

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

went unchallenged; then a movement began to declare such forms of exclusion illegal that led to the enactment of many state laws forbidding such practices and ultimately to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. But discrimination based upon the sexual orientation of the subject was upheld by the courts as a right to eliminate "immoral" persons from the work force or from housing. The judiciary consistently echoed the cultural norms of the heterosexual majority as binding upon the whole of society. Early attempts to include homosexuals within the protections afforded cultural, religious, and racial minorities met uniformly with failure. Only gradually did groups concerned with civil liberties come to believe that discrimination against homosexuals violated their civil rights. The struggle to include "sexual orientation" (= bisexuality or homosexuality) in the protected list of anti-discrimination laws began in the 1970s and has led to the passage of some 50 municipal ordinances with such guarantees.

Federal Employment. The United States federal government has since the late 1940s maintained that homosexual conduct is immoral and that homosexuality in itself establishes unfitness for employment. The argument is that homosexual conduct is scandalous and disgraceful and requires punitive policies on the part of the executive. While more recent court decisions have somewhat limited the Civil Service Commission in this area, they leave open the possibility that homosexual conduct might justify dismissal where interference with efficiency could be proved. The military establishment has almost uniformly been successful in defeating suits brought against it by homosexual and lesbian members of the armed forces threatened with discharge and often loss of benefits as well.

Public Schools. The situation of school employees is entangled in a web of contradictory and inconsistent decisions. While procedural due process is accorded

public employees, there is no guarantee that a teacher's classroom performance will be the basis of the decision. Homosexual teachers and counselors often face dismissal on the basis of substantive rules that disqualify such an employee for "moral turpitude" or "immoral or unprofessional conduct." Because popular belief identifies the homosexual with the child molester, public schoolteachers face a particularly invidious type of discrimination. Revocation of the teaching credential has been a virtual rule when a teacher is convicted of a homosexual offense, even though the party with whom the act was committed may have long since passed the school attendance age. More recently, a few courts have held that an employee's private life should not be of concern to an employer unless it could be shown to affect the employee's ability to perform his duties. In practice, the criterion has often been the employee's visibility: if his sexual activity is covert and unknown to the community, the school officials can overlook it, but if it becomes publicly known, they feel obliged to "protect the reputation of the institution." Such is also the logic of court decisions that uphold the right of an employer to dismiss a gay activist whose political overtness has made him notorious.

Housing. Discrimination in housing is another barrier that homosexuals face, particularly when trying to rent apartments. Single homosexuals who "pass" are not likely to encounter difficulty; moreover, gay people are recognized by many landlords as likely to improve property. When two prospective tenants of the same sex apply, however, they may be denied at the whim of the owner or, in the case of large corporate landlords, as the result of company policy. The argument is voiced that their presence will have a "morally corrupting influence" on the children of families living in the same building or in the general area. Homosexuals are by definition single, even if in fact they are long-term, stable couples; they

may have children, but they do not qualify for benefits offered to young married couples or families with children. If one of the partners in a relationship dies, the lease may not be transferable to the survivor because there is no formal marriage tie.

Public Accommodations. Restaurants, bars, and hotels do not offer the same problems for the homosexual as they once did for ethnic or religious minorities who were explicitly denied lodging or service, though an obviously gay couple may still be the object of rudeness or hostility. On the whole, however, homophile activists have not raised this issue in the courts, while for the civil rights movement of the early 1960s it was a prime concern. Similarly, the denial of voting rights that was a major issue in the drive for racial equality did not concern the gay movement, because homosexuals have never been politically demarcated even for purposes of exclusion. Also, the development of a network of guest houses, restaurants, bars, and similar establishments that welcome a gay clientele has filled the need for such places of recreation and leisure.

Economic Aspects. The economic dimension of discrimination against homosexuals is difficult to assess, just because it may consist in underemployment, denial of promotion, or rejection for an executive position though not an entry-level one. In fields where a significant proportion of the workers are gay (e.g., librarianship, dance), it is only those with a heterosexual appearance or social façade who may be chosen for advancement to the upper levels of the occupational hierarchy. Also, some homosexuals fearing discovery or dismissal may opt out of the normal career path entirely, preferring to create their own firms from which they cannot be fired at the whim of a heterosexual employer.

Private Life. Forms of discrimination in private life cannot be separated from the right of an individual to choose his associates and intimates. The private

citizen who wants no part of homosexuals cannot be taken to court on any ground, even if he engages in open rudeness. Also, there is a civil liberties issue: the freedom of association necessarily includes the right of non-association, which can be motivated by any number of idiosyncratic dislikes and aversions. Here only patient education—and diplomacy on the part of homosexuals in their dealings with unsympathetic heterosexuals—can erase the invisible barriers.

Affirmative Action. From the late 1960s onward, laws and guidelines were enacted that called for "affirmative action" to increase the numbers of women and ethnic minorities in fields from which they had traditionally been excluded or limited to low-level, menial positions. These have even included actual quotas that an employer needed to meet to comply with the law. None of these programs has contained any measure to increase the number of homosexuals in any firm or industry, indeed critics sometimes advanced the very suggestion that there should be one as the *reductio ad absurdum* of the entire scheme. It is also a fact that homosexuals are overrepresented in many areas of employment relative to their numbers in the general population, and in these fields quotas would not benefit the gay community, but rather deprive its members of their hard-earned livelihood. Then too, many homosexuals who are in no way obvious would never identify themselves as deserving preference under a quota system.

People with AIDS. In recent years, the spread of AIDS in the gay male population has resulted in demands for anti-discrimination measures that have enjoyed some success as part of a general movement to protect the rights of the disabled and handicapped. Courts have interpreted such statutes as meaning that an employee with AIDS cannot be fired so long as he is capable of performing competently on the job. On the other hand, efforts by insurance companies to identify homosexual

men and deny them protection have in some instances been tacitly approved by the courts and legislatures. Also, forms of ostracism and social isolation inspired by fear of disease have gone so far as to deny people with AIDS seats on a commercial airliner.

Prospects and Goals. The campaign for anti-discrimination ordinances parallel to those protecting other minorities will be a major part of gay movement activity in the decades ahead, as removing the negative sanctions in the law is only the first, though necessary, step. One cannot logically ask to be protected in behavior which is per se illegal. Many homosexuals choose not to advertise their sexual orientation to an unfriendly environment, and desire only respect for their privacy. The long tradition of exclusion and ostracism of homosexuals in Western civilization has only begun to recede in the face of the organized movement for gay rights, and positive guarantees of the fundamental liberties that homosexuals need to become full-fledged members of modern society remain one of that movement's principal goals.

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DISGUST

Disgust is a physical reaction comparable to nausea that is provoked by exposure to something experienced as distasteful or loathsome. Nausea is a primary response of the gastro-intestinal system to substances rejected and expelled by it, typically in the form of vomiting. The close relationship between the oral

cavity, the sense of taste, tactile sensations, and deglutition on the one hand, and the functions of the stomach, on the other, explain the existence of tastes and odors that are nauseating even to one who has never previously encountered them.

The principal reason for mentioning disgust in this encyclopedia is that it figures so frequently as an argument for the intolerance of homosexual expression. In debates on the sodomy laws speakers often allege that "hearing of these practices makes me sick to my stomach" or that "what I read there nauseated me to the foundations of my being." Further, this reaction is cited as a spontaneous expression of the *vox populi*, as the natural aversion of the common man to "this revolting filthiness" that justifies the perpetuation of the statutes by a democratically elected legislature.

Psychology. Modern psychology recognizes that erotic sensations are closely associated with the arousal of certain parts of the body known as erogenous zones. Among these, the buccal cavity must be regarded not merely as primary and as one of the most important, but also as one of those which retain their function into adulthood. Early in the life of the child the feeling of disgust originates as a negative reaction deriving from external conditioning that represses the erotic tendencies associated with the oral cavity. Just as the complete gratification of the hunger instinct is followed by a disgust felt for further nourishment, so the satisfaction of sexual desires can result in disdain for further activity.

A further consideration is that the sexual acts of others are capable of arousing disgust in an individual who regards his own with equanimity. This reaction is not confined to high stages of civilization, but is found among primitive peoples in an even more palpable form. It gives rise to the belief that sexual intercourse is unclean, impure, defiling, and also to the social compulsion to hide one's sexual activity from the light of day, to