

While Cambacérès was a major figure in the entourage of Napoleon Bonaparte, the reform of the penal laws on homosexuality was not his doing; this action was rather the consequence of the philosophical trends of the eighteenth century and the critique of the criminal legislation of the Old Regime by such writers as Beccaria and Voltaire. No one statesman can be credited with the merit of this advance over the barbarity of previous centuries. The prestige of Napoleon and the force of French arms fostered the spread of the code and marked the dawn of an era of toleration for the homosexuals of France and many other countries.

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CAMBRIDGE AND OXFORD

Residential colleges have dominated England's two ancient universities—sometimes verbally merged as "Oxbridge"—which trace their origins to the twelfth century. Royal and aristocratic patronage, accentuated by the richly endowed, exquisite colleges in which fellows slept and dined, gave them an elite character often, though not always, conducive to academic excellence.

Early Indications. Following the clerical tradition of the Middle Ages, the dons were (until Gladstone's liberal reforms in 1877) forbidden to marry. Temptation beckoned in the form of an endless supply of highborn and attractive undergraduates. After 1500 most trained academically and (homo)sexually at the aristocratic public [i.e., private boarding] schools like Harrow and Winchester on a curriculum of Greek and Latin classics

which, despite careful selection, could not be purged of pederastic motifs.

On early sodomites the curtain of silence lifts only occasionally. In 1739 the Rev. Robert Thistlethwayte, who had served as warden of Wadham College at Oxford for fifteen years, was charged with making a "sodomitical attempt" on William French, an undergraduate. As depositions to the grand jury revealed, Thistlethwayte had shown a previous pattern of homosexual activity, and he fled to France, fearing mortal consequences. John Fenwick, known to have had homosexual relations as a student at Oxford, but not charged until 1797, when he had become a clergyman, also fled to the continent. At Cambridge George Gordon, Lord Byron, already in love at Harrow, had a relationship with a choirboy named John Edleston and formed lifelong friendships with John Cam Hobhouse, the dissipated Scrope Berdmore Davies, and the irreverent Charles Skinner Matthews—his correspondents and defenders when, having discovered a more open homosexuality in Italy and Greece, Byron went into exile.

Reformers and Aesthetes. The Victorians (1837–1901) strove to raise the standards of Britain's decayed educational establishment. In addition to the universities, the feeder system of the elite public schools had to be restructured. Unbeknownst to the reformers, public school boys fashioned a thriving homosexual subculture, with its social hierarchies and special vocabulary, and passed it on to the universities.

The mid-nineteenth century also saw a crisis of faith. Some like Cardinal Newman resolved this by converting to Roman Catholicism. Gravitating toward aestheticism, a creed with strong homosexual overtones, others—unlike the Oxford don Walter Pater, the pontiff of aestheticism, who was most discrete about his sexual longings—became notorious, Oscar Wilde met Alfred Douglas when the latter was a handsome undergraduate at Oxford, and the *Chameleon*—which played

a fateful role in Wilde's trial—was an Oxford undergraduate magazine whose single issue, cloyingly tinged with homoeroticism, appeared in December 1894.

The Cambridge Apostles. A remarkable example of intrainstitutional continuity is the Society of Apostles founded by students at Cambridge University in 1820, whose members gathered once a week to hear papers on controversial topics. The first recruits to this distinguished intellectual club were mainly clergymen, apparently of impeccable moral character. By the 1840s, however, intimations of homosexuality begin to emerge—though sometimes only in the form of the "Higher Sodomy," that is, nonsexual male bonding.

Later in the century a picturesque, bibulous, socialite don, Oscar Browning, nourished a special homosexual atmosphere at Cambridge. In 1862 he began almost annual visits to Rome with an undergraduate in tow. As the novelist E. M. Forster, another Cantabrigian, was later to demonstrate, Italy played a special role for cultured Englishmen in search of sexual freedom.

The influence of the Cambridge Apostles radiated into the larger community. William Johnson, later Cory (elected in 1844), became a leading member of the Calamite group of pederastic poets. At the end of the century, the Cambridge atmosphere was determined by the philosopher G. E. Moore (who was not homosexual) and Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson (who was). Then, in the early years of the present century, homosexual graduate Apostles, notably Lytton Strachey and John Maynard Keynes, formed a kind of adult branch in London, which became known as Bloomsbury. Most of the members of this literary and artistic group were connected with Cambridge through family ties if not by direct attendance.

The Oxbridge Heyday. A distinctive feature of Oxbridge is the social contact between dons and undergraduates, who daily drank sherry together and dined

together in "commons" at the college where they had their rooms, on terms of familiarity that would be almost inconceivable at an American college. Until the Edwardian era, the two universities were by and large socially closed institutions that drew their student body from the cream of the upper classes, especially from the graduates of the public schools where adolescent homosexuality was rampant. Also, from the decline of medieval scholasticism until modern higher education policy opened its doors to scholarship holders from impecunious but talented families, Oxbridge offered far more a "playboy" than an intellectual setting, where the future politician, public servant, or member of the House of Lords passed a stage in his *cursus honorum*. All these circumstances, together with intense and prestigious competition in sports if not in learning, made for homosexual contact between the dons and students and for the sort of bonding among undergraduates that readied Oxbridge alumni for their life roles as builders and administrators of the British Empire.

But not all ran smoothly in the creation of future public servants. At Cambridge in the 1930s Anthony Blunt, Guy Burgess, and Donald McLean, all homosexual Apostles, converted to Marxism and became secret Soviet agents. Their unmasking during the Cold War occasioned speculation about a connection between the upper classes, homosexuality, and espionage. After the war, however, the homosexual complexion of the Cambridge Society of Apostles faded.

During the interwar years Oxford became more prominently identified with the homosexual sensibility. Figures such as Evelyn Waugh succumbed to it only for a time, but the poets W. H. Auden and Stephen Spender forged a lifetime comradeship. In the depression of the 1930s many undergraduates converted to Marxism, as at Cambridge. Toward the end of his life, Auden returned to live at his Oxford college but found the atmosphere too much

changed for his taste. The more democratic emphasis of education after World War II, sparked by Labor governments, eroded both the privileges and mystique of Cambridge and Oxford. Moreover, gay liberation in the 1970s diffused homosexual life and the need for special redoubts of privileged homophilia at the universities and public schools receded.

Alfred L. Rowse, claiming to be unbiased, and Sir Kenneth Dover, professing that he is straight and happily married, broke the taboo against writing on homosexuality which John Addington Symonds thought had barred him from a chair in classical scholarship and on which Sir Maurice Bowra never dared write a book or even an article. After World War II British universities proliferated. At Essex and Sussex, institutions on a new model, gay studies have emerged under auspices that encourage rethinking of established gender patterns.

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CAMP

Camp is a type of wit common to, but by no means exclusive to male homosexuals. A definition of the concept is elusive, but it may be tentatively circumscribed by saying that camp consists of taking serious things frivolously and frivolous things seriously. Camp is not grounded in speech or writing as much as it is in gesture, performance, and public display. When it is verbal, it is expressed less through the discursive means of direct statement than through implication, innuendo, and intonation. As an art of indirection and suggestion, it was suited to the purposes of a group that found it imprudent to confront culturally approved values directly, but preferred to undermine them through send-ups and sly mockery. Because it is viewed, perhaps mistakenly, as relatively unthreatening, camp gains entree into the upscale worlds of chic and swank.

Roots of Camp. Camp has close links with the modern world of mass entertainment, and it may have found its first artistic outlet in late-nineteenth-century music halls, vaudeville, and pantomime. The word first appears in the slang of this period—the earliest printed attestation is from 1907—where it refers to outrageous street behavior. The term has been plausibly traced to the French verb *se camper*, which can mean (among other things) to posture boldly. (In Australia, *camp* has acquired the common meaning of “gay, homosexual” without other qualification, but this usage is rare elsewhere, where heterosexuals and bisexuals may be “camp” with little fear of loss of reputation.)

Some recognize a gamut of low to high camp, ranging from the provocative behavior of a street queen determined to “camp up a storm” to the elegant writings of Oscar Wilde and Ronald Firbank. Indeed, Wilde’s tour of America in 1882 was one of the first media successes of high camp. By definition camp is a form of exhibitionism that requires an audience; it cannot be done in the privacy of one’s home—except as practice.

The targets of camp are good taste, marriage and the family, suburbia, sports, and the business world. Camp is thus a less hostile continuation of the trend of nineteenth-century Bohemia to *épater le bourgeois*, to bait middle-class respectability. Undeniably, camp is subversive, but not too much so, for it depends for its survival on the patronage of high society, the entertainment world, advertising, and the media.

Antecedents and Analogues. Camp is characteristically modern, yet examples have been noted in earlier centuries, including the Roman writer Petronius, the Italian mannerist paintings of the sixteenth century, the *précieuses* of the French salons of the time of Louis XIV, Bel Canto opera, and in fops and dandies of various periods. To a large extent camp is in the eye of the beholder, so that Charles De Gaulle’s stylized speeches and appearances