

Diversity in American Indian Culture,
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Walter L. Williams

BERGLER, EDMUND (1899–1962)

American psychoanalyst. Peripherally associated for a time with Freud in Vienna, he emigrated in 1938 and thereafter practiced in New York City. Perhaps the most vocal of the homophobic "experts" who courted the attention of the American public in the years after World War II, Bergler promoted the notion of "injustice collecting" as a key feature of the allegedly inevitable unhappiness of homosexuals. In his book *Homosexuality: Disease or Way of Life?* (1956) he asserted that all homosexuals harbor an unconscious wish to suffer (psychic masochism) but can be cured if willing to change, tormented by "conscious guilt" over their homosexual activity. But at the same he accused homosexuals of "trying to spread their perversion" and of seducing adolescent boys who would then be "trapped in a homosexual orientation." Bergler also maintained that women's fashions are a masculine invention secondarily foisted upon the female sex to alleviate man's unconscious "masochistic fear of the female body," and that women's fashions are designed by male homosexuals, "their bitterest enemies." Although Bergler had entrée into leading magazines and journals of opinion, he was dismayed by the success of the Kinsey Reports and their implicit tolerance of same-sex relations which he sought to combat. His major theoretical positions rejected by his colleagues even in his lifetime, his influence waned precipitously after his death, so that his writings are now of interest solely as a classic document of psychoanalytic rationalization of moralizing prejudice.

Warren Johansson

BERLIN

Berlin rose to prominence first as the capital of Brandenburg and then of

Prussia. It became capital of Germany in 1871, retaining this status through the Weimar republic and the Third Reich until its occupation by the victorious Allies in May of 1945. Currently its three million inhabitants are divided between East Berlin, capital of the Communist German Democratic Republic, and West Berlin, an enclave of Western life surrounded by the Berlin Wall.

No trace of homosexual life has been found in the chronicles of the first three hundred years of the city (founded in the thirteenth century), since the legal prosecution of homosexuality that was usual elsewhere did not exist in Berlin before the introduction of the *Constitutio Criminalis Carolina* in 1532. The Saxon penal code, which Eike von Regow had codified in 1225 in the *Sachsenspiegel* and which was in force in Berlin with some modifications, knew no penalty for "lewd and lascivious acts against nature." In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Berlin Municipal Court pronounced numerous death sentences for sodomy.

Only with the rise of Prussia to the status of one of the great powers of Europe under King Frederick II (the Great; 1712–1786) can any information other than legal sanctions be discovered on homosexuality in Berlin. In 1753 there appeared the first of many anonymous pamphlets accusing Frederick II and his brother, Prince Henry, of homosexuality. These allegations are probably justified, and under the regime of Frederick II an extensive homosexual subculture developed in the Prussian capital. In 1782, in his *Letters on the Gallantries of Berlin*, Johann Friedel describes homosexual street prostitution, a brothel-like inn (*Knabentabagie*), secret signs by which the homosexuals recognized one another, and the name given the Berlin pederasts, *warme Brüder* ("warm brothers"). By this account persecution by the police seems not to have been especially intensive at that time, and in 1794 a new penal code which retained the inspiration of Frederick II came into force that

abolished the death penalty for sodomy and replaced it with imprisonment and flogging.

In 1750 Berlin had some 90,000 inhabitants, by 1800 170,000, and by 1880 over 1 million. This vigorous population growth was accompanied by a steady development and extension of the homosexual subcultures. The most frequent and extensive accounts of homosexual life in the big city that figure in the writings of Karl Heinrich Ulrichs pertain to Berlin. Although homosexual acts (since 1851 only between males, since 1853 only anal intercourse) remained criminal, the police seem actually to have tolerated the flowering of homosexual life: after approximately 1870 public balls for homosexuals were held, and for the first time in the world an organized gay movement emerged. In the suburb of Charlottenburg (officially incorporated into Berlin only in 1920), on May 15, 1897, Magnus Hirschfeld, together with E. Oberg, M. Spohr, R. Meienreis, H. von Teschenberg and F. J. von Bülow, founded the Wissenschaftlich-Humanitäre Komitee (Scientific-Humanitarian Committee), whose main goal was to abolish the antihomosexual Paragraph 175 of the Imperial Penal Code. But this goal, which was to be achieved through influence on public opinion and petitions to the German Reichstag meeting in Berlin, was down to the very end (the Committee dissolved itself on June 8, 1933 to forestall being banned by the Nazis) unattained.

In 1898 the anarchistic Berlin periodical *Der Eigene* (The Exceptional) converted itself into the first long-lasting gay publication (down to 1931). (Its predecessors, Ulrichs' *Uranus* of 1870 and Raffalovich's *Annales de l'unisexualité* of 1897 appeared in only a single issue each.) *Der Eigene* was edited by the Berlin writer Adolf Brand, who in 1903 founded the Gemeinschaft der Eigenen (Community of the Exceptional), after the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee the second gay organization in Berlin. These two organizations embody a significant part of the

gay history of Berlin, but the majority of Berlin's homosexuals never had any contact with either one.

After World War I numerous gay and lesbian periodicals appeared in Berlin, and even in films and in the theatre homosexuality could no longer be fully taboo, as after the fall of the monarchy considerably more liberal censorship rules were in force. In 1932 Berlin had some 300 homosexual bars and cafés, of which a tenth were for lesbians. During the Nazi era between 1933 and 1945 virtually all homosexual life was driven underground, and a persecution without parallel in history began. Many gay Berliners suffered as inmates with the pink triangle in the concentration camp established north of Berlin at Oranienburg/Sachsenhausen, and not a few of them were killed there.

After the liberation in 1945 Berlin was divided and in the Western part of the city after approximately 1948 new gay organizations developed, periodicals were founded, bars opened, and gay balls tolerated, although thanks to the conservative regime under Konrad Adenauer in Bonn the even more punitive version of Paragraph 175 inserted in the Penal Code by the Nazis remained in force until 1969. In the eastern part of the city the regime applied Paragraph 175 in its pre-Nazi wording (only "acts similar to coitus" were punishable, but not mutual masturbation and prostitution), but on the basis of the Stalinist notions of morality gay men and lesbians were forced underground and threatened with prosecution.

Only in the 1970s did an increasingly liberal climate facilitate the emergence of a gay movement in both halves of Berlin on the Anglo-American model. There was no continuity with the tradition of the pre-1933 organizations, the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee and the Community of the Exceptional. In East Berlin, moreover, up until the 1980s periodicals and organizations for gay men were forbidden. Whereas West Berlin today exhibits a homosexual subculture that

with its numerous autonomous institutions (communications centers, journals, publishing houses, sports and choral societies, religious, political and trade union groups, a gay member of the city council, and so forth) is comparable to other Western metropolitan areas, in East Berlin the corresponding development has proceeded much more slowly because of the obstacles imposed by the Communist government in that part of Germany.

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Manfred Herzer

BERNESQUE POETRY

This type of Italian poetry may be regarded as an outgrowth of burchiellesque poetry; it also continues the tradition of obscene carnival songs (*canti carnascialeschi*). The genre takes its name from Francesco Berni (1496/8-1535), the best known of the poets who were engaged in softening the original obscurity of the burchiellesque trend so as to make it more accessible—while retaining the essentials of its coded language.

Bernesque poetry relies on double meanings—which are often deployed in a masterful way—characteristically incarnated in food items (round ones such as apples symbolize buttocks, phallic ones such as eels stand for the penis) or objects of daily use (the chamber pot represents the anus; the needle symbolizes the penis).

While the Bernesque poet gave the appearance of choosing everyday objects so as to produce comic effects by

heaping excessive praise on trivial things, in reality he constructed a subtle net of double meanings in order to exalt sexual relations.

Unlike the burchiellesque poets, however, who often delighted in cobbling together tangles of words that seemed to lack any coherent meaning, the Bernesque poets always made compositions that were fully meaningful, in a colloquial, humorous, and (at first sight) simple tone. This aspect permits the reader to enjoy their works as humor, even if he misses the double meanings.

In the Bernesque genre, homosexual themes (generally having to do with anal contacts) often occur. The poets sometimes took great pains to compose seemingly innocuous poems for boys (such as Berni's directed to "young abbés" of the Cornari family), which when decoded reveal highly obscene senses.

Berni also wrote serious love poems in Latin, which were fairly explicit, in praise of boys. A priest, he was shut up for a year and a half in an Abruzzi monastery for a homosexual scandal, the full details of which are not known (1523-24). Moreover, some private letters have survived containing innocent requests to friends, but which read with the code of burchiellesque language reveal requests for the sending of boys (examples are those to Vincilao Boiano of May-August 1530).

Many authors wrote Bernesque poetry with homosexual themes. Among them are Angelo Firenzuola (1493-1543), Andrea Lori (sixteenth century), Matteo Franzesi (sixteenth century), Giovanni Della Casa (1503-1556), Benedetto Varchi (1503-1565), Lodovico Dolce (1508-1568; he also wrote a long work "For a Boy"), and Antonio Grazzini, known as "Il Lasca" (1503-1584).

With the Counterreformation, and the more repressive climate that came to prevail in Italy as a consequence, practitioners of the Bernesque genre found it prudent to abandon erotic double entendres, and the mode gradually ebbed,