

inhabitants of Albania, who until recently boasted a rich indigenous tradition of pederasty, nonetheless sometimes designated their custom as *madzūpi*, derived from *madzūp*, "Gypsy," implying that pederasty had been brought in from the outside by this wandering people.

Some French writers localized the customs in other zones of the Mediterranean littoral. French trade with Arab countries and the occupation of North Africa (beginning in 1830) are probably responsible for the popularity of such expressions as *mœurs levantines* and *mœurs arabes*. Just after the turn of the century, the Krupp and Eulenburg-von Moltke scandals contributed greatly to the popularity in a hostile France of the expression *vice allemand*, apparently reviving a notion current there in the time of Frederick II the Great in the second half of the eighteenth century. The temptation to hurl such charges becomes particularly great in wartime as seen in an absurd volume by Samuel Igra, *Germany's National Vice* (London, 1945), which even alleges that Hitler had been a male prostitute. A more general type of ethnophobia, found both in Communist and some Third World countries, claims that the Western industrial nations collectively are declining because of their tolerance of "unnatural vice." As a kind of silver lining, if only that, we may be grateful that the appearance of AIDS, whose spread has been connected both to Africa and the United States, has not led to any general international label of origin. While such hopes must be proffered with diffidence, perhaps some degree of reason is beginning to prevail in these matters.

See also Fascist Perversion.

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## ETIOLOGY

Etiology is the study of the factors that contribute to the occurrence of a disease or abnormal condition. As such the term has been employed in inquiries and speculations regarding the causes of homosexual behavior. In medicine the significance of etiology is that it is the necessary starting point for therapy and even more for prophylaxis, to which modern public health programs owe their chief successes in the eradication of disease.

*Historical Perspectives.* The application of the idea of etiology to same-sex behavior stems from several judgmental perspectives. The broad outlines of their reasoning are as follows. (1) If homosexuality is mere depravity—moral failure rooted in individual caprice and self-indulgence—then society is justified in ostracizing and punishing those who engage in it. Such measures would serve as a warning to others to amend their conduct, which they can do through an exercise of free will. (2) If, however, homosexuality is a psychological condition that has arisen independent of the conscious will of the individual, then therapeutic measures of one kind or another are called for. These must be imposed for the good of the individual and that of society. (3) Yet again, the homosexual may be simply manifesting an inborn and unmodifiable condition determined by hereditary or genetic factors; then society is well advised to leave him alone as neither punishment nor therapy will change his orientation.

*The Pathological Explanation.* For many centuries the first interpretation—the abuse of free will—was virtually the only one admitted in Christian Europe, and accordingly habitual sodomites were seen as criminals and outcasts for whom no punishment could be too severe. The matter fell in the realm of the criminal law and the role of the forensic physician was ancillary. Only in the nineteenth century, when the early homophile apologists had drawn the attention of psychiatrists such as Karl Westphal and Richard

von Krafft-Ebing to the existence of exclusively homosexual individuals, did the notion of sexual inversion as a pathological state raise the question of etiology, properly speaking. The psychiatrists of the late nineteenth century were inclined to organic explanations that made homosexuality a consequence of hereditary degeneration of the central nervous system—and some people even now thoughtlessly brand homosexuals as “degenerates.” Little do they suspect that with the acceptance of the findings of Mendel and Weismann that acquired characteristics cannot be inherited—for good or for ill—the notion of hereditary degeneration ceased to exist for medical science.

A variant was that homosexuality resulted from the psychological vicissitudes of early childhood. This idea had a few adherents in the nineteenth century, but found much broader support in the twentieth, thanks to such psychiatrists as Albert von Schrenck-Notzing and psychoanalysts of whom Isidor Sadger and Alfred Adler are the most outstanding. In the view of such writers, homosexuality was a fixation in a stage of psychological development which normal individuals left behind on their way to adult heterosexuality. An assortment of fears and attachments in childhood left an indelible impression on the psyche of the individual, and this complex of factors triggered a homosexual orientation. This thinking offered a rationale for the compulsory psychotherapy imposed upon some young homosexuals by their parents and upon others by judges in lieu of a prison sentence.

#### *The Shift to a More Positive View.*

During the same period a very different view emerged. As early as 1896 such defenders of homosexual rights as Magnus Hirschfeld, Marc-André Raffalovich, and Albert Aletrino held that homosexuality was a non-pathological variation within the human species, inborn and unmodifiable, occurring in all races in all epochs of history in approximately the same degree

and with roughly the same range of constitutional types. And in fact more than a century of medical and biological research has failed to discover any common denominator in exclusively homosexual subjects other than their sexual orientation. If a specific cause underlies the sexual orientation of such individuals, genetic science has thus far been unable to identify it.

*Other Etiologies.* Other explanations have been defended from time to time. One is that hormonal imbalance or some glandular abnormality causes homosexuality, but therapies grounded in these assumptions have had little result. The attempt of biologists such as Richard Goldschmidt to prove that all homosexuals were constitutional intersexes (“disguised” members of the opposite sex) has also found no confirmation. Moralizing psychiatrists such as Edmund Bergler have argued that homosexuality is the outcome of the seduction by older homosexuals of adolescents who are then trapped in an orientation into which they initiate younger males in their own adulthood—a view paralleling the interpretation offered by the second edition of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* published at the end of Stalin’s lifetime. And simple-minded fundamentalists believe that homosexuality is the result of demonic possession or some equally malign spell cast by the evil powers of another world.

Edward O. Wilson and other advocates of **sociobiology** have offered several explanations based on the concept of “inclusive fitness.” In this view homosexuals and lesbians who have no offspring of their own assure the transmission of their genes by helping siblings and their children. This factor would account for the transmission of a trait that otherwise cannot be accounted for in modern Darwinism.

A fifteen-year longitudinal study by Richard Green defined sissy boys as cross-dressing, role playing as girls, frequently playing with dolls, and avoiding

rough-and-tumble sports. Such boys were found to be much more likely to become homosexual than a control group. This finding, though it has been supported by several other scholars, probably cannot be generalized, since a large proportion of adult homosexuals report no effeminacy in childhood, while others were without excessive difficulty able to suppress the traits, becoming masculine in appearance while still homosexual.

*Correlations and Ulterior Motives.* Whatever the etiology proposed by a given author, the political correlation has been fairly clear. With a bare handful of exceptions, those who believed in the genetic or constitutional determination of homosexuality have been supporters of gay rights, Conversely, many who upheld the theory of the neurotic or environmental origin of the condition (which they tended to regard as a "disease") have, historically, been antagonistic to the homophile movement. More recently, however, many anthropologists and sociologists, even if they profess that human behavior is by and large culturally rather than biologically conditioned, have expressed toleration for a plurality of lifestyles. The old school racked its brains to discover rationalizations for refusing to abolish the medieval laws, to recognize gay organizations, or to grant plaintiffs in court cases the rights which they sought. In not a few instances a kind of ideological shadow boxing occurs; those who insist upon the neurotic causes of homosexuality in reality think of it as depravity, while those who champion the genetic origin are obliquely dismissing the moral condemnation that derives from Christian theology with its absolute rejection of all "non-procreative" sexual activity.

*Future Directions.* A valid account of the causes of homosexual behavior must take account of the dialectic of sexual dimorphism. In so doing it must attempt a unified-field theory of sexual development that will account for the whole spectrum of orientation, including

shifts within a single individual's lifetime. Thus heterosexual behavior demands an explanation as much as homosexual conduct. Also, a distinction must be drawn between the macroevolutionary causes of homosexuality (Why do homosexual behavior and response occur in *homo sapiens*? Why does exclusive homosexuality occur?) and the microevolutionary causes (Why do homosexual response and behavior occur in a particular individual? Why is a given individual exclusively homosexual?). Not only must teleological conceptions of the "purpose" of sexuality be discarded in order to reach a scientific answer to the above questions, but the perspectives of different disciplines must be brought to bear to separate the phylogenetic from the ontogenetic (the species-wide phenomenon from the individual case history).

A solution to the question of causes will involve a rethinking and revision of the confusions introduced by the older concepts of etiology, fraught as they are with the insinuation that homosexual behavior is tainted with pathology. No progress can be made as long as research is hobbled with such an a priori judgment. The answer will also require integration of new scientific perspectives and findings which are still unfolding.

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## ETRUSCANS

The Etruscans were the dominant people in central and northern Italy from the ninth to the second centuries B.C. Their civilization stood at its prime from the sixth to the third century B.C., but the language has not for the most part been