

# Solitary Sex and the Question of Gender

**Thomas  
Laqueur**

*Department of History,  
University of California  
at Berkeley*

**March 12, 2004  
Friday 4:00 pm**

Third Floor, Levis Faculty Center  
919 West Illinois Street, Urbana  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

*Sponsored by:*  
Department of History  
Women's and Gender History Graduate  
Symposium Organizers

*In conjunction with:*  
The Fifth Annual Graduate Symposium on  
Women's and Gender History is supported  
by more than 50 campus units.  
For a complete listing, please see  
[www.history.uiuc.edu/wghs/](http://www.history.uiuc.edu/wghs/)

*Series support provided by:*  
Office of the Chancellor  
Office of Equal Opportunity and Access  
Office of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for  
Academic Affairs  
Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research  
Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student  
Affairs  
The Center for Advanced Study  
George A. Miller Programs Committee  
Peggy Harris Memorial Fund  
The Council of Deans  
The Graduate College

Laqueur argues that the emergence of masturbation as a morally and medically exigent practice of sexuality in the eighteenth century brought women to the center of debates about the ethics of the self. He explains why female masturbation became the paradigmatically dangerous instance of this universal practice in the eighteenth century and why there developed a politically important divergence of the meaning of male and female autoeroticism in the century after Freud.

This talk is held in conjunction with the Fifth Annual Graduate Symposium on Women's and Gender History. For more information, please contact [genderysymp@uiuc.edu](mailto:genderysymp@uiuc.edu) or access [www.history.uiuc.edu/wghs/](http://www.history.uiuc.edu/wghs/).

For background information, please consult [www.cas.uiuc.edu](http://www.cas.uiuc.edu) or the CAS Events Line, 333-1118.