to that one is, "One can if one can."

Can human beings love both men and women at the same time? They can if they can.

What does this do to the individual's standards of loyalty? Is he or she able to carry the burdens of trust necessary in relationships that are more than transient or skin-deep? Or is he or she, by playing a dual role, a "spy"?

During wartime, spies, when captured, may be shot. An even worse fate may await citizens convicted of treason. They are often held up to particularly vicious public scorn before being killed. As much today as in the remote past, loyalty to "one's own" is held dear by the human race, north, south, east, and west. We simply do not condone spying or treason. They are acts so abhorrent that we are shocked by their existence, and often feel no guilt in erasing the spy, the traitor, so that no living trace remains. Being "drummed out" is, in a very real sense, being told that it would have been better had you never been born, and that from this time forward the position will be taken that you never were. "My country—right or wrong," is a line straight to the human heart, a place of worship in the human psyche.

The bisexual resembles the spy in that he or she moves psycho-sexually freely among men and among women. The bisexual also resembles the traitor in that he or she is in a position to know the secrets of both camps, and to play one against the other. The bisexual, in short, is seen as a dangerous person, not to be trusted, because his or her party loyalty, so to speak, is nonexistent. And if one lacks this sort of loyalty, one is so far outside the human sexual pale that one is virtually nonexistent.

Let us return again to Dr. Hatterer's interesting word "disguise."

A disguise is a deceit. A human being who spends his or her life in disguise is not to be trusted. It follows that a Jew in Nazi-ruled Europe who disguised him- or herself as a non-Jew to keep from being killed was not to be trusted by anyone. Yet, in retrospect, there are few of us with a claim to intelligence, let alone humanity, who would not trust the secret Jew above the S.S. officer who proudly showed his true face to the world.

In our society, with its strong negative view of homosexual behavior of any kind, it is quite understandable when bisexuals, or "closet" homosexuals, disguise their behavior. *But bisexuality is not disguised homosexuality, nor is it disguised heterosexuality.* It is another way of sexual expression. Although it contains elements of both heterosexual and homosexual behavior, it is a way of being, in and of itself, a way neither better nor worse than the more accepted ways of healthy heterosexuality and healthy homosexuality.

No matter what sexual orientation a person has, he or she lives on a continuum. Despite the certainty of eventual death, the life of an individual goes on until that time. During the course of a lifetime, each individual plays a number of roles: father, mother, soldier, teacher, heterosexual, homosexual, and so on. We take comfort in the labels; they help define our relationships with one another and with the world at large. Yet with each label we acquire, we limit our infinite possibilities, our uniqueness. It is our insistence on labels that creates the "either-or" syndrome. This is well illustrated by the mother and father who came to see me about the progress of their 25-year-old daughter, who was a patient of mine. They are a nice couple, prosperous, good churchgoing citizens. All their lives they have marched in a sometimes meandering, sometimes straight line for God and country. They have been rewarded with a comfortable life. When they came to see me everything was in its place except their daughter, who had recently announced to them that for the moment she was living with a woman. They were particularly upset because they were paying part of my bill for the therapy necessary after their daughter's recent divorce.

"Would you rather she hadn't told you?" I asked.

"What kind of a world is this where such a thing can happen?" the father replied.

"What has happened?"

"If this is where therapy leads, then to go on paying is throwing good money after bad." The mother was on the verge of tears. "A lesbian. We sent her to you and now she's a lesbian."

"Why do you say she's a lesbian?"

"She told us."

"She told you she was a lesbian? She said that?"

They looked at each other as though allied against some dark, sinister force. The mother answered. "She's living and doing God knows what with a *woman*. What else do you call it?"

"What did your daughter call it?"

"Whatever she calls it, she's too sick to know what it is." The father waved his hand in a gesture of dismissal.

"She says she loves this woman," the mother said, comforting her husband with a pat on the arm. "She actually wants us to meet her."

"How do you feel about that?"