Havelock Ellis (1859-1939), a British physician, psychologist, sex reformer, a proponent of post-Victorian modernism, and one of the preeminent European sex theorists, was MS’s lover, intellectual mentor and remained a close friend until his
death. MS met Ellis in London, and when she told him she wanted to study birth control literature, Ellis began meeting with her to advise her on the literature. (Grosskurth, Havelock Ellis, 243; for more on Ellis and MS see Volumes 1 & 2)

Sex in Relation to Society
[632] In cases where the husband is sterile and the couple wants a child “the question of impregnating the wife by other methods has occasionally arisen. Divorce on the ground of sterility is not possible, and, even if it were, the couple, although they wish to have a child, have not usually any wish to separate. Under these circumstances, in order to secure the desired end, without departing widely from widely accepted rules of morality, the attempt is occasionally made to effect artificial fecundation by injecting the semen from a healthy male.”

But says artificial fecundation “is nearly always difficult to effect, and often impossible.”

“Opinion, on the whole, has been opposed to the practice of artificial fecundation, even apart from the question of the probabilities of success.”

[633] apart from objections of the law, the church and medicine “it would certainly seem that those who desire offspring would do as well,...to adopt the natural method, which is also the best, or else to abandon to others the task of procreation, for which they are not adequately equipped.”

Grosskurth:
MS and Ellis were getting closer by Christmas. She told him she planned to study literature and practice of birth control before returning to the US. Ellis had suggested they meet at his home often to talk and at the British Museum, where he would advise her on what to read. (P. 243)

Daniel J. Kevles, In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity (Cambridge, MA, 1985)
[85-86] Quotes Ellis: “We generate the race; we alone can regenerate the race.” (From Ellis, The Problem of Race Regeneration, 1911) Ellis, Shaw and others wanted to use new knowledge of heredity to increase the numbers of the fit.

[87] in Ellis’s view the class system would first have to be destroyed before the race could be regenerated since the best stocks were spread all thru the classes.

[87] “Yet many social-radical eugenicists doubted that people with hereditary
deficiencies would refrain from marriage for the good of the race. That, Ellis noted, had been the Utopian fantasy of Francis Galton – with the result, he added, that eugenics was ‘constantly misunderstood, ridiculed, regarded as a fad.’ But now that the mechanical control of reproduction was ever more reliably at hand, Ellis argued, eugenics no longer needed to be impractical, ridiculous, or contrary to natural human desires.”


[50] “We are beginning to realise that we are the keepers of our children, of the race that is to come after us. Our sense of social responsibility is becoming a sense of racial responsibility. It is that enlarged sense of responsibility which renders possible what we call the regeneration of the race.”

[51] “It is we who are, more immediately, the creators of men. We generate the race; we alone can regenerate the race.”

Havelock Ellis, “Birth Control and Eugenics,” Eugenics Review 9 [April 1917]

[35-37] Ellis claimed that notions of race regeneration had been “misunderstood, ridiculed, regarded as a fad” due to the inability of eugenic pioneers, such as Francis Galton, to set forth practical applications for eugenic theories while advancing absurd positions, such as the belief that people with hereditary defects would voluntarily refrain from marriage for the good of the race.

Pivot of Civilization

[178] MS agreed with Ellis in Pivot of Civilization that eugenicists generally lacked “feasible remedies,” and subjected themselves to ridicule until they paired hereditary knowledge with the use of birth control.

Ellis, like other sex reformers, believed sexual happiness was possible only when sexual intercourse was separated from reproduction and moral consequences.


[168] “One of Ellis’s major contributions was to offer clear support for the insertion of a note of relativity into the discussion of sexual conduct; to define abnormality as a statistical rather than a moral anomaly, and to deal with it in the same context as the commoner forms of sexual activity.”

checked: Vincent Brome & Phyllis Grosskurth books on Ellis (in my office)
2) ID Havelock Ellis' posthumous book 166008, 1945/11/11

About Havelock's last book--Hugh dear--I will never discuss it with anyone but you--

Research Completed:

Grosskurth, Ellis

[275] A reference to Ellis’s autobiography, My Life, posthumously published in 1939, which he had been working on for decades. Though it ended with the death of his wife Edith Ellis, in 1917, he kept rewriting and inserting new section.

NY Times, Oct. 14, 1939
Book published in Oct. 31, 1939

3) Locate and quote Ellis’s mention of MS in his book; document any outrage from her friends 166008, 1945/11/11

Friends of mine over here & elsewhere, who know how I worshipped H. E. were furious at his mention of me in his book--

Research Completed:

Ellis, My Life:

[520-21] Without ever mentioning MS by name, Ellis described her as a stranger who arrived at his doorstep, to whom he responded with sympathy and then “affectionate friendship.” He described her as “An American of Irish origin” who “attractively united the good points of both nationalities.” He noted she was “quicker, more daring and impulsive, than it is my nature to be.” But they found had “much in common and never jarred each other. I had rarely known a more charming and congenial companion and I had never found one so swiftly.” However, he claimed their relationship, reflecting his own desires, as merely “one of calm friendship, even though there was a touch of intimacy about it.” He then professed surprise that when he told his wife about it, she was shocked and upset.

[550] In a May 1915 letter to Edith Ellis, reprinted in the book, Ellis wrote: “M. is quite nice and a very pleasant companion, but she has no power to help or comfort me;...”

4) Describe Ellis-Sanger letters, refer to V1, quote his book “M--an American
I was so sick & sad that I thought I should die at first because in going through his letters to send to the Library of Congress--I found letters of the same date saying such beautiful things to me--I was in London--urging me to closer intimacy & friendship with him arranging for meetings together, walks teas, musicals, the Spanish dancers, letters every day--good night letters even when we had seen each other for tea or supper--yet according to his letters of that period--I was just “M-- an American nurse” whom he wished at times never to see again--

Research Completed:

Material in the Sanger Papers at the Library of Congress includes her diaries for 1914 to 1917 which covers includes her 1914-1915 stay abroad when she met and began an affair with Ellis. It also includes many of Ellis’ letters to her from this period. (For Diary see LCM 1; for Ellis letters dated Dec. 24, 1914 through August 1915, see reel 4; also see volume 1)

5) Details on Ellis’s will, did it, or any letters discuss the selection of letters for the book and the caveat that it shouldn’t be published ten years after his death 166008, 1945/11/11
Well I think I understand better than most people do-- Francoise should not have allowed that book to be published as it was unedited-- In his will he particularly requested in a letter to Francoise that she select the letters to go into the book & that it be not published at least for two years after his death.

Research Completed:

Ellis to Lafitte letter probably written in the summer of 1938 (quoted in Grosskurth p. 444-445:
Says he left her his autobiography “which I want you to get published two years after my death..” Says he is getting it all typed and told her “I want the typed part to be published exactly as it stands....The untyped part may need a little correction of mistakes.”

He also wrote “Do not easily give permission for publication of my letters. It isn’t that I fear intimate things being published. On the contrary I think it is only the real & intimate letters (if not injurious to living persons) that ought to be published ....”

Places to Check: check Francoise LAFITTe Cyon letters
6) Summarize American reviews of Ellis’s book, which MS characterized as “devastating and cruel.” 166008, 1945/11/11

Research Completed:

“There are rewarding passages in the book, needless to say, and moments of utter frankness and candor. But an element of self-mortification accompanies frequently accompanies the one, an air of self-justification the other, and where neither is present there is likely to be the sense of an old man struggling to interpret his entire career in the light of one significant error.”

“...while the chief character of “My Life” is certainly Havelock Ellis, the best defined character is Edith Lees Ellis.”

Chicago Daily Tribune, Nov. 8 1939, p. 24
“...Havelock Ellis’ love lives in these pages more vividly, more intimately seen, more minutely recorded than does the biographer’s life.”

Los Angeles Times, Nov. 12, 1939, p. C6
“...it must be said that the autobiography of Havelock Ellis is not going to increase reverence for the man or his writings....his friends will see their hero off the pedestal; his enemies will sneer.”

Notes that from point where it starts dealing with Edith Ellis, the book becomes “a long, minute and tedious history of the love life of Havelock Ellis and Edith Lees.”

Newsweek, Nov. 6, 1939, p. 44
“Ellis took an almost clinical interest in himself. Much of My Life is concerned with his love life, and the reader is kept informed with medical exactitude on the progressive states of the author’s appearance, digestion, teeth, and eyes, on his habits and his dreams.”

“So at first reading one is terribly disappointed in this book: partly because of its lack of depth and self-awareness, partly because of the limitations of character which it discloses.”

7) Details on MS’s relationship with Ellis, and their trip to Ireland alone.
302147, 1948/06/17
I have gone many places in my life with great men to Ireland with [Harelich] Ellis alone but we both knew what our relationship was--& did not [seek] to cater to gossip or [innuendos]--we knew we were not doing the things gossips like to think people do--

Research Completed:

Vol. 1: Sanger and Ellis vacationed in Ireland starting on Aug. 4, 1920 stopping in Dublin, Glengariff, and Killarney. The couple returned to London on Aug. 11. 1920 MS was probably feeling ill, for she later apologized for being “nervous impatient & horrid.” Unhappy that she could not spend much time with him after their return, Ellis consoled himself with memories of the trip, “which will always be a delicious memory to me.” (MS Diary [LCM 1:407]; MS quoted in Ellis to MS, Aug. 13, 1920; Ellis to MS, Aug. 17, 1920 [LCM: 4:581, 583]; Grosskurth, Havelock Ellis 298; Chesler, Woman of Valor, 182.)

Grosskurth:
[298]: Says MS pressured Ellis to go to Ireland, even though it was dangerous. He finally gave in. They had to return to England earlier than planned when of MS’s incapacitating periods came on MS travels to Ireland with Ellis in August 1920, visiting Glengariff, Killarney and other places.

Diary Entries for May - July 1920: (LCMSP: (100200)
June 14: “Ellis -- dinner Ireland trip suggested”

Ellis to MS, Aug. 13, 1920 [LCMSP: 4:581-582
They returned to London on August 11, possibly earlier than planned, because MS was feeling ill. She apparently wrote Ellis apologizing for being “nervous, impatient & horrid.” Ellis replied she needed a real rest after their “wild rush through Ireland -- which will always be a delicious memory to me.

Ellis to MS, Aug 17, 1920 (LCMSP 4: 583)
Complains he hasn;rt seen enough of her that summer, but is consoled by memories of their trip to Ireland, telling her “I shall never, never forget our beautiful & sacred Sunday on the terrace at Killarney.”

8) Ellis and MS, if needed  302490, 1953/10/10
People who watched the growth of the movement as well as the growth of MS. But so many of these are dead--HG Wells, Harold Cox, Ellis,

Research Completed:  Havelock Ellis died on July 8, 1939
9) Details on the biography of Havelock Ellis worked on 234701, 1954/11/01
I hope you are well & that the biography about Havelock does not worry you.

Research Completed: A reference to Lader’s upcoming biography, The Margaret Sanger Story. --ek

10) Update on Havelock Ellis, what letters are they talking about 234701, 1954/11/01

Research Completed: No note needed

11) MS claims that she was discussing homosexuality; go into Ellis’s views and what he taught about homosexuals and perversion 400105, 1957/09/21

Mike Wallace interview: Wallace: “Well, in the same vein, in your autobiography which you cannot disavow, you wrote the following about sexologist Havelock Ellis. You said he’s been able to clarify the question of sex and free it from the smudginess connected with it from the beginning of Christianity.”

Note 34: Sanger wrote of Ellis: He, beyond any other person, has been able to clarify the question of sex, and free it from the smudginess connected with it from the beginning of Christianity, raise it from the dark cellar, set it on a higher plane.” (MS, An Autobiography, 135

MS: “I say if we had more records of it from the dawn of Christianity... And I think I was speaking of Havelock Ellis as having clarified the question of homosexuals. Making the thing a, not exactly a perverted thing, but a thing that a person is born with: different kinds of eyes, different kinds of, of structures and so forth, that the, he didn’t make all homosexuals, ah, perverts and I felt that he helped clarify that to the medical profession and to the scientists of the world, as perhaps one of the first ones to do, to do that. That’s one of the things that I meant in that.”

Research Completed:

Grosskurth
(p. 179) Interested in scientific study of the varieties of sexual behavior, he began Sexual Inversions as a collaboration with John Addington Symonds. With Symonds death in
1893, Ellis finished the work alone.

Published in 1897, Sexual Inversions was the first sympathetic and comprehensive treatment of homosexuality (p. 185). Ellis was the first person in England to write about homosexuality as neither a disease nor a crime (p. 185). The book includes references to noted homosexuals in history including Michelangelo and Sappho, as well as 33 case histories.

Sources Used:


Notes

108005:13 Havelock Ellis (1859-1939), a British physician, psychologist, sex reformer, and one of the preeminent European sex theorists, was MS’s lover, friend and intellectual mentor. The two met in London in 1915 where MS had run to escape an obscenity indictment. When she told Ellis she wanted to learn everything she could on the subject of birth control and rationales for it, Ellis began meeting with her regularly to guide her in the study of eugenics, psychology and medicine. Ellis, was a committed eugenicist who wrote: “We are beginning to realize that we are the keepers of our children, of the race that is to come after us.....It is we who are, more immediately, the creators of men. We generate the race; we alone can regenerate the race.” He discussed what he called “artificial fecundation” in his book, Sex in Relation to Society where he acknowledged that where a married couple wants a child, but the husband is sterile “the question of impregnating the wife by other methods has occasionally arisen.” In those rare cases, he admitted, “in order to secure the desired end, without departing widely from widely accepted rules of morality, the attempt is occasionally made to effect artificial fecundation by injecting the semen from a healthy male.” He warns that the process is difficult and that “opinion, on the whole, has been opposed to the practice of artificial fecundation, even apart from the question of the probabilities of success.” MS, however, was always less interested in problems of infertility than she was in controlling fertility. (Havelock Ellis, “The Problem of Race-Regeneration,” [New York, 1926; first published in 1911], 39-40 [quote 1]; Sex in Relation to Society, Vol. 6 of Studies in the Psychology of Sex [Philadelphia, 1910], 632-633, quotes 2-3] ;Grosskurth, Havelock Ellis, 243; also see Volumes 1 & 2)
This was a reference to Ellis’s autobiography, *My Life*, posthumously published in 1939, which he had been working on for decades. Though it ended with the death of his wife Edith Ellis in 1917, he kept rewriting and adding to it. (Grosskurth, *Havelock Ellis*, 275; Ellis, *My Life: Autobiography of Havelock Ellis* (Boston and London, 1939)

Without ever mentioning MS by name, Ellis described her as a stranger who arrived at his doorstep, to whom he responded with sympathy and then “affectionate friendship.” He described her as “An American of Irish origin” who “attractively united the good points of both nationalities.” He noted she was “quicker, more daring and impulsive, than it is my nature to be.” But they found had “much in common and never jarred each other. I had rarely known a more charming and congenial companion and I had never found one so swiftly.” However, he claimed their relationship, reflecting his own desires, as merely “one of calm friendship, even though there was a touch of intimacy about it.” He then professed surprise that when he told his wife about it, she was shocked and upset. Included in the volume were several letters between Ellis and his wife in which she expresses concern about his affair with MS, while he takes care to minimize it, most notably in a May 1915 letter to Edith Ellis, reprinted in the book. Ellis wrote: “M. is quite nice and a very pleasant companion, but she has no power to help or comfort me.” (Ellis, *My Life*, 520-21, 523, and 550)

Material in the Sanger Papers collection at the Library of Congress includes her diaries for 1914 to 1917 which covers includes her 1914-1915 stay abroad when she met and began an affair with Ellis. It also includes many of Ellis’ letters to her from this period. (For Diary see LCM 1; for Ellis letters dated Dec. 24, 1914 through August 1915, see reel 4; also see volume 1)

In a letter from Ellis to Lafitte, probably written during the summer of 1938, but to be read after his death, he told her he wanted the autobiography to be published two years after his death and that he had gotten it partially typed. He told her “I want the typed part to be published exactly as it stands....The untyped part may need a little correction of mistakes.” He also warned Lafitte: “Do not easily give permission for publication of my letters. It isn’t that I fear intimate things being published. On the contrary I think it is only the real & intimate letters (if not injurious to living persons) that ought to be published ....” (Ellis quoted in Grosskurth, *Havelock Ellis*, 444-445:)

Ralph Thompson of the *New York Times* found the book contained “rewarding passages...and moments of utter frankness and candor. But an element of self-mortification
accompanies frequently accompanies the one, an air of self-
justification the other, and where neither is present there
is likely to be the sense of an old man struggling to
interpret his entire career in the light of one significant
error.” The Chicago Tribune found “Havelock Ellis’ love
lives in these pages more vividly,...than does the
biographer’s life.” While the Los Angeles Times opined “the
autobiography of Havelock Ellis is not going to increase
reverence for the man or his writings....his friends will
see their hero off the pedestal; his enemies will sneer.”
31, 1939,. 28 [quote 1]; Chicago Daily Tribune, Nov. 8 1939
[quote 2]; Los Angeles Times, Nov. 12, 1939,[quote 3]; also
see Edmund G. Richard, “Havelock Ellis Looks Back Along the
Years,” New York Times, Nov. 12, 1939, p. 91, Newsweek,
Nov. 6, 1939, p. 44 and Lewis Mumford, “Study in Sex,” The
New Republic, Dec. 20, 1939, pp. 265-66)

Sanger and Ellis vacationed in Ireland starting from August
4 to 11, 1920 stopping in Dublin, Glengariff, and Killarney,
though they returned early when MS fell ill. (Grosskurth,
Havelock Ellis, 298; Ellis to MS, Aug. 13, 1920 [[LCM
4:581; also see Vol. 1])

Havelock Ellis died on July 8, 1939

A reference to the Lader’s book The Margaret Sanger Story.

In Sexual Inversion, the first in his six-volume Studies in
the Psychology of Sex, Havelock Ellis studied sexual
behavior of homosexuals in a sympathetic, comprehensive and
non-judgmental manner, viewing homosexuality as neither a
pathology nor a crime. (Grosskurth, Havelock Ellis, 179 and
185; Ellis, Sexual Inversion [Germany, 1896].)

17. MS met Havelock Ellis in December 1914 and arranged to meet him
at the British Museum Library for the next several weeks, where he
advised her on readings. For more on their meeting, see MS, Diary
[ch]