

having been taken over from an earlier work by S. A. D. Tissot, a physician obsessively concerned with that subject. Clearly the attempt to move beyond traditional religious ideas into a realm of unbiased secular information had not even begun at this point. Better informed is the article on "Socratic Love" in the more personal *Dictionnaire philosophique* of Voltaire (1764). Incidentally, this tradition of the sometimes idiosyncratic one-person dictionary has been revived in recent years by such scholars as Mary Daly, Wayne Dynes, and Monique Wittig.

The eighteenth century also saw the beginning of a more informed tradition of treatment in medical reference works, of which the first notable example is Robert James, *A Medical Dictionary* (1743-45). This tradition continued into the nineteenth century, as seen in the French multivolume *Dictionnaire des sciences médicales* and *Encyclopédie des sciences médicales*.

Dictionaries of sexual information did not appear until the twentieth century. The *Handwörterbuch der Sexualwissenschaft* (1923), edited by Max Marcuse, combines articles derived from the mainstream German tradition of sex research with newer psychoanalytic viewpoints. The first example in English is *The Encyclopedia of Sexual Knowledge* (1934), edited by the Australian homophile Norman Haire, though this volume is largely based on German materials assembled by Arthur Koestler. In the post-World War II period, the *Encyclopedia of Sexual Behavior* (1961), of Albert Ellis and Albert Abarbanel, attempted to be truly cross-cultural with much material on non-Western cultures, even though the coverage may seem thin or dated today.

When not subject to censorship, slang dictionaries often contain considerable lexicographical material on homosexuality, though the terms included are usually culled from the usage of heterosexuals, often from the argot of the urban lower classes or members of the criminal

underworld. There are also erotic dictionaries of various languages; significantly, the first of these appears to be that of Pierre Pierrugues, of Latin terms and in Latin, of 1826. The classic in this genre is Alfred Delvau's *Dictionnaire érotique de la langue verte* (1864).

Homosexuality and lesbianism have not fared well in general encyclopedias in English, such as the Britannica and the Americana, perhaps because these are addressed in part to a secondary-school readership, for which extensive discussion of such matters is not deemed suitable. The general articles are relatively brief and suffer from outdated and incomplete information. Biographical articles rarely mention that the subjects are gay or lesbian, and contributions of eminent figures to the study of homosexuality are omitted from their biographies. The general rule is, the more accessible and popular a reference work is, the more uninformative it is likely to be on the topic of homosexuality.

With today's demand for more information on sexual matters, it is to be hoped that this situation will change. Yet with the increasing tempo of information build-up, it will probably be necessary to resort more and more to information stored in computer-accessed data banks.

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Ward Houser

## DIONYSUS

Greek god associated with wine and emotional exuberance. Although the name occurs in linear B tablets from the end of the second millennium B.C., his figure absorbed additional elements from Thrace and the East in the following centuries. Dionysus, called Bacchus in Latin, was the son of Zeus and a mortal Semele. When his mother unwisely besought Zeus to reveal himself in his true form, she was

incinerated, but the embryo of her son escaped destruction. Zeus then inserted it into his own thigh and carried the child to term. This quality of being "twice born," once from a woman and once from a man, points to the ambiguity of the god, who though male had effeminate traits. In literary and artistic representations, he sometimes served as a vehicle for questioning sex roles, otherwise strongly polarized in ancient Greece.

According to the late-antique writer Nonnus, Dionysus fell in love with a Phrygian boy, Ampelos, who became his inseparable companion. When the boy was killed in a bull-riding accident, the grief-stricken Dionysus turned him into a vine. As a result, the practices of vine cultivating and grape harvesting, of wine making and drinking, commemorate this deeply felt pederastic relationship: in honoring the vine (*ampelos* in Greek), one honors the god through his beloved.

In historic times Dionysus attracted a cult following consisting largely of women, the Bacchae or maenads. During the ritual followers abandoned their houses and work, to roam about in the mountains, hair and clothing in disarray, and liberally imbibing wine, normally forbidden to women. At the height of their ecstasy they would seize upon an animal or even a child, tear it to pieces, and devour the uncooked flesh, by ingesting which they sought to incorporate the god and his powers within themselves. From a sociological point of view, the Bacchic cult is a "religion of the oppressed," affording an ecstatic relief to women, whose status was low. Occurring only once during the year, or once every two years, these Dionysiac rites were bracketed off from the normal life of the Greek polis, suggesting comparison with such later European customs as the feast of fools, the carnival, the charivari, and *mardi gras*.

The maenads assume a major role in Euripides' tragedy, *The Bacchae* (406 B.C.). Accompanied by his female followers, Dionysus appears in Thebes as a mis-

sionary. Unwisely, King Pentheus insults and arrests the divine visitor; after he has been rendered mad and humiliated, the transgressor is dismembered by the maenads. Interpretations of the play differ: a warning of the consequences of emotional excess versus a reaffirmation of the enduring presence of humanity's irrational side. The subject probably attracted Euripides as a phenomenon of individual and group psychology in its own right, but it is unlikely that he intended it as a forecast of modern gay liberation in the "faery spirituality" mode, as Arthur Evans has argued. Inasmuch as the sexuality of *The Bacchae* was not pederastic, the Greek audience would not have seen the play as homosexual (a concept foreign to their mentality), but rather as challenging gender-role assumptions about men and women, whatever their sexual orientation. That the parts of the maenads were taken by men was not exceptional: women never appeared on the Greek stage.

Bacchanalian rites were introduced into Rome during the Republic. Men joined women in the frenzied gatherings, and (according to the historian Livy) there was more debauchery among the men with each other than with the women. Apart from their orgiastic aspects, the rites caused concern because they crossed class lines, welcoming citizens, freedmen, and slaves alike. Condemned as a subversive foreign import, the Senate suppressed the Bacchanalia in 186 B.C., but they evidently were soon revived. Roman sarcophagi of the second and third century of our era show Bacchic scenes, projecting hopes for an afterlife spent in Dionysic bliss. In its last phases the cult of Dionysus emerged as an other-worldly mystery religion, showing affinities with Mithraism, the religion of Isis, and Christianity. Meeting now behind closed doors, members of the sect recognized one another by passwords and signs.

Although the early Christians regarded all pagan worship as demonic, they were not averse to purloining the

Bacchic wine harvest imagery for their own sarcophagi and mosaics. Some Bacchic reminiscences recur in drinking songs of medieval goliardic poets, notably the *Carmina Burana*. As a religious phenomenon the Bacchanalia attracted discrete attention among the hermetic adepts of the Italian Renaissance, foreshadowing the latter interest of students of comparative religion. At the end of the sixteenth century the flamboyant bisexual painter Caravaggio created a notably provocative image of Bacchus-Dionysus (Florence, Uffizi Gallery).

The most influential latterday evocation of the god occurs in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) of Friedrich Nietzsche, who exalted the category of the Dionysiac as an antidote for excessive rationality in the interpretation of ancient Greece and, by implication, in modern life as well. Nietzsche's ideas were modernized and correlated with anthropology and psychoanalysis by the classical scholar E. R. Dodds, who in turn influenced the poet W. H. Auden. Together with his lover, Chester Kallman, Auden turned Euripides' play into an opera libretto entitled *The Bassarids*. Set by the gay composer Hans Werner Henze, the work premiered at Salzburg in August 1966. While the opera has not gained a permanent place in the repertoire, Euripides' play—with Dionysus as the apostle of the "do your own thing" principle—found much favor in the experimental theatre of the 1970s and 1980s, though sometimes transformed to the point of unrecognizability.

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## DISCRIMINATION

In its social dimension, discrimination refers to treatment that disadvantages others by virtue of their perceived

membership in a group. Earlier studies of such patterns concentrated on economic discrimination—the denial to a group of earnings commensurate with ability. Interest focused on groups that are either ethnic or religious minorities (blacks in the United States, untouchables in India, Jews in the Soviet Union), or political or social minorities (blacks in South Africa, immigrants from North Africa in Israel, women in most countries). Even this aspect was neglected in the past because economists were reluctant to interpret any significant economic phenomena in terms of the Marxian concept of "exploitation." The growing concern of economists with this phenomenon has been grounded in thinking that circumvents the Marxian analysis by making an even sharper break with traditional economic theory. This approach holds that a group can be the object of discrimination if others are willing to sacrifice resources or gains of their own in order to avoid employing, working beside, lending to, training, educating, or associating in any manner with its members.

*History.* The attitude of Western Christianity toward individuals known to have engaged in homosexual activity has been one of persistent discrimination and exclusion. It was the pattern of ostracism and general intolerance that drove homosexual men and women to desperate measures of concealment and deception in order to avoid the economic and social penalties which a hostile environment sought to inflict upon them. This discrimination differed from the exclusion imposed on members of groups such as women or religious minorities who had an inferior status within the society, but still held a recognized place; these groups were not stigmatized as criminals and outcasts, even though they were until quite recent times denied access to higher education and to the exercise of certain professions.

*American Developments.* Until the 1940s the right of American employers, landlords and the like to discriminate on the grounds of racial or ethnic origin