

After the victory over the Nazis the situation of the homosexuals in the two newly emerging states was different. In West Germany after about 1948 conditions returned to what they had been before 1933. Although the Nazi version of Paragraph 175 remained on the books, homosexual organizations, bars, and gay magazines were tolerated in many West German cities and in West Berlin. In East Germany, to be sure, only the milder pre-1933 version of paragraph 175 was in force, but homosexual life was subject to restrictions on the part of the state and the police, so that gay men and lesbians had scarcely any opportunity to organize and express their views freely. After the liberalization of the penal laws against homosexuality in both German states (East Germany 1968, West Germany 1969), a gay movement of a new type arose in the Federal Republic under the influence of Anglo-American models. In East Germany the beginnings of an independent gay and lesbian organization tolerated by the state appeared only in the mid-1980s.

See also Austria.

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GESTURE AND BODY LANGUAGE

Gestures can have a specific import, as (in our culture) the forefinger laid vertically against the lips, which means "silence." Contrasting with such semiotic gestures are ones expressing more general states, as drumming of the fingers on a

surface displaying nervousness. Gestures of the first type are culturally determined signs and vary enormously in meaning across the world, while the latter are more the product of somatic processes and tend to be relatively uniform, though vaguer in signification. The degree of acceptance of gesticulation varies from one culture to another, so that the peoples of northwestern Europe and North America are much more sparing in its use than, say, those of Sicily or Argentina. In our culture this restraint goes together with a general reduction of affect, and a consequent magnification of its significance when enacted, so that a touch or a kiss that would be a minor matter in another society may be taken as a sexual invitation and found offensive.

In ancient Greece, to judge from depictions in vase paintings, a man's courtship of a boy was conveyed by an eloquent gesture with one hand touching the youth's genitals while the other chucked his chin in entreaty. In modern western culture, the best-known courtship gesture among gay men is less directly physical: the *eye lock* employed in *crusing*, or ambulatory sexual solicitation. This act constitutes a deliberate violation of the taboo on staring, and if the partner is uninterested or uncomprehending he will immediately break contact. A different eye gesture is *reading*, now less common than in the first half of the century, in which the gay person indicates by a knowing look that he is aware that the other individual is also homosexual. Seemingly recent is *attitude*, a bodily posture found in makeout bars conveying hauteur and disdain. The *queen* of former decades was inclined to adopt gestures associated with the gentility of upper-class drawing rooms and café society, as in the distension of the little finger when taking tea. Winks and eyebrow-raising may be common in some circles, though these are not specifically gay. In the world of entertainment, drag performers developed an elaborate repertoire of exaggerated *gender-crossing* gestures, which were

imitated by other members of the gay community only on occasion, as **camp**.

One would expect that during earlier times of clandestinity self-protection would have fostered a sophisticated language of gesture to signal the suspected presence of plainclothesmen, dangerous individuals and the like, but in fact such warnings seem to have been expressed mainly in verbal form ("tilly," "dirt"), using **slang** known to the adepts but not to outsiders. The comparative study of gesture is still in its infancy and future studies are likely to discover a richer heritage of gay and lesbian gestures worldwide than the few now known. In our culture, non-verbal communication also takes the form of tokens and regalia, such as **lambda** pins and **pink triangle** buttons, as well as keys worn externally and colored handkerchiefs dangling from a back pocket.

Deprecatory gestures signaling the presence of gay people occur among heterosexuals. Widespread is the *limp wrist* posture connoting sissiness and affectation: the arm is kept close to one's side but bent sharply at the elbow, while the hand dangles helplessly aloft. Some gestures are quite culture-specific. In Latin America an "invert" may be signified by placing the arm along one's side with the thumb and forefinger forming a circle just below the belt; the implication is that the other person possesses a vagina rather than a penis. Also in Latin America, the suspected presence of a lesbian may be signaled by slapping the hands together, alluding to the word *tortillera*, "tortilla maker, lesbian." As this example shows, some gestures are parasitic on verbal language, which must be known in order to decipher them. Other hostile gestures seek to convey the notion of **effeminacy** through disposition of other parts of the body, as through swaying hips and supercilious smiles. Male homosexuals are traditionally thought to have a "mincing" gait, a stereotype that is reflected in such slang labels as *swish* and *flit*. By contrast lesbians are caricatured through heavy gestures and a stomping

walk. These devices of mimicry reflect the notion that homosexual persons are irresistibly drawn to adopt the conduct of the opposite sex.

Another aspect of body language studied by scholars is proxemics, the distance that people assume from one another. In social encounters Europeans prefer greater distance than Arabs and Brazilians. To come close makes the other individual feel uncomfortable, and may even be interpreted as a sexual "pass." In straight company, therefore, many homosexuals check themselves from approaching "too close" to their interlocutor—so that paradoxically the excessive distance which they maintain amounts to a giveaway.

See also Semiotics, Gay.

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GHETTOS, GAY

The term *ghetto* originated in Renaissance Italy, as the Venetian dialect form derived from Vulgar Latin *iectus* "foundry," the name of the enclosed area of Venice in which the Jews were not merely required to live, but even had to be after a certain hour in the evening, while conversely Christians were forbidden to enter the Jewish quarter after dark. The motive for the creation of the ghetto was to prevent sexual intercourse between Jews and Christians. In the nineteenth century the abolition of the ghetto was a significant part of the emancipation of the Jewish communities of Western and Central Europe.

In the 1960s, the survival of the word in English usage led to its being applied by analogy to areas in the inner cities of the United States in which racial minorities, especially blacks and Latinos, were concentrated by reason of poverty or of the collusion of real estate interests to prevent them from obtaining homes or apartments outside of designated neighborhoods. It also connoted the exclusion (or self-exclusion) of such minorities from the political and cultural life of the larger