

island of Capri for several years, later returning to France after having visited Sri Lanka and China.

The great love of his life was the boy Nino Cesarini, who lived with him in the Villa Lysis on Capri, which was filled with statues of naked youths and which is now overrun by weeds and stray cats. Adelswärd Fersen also wrote poems to a thirteen-year-old Eton schoolboy. He was the model for Baron Robert Marsac Lagerström in Compton Mackenzie's amusing novel *Vestal Fire* (1927), and was the hero of Roger Peyrefitte's historical fiction *L'exilé de Capri* (1959). He died of a drug overdose in 1923, having for years been an opium and cocaine addict. He had modeled his life on that of Count Robert de Montesquiou, but the latter refused to have anything to do with him, for even in Capri Adelswärd Fersen had caused scandals. He was even associated with Essebac (as the novelist Achille Bécasse was known), Norman Douglas, and Baron von Gloeden. The story of his sexual life is to be found in his own books, in the works of Norman Douglas, and in Peyrefitte's novel, which is spoiled by a mixture of fact and fiction.

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### ADHESIVENESS

The concept of adhesiveness was introduced into English by the phrenologist Johann Gaspar Spurzheim (1776-1832) in the meaning of "the faculty that causes human beings to be attached to one another." It derived ultimately from the Latin verb *adhaerere*, as in Genesis 2:24, where St. Jerome's equivalent of "Therefore shall a man . . . cleave unto his wife" is "Quam obrem . . . homo . . . adhaerebit uxori suae." Diffusion of the concept of adhesiveness by the (pseudo-)science of phrenology enabled it to become part of the special vocabulary of the emerging homosexual

subculture of the nineteenth century. Phrenologists themselves grounded this passionate friendship—which could exist between members of opposite sexes as well as between those of the same sex—in the brain, giving it a material base and a congenital origin. Walt Whitman self-consciously narrowed the reference of the term "adhesive love"—which he also named "comradship"—to homosexual relationships, and in so doing coded his writings for the initiated reader.

*Permutations of the Concept.* George Combe (1784-1858), a middle-class lawyer from Edinburgh, met Spurzheim in 1815, and soon thereafter became a leader of British phrenology. His *Constitution of Man Considered in Relation to External Objects* (1828) became the basis of orthodox phrenology. His major contribution to the understanding of adhesiveness was his complex sense of the working of the "organ" and his additions to the iconography. He also contrasted the selfish side of adhesiveness with the nobler ends that had to be directed "by enlightened intellect and moral sentiment." Excess of adhesiveness could, however, amount to a disease.

At least two of the European contributors to the definition of adhesiveness may themselves have been homosexual: Spurzheim himself, and his younger Scottish contemporary Robert Macnish (1802-1837). In discussing women with small amativeness and large adhesiveness, he said that they "prefer the society of their own sex to that of men." Amativeness thus applied to relations between the sexes, while the other term was discretely given the implicit meaning of "homosexual attachment." Romantic passions between young people of the same sex Macnish deemed an "abuse of adhesiveness." He went so far as to describe a male couple whose mutual attachment was so excessive as to be "a disease."

There is no indication that Walt Whitman knew Macnish's writings. His own acquaintance with the phrenological

tradition came from the Americans associated with "Fowler and Wells," the "phrenological cabinet" that distributed the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* and later hired Whitman to write for their publication *Life Illustrated*. Owen Squire Fowler (1809–1887) took up phrenology with great gusto after hearing Spurzheim's lectures during his student days at Amherst College. In 1840 he published an *Elemental Phrenology* in which adhesiveness was defined as "Friendship; sociability; fondness for society; susceptibility of forming attachments; inclination to love, and desire to be loved. . . ." When he treated adhesiveness at length, as he did repeatedly in journal articles in the following years, he was strong on repetitious rhetoric but weak in analysis. Little of his sermonizing derived from exact observation or rigorous debate.

Franz Joseph Gall (1758–1828), the founder of phrenology, had classified excessive adhesiveness as a "mania," which meant that it could fall within the scope of the physician's interest. However, in the middle of the nineteenth century medical science had not gone beyond defining *quantitative* (as opposed to qualitative) changes in the sexual drive as pathological. Homosexual tendencies were either dismissed as "excesses of friendship" or relegated to the category of "revolting moral aberrations."

*Walt Whitman*. Under the influence of Fowlerian phrenology Whitman developed his own ideas on the role of adhesiveness in his universal scheme of things. Whitman's self-conception was powerfully shaped by the reading of his head done by Lorenzo Fowler, which showed him to have immense potential, and in the wake of this event Whitman underwent a self-transformation that made him the bold prophet of a new vision of democracy.

In the 1856 edition of *Leaves of Grass* Whitman wrote:

Do you know what it is, as you pass,  
to be loved by strangers?  
Do you know the talk of those  
turning eye-balls?  
Here is adhesiveness—it is not  
previously fashioned—it is apropos.

The restriction to love between members of the same sex—which was not borrowed from the phrenologists—was Whitman's initial adaptation of the term. When later in *Democratic Vistas* he came to elaborate his new vision of society, he spoke of "the adhesive love, at least rivalling the amative love." For the phrenologists amative-ness and adhesiveness had been distinct, but had not been so polarized, simply because the opposition heterosexual: homosexual did not yet exist in their minds, although they could recognize adhesiveness as "the fountain of another variety of mental symptoms."

Whitman can be seen in this light as a forerunner of Hans Blüher, who, in the second decade of the twentieth century, from an openly elitist and conservative standpoint exalted the role of homoeroticism and of male bonding in the maintenance of the state. For Whitman the core of social organization was same-sex comradeship, which he set at least potentially on a par with heterosexual marriage. He could now celebrate the equalizing effects of his version of adhesiveness, developing it as the basis of social reform in *Democratic Vistas* (1871). His ideal of comradeship linked both his early enthusiasm for the promiscuous anonymity of Manhattan and his later, more or less serial monogamy with his hopes for the future of American democracy.

*Aftermath*. In the remaining decades of the century, the few surviving phrenologists became painfully aware of the moral dangers of adhesiveness and of the injurious effects of the "excessive desire for friends." In 1898, three years after the disgrace of Oscar Wilde, the *Phrenological Journal*, now edited by Orson Fowler's younger sister, published a two-part ar-

ticle that dwelt as never before on the excesses of friendship, which "causes its possessor to seek company simply for the sake of being in it, whereby their time is wasted and they become a natural prey to the dishonest, tricky, unscrupulous, and vicious, who may take advantage of and link them into all sorts of obligatory concerns ruinous to their pockets and their morals."

Today discredited and forgotten, phrenology retains a historical interest as one of the disciplines that sought to analyze the causal factors in personality before a scientific psychology had emerged from philosophy. As such, it brought Whitman and perhaps others involved in the homosexual subculture of that day to a better understanding of themselves and of the potential of homoerotic urges for the positive task of nation-building. The notion of adhesiveness as related to male comradeship linked it to the *paidarasteia* of Greek antiquity, with its emphasis on loyalty to one's comrade in arms and on duty to the state of which one was a citizen—the latter being one of the sources of the modern democratic ideal.

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### ADLER, ALFRED (1870-1937)

Austrian psychiatrist, founder of Individual Psychology, commonly known as the Adlerian School. Like Sigmund Freud, Adler came from a lower middle-class Jewish family in Vienna. A central figure in Freud's psychoanalytic circle from 1902 to 1911, his heated disputes with the master in the latter year led to his seceding with several other members to form an independent group.

Adler's theories are technically less complex than those of Freud, and draw

more directly on his experiences with patients of humbler social origin. As a result they have a commonsense quality that earned them considerable popularity in the middle decades of the twentieth century, a popularity that has since ebbed. Alfred Adler's thinking emphasized the individual's striving for power and **self-esteem** (with the inferiority complex often arising as an unwanted byproduct) and the patient's **lifestyle**—a concept that, much modified over the decades, was to play a notable role in the ideology of the gay movement.

Although he attained a qualified approbation of the goals of the women's movement, he insisted on classifying homosexuals among the "failures of life"—together with prostitutes and criminals. His writings on homosexuality began with a 52-page brochure in German in 1917 and continued sporadically through most of the rest of his life. Possessing little independent explanatory power, Alfred Adler's views on homosexuality are now chiefly of historical interest, as instances of stereotyped judgmentalism and reified folk belief of a kind not uncommon among professionals of his day. Beginning in the 1970s some adherents of (Adlerian) Individual Psychology proposed a less negative approach to homosexual behavior, but their revisionism was opposed by others.

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### ADULT-ADULT SEXUALITY

See **Androphilia**