

30. The American frontier, however, was populated by young males with few females in the initial phase of settlement.

Among these nineteenth-century urban celibates the homosexual emerged and was named in 1869, exclusive as opposed to the earlier sodomites who, it was assumed, would normally be married.

Reaching their sexual peak later than men, women had opportunities to become lesbian at various stages of their increasingly long lives. Most men long outlived their sexual peak (in their late teens), more and more living into the slackening of sexual potency attendant on middle and old age. No wonder one hears so much of lesbianism after the eighteenth century and so little before.

The application of demographic principles to the study of sexual patterns is still in a pioneering stage; further investigation may shed considerable light, not only on the periods discussed above, but also on contemporary developments in the Third World and elsewhere. In the absence of literary and other documentation for sexual mores in the broad mass of the population, demographic analysis may open a window into these little-known areas.

William A. Percy

DEMUTH, CHARLES (1883–1935)

American painter. Born into a well-to-do family in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Demuth was a sickly child who was educated largely at home. After art school in Philadelphia, he made two trips to Europe, absorbing modernism at its source in Paris. During the second of these, in 1913, he met another gay American artist, Marsden Hartley, a friendship that was to last all his life. After returning to the United States at the beginning of World War I, Demuth began to spend more and more time in New York's Greenwich Village, where new ideas of aesthetics and sexuality effervesced in equal measure. In

the company of Carl Van Vechten he began to frequent nightclubs in Harlem, then considered off-limits by bourgeois society. He also visited bathhouses, producing frank watercolors of scenes of sexual solicitation. Always strongly interested in literature—a connection enhanced by his friendships with such figures as Eugene O'Neill and William Carlos Williams—Demuth began to illustrate works of fiction, including books by Honoré de Balzac and Frank Wedekind concerned with sexual variation. Also emerging at this time was his continuing predilection for flower subjects, into which sexual meanings were read in the then-prevailing Freudian mode. To the extent that Demuth himself shared these readings (a matter that is uncertain), they are not without validity.

In the later 1920s and 1930s, suffering from diabetes and under his mother's care in the family home in Lancaster, Demuth summoned himself to produce major works evoking the American scene, which have much in common with the precisionism of Charles Sheeler. At the same time, he produced for private viewing a series of watercolors that are even now striking in their frankness. These show street cruising, blatant sexual display, and even episodes of male group sex. These works feature military men, especially sailors, and "rough trade."

Demuth worked at a time of transition in American art, as it was abandoning the certainties of the academy and the realism of the Ashcan School, but before it fully embraced the modernist aesthetic. This historical position, and the unusual range of his subject matter, make his ultimate standing hard to determine. Certainly the 1980s rediscovery of his sexually explicit works—achieved at a time when critics are questioning the conventional distinctions between high and low art, between erotic painting and pornography—makes a reassessment mandatory. Significantly, as a major retrospective of his oeuvre was mounted in four American cities in 1987–88 some critics still ex-

pressed distaste for Demuth's more overt works. In an art world characterized by increasing pluralism and an attitude that "anything goes," this lasting power to shock is an achievement.

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Wayne R. Dynes

DENMARK

This small country, which occupies the Jutland peninsula and neighboring islands, is the home of a people who roamed far and wide in the medieval period. Denmark was converted to Latin Christianity just before the year 1000 and became Lutheran in the sixteenth century. Since World War II it has been both admired and excoriated for its liberal attitudes toward sex and pornography.

The Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period. Pagan Scandinavia knew no generalized taboo on homosexuality, certainly no laws against it, but there was a folk belief that the man who took the passive role with another in a sexual relationship had forfeited the respect owed his sex. Christianity at first brought only moral condemnation and religious penance. On February 2, 1227 pope Honorius III wrote a letter to the Danish archbishop in reply to his request for advice on how to deal with a number of individuals guilty of incest or homosexual sodomy. As they could not very well make the long trip to Rome, the pope gave the archbishop the authority to decide for himself on a penance which should be neither too hard nor too lenient.

With the influence of the Reformation and its revived interest in the Old Testament, the Danish Lawbook (*Danske Lov*) of King Christian V (1683) prescribed burning at the stake for sodomy. In point of fact, however, little is known of prosecutions for homosexual intercourse, and they were probably rare. An isolated case of pederasty is recorded in which a married weaver was in 1744 sentenced to two years'

hard labor followed by banishment from the province of Jutland for having had sexual connection with a boy. The attitude of that time was expressed by a professor at the University of Copenhagen, Ludvig Holberg, in his *Introduction to Natural and International Law* (1716). Admitting that "we must condemn the evil vice," he went to say that "the authorities cannot punish vices which are practiced by so many, and which are so firmly embedded that to eradicate the evil would be to cause the disintegration of the whole state. And if they are but works of darkness and are not generally noticed and of little consequence, why trouble the authorities by calling their attention to them?"

Toward the Present. This attitude, however, changed after 1866 when the death penalty was rescinded and replaced by imprisonment. After this time a considerable number of prosecutions and convictions occurred. It is likely also that the introduction of modern police methods of surveillance and entrapment contributed to the new situation. Just as in the penal code of the German empire, the provisions of the law applied only to male homosexuality.

The first Danish author to address the plight of the homosexual from the standpoint of the literature produced by the inchoate homophile movement and by responsive psychiatrists wrote under the pseudonym "Tandem." Himself a layman, he published in the medical journal *Bibliotek for Læger* (1892), an article of some fifty pages surveying everything that had been written in Western Europe and Scandinavia on the subject, concluding with a plea for toleration. This was not to come, however, until the sexual reform movement in Germany had placed the issue on the agenda. In 1928 the World League for Sexual Reform on a Scientific Basis held its second congress in Copenhagen, at which Magnus Hirschfeld read the text of an "Appeal on Behalf of an Oppressed Variety of Human Being"