

novelists and German sexologists started writing voluminously about lesbianism and were published in America.

America may have been slower than Europe to be impressed by the taboos against same-sex love for several reasons: (1) Without a predominant Catholic mentality the country was less fascinated with "sin" and therefore less obsessed with the potential of sex between women; (2) by virtue of distance, America was not so influenced by the German medical establishment as other countries were, such as France and Italy and, to a lesser extent, England; (3) there was not so much clear hostility, or rather there was more ambivalence to, women's freedom in a land which in principle was dedicated to tolerance of individual freedom. Therefore, romantic friendship was possible in America well into the second decade of the twentieth century, and, for those women who were born and raised Victorians and remained impervious to the new attitudes, even beyond it.

However, that view did not continue for long in this century. A 1973 experiment conducted by two Palo Alto, California, high school girls for a family-life course illustrates the point. For three weeks the girls behaved on campus as all romantic friends did in the previous century: they held hands often on campus walks, they sat with their arms around each other, and they exchanged kisses on the cheek when classes ended. They did not intend to give the impression that their feelings were sexual. They touched each other only as close, affectionate friends would. But despite their intentions, their peers interpreted their relationship as lesbian and ostracized them. Interestingly, the boys limited their hostility to calling them names. The girls, who perhaps felt more anxiety and guilt about what such behavior reflected on their own impulses, threatened to beat them up.

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FRIENDSHIP, MALE

Friendship has been a basic theme in Western civilization, one which has interacted with other social and intellectual currents. As the definition of homosexuality has changed over time, so has the way of conceiving its relationship with friendship.

Themes of the Classic Texts. When the Greeks first learned to write they wrote about friendship. For more than two millennia the discussion they began continued with undiminished enthusiasm, across Imperial Rome, the Christian Middle Ages and the philosophers, poets, and dramatists of the Renaissance.

The essential texts on which this discussion depends are very few. One is Cicero's essay *De Amicitia*. The second is Aristotle's discussion of friendship in Books VIII and IX of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and Book VII of the *Eudemian Ethics*. The third is Plato's *Symposium*, both in his own version and in the influential commentary written by Marsilio Ficino in the fifteenth century. These three texts dominated the discussion of friendship until well into the seventeenth century and one finds them woven together time and again with the supple ease of ideas which have long been companions.

One might well wonder why. For all that they appear together so frequently, these are very diverse texts. Cicero's essay breathes the clear air of humanism. For him, friendship is personal and its basis is virtue. It is thus a harmony between two people in everything, multiplying joys and

dividing griefs. Such a friendship necessarily requires an equality and if it is lacking it must, Cicero tells us, be made. For Plato friendship is rather part of the philosopher's quest: a link between the world of the senses in which we live and the eternal world. In Ficino's commentary, however, there is a subtle shift from the philosopher to the lover of God. The sparks of God's glory scattered throughout the world, if the haunted lover but knew it, are what attract him in the beauty of his beloved and the love they inspire are what binds the universe together in all its myriad forms. But something which is the very knot of the universe is as likely to bind the high and the low as much as it does men of equal degree, if all these are but the shadow of the bond that binds in one the Creator and His creation. Somewhere along the way, equality has been forgotten.

But friendship is disinterested, both Ficino and Cicero agree on that: it is content to be its own reward. It is here, though, that we hear the questioning voice of Aristotle. Such friendship, he tells us, is of course the best, but it is not the most common. Why do most men love one another, he asks? They do so, he tells us, because of their usefulness to each other.

These writers had by no means the same ideas about friendship, and the lack of embarrassment with which they were later combined needs some explanation. It is odd to see the humanism of Cicero intertwined with the religious rapture of Ficino; but we do, frequently. It is also odd to find a critical comment reminiscent of Aristotle within a text which otherwise draws on either of these two; but the assiduous researcher will also find that. This ease in combining the uncombinable tells us something we ought perhaps in any case to have guessed for ourselves. It is that when medieval or Renaissance writers wrote of friendship, they were not writing of something they had discovered in the pages of Cicero or Plato. It was something that already existed in their society, and what they were

doing was presenting it in its very best clothes.

Subsequent Reflections. In the more mundane documents of their time—in the writings of a medieval chronicler or the letters of a man of affairs—there is a tacit but salutary commentary on such material. There one will frequently find "friend" or "friendship," but the kind of relationship characterized by these words is altogether more practical. It is quite likely to be the relationship a patron had with his client or a lord with his tenants: the relationship, to put it at its broadest and most characteristic, between those men who possessed power and those with whom they were willing to share it.

"Friendship" in this sense casts a revealing light on the more literary descriptions of friendship. Typical of many is John Lyly's (ca. 1554–1606) description of Euphues' friendship with his friend Philautus, written in the England of Elizabeth I:

But after many embracings and protestations one to another they walked to dinner, where they wanted neither meat, neither music, neither any other pastime; and having banqueted, to digest their sweet confections they danced all that afternoon. They used not only one board but one bed, one book (if so be it they thought not one too many). Their friendship augmented every day, insomuch that the one could not refrain the company of the other one minute. All things went in common between them, which all men accounted commendable.

The description is engagingly ideal and it was meant to be, but the idealization does not lie in its details; all had their ready parallels in the England in which John Lyly was writing. Similar protestations of affection could be found in the correspondence of the hardworking secretaries of the Earl of Essex or Lord Burghley. Edmund Spenser (1552–1599),

the hopeful poet of *The Shepherdes Calender*, also looked forward, as many of his contemporaries did, to the kisses and embraces of other men that would mark his success. And as Euphues slept with Philautus, so Archbishop Laud dreamt of sharing his bed, in the eyes of all the court, with the great Duke of Buckingham: in a society where most people slept with someone else in conditions which lacked privacy, with whom a powerful man shared his bed was a public fact and a meaningful one. The idealization lies rather in what John Lyly misses out: that material interest between men of which such signs were the public symbols, and the stream of coin, of New Year's gifts and ready credit that these marks of influence could produce from those who sought to make use of them.

It is such things that were apt to find themselves dressed in elegant garments drawn from Cicero's *De Amicitia* or Ficino's commentary, without, it has to be said, a very close reading of either; and one will very probably find that the immediate source is not these writings but one of those numerous treatises of love which were as common in the sixteenth century as popular Freudianism is today.

Between such friendship and homosexuality there appears at first sight a towering divide. Elsewhere John Lyly speaks of homosexuality with the same terms of fear and loathing Elizabethan writers usually used when mentioning "unnatural vice;" and to some extent there had always been anxiety about it. How could the masculinity of a youth be preserved in a homosexual relationship with an older man? That was the kernel of the problem for the Greeks. For the Romans it was the perennial anxiety that a free citizen might take a passive role in a sexual relationship with a slave. Homosexuality in itself was not the problem for either: it was in the forms that homosexuality might take that the difficulty lay.

Distinctions. In the late Middle Ages the absolute abhorrence of homo-

sexuality took full shape, and it was a fear the Renaissance inherited in full measure. It was characteristically among the fears and anxieties of the thirteenth century that the fearful link was first made between the sodomite and the heretic and, by a transition natural to a society where state and church lay so close together, between these figures and the traitor; the polemics of the Reformation only sharpened that deadly association. Now more than ever the distinction between friendship and homosexuality had to be securely defined.

It was not, though, an easy distinction to make. A description like that of John Lyly makes that very clear. Each involved an emotional bond, each required a physical intimacy and the signs of the one were dangerously close to the signs of the other. Yet the distinction was all the more important and no light matter in a society where "friendship" in the forms of its daily use played the role it did.

In time the problem would lessen, and it is not one that the modern world has inherited. With the coming of the eighteenth century, friendship was well on the way to becoming a more individual and personal relationship. Homosexuality, too, was putting on a different mask, for it was from about this point that the sodomite began to be conceived as part of a minority of human beings for whom homosexual desire alone was a possibility. The change has meant that the tension between friendship and homosexuality which was alive for so long is apt now to elude one.

But if it does, one will have difficulty in fully understanding the history of either homosexuality or friendship before the eighteenth century, for it is here that one inevitably finds the larger world of relations between men in which homosexuality found expression; and time and again in the courts of medieval and Renaissance Europe the accusations of sodomy occur in social relations which at other times a contemporary might have called "friendship."

But there is another reason also why the historian needs to be alive to this tension. Is one so sure that on occasion some did not indeed call the one the other? The two also lay at the boundaries of each other's meaning and to see that is also to ask inexorably a more critical question about who it was that had the power to define that the one was the one and the other was the other. Here is an illustration: In 1368 a boy called Antonio appears among the court records of Renaissance Venice in a trial for sodomy along with a man called Benedicto, who was teaching him to be a herald. During the proceedings, the judges turned to the boy and asked him what *he* made of this crime. It was, the boy replied, "friendship" because Benedicto was "teaching him like a master." His judges had not asked their question out of curiosity. They had elicited his answer all the more effectively to replace it with their own. They had decided that their account should prevail, not his. But why, one is forced still to ask, should the modern investigator?

Homosexuality and friendship: they may well appear at first as two discrete histories, one of society and the other of sexuality. But if one tries to follow their subterranean currents in the Europe of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, one will end by finding oneself drawn into writing about something larger. One will find oneself writing about power and the power not only of judges but of words.

Alan Bray and Michel Rey

Post-Renaissance Developments.

Since the Renaissance the relationship between friendship and homosexuality has seen a contrast between those who sought to define friendship in a manner that would exclude the homoerotic element, and those who preferred, often for covert reasons, to make friendship encompass the phenomenon of homosexuality and serve as a code name for it. Did homosociality, a major aspect of modern social relations, include or exclude homoerotic feelings and rela-

tions? The distinction between friendship and love that denied the erotic component of the former and legitimized eroticism solely between men and women redrew the boundary between them in a manner which the defenders of homosexuality tended not to contest directly, but rather to modify by placing their own markers.

Marriage itself was redefined, with implicit consequences for friendship. A society that had observed the tradition of arranged marriages between unequal partners was confronted with a need for change. Under the influence of the middle-class ideology of the eighteenth century, society now accepted the principle of a marriage founded upon the affinity of equals, upon love rather than family interest. In this sense husband and wife could now be friends, and friendship was no longer invested with an exclusively homosexual character. The decisive shift in this direction occurred in England, where the Industrial Revolution and the ideology of classical liberalism went hand in hand.

In Germany political and social relations were more backward, and the period between 1750 and 1850 is often called the "century of friendship" because friendship was held in such high esteem as a bond of intimate feeling in circles where conversely, the intimacy and self-revelation of friendship were opposed to the mask that one had to wear in order to play one's role in society. That this notion corresponded to the antithesis between the homosexual's true self and the socially prescribed mask of obligatory heterosexuality subtly reinforced the fusion of friendship with homoeroticism. This type of friendship was grounded in a bond between kindred spirits, but also was an expression of social virtue that promoted the general well-being. However, because true friendship excluded the erotic, it could not exist between men and women, in whose lives it would be only the ante-chamber leading to a sexual relationship. Friendship with its higher and nobler ends could thus be seen as superior to the

emotionally stormy and unpredictable relationship between a man and a woman. So Romanticism revived the classical model of friendship for which Hellenic antecedents could always be held up as an ideal by such homosexual admirers of antiquity as Johann Joachim Winckelmann, a thinker who in Goethe's words "felt himself born for a friendship of this kind" and "became conscious of his true self only under this form of friendship."

Ambiguities of the Modern Situation. The ambivalence which the Christian attitude toward male homoeroticism introduced into the equation always made for mixed feelings on the subject. (As late as the 1930s German legal authors seeking to justify the Nazi laws against homosexuality claimed that their purpose was to keep relations between men—but not women—free of the sexual element.)

It was in this context that the first psychiatric writers on homosexuality formulated their definitions, taking as their point of departure the notion that in "normal" subjects sexual contact with members of the same sex caused aversion and disgust, while in pathological subjects it was a source of pleasure. Friendship was healthy because it remained asexual, homosexuality was diseased because it did not. This view was clearly not acceptable to defenders of homophile affection. Their rejoinder took either the form of (1) treating homosexuality as "Freundschaftseros," or (2) of openly asserting the homoerotic element in male bonding and its institutional expression. The first course was followed by Elisar von Kupffer in his anthology *Lieblingsminne und Freundschafts-liebe in der Weltliteratur* (1900), which inspired Edward Carpenter's *Ioläus: An Anthology of Friendship* (1902)—two collections of texts in which the homosexual content was scarcely veiled. The second, more insightful claim was put forth by Hans Blüher, first in *Die Wandervogelbewegung als erotisches Phänomen* (The German Boy Scout Movement as an Erotic Phenomenon; 1912) and then in *Die*

Rolle der Erotik in der männlichen Kultur (The Role of the Erotic in Male Culture; 1917–19). In these works Blüher revived the Platonic opposition between the *eros pandemos*, the lower form of erotic attraction that united man and woman and served as the basis of the family, and the *eros uranios*, the higher form that underlay male bonding and was the psychological underpinning of the state.

Controversial as this idea had to be, it has been revived in recent times by such authors as Lionel Tiger, who have analyzed at length male bonding and the advantage it gives the male sex in political and economic competition, as well as in shaping the ethos of teamwork which, even in an individualistic society, is necessary for the effective functioning of organizations. Viewed in this perspective, the inability of women either to internalize this ethos or to participate in male bonding with its ever-present, but highly subdued eroticism handicaps them in two crucial respects.

At the same time, sociologists such as Georg Simmel denied that the old forms of friendship were appropriate to modern society. In particular, the tradition of pairs of warriors fighting and dying together on the battlefield had been replaced by an ethos of the group, the military unit. It was this feeling that lingered after World War I, with its experience of comradeship in the trenches, and carried over into the paramilitary groups that fought in the streets of German cities under the Weimar Republic. But the old ambivalence remained, again finding oblique expression on both sides of the fence dividing homosexual from heterosexual. While Ernst Röhm could boast, late in 1933, that the homoerotic component in the SA and SS had given the Nazis the crucial edge in their struggle against the Weimar system, homophobic writers could call for the suppression of all forms of overt male homosexuality and the enactment of even more punitive laws—which were in fact adopted in 1935.

Contemporary America. The lingering distinction between friendship and love based upon the absence or presence of the overt erotic component also affects relations between homosexual men and heterosexual women. Certain women feel more comfortable in their dealings with gay men, just because they know that they do not have to be constantly on guard against sexual aggression, but can have close relationships, both social and professional, that attain high levels of creativity and imagination. Particularly in professions where homosexuality is no handicap, there can be friendships between gay men and women who take no offense at the male's lack of physical desire for them.

The use of "friend" or "friendship" as a euphemism for the homosexual partner (lover) and the liaison itself persists. Recently the compilers of newspaper obituary columns have taken to describing the lifelong companion of a deceased homosexual as his "friend," in contexts where a heterosexual would be survived by the spouse and children. And the author of a bibliography of *Freundschaftseros* published in West Germany in 1964 stoutly upheld not only the distinction between classical pederasty and modern homosexuality, but also the existence of a form of male bonding from which the erotic element is absent.

Conclusion. The overlap since time immemorial between friendship and eroticism persists in the ongoing debate over the place of homosexual feeling and homosexual activity in modern society. The advent of the gay rights movement has helped some individuals become more accepting of the erotic nature of their attachments to friends of the same sex—though some others have become more self-conscious and defensive. The lines of demarcation are being continually renegotiated as part of the revolution in moral values that has undermined many of the old norms without as yet formulating new ones. It will be the task of the future to resolve the antagonism rooted in the en-

counter of classical and Judeo-Christian attitudes toward homoeroticism/homosociality.

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FRUIT

In general English usage, this noun designates the edible reproductive body of a seed plant, particularly one having a sweet pulp. In North American slang, especially in the second and third quarter of the twentieth century, it has been a disparaging epithet for a male homosexual—sometimes used in the vocative: "Hey, fruit!"

Unlikely as it may seem, the term belongs to that significant class of words in which a pejorative appellation at one time given to women shifted to male homosexuals (compare *gay* and *faggot*). The explanation of this transfer is as follows. At the end of the nineteenth century, fruit meant an easy mark, a naive person susceptible to influence, reflecting the notion that in nature fruits are "easy pickings." From this sense it came to mean "a girl or woman easy to oblige." The transfer and specialization to gay men was probably assisted by the stereotypes that homosexuals are soft and use scent. In the 1940s, the heterosexual counterpart was the more specific "tomato," an available woman.

In England the expression "old fruit" is a mild term of affection (compare "old bean"). The word may also be a clipped form of "fruitcake"—from "nutty as a fruitcake."