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ENLIGHTENMENT

The Enlightenment thinkers—the *philosophes*—who flourished in the eighteenth century sought to give practical effect to the era's fundamental advances in knowledge. The trend represented both a prolongation and a departure from the Age of Reason of the previous century. Continuing to rely on the application of rationality as the solution to problems, the Enlightenment shifted attention away from pure thought and natural science to ethics and human happiness. Firm believers in progress and the value of

education, the philosophes were strongly secularist, viewing established religion as a major source of continuing human ills. The movement's two heroes were Confucius and Socrates, the humanistic philosophers of East and West. Because of its commitment to human betterment, the Enlightenment has been called the "Party of Humanity."

Basic Problems. For many today the word "Enlightenment" retains a halo owing to the underlying metaphor of illumination and also to its social optimism and humanism. Moreover, films and other modern popular presentations have spread the idea that the eighteenth century was an era of joyous and unrestrained sexual hedonism. Before endorsing this view, it should be remembered that this was the period in which the great **masturbation** scare began—the claim that physical weaknesses of all kinds, leading to insanity and death, were the inevitable result of this harmless practice. The hysteria began with an anonymous English publication, *Onania; or, the Heinous Sin of Self-Pollution, and all its Frightful Consequences in both Sexes, Considered* [1707-08], continued in the Swiss Dr. Tissot's *L'Onanisme; ou dissertation physique sur les maladies produites par la masturbation* (1760), and was even enshrined in the great French *Encyclopédie*, the pantheon of the Enlightenment, under the article "Sodomie."

Rather than taking it at its own evaluation and that of its latter-day admirers, one should examine the Enlightenment critically and historically, and distinguish the contingent and personal views of individual thinkers from overarching principles. Diderot and Voltaire harbored some conventional anti-Jewish prejudices, yet the overall thrust of their rhetoric promoted the emancipation of European Jewry. Also, Voltaire praised enlightened despots, but furthered the recognition of individual rights and of political democracy.

Individual Thinkers. In a brief, but suggestive passage Baron Montesquieu

(1689–1755), hereditary judge of the parlement of Bordeaux, puzzled: "It is curious that we recognize three crimes, magic, heresy, and the crime against nature [homosexuality], of which one can prove that the first does not exist, that the second lends itself to an infinite number of distinctions, interpretations, and limitations, and that the third is frequently obscure; all three are punished by burning." Same-sex conduct, of which Montesquieu disapproved, he saw as being fostered by social conditions (*The Spirit of the Laws*, XII, 6, 1748). Elsewhere he charged that Christian asceticism was Malthusian in its consequences, robbing the Roman Empire of manpower for its wars and causing its decline—thus implying that sexual activity should be procreative.

Famous for his comparison of the human body to a machine, the materialist philosopher Julien Geoffroy de La Mettrie (1709–1751) advocated hedonistic ethics with an emphasis on satisfaction, including sexual gratification.

Anticipating twentieth-century media, Voltaire (1694–1778) made clever use of the press to mobilize public opinion against injustices. In the Calas case of 1762, for example, he showed how a Protestant had been wrongly executed out of religious bigotry. Tireless in his indictments of the cruelty, arbitrariness, and irrationality of the French legal system of his day, Voltaire's voice was unfortunately raised only slightly in defense of sodomites, who were still being put to death. In the article on "Socratic Love" in his *Philosophical Dictionary* (1764), he makes it clear that although he personally found homosexuality repellent, it should be regarded as an aberrant taste, rather than a crime. He also gives historical instances of famous homosexuals, anticipating a device that homophile apologists were to use abundantly during the twentieth century.

The prolific Denis Diderot (1713–1784), co-editor of the great *Encyclopédie*, wrote on virtually every topic in

human affairs. In a guarded, though for its time unusually frank, discussion of the limits of sexual expression, "The Conclusion of the Conversation between D'Alembert and Diderot" (1769), he states: "Nothing that exists can be either against nature or outside nature. I don't except even voluntary chastity and continence, which would be chief crimes against nature if one could sin against nature." Diderot anticipated twentieth-century sexologists in holding to the **hydraulic metaphor** of sexual energies, which demand an outlet. His animus against chastity is also linked to his hostility to the ascetic morality of Christianity, to which he gives full sway in his novel, *La Religieuse* (1760; not published until 1796). In this melodramatic work he presents a catalogue of anguish and horrors, not excluding lesbianism, which he deems the result of involuntary collective seclusion of women in convents. To berate Europe for its unnatural restrictions, Diderot's "Supplement to Bougainville's *Voyage*" (1772) uses the device of a South Sea island paradise of heterosexual satisfactions that combined, quoting Horace, the pleasurable with the useful, so that women who had passed the childbearing age were supposed to refuse coitus. In keeping with general eighteenth-century opinion, he disliked masturbation. His reasoning on sexual morality is Janus-like: while criticizing its asceticism, he retained the procreative bias of Christian thought in fostering a naturalistic sexual morality that set definite limits on nonconformity, and so created a secular rationalization of the religious argument that homosexuality is unnatural. In this way Diderot anticipated the "social materialist" homophobia of Communist nations today.

The Italian Marquis Cesare Beccaria (1738–1794) sought to apply a kind of Occam's razor to laws. In his view, draconian punishments, including those against sodomy, were not achieving their aim. He also proposed a sociogenic explanation of homosexuality, which he held was fos-

tered by the one-sex populations of total institutions, such as boarding schools and prisons. The corollary was that undesirable behavior could be lessened by altering the design of human institutions. As this example shows, the Enlightenment was concerned not only with lifting the burden of inherited irrationality, but with proposing new devices of social control, ones which, by virtue of their good intentions, might be all the more oppressive. Thus the Enlightenment is the ancestor not only of modern liberalism but also of state socialism.

Evaluation. The *philosophes* forged powerful arguments to discomfit tyrants everywhere. Yet the passage of time has revealed some weakness in their thought: an overemphasis on reason itself, to the neglect of feelings and sentiments, which have often swayed humanity. To a large extent this oneness was corrected and superseded by the ensuing romantic approach begun by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. There was a vital survival, however, in the work of Jeremy Bentham, whose carefully considered theories of homosexual emancipation were regrettably not published in his lifetime.

In political philosophy rationalism has tended to yield to the seductions of *constructivism*, as F. A. Hayek has termed it. This is the tendency to assume that one can sweep away existing habits and preferences, and then create a new society by fiat according to a deductive idea of how humanity should be. In this heady vision, the old divinities depart—but society becomes the god. In this outcome, the tyranny of the majority is scarcely avoidable. Or contrariwise, in keeping with the doctrine of self-interest, the wishes of the individual become the only criterion. The farthest reaches of this second avenue were trodden by the most radical of the Enlightenment thinkers, the Marquis de Sade. Without fear of punishment in an afterlife and the restraining bonds of tradition, how can we be certain that human beings will not simply abandon themselves to a mael-

strom of self-indulgence? This question, which might be tiresome in a conventional moralist, gains force in Sade's novels, with their detailed visions of cruelty. Sade was the first great creator of a dystopia, a negative vision of society in which the trends of his day found their utmost logical extension.

The mainstream, or positive utopian aspect, of the Enlightenment held that human nature is, or ideally should be, uniform. Thus present diversities will yield to a new universalist ideal of humanity and of uniformly applicable principles of law. And the Enlightenment thinkers, while deists, did not deny the need for institutions as arbiters of morality—which in practice meant the ascetic morality which was to blight Victorian society with its exaltation of "the sacred marriage bond" and the social-purity movements which relegated homosexuals to the underworld of vice that was to be eradicated. Even if Frederick II the Great, Joseph II, and other enlightened despots abolished the death penalty for sodomy in the eighteenth century, the Code Napoléon did not keep the Paris police under the Third Republic from establishing a vice squad.

No organized movement for homosexual rights emerged during the Enlightenment; only at the end of the nineteenth century did the earlier trend toward freeing disadvantaged groups and empowering them finally reach the despised and outlawed homosexual community. Still, to the extent that its supporters can draw on the intellectual capital of the earlier trend, the struggle for gay rights counts as part of the "unfinished business of the Enlightenment." The appeal to knowledge as the ground of human freedom has deep resonance. Yet the empirical study of homosexuality owes little or nothing to the Enlightenment; it stems from nineteenth-century innovations in the fields of biology and psychiatry. This research is often of intrinsic value, but in and of itself it clearly has not accomplished the emancipation of homosexuals.

Human beings are only in part rational creatures, and lingering myths and fabrications have proved hard to eradicate from the popular mind. Sober reflection indicates that Enlightenment in the sense of education and the spread of knowledge must be fused with an effective political program that can secure recognition of the innate diversity of human beings as the bulwark of fundamental rights.

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ENRIQUE IV

See Juan II.

EPHEBOPHILIA

The word "ephebophilia" refers to an erotic attraction to maturing male youth, and as such stands in contrast to terms such as **androphilia** (love of one adult male for another), **gerontophilia** (love of the old), **pedophilia** (whether this term is restricted to love of prepubescent children or includes adolescents as well), and "puberphilia" (love of pubescents).

Terminology. The term ephebophilia seems to have been coined by Magnus Hirschfeld in his *Wesen der Liebe* (1906), where he applied it to sexually mature youths from puberty up to the age of 20; in his 1914 magnum opus, *Die Homosexualität des Mannes und des Weibes*, Hirschfeld specified the range of love objects as from "the beginning to the completion of maturity, so approximately ages 14-21." The German researcher estimated that 45 percent of all homosexuals were ephebophiles. For women, he used the term "parthenophiles."

The Greek word which Hirschfeld borrowed for his compound, *ephebos*, is of various meanings, used for one arrived at adolescence or manhood (at 16 to 18, de-

pending on locality) or at the prime strength and vigor of youth. It seems, however, to have referred to the older youths, those with bearded faces who had outgrown the stage at which they were appropriate as the younger partners in **pederasty**, but not yet old enough to marry: the prime age for military service. The ancient Greek age of puberty was likely in the mid-teens rather than the younger ages typical of contemporary Western society.

In current usage, the term seems to have dropped the youngest segment of Hirschfeld's definition, those adolescents just emerging from puberty, and focused on the later years, 17-20. In many societies, this age group is treated as adults for **consent** purposes, drawing a strong legal and practical boundary between ephebophilia as currently used and the sexual attractions to younger ages. In other societies, ephebes are legally on a par with younger children, but in practice sexual activities with them are not as harshly repressed as with the younger group.

According to Hirschfeld, two ephebes in love with each other are both ephebophiles, but as attraction of same-aged persons is not of special intrinsic interest, this article will focus on adult ephebophilia.

Popularity of Ephebophilia. Most male **prostitutes** and models for homosexual **pornography** seem to be drawn from the ranks of ephebes, supporting Hirschfeld's observation that ephebophilia is a major component of adult homosexuality (in modern Western cultures).

Aesthetic considerations (which may well have biological roots related to the best ages for childbearing) under which in most cultures males prize youthfulness in their sexual partners, whether male or female, play a role in this attraction, but other factors are also significant.

Sex researcher Alfred Kinsey's 1948 finding that the statistically average white American male reaches his peak sexual activity (measured in orgasms per week) at the age of 17 points to the widely