

- GAUGUIN, PAUL
1957—Noa noa. New York: The Noonday Press.
- LEVY, R.
1966—Ma'ohi drinking patterns in the Society Islands. *The Journal of the Polynesian Society* 75:304-320.
1967—Tahitian folk psychotherapy. *International Mental Health Research Newsletter* 9.
1968a—Child management structure and its implications in a Tahitian family. *In A modern introduction to the family*. E. Vogel and N. Bell eds., New York: The Free Press.
1968b—Tahiti observed: early European impressions of Tahitian personal style. *The Journal of the Polynesian Society* 77:1:33-42.
1969a—On getting angry in the Society Islands. *In Mental health research in Asia and the Pacific*. W. Caudill and T. Lin eds., Honolulu: East West Center Press.
1969b—Tahitian adoption as a psychological message. *In Adoption in Eastern Oceania*. V. Carroll, ed. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
1969c—Personal forms and meanings in Tahitian Protestantism. *Journal de la Société des Océanistes* 25:125-136.
1969d—Personality studies in Polynesia and Micronesia, stability and change. Working papers 8, Social Science Research Institute. Honolulu: University of Hawaii.
- MORRISON, J.
1935—The journal of James Morrison. London: Golden Cockerel Press.

CORRESPONDENCE

Fuzzy sets and abominations

As Mary Douglas (1966: 63) envisioned the division of labour, it is God's work to create order and, presumably, anthropologists' to reveal it. Witkowski, Brown and Chase (*Man* (N.S.) 16, 1-14) again demonstrate that anthropologists perform this mission better with categories of life forms than for categories of social roles. In contrast to the positing of universals for the former, Carrier (*Man* (N.S.) 15, 541-2) suggests that one of the most refractory of the latter, 'homosexual', be removed from the list of etic concepts (although, somewhat inconsistently, he projects an American view of 'transsexual' onto the rest of the world).

Douglas's famed interpretation of the abominations of Leviticus (1966: 54-72) is premised on the structural linguistics position that text reveals structure: 'The only sound approach is to forget hygiene, aesthetics, morals and instinctive revulsion, even to forget the Canaanites and the Zoroastrian Magi, and start with the texts' (1966: 63). This rejection of any relevance for comparative data is arresting in the course of a book presenting a cross-cultural theory of pollution and taboo (note the singular forms), and invites an ethnocentric bias even more than does reliance on dictionaries constructed by Western observers (see Murray & Arboleda in press). Douglas treats her own religious tradition as a privileged case—a subject that can therefore be a source of comparison but never an object to be explained by comparison. This ethnocentrism leads Douglas to explain variation in dependent variables with (unrecognised) invariant independent variables, namely, whereas there are always phenomena residual to any categorisation schema, what does not fit is not everywhere regarded with horror. Still less are attempts to exterminate what is anomalous to a classification schema universally made.

Mayr (1981) has interpreted the history of Western biological theory as a recurring clash between essentialisms (doctrines that maintain there are a limited, readily conceivable number of species characterised by essential, distinct features) and nominalism (doctrines positing an inter-breeding population of individual organisms grouped more or less arbitrarily by species names). Comparative ethnobiological work (in addition to Witkowski *et al.*, see Berlin 1972;

Berlin *et al.* 1966; 1968; Raven *et al.* 1971; Brown 1977; 1979; Bulmer 1967) has contrasted essentialisms, and found gross morphology universally employed to distinguish kinds of plants and animals.

Not only the ancient Hebrews noticed, 'In the firmament two-legged fowls fly with wings. In the water scaly fish swim with fins. On the earth four-legged animals hop, jump, or walk' (Douglas 1966: 70), and classified accordingly. Apparently there was a stage 4 classification in which 'wug' and 'animal' were not distinguished, but clearly contrasted to 'snake'. The Semitic (Amharic and Arabian), Cushitic (Galla) and Indo-Iranian (Pahlavi and Pashto) languages in Brown's (1979) survey of zoological classification systems are all stage 4 (as are more than a third of all those in the sample).

Aquatic crustaceans are usually classed 'fish'. 'True fish' are the prototype of this class (Hunn 1977: 250), and shrimp problematic, whether located in semantic space outside the 'wug' boundary or on the other side (that is, in the 'wug' class). There is no report of any ancient Semitic people attempting to exterminate shrimp, any more than peoples in Papua New Guinea faced with the difficulty of classifying cassowaries as 'birds' or 'mammals' (Bulmer 1967; cf. Herdt 1981: 131-57) have been reported to resolve the conceptual problem by eliminating cassowaries.

If there is any psychological reality to the 'horror' purportedly inspired by such classification difficulties, it is confined to anthropologists intent on eliciting complete and exhaustive contrast sets. As Goody (1977) suggested, fixing folk classification schemata into writing (as in tables of components or hierarchical tree diagrams) can create anomalous phenomena otherwise orally glossed over and not reflected upon. Kuhn (1962: 9) noted that even in 'science' there are *always* counterinstances: not everything that is unknown or does not easily fit received 'knowledge' is problematic. Anomalies are recognised with great reluctance, and attempts to construct a new paradigm (in the original linguistic sense from which Kuhn borrowed it) occur only after persistent failure to solve a problem produces a 'crisis' (Kuhn 1962: 144). With no felt problems and no widely-recognised failure(s), there is no rethinking of fundamentals. The psychological reality of the

danger in *Purity and danger* (Douglas 1966) has not been demonstrated. The native-speakers, whom the theory would have one believe are driven by anxiety to proscribing and even attempting to annihilate what is not readily classifiable from the world, routinely operate with fuzzily-bounded categories and ignore the imperfect fit, rather than focus on it—as a taboo must (Scarle 1975).

Folk theories implicit in everyday categorisation (for biology, see Raven *et al.* 1971) are not completely articulated logical sets of rules capable of generating clear answers to any question about any imaginable combination of 'essential' social features any more than of 'essential' features of life-forms. Anthropologists' concerns to the contrary notwithstanding, social categories are not designed to adjudicate boundary disputes to such conflicting answers as one is likely to elicit with questions such as, 'Is your mother's stepbrother's adopted son a "first cousin"?' This arcane genealogical creature may be classed with mother's brother's sons, or not, but it is unlikely there will be a separate named class for this infrequently occurring phenomenon.

Just as there are no exhaustive taxonomic slots for all plants or animals, or genealogical slots for each human individual, there are fewer roles than behaviours (in any culture). For instance, in cultures with labelled homosexual roles, there is homosexual behaviour in which neither participant enacts or defines himself by the role. (For Anglo-North America, see Humphreys 1975; Miller 1978; Weinberg 1978; Murray 1979; for indigenous North America, Whitehead 1981: 95; for Mesoamerica, Carrier 1975; Taylor 1978; Murray 1980; and for Tahiti, Levy 1973: 132).

The taboo on homosexual coupling is the part of the Holiness Code in the Old Testament that some social groups in the English-speaking world attempt to enforce on non-believers. Moreover, within living memory, it was the official policy of one state within Christendom to go beyond tabooing homosexual behaviour to exterminating those categorised 'homosexuals' (Steakley 1975; Lautmann 1980). This 'abomination of Leviticus' appropriated to legitimate policy in contemporary states is one Douglas (1966) did not treat. She extended her analysis from food taboos to bestiality but passed over contiguous passages in Leviticus dealing with same-sex copulation. Several followers (Vura 1979; Gorman 1980; Fry 1974; Plummer 1981), however, have extended her interpretation that 'Holiness requires that individuals shall conform to the class to which they belong. And holiness requires that different classes of things shall not be confused . . . keeping distinct the categories of creation' (Douglas 1966: 67), although homosexual copulation keeps the sexes distinct (as morphological, rather than

functional classes) instead of mixing male and female 'classes'.

If taboos against homosexual behaviour were reaction formations against the anxiety provoked by classification difficulties where behaviour departs from the heterosexual, one would expect the taboos to be most intense in societies in which the most important distinction for the production and distribution of subsistence and wealth is male *v.* female. Yet precisely in the heartlands of sexual antagonism (Murphy 1959)—Melanesia and Amazonia—are societies in which protracted periods of exclusive homosexual receptivity is prescribed for would-be warriors (Kelly 1976; Schieffelin 1976; Herdt 1981; 1982; n.d.), or is pervasive, with the same lineage preferences as heterosexual marriage (Lévi-Strauss 1973: 313–14; C. Hugh-Jones 1979: 160–1; S. Hugh-Jones 1979: 110). In the more fully-documented Melanesian cases, as in ancient Greece (Dover 1979) and medieval Egypt (Murray 1981), a homosexual apprenticeship is regarded as masculinising. Homosexual coupling does not confuse anyone about the sex of the participants, for whom such relations do not signify cross-gender identities. Even in the native American cultures in which there was a role for men ordained (by visions) to do 'women's work', there was no confusion—except on the part of observers (as of Oman)—that 'berdaches' were men (Whitehead 1981: 90; Stevenson 1978 [1896]: 472–3). A man who did women's work and cross-dressed was 'thinkable', and so was a man who had sexual relationships with other men (whether or not either enacted the 'berdache' role generally).

Instead of cultures in which gender is the most salient criterion of social organisation with a rigid sexual division of labour, it is in cultures without that those defined by homosexual acts have been targeted for extirpation (notably during periods of rapid social change: see Perry 1980; Gerard 1981; 1982; Bullough 1976: 333–7). Goodich (1979) suggests one motivation in seizure of property. In addition to his examples (notably the Knights Templar), is Henry VIII's avuncular advice to James V, and later to the regent who succeeded him in Scotland, recounting his own earlier suppression of homosexuality in monastic orders as an exemplar of a more efficacious way to raise royal revenue than driving off subjects' sheep (quoted by Knowles 1959: 204–5). Perry (1980) suggests the diversion of unrest as another motivation for the spectacle of incinerating 'sodomites'. Hebrew prophets using prescription of temple prostitution to erect an ethnic boundary is another type of explanation (advanced by Devereux and Loeb 1943: 144–5 and supported by hermeneutic interpretations of the texts such as Bailey 1955; McNeil 1976; Boswell 1980). These seem more plausible explanations than horror in-

- spired by difficulties in classifying the sexes or sexual actors.
- To understand the 'abominations' of Leviticus and, even more, contemporary selective appeal to them for legitimation, the text does not suffice, because fitting nature into perfectly discrete categories does not appear to be how cognition operates (see Zadeh 1965; Kay 1978; Coleman and Kay 1981)—even for phenomena for which there are clear extra-linguistic standards to contrast with lexicon, such as colour (Kay & McDaniel 1978). Phenomena which are not prototypes of a category abound, whereas the alleged consequences of not fitting do not.
- S. O. Murray
- Bailey, D. S. 1955. *Homosexuality and western Christian tradition*. London: Longmans Green.
- Berlin, B. 1972. Speculations on the growth of ethnobotanical nomenclature. *Lang. Soc.* 1, 51-86.
- , D. E. Breedlove & P. H. Raven. 1966. Folk taxonomies and biological classification. *Science* 154, 273-5.
- 1968. Covert categories and folk taxonomies. *Am. Anthropol.* 70, 29-99.
- Boswell, J. 1980. *Christianity, social tolerance and homosexuality*. Chicago: Univ. Press.
- Brown, C. H. 1977. Folk botanical life forms. *Am. Anthropol.* 79, 317-42.
- 1979. Folk zoological life forms. *Am. Anthropol.* 81, 791-817.
- Bulmer, R. 1967. Why is the cassowary not a bird? *Man* (N.S.) 2, 1-25.
- Bullough, V. 1976. *Sexual variance in history and society*. New York: Wiley.
- Carrier, J. M. 1975. Urban Mexican male homosexual encounters. Thesis, University of California at Irvine.
- Coleman, L. & P. Kay 1981. Prototype semantics. *Language* 57, 26-44.
- Devereux G. & E. M. Loeb 1943. Antagonistic acculturation. *Am. sociol. Rev.* 8, 133-47.
- Douglas, M. 1966. *Purity and danger*. Baltimore: Penguin.
- Dover, K. 1979. *Greek homosexuality*. Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- Fry, P. 1974. Homosexuality among Afro-Brazilian possession cults. Am. Anthropol. Assoc. meetings, Mexico, D.F.
- Gerard, K. 1981. The tulip and the sodomite. Kroeber Anthropol. Soc. meetings, Berkeley.
- 1982. The erection of the sodomite. Kroeber Anthropol. Soc. meetings, Berkeley.
- Goodich, M. 1979. *The unmentionable vice*. Santa Barbara: Ross-Erikson.
- Goody, J. 1977. *The domestication of the savage mind*. Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- Gorman, M. 1980. A new light on Zion. Thesis, University of Chicago.
- Herdt, G. H. 1981. *Guardians of the flute*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- 1982. *Male initiation in New Guinea*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press.
- n.d. Ritualised homosexual behavior in the male cults of Melanesia: 1862-1982. MS.
- Hugh-Jones, C. 1979. *From the Milk River*. Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- Hugh-Jones, S. 1979. *The palm and the Pleiades*. Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- Humphreys, L. 1975. *Tearoom trade*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Hunn, E. S. 1977. *Tzeltal folk zoology*. San Francisco: Academic Press.
- Kay, P. 1978. Tahitian words for 'race' and 'class'. *Pub. Soc. Océan.* 39, 81-91.
- & C. McDaniel 1978. The linguistic significance of the meaning of basic color terms. *Language* 54, 610-46.
- Kelly, R. 1976. Witchcraft and sexual relations. In *Man and woman in the New Guinea Highlands* (eds) P. Brown & G. Buchbinder. Washington: American Anthropological Association.
- Knowles, D. D. 1959. *The religious orders in England*. vol. 3. Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- Kuhn, T. S. 1962. *The structure of scientific revolutions*. Chicago: Univ. Press.
- Lautmann, R. 1980. *Terror und Hoffnung in Deutschland 1933-1945*. Hamburg: Rowohlt.
- Lévi-Strauss, C. 1973. *Tristes tropiques*. New York: Atheneum.
- Levy, R. I. 1973. *The Tahitians*. Chicago: Univ. Press.
- Mayr, E. 1981. *The growth of biological thought*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press.
- McNeil, J. J. 1976. *The Church and the homosexual*. Kansas City: Sheed, Andrews & McNeel.
- Miller, B. 1978. Adult sexual resocialization. *Alternative Lifestyles* 1, 207-33.
- Murphy, R. F. 1959. Social structure and sexual antagonism. *SWest. J. Anthropol.* 15, 89-98.
- Murray, S. O. 1979. The art of gay insults. *Anthropol. Ling.* 21, 211-23.
- 1980. The 'species homosexual' in Guatemala. *Anthropol. Ling.* 22, 177-85.
- 1981. The status of women, acceptance of homosexuality and circulation of the Mamluke elite. Pacific Soc. Assoc., meetings, Portland.
- & M. Arboleda in press. Lexical inference. *J. of Homosexuality*.
- Perry, M. E. 1980. *Crime and society in early modern Seville*. Hanover: Univ. Press of New England.
- Plummer, K. 1981. *The making of the modern homosexual*. London: Hutchinson.
- Raven, P. H., B. Berlin & D. E. Breedlove

1971. The origins of taxonomy. *Science* 174, 1210-13.
- Schieffelin, E. L. 1976. *The sorrow of the lonely and the burning of the dancers*. New York: St Martin's.
- Searle, J. 1975. The logical stratus of fictional discourse. *New Literary History*.
- Steakley, J. 1975. *The homosexual emancipation movement in Germany*. New York: Arno Press.
- Stevenson, M. C. 1978 [1896]. A death which caused universal regret. In *Gay American history* (ed.) J. Katz. New York: Avon.
- Taylor, C. L. 1978. *El Ambiente*. Thesis, University of California at Berkeley.
- Vura, D. H. 1978. *Legitimate intruders*. Thesis, University of Arizona.
- Weinberg, T. S. 1978. On 'doing' and 'being' gay. *J. Homosexuality* 13, 1-11.
- Whitehead, H. 1981. The bow and the burden strap. In *Sexual meaning* (eds) S. Ortner & H. Whitehead. Cambridge: Univ. Press.
- Zadeh, L. 1965. Fuzzy sets. *Information & Control* 8, 338-53.

STIGMA TRANSFORMATION AND RELEXIFICATION: "GAY" IN LATIN AMERICA

by Stephen O. Murray and Manuel Arboleda G.¹

In the past few years the term "gay" has diffused rapidly in urban Latin America, raising the question whether use of the term reflects changes from a "gender" to a "gay" organization of homosexuality. The latter was characterized by Adam (1979: 18) as one in which "people meet and form enduring social networks only because of mutual homosexual interest , (2) there is a sense of peoplehood and emerging culture (Murray 1979a; Levine 1979), and (3) there is the possibility of exclusive (non-bisexual) and egalitarian (not role-bound) same-sex relations." In North American cities a shift -- albeit one that is not complete even now -- has occurred. Formerly, the man who took only the insertor role in homosexual coitus (termed "trade" in the homosexual subculture which preceded "gay community") was not identified and did not identify himself as homosexual. Only (some of) those regularly taking an insertee role ("queens") did (Reiss 1961; Humphreys 1975; Murray 1979b; Murray and Poolman 1981). Under the aegis of "gay", an aggressively stigma-challenging label (Goffman 1963) without the negative connotations of "queer" or

¹ Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the 1982 Pacific Sociological Association meetings in San Diego and the 1982 American Sociological Association meetings in San Francisco. The authors would like to acknowledge the encouragement of the session organizers -- respectively, Wayne Wooden and William Devall -- and also that of Niyi Akinnaso, John Gumperz and Amparo Tuson.