

origin, was not morbid, but rather healthy in that it was spontaneous and occurred in individuals who were able to function as well as other members of society. He distinguished homosexuality per se from pedophilia, pederasty, hermaphroditism, misogyny, and "pseudo-homosexuality" (the latter largely corresponding to bisexuality).

Some of the English translations of Bloch's works, especially those dealing with anthropological and historical subjects, are so heavily abridged as to be no true measure of his erudition.

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BLOOMSBURY

Taking its name from the district of London where many of the members lived, the Bloomsbury coterie influenced British thought and letters during the first half of the twentieth century. Broadly cultural rather than academic in their interests and affiliations, its members practiced and favored several arts, standing for civilized tolerance as against the competitive ethic of official Britain. Adherents were socially cohesive, but sexually varied: the salons of Bloomsbury hosted heterosexual, bisexual, and homosexual members.

The group began in March 1905, when the Stephen family launched their "at homes" at 46 Gordon Square. Many of the recruits were young men who had just been graduated from Cambridge, where they had absorbed, in an atmosphere of wide-ranging enquiry, the ethical precepts of the philosopher G. E. Moore. At Cambridge most had belonged to a secret soci-

ety, The Apostles, which was suffused with homoeroticism (the "Higher Sodomy"). Although Bloomsbury was not secret, the smugness and self-satisfaction stemming from belonging to an exclusive coterie clung to members—and repelled outsiders such as D. H. Lawrence and Wyndham Lewis. For those who had been scarred early by life's rough-and-tumble, Bloomsbury offered a refuge. Within the protected redoubt they freely cultivated opinions, modes of speech and conversation, and clothing styles that struck outsiders, to the extent that they could comprehend them, as aberrant and bizarre. The character and doings of members and friends were tirelessly chronicled in arch and informed gossip. Blasphemy and bawdiness flowed unstintingly. In a 1914 letter Vanessa Bell wrote: "One can talk of fucking & sodomy & sucking & bushes all without turning a hair." Social gatherings, the life support of the group, featured more than just talk: opportunities for sexual encounters—indeed of a sexual merry-ground—were ever present. Homosexuality was "in." As Virginia Woolf, a member of the Stephen family, bluntly remarked: "The society of buggers has many advantages—if you are a woman. It is simple, it is honest, it makes one feel . . . in some respects at one's ease." A sign of their sexual adaptability was the fact that some members settled into a ménage à trois.

After Clive Bell—who stood out for his "special charm of normality"—married Vanessa Stephen in 1907, a second salon was established in which the visual arts were favored. Later Roger Fry was to promote avant-garde modern art through his writings, exhibitions, and above all through a collaborative atelier, the Omega Workshops, which employed a number of "Bloomsberries." By international standards, however, the Bloomsbury painters—Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant, and Fry himself—were second-rate, never enjoying the prestige of the novelists E. M. Forster and Virginia Woolf, not to speak of the economist John Maynard Keynes.

The public image of the group was already forming before World War I, and the mutual support that adherents could rely on helped to advance their individual careers. The group was generally hostile to the war, and a number of members became conscientious objectors. In 1918 a homosexual Bloomsberry, Lytton Strachey, published his *Eminent Victorians*, which poured scorn on the icons of official Britain. Bloomsbury discounted religion as something that educated people could not take seriously, while politics was generally dismissed as coarse and life-diminishing. The values of the group were frankly hedonistic: they appreciated modernist painting largely for its "retinal" qualities, cultivated French cuisine, and engaged in the kinds of sex that appealed to individual taste. Although members were individualistic, their headquarters in London gave them a cohesion that no group of academics, scattered among provincial universities, could hope to attain. They used their access to the media to project what they sincerely believed were the ideals of civilization and tolerance.

To its enemies Bloomsbury stood for superficiality and self-indulgence, a prolongation in a new guise of the aestheticism and decadence of the 1890s. In art and literature, the Bloomsberries sacrificed content to form, and indeed their aesthetic ideas belonged to the international context of Formalism. For their highbrow tastes "proletarian culture" was as repulsive as "capitalist culture": both were hopelessly vulgar. For all their dislike of the degradation brought by the industrial system, their revolt against Victorianism seemed to depend, all too crucially, on the maintenance of the stability secured by the sacrifices of earlier generations—not to mention their social position and income. At Bloomsbury gatherings, servants always hovered in the background and class privilege was taken for granted. The coming of the international depression in 1929 and World War II seemed to lend substance to this critique,

and Bloomsbury faded in public awareness, though individual members continued to produce.

The revival of interest in Bloomsbury coincided with the new prosperity of the 1950s, which made its lifestyle preferences available to a larger segment of society. A further stimulus was the fascination with the early phases of modernism. Then there was the sexual revolution of the 1960s, which Bloomsbury was rightly seen as having anticipated. For the first time Michael Holroyd's massive study, *Lytton Strachey: A Critical Biography* (London, 1967–68) revealed to a larger public the centrality of homosexuality to the group. All these factors turned writing about Bloomsbury into an academic growth industry, and there was much uncritical acclaim. Books poured from the presses, and on the art market prices of even the shabbiest Omega workshop items increased enormously. Inevitably, a reaction followed, but not so sharp as to exclude the consolidation of a more balanced picture of the group's accomplishments.

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BLÜHER, HANS (1888–1955)

German homophile leader and scholar. His early, controversial studies on the German youth movement (Wandervogelbewegung) emphasized the positive function of male eroticism in the initiation of the young to collective life. Blüher was strongly influenced by the psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud, and radically opposed to the "third sex" theory of Magnus Hirschfeld, the leader of the Ger-