

Gay Anglicans have fared better in the United States. In the era of gay liberation, the lay Episcopal group Integrity was formed, encountering the benevolent support of many Anglican clerics. In 1976 the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. passed a resolution stating that "homosexual persons are children of God, who have a full and equal claim with all other persons upon the love, acceptance, and pastoral concern and care of the Church." Reverend Paul Moore, bishop of New York, has been outspoken in his defence of gay people, whom he has also ordained. To be sure, his positive attitude is not universally shared among American Episcopalians, but on the whole their church has borne the stress of the age of AIDS with calmness and compassion

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ANGLO-SAXONS

Our information about homosexual behavior in Anglo-Saxon England is chiefly linguistic. The word *baedling*, a diminutive of *baeddel*, occurs in an Old English glossary as the equivalent of the Latin terms *effeminatus* and *mollis*, designating the effeminate homosexual. A synonym is the word *waepenwifstere* (approximately: "male wife"). Evidently, these words reflect an Anglo-Saxon stereotype of the homosexual as an unwarlike, womanish type. In all likelihood, this negative concept derives in part from a common Germanic archetype, attested by a passage in *Germania* (12) by the Roman historian Tacitus—where death by drowning is stipulated for such individuals—but probably modified in the early Middle Ages by Mediterranean-Christian influences.

Similar in form to *baedling* is *deorling*, the source of the modern English

darling. While the Old English word had a general sense of a beloved person or thing, it was also used more specifically to label a minion, a youth favored because of his sexual attractiveness.

At the present stage of research further data about homosexual behavior in Anglo-Saxon times (that is, from ca. 500 to 1066) remains elusive. For its part, however, the word *baeddel* survived, turning eventually—through a process of semantic expansion—into the general English adjective of pejoration, "bad." The word also forms part of two place names in England: Baddlesmere ("baeddel's lake") in Kent and Baddlinghame ("the home of the baedlings") in Cambridgeshire.

The broadening of the meaning of the word *baeddel* in the direction of general disparagement ("bad") has several historical parallels. The first, from another Germanic sphere, is the shift from old Scandinavian *argr*, cowardly, effeminate, to modern German *arg*, bad, wicked. Then early medieval France seems to have witnessed the creation of *fello/felonis*, evil person (the etymon of our legal term felon) from Latin *fellare*, to fellate. It is also possible that Russian *plokhoi*, bad, is cognate with Greek *malakos* (with change of the initial labial from *m* to *p*), as the Polish *plochy* has the meaning of "timid, fearful," another of the nuances of *argr*.

ANIMAL HOMOSEXUALITY

A body of evidence has accumulated showing homosexual behavior among many species of animals—behavior that has been observed both in the wild and in captivity. While this evidence suffices to dispel the old belief that homosexuality is unknown among animals, more extended comparisons with human homosexual behavior remain problematic.

Examples and Characteristic Features. In the 1970s the well-publicized reports of the German ethologist Konrad Lorenz drew attention to male-male pair

bonds in greylag geese. Controlled reports of "lesbian" behavior among birds, in which two females share the responsibilities of a single nest, have existed since 1885. Mounting behavior has been observed among male lizards, monkeys, and mountain goats. In some cases one male bests the other in combat, and then mounts his fellow, engaging in penile thrusts—though rarely with intromission. In other instances, a submissive male will "present" to a dominant one, by exhibiting his buttocks in a receptive manner. Mutual masturbation and fellatio have been observed among male stump-tailed macaques. During oestrus female rhesus monkeys engage in mutual full-body rubbing.

Those who have observed these same-sex patterns in various species have noted, explicitly or implicitly, similarities with human behavior. It is vital, however, not to elide differences. Mounting behavior may not be sexual, but an expression of social hierarchy: the dominant partner reaffirms his superiority over the presenting one. In most cases where a sexual pairing does occur, one partner adopts the characteristic behavior of the other sex. While this behavioral inversion sometimes occurs in human homosexual conduct, it is by no means universal. Thus while (say) Roman homosexuality, which often involved slaves submitting to their masters, may find its analogue among animals, modern American *androphilia* largely does not. This difference suggests that the cultural matrix is important. Human sexual behavior, whether heterosexual or homosexual, has a vast expressive dimension which has both sociological (group) and psychological (individual) aspects. Cross-cultural study reveals wide variations in the social organization of homosexual behavior. In the psychological realm, we know of persons, such as some members of monastic orders, who—because of their erotic fantasy life—regard themselves as completely homophile yet have never had a homosexual experience. Such a thing is

possible among animals, of course, but it is very unlikely—and in any case there is no way of studying an animal's consciousness except on the basis of its overt behavior.

Human homosexuality is a complex interaction of physiological response, social patterning, and individual consciousness. For many, homosexuality in human subjects demands the complete suppression of the dialectic of sexual polarity—it involves the masculine in the male seeking the masculine in another male, or the feminine in the female seeking the feminine in another female. It can be doubted that homosexuality, by this definition, ever occurs in animals; the mechanisms that trigger sexual arousal and activity would not allow it.

In the light of this complexity, a simple identification of human homosexual behavior with same-sex interactions among animals is reductive, and may block or misdirect the search for an understanding of the remaining mysteries of human sexuality. Still, for those aspects to which they have relevance, animal patterns of homosexual behavior help to place human ones in a phylogenetic perspective—in somewhat the same way as animal cries and calls have a relation to human language, and the structures built by birds and beavers anticipate the feats of human architecture.

Classical Antiquity and Animalitarianism. The observational powers of the Greeks encompassed the question of same-sex behavior among animals, which some affirmed and others denied. There were also folkloric beliefs, such as the notion that males of the partridge species are so highly sexed that in the absence of females they readily assault each other sexually. Early Christian writers associated the hare with pederasty because of the fantastic belief that it grows a new anus each year. More radically, the hyena symbolized gender ambiguity because it changed its sex each year. Finally, the weasel, which was supposed to conceive

through the mouth, stood for the practice of fellatio. To be on the safe side, the author of the Epistle of Barnabas forbade eating the flesh of any of these creatures.

These "bad examples" from the animal kingdom, are exceptional and atypical. The contrasting notion that the conduct of animals is in key respects superior to that of human beings, and therefore serves as a yardstick to determine our "naturalness," has been dubbed "animalitarianism" by the historian of ideas George Boas. The Greek writer Plutarch (second century of our era) has a fanciful essay, "Gryllos," in which a talking pig asserts that animals are better than human beings because they do not practice pederasty. (This idea was in fact adumbrated by Plato in the fourth century B.C.) As been noted, recent evidence shows that in fact animals do engage in homosexual behavior, but of a circumscribed kind: perhaps animalitarians could now argue that less is better ("A little homosexuality is acceptable, but . . .").

Since the Greeks, the animalitarian gambit has enjoyed a long run of popularity, answering to a sentimental hankering for a pastoral life without pressures and ambiguity, for a never-never land of the "state of nature," which the life of animals—guided solely by instinct—is supposed to preserve. The beast standard is, of course, selective, inasmuch as its advocates are not apparently willing to discard a host of conveniences—from clothing to computers—not available to animals. Nor are these persons inclined (as Aristophanes pointed out when the thesis was first broached) to perch on roosts at night like birds, or to throw feces as a friendly way of gaining attention like apes. Human beings use a wide variety of soaps and deodorants to reduce or mask smells which their bodies produce. The argument that animal ways are best, then, rests on a kind of selective amnesia which makes it possible to ignore some types of human departure from the animal model, while focusing moral indignation on others.

In statements by contemporary antihomosexual propagandists, it is revealing that they will sometimes first insist that homosexuality must be unnatural, since "even the lowest animals don't do it," and then when confronted with ethological evidence to the contrary exclaim with outrage that same-sex relations drag man down to the subhuman level. "behaving like a filthy swine." Such dodges suggest that moral distinctions are first posited and then superimposed on interspecies comparisons, instead of being derived from them in any consistent way. From time immemorial human beings have used animal comparisons as criticism (dumb as an ox, scared as a rabbit) and as praise (bold as a lion, far-sighted as an eagle); the choice depends upon the presuppositions of the speaker.

Every species has patterns of sexual behavior unique to itself, so that claiming on supposedly moral grounds that man should imitate the lower animals is absurd. Moreover, social control of human sexual activity can only be justified on the grounds that the policy promotes the higher interests of mankind—including the evolutionary progress of the species—rather than following the lead of the instinctual life of creatures far lower on the evolutionary scale. All living things exist in a world in which—as Darwin showed—they must compete for scarce resources; but while nature confronts scarcity with redundancy, man confronts scarcity with foresight. That is to say, lower forms of organic life survive by engendering such myriads of young that at least a minimal number will reach adulthood and the reproductive stage; but man survives by economic and demographic measures that seek to proportion his numbers to the resources available for consumption. Especially given the absence of superfetation in the human female, the notion that "homosexuality means race suicide" is preposterous. All human sexual activity, homosexual and heterosexual, occurs in a context of economic and social values that removes it entirely from

