

drogynous ideals of beauty, which a boyish girl or a girlish boy can approximate more closely than a grown male or female. In the Middle East, male prostitutes often wear female clothing, possibly to appear more attractive. In ancient Greece, female prostitutes were obliged to wear male clothing, and in seventeenth-century Japan they dressed as boys, which made them popular with Buddhist monks, who were prohibited from being seen in the company of women.

The term *ghulamiyya* stems from an Arabic root, *ghalima*, which means "to be excited by lust, be seized by sensuous desire." Derived terms are *ghalim*, "excited by lust, lewd," *ghulma*, "lust, heat, rut," and *ghulam*, "boy, youth, lad; slave; servant, waiter." The two facets of meaning seem to be clearly pederastic in nature. *Ghulamiyya* in the present sense seems to be derived from *ghulam*, simply being the feminine form of the better-known word.

See also *Mukhannath*.

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Maarten Schild

## GIDE, ANDRÉ (1869-1951)

French novelist, diarist, and playwright. Born into a family that gave him a strict Calvinist and puritanical upbringing, Gide rebelled against his background, yet throughout his life joined a Protestant attachment to the Gospels with a profound admiration for the beauty and sensuality of the pagan classics. After his visits to North Africa between 1893 and 1896, he gave open expression to a pagan value system that was for him a self-liberation from the moral and sexual conventions of his upbringing. He became a controversial figure in the French intellectual world of the first half of the twentieth century, not least because of his public defense of homosexuality.

*Life and Works.* In 1891 Gide met Oscar Wilde, the flamboyant aesthete, who set about ridding him of his inhibitions—with seductive grace. Gide's first really striking work of moral "subversion" was *Les Nourritures terrestres* (The Fruits of the Earth; 1897), a set of lyrical exhortations to a fictional youth, Nathanaël, who is urged to free himself of the Christian sense of sin and cultivate the life of the senses with sincerity and independence. During the political turmoil of the 1930s Gide returned to the same themes and stylistic manners in *Les nouvelles nourritures* (1935).

In 1895 he married his cousin, Madeleine Rondeaux, and suffered an acute conflict between her strict Christian values and his own yearning for self-liberation, together with his awakening homosexual drives. The never-ending battle within himself between the puritan and the pagan, the Biblical and the Nietzschean, caused his intellect to oscillate between two poles that are reflected in his succeeding books. In *Les Caves du Vatican* (The Vatican Cellars; 1914), the hero, Lafcadio, "lives dangerously" according to the Gidean formula and commits a seemingly senseless murder as a psychologically liberating "gratuitous act." A further series of short novels have an ironic structure dominated by the viewpoint of a single character, while his major novel, *Les Faux-monnayeurs* (The Counterfeiters; 1926) has a Chinese-box like structure meant to reflect the disorder and complexity of real life.

In 1908 he was among the founders of the highly influential periodical *Nouvelle Revue Française*. After World War II he traveled widely, writing ever more on colonialism and communism. During the period of the popular front he joined other intellectuals in rallying to the left, but after visiting the Soviet Union in 1936, he wrote a book voicing his disillusionment with the workers' paradise, *Retour de l'U.R.S.S.* (Back from the USSR; 1936). While others were dazzled by what

their Soviet hosts chose to show them, or turned a blind eye to what they preferred not to see, Gide's experience as a homosexual had taught him to look for the tell-tale signs of the disparity between the surface of society and the hidden reality—which he espied only too well.

His publications include an autobiography, *Si le grain ne meurt* (If It Die . . .; 1926) and his *Journal*, which ultimately covered the years 1885 to 1949. His ambivalent stand during the years of the German occupation cost him much of the influence which he had enjoyed during the height of his career, and even the Nobel Prize for literature awarded him in 1947 could not restore his prestige. He died in 1951 at a moment when his importance as a man of letters had largely waned and the homosexual liberation movement that was to vindicate a significant part of his life's work was just beginning.

*Views on Homosexuality.* Gide's major work on homosexuality was a set of four dialogues entitled *Corydon*. A short first version had been privately printed in 1911, the enlarged essay was issued privately in March 1920, and the public version was placed on sale in May 1924, creating a scandal in that it made a tabooed subject the talk of the literary salons of Paris. Limited in scope as they were, Gide's four dialogues constituted a remarkable achievement for their time by blending personal experience, the French literary mode of detached presentation of abnormal behavior, the traditional appeal to ancient Greece, and the then quite young science of ethology—the comparative study of the behavior of species lower on the evolutionary scale.

The incidents that prompted the dialogues were the Harden–Eulenburg affair in Germany and a debate over Walt Whitman's homosexuality on the pages of the journal *Mercur de France*. Their publication followed the appearance of Proust's *Sodome et Gomorrhe* (1921), with the explicit depiction of the homosexuality of the character Baron de Charlus. The

essay is designed to oppose the medical point of view, as Gide thought physicians the social group most hostile to homosexuality in that era. Religion is ignored save for remarks in the fourth dialogue about the monastic suppression of the pederastic literature of antiquity and the Christian exaltation of chastity. The first two dialogues argue that homosexuality is natural because deriving from the structure of sexual polarity, the ratio between the sexes, and the independence of sexual pleasure from reproduction. The third and fourth dialogues then claim that homosexuality occurs naturally in human beings, and so far from being the unfortunate relic of an earlier stage of evolution, it is capable of inspiring a great and classic civilization.

Responding to the polemic literature of his time, Gide addressed two antithetical issues in the discussion of homosexuality. The first was the origin of homosexual response as a problem in human macroevolution; the second was the role of homosexuality as a factor in the erotic and cultural life of human society. Going against the temper of the age, he noted that the positive achievements of ancient civilization credited to the homoerotic impulse all belong to the institution of pederasty, not to the androphile homosexuality of modern times, and even less to "inversion," the passive-effeminate male homosexuality which he spurned as diseased or "degenerate." The problematic equation of the "natural" with the socially desirable he therefore left unresolved, even if his work answers some of the conventional objections to homosexuality on pseudo-biological grounds.

André Gide blazed a trail in making homosexuality a topic for literature and for literary criticism, and the capital fact of his own sexual orientation—including the narcissistic side of his personality—remains crucial to the understanding of his entire life's work as a French prose writer.

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## GILGAMESH

This Mesopotamian figure ranks as the first tragic hero in world literature. The Epic of Gilgamesh has survived in Sumerian, Akkadian, and Hittite versions that go back to the third millennium before our era. Lost from sight until the decipherment of the cuneiform script retrieved the literatures of early Mesopotamia, the epic is a blend of pure adventure, morality, and tragedy. Only the final version, that of Assurbanipal's library in Nineveh, has survived in virtually complete form, but all the episodes in the cycle existed as separate poems in Sumerian. The setting of the story is the third millennium, and the original language was Sumerian, the Paleoeurasian speech of the first literate civilization of Mesopotamia, which continued like Latin to be copied as a dead language of past culture even after it was displaced by the Eastern Semitic Akkadian.

The epic opens with a brief résumé of the deeds and fortunes of the hero whose praises it sings. Two crucial themes are sounded: (1) that love is at the heart of the hero's character, and (2) that love (or *eros* as the Greeks later called it) is the force that provokes the transformation and development of man's nature. Gilgamesh is announced at the outset as a hero: two-thirds god and one-third man, endowed by the gods with strength, with beauty, with wisdom. His sexual demands upon the people of Uruk are insatiable: "No son is left with his father, for Gilgamesh takes them all. . . . His lust leaves no virgin to her lover, neither the warrior's daughter nor the wife of the noble." In reply to their complaints Aruru, the goddess of creation, forms Enkidu out of clay. "His body was rough, he had long hair like a woman's. . . . He was innocent of mankind;

he knew not the cultivated land." To tame the wild man a harlot offers her services, "she made herself naked and welcomed his eagerness, she incited the savage to love and taught him the woman's art." At the conclusion, the transforming power of *eros* has humanized him; the wild animals flee from him, sensing that as a civilized man he is no longer one of them. The metamorphosis from the subhuman and savage to his new self proves strikingly how love is the force behind civilization.

Gilgamesh has two dreams with symbolism which presages the homoerotic relationship which the gods have planned for him and the challenger Enkidu. In the Akkadian text there are puns on the words *kisru*, "ball (of fire), meteorite," and *kezru*, "male with curled hair," the counterpart of the harlot, and on *hassinu*, "axe," and *assinu*, "male prostitute." Gilgamesh's superior energy and wisdom set him apart from others and make him lonely; he needs a male companion who can be his intimate and his equal at the same time, while their male bond stimulates and inspires them to action. After a wrestling match between Enkidu and Gilgamesh in which the latter triumphs, the two become comrades. Their erotic drive is not lost, but rather transformed and directed to higher objects; it leads to a homoerotic relationship that entails the rejection of Ishtar, the goddess of love. A liaison of this kind is not contingent on the physical beauty of the lover, it endures until death. Gilgamesh himself abandons his earlier oppressive conduct toward Uruk and comes to behave like a virtuous ruler who pursues the noble goals of fame and immortality through great deeds. But a dream warns Gilgamesh: "The father of the gods has given you kingship" but "everlasting life is not your destiny. . . . Do not abuse this power, deal justly with your servants in the palace."

Because the pair have slain the Bull of Heaven and have slain the demon Humbaba, the council of the gods decrees that one of the two must die, and the choice falls on Enkidu, who succumbs to