

poems from Hafiz based on German translations.

Contemporary Muslims like Khomeini angrily reject European interpretations of Hafiz as an unrestrained libertine, drunkard, and pederast. Europeans can be faulted for projecting their desires on people they have defined as aliens, but the rising nations of Asia have themselves been tricked into suppressing their own customs to please missionaries. In his own time Hafiz had to struggle against the Islamic proscription of drinking; he struggled to go beyond good and evil, God and Satan, the body and spirit by transcending dualities. In his quest he searched for boys who wore their caps askew.

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Charley Shively

## HAITI

This French- and creole-speaking black republic of over six million people occupies the western third of the island of Hispaniola. Although handicapped by poverty and political discord, Haiti is a remarkable cultural amalgam, retaining many hallmarks of the African diaspora.

In the early 1980s claims were made that male homosexuality is such a tabooed topic in Haitian culture that dying AIDS patients would necessarily deny any homosexual involvements. Yet earlier observers such as the anthropologist Melville Herskovits, who studied rural Haiti, were able to elicit information about attitudes toward local homosexuals. The attitudes reported—bemused denigration—and the lack of any attempts to extirpate homosexual behavior do not differ from those known throughout Latin America. If anything, less prominent machismo in Haiti connects with greater toleration of homosexuals in *voudon* cults than is imaginable in any Spanish-speaking Latin American societies. Bahia, in one of the most Afro-American parts of Brazil, which

was similarly populated from Dahomey (now Benin), is the closest cultural analogue. There, cross-gender possession and homosexuality are prominent parts of Xango cults. The literature on *voudon* contains many mentions of possessions by *loas* (spirits) of a sex other than that of the person possessed. No particularly notable taboo on homosexuality was reported in pre-AIDS ethnographic literature. This claim would seem to have been concocted to protect tourism in Haiti. Explicit gender non-conformity in the folk religion, which was sanctioned by the Duvalier regime between 1957 and 1986, was notable; the homosexual taboo is not found there.

Any serious assertion that it is particularly difficult to elicit information about homosexuality from Haitians must be comparative, but no one has compared elicitation in Haiti with elicitation in the Dominican Republic (the Spanish-speaking other portion of the island of Hispaniola), Bahia, or any other point for comparison. In the United States itself, one observer has noted, "except for three cases of AIDS in admittedly homosexual Haitians, none of the other cases reported have admitted to homosexual activity despite intensive questioning in both French and Creole by both American physicians and by Haitians."

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Stephen O. Murray

## HALL, RADCLYFFE (1880-1943)

English novelist and poet. Born to a well-to-do family in Bournemouth, Hall was left a good deal to herself as a child, developing her own identity under her favorite name of "John." Throughout her life she was to affect a strikingly masculine appearance. At the age of 27 she fell in

love with the 50-year-old Mabel Batten, whom she had met at the resort of Homburg. The two took up residence together and, influenced by her lover, Hall converted to Roman Catholicism. In 1915 the two women attended a tea party in London, where Hall met Una, Lady Troubridge, the wife of an admiral. When Batten died soon after, the way was clear for Hall and Troubridge to live together—much to the admiral's puzzlement. The two women were destined to remain together for thirty years.

Hall published several volumes of poetry during this period, but it was only with the appearance of her novel *Adam's Breed* in 1926 that she achieved popularity. In this work she transposed her own personality into that of a man, Gian-Luca. Two years later, however, she launched her bombshell, the openly lesbian novel *The Well of Loneliness*. This work, though it seems mild and lacking in explicitness today, was declared "obscene" and the British courts ordered all copies seized. After this point Hall and Troubridge judged it prudent to live abroad, retaining however the conservative political and social views characteristic of their class.

Inevitably *The Well of Loneliness* strikes readers today as a time-bound work, inasmuch as Hall subscribed to current theories of "sexual inversion," which she popularized. Indeed as a role model she may have led many women into an unnecessary cultivation of stereotypes. Nonetheless, the notoriety of her work helped to move lesbianism into the consciousness of a public which in the Anglo-Saxon world at least had managed until 1928 to ignore the phenomenon almost entirely.

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Evelyn Gettone

## HANDBALLING

This sexual practice involves the insertion of one partner's hand—and sometimes much of the arm—into the rectum of the other. Before attempting such insertion the nails are pared and the hand lubricated. Sometimes alcohol and drugs are used by the receptive partner as relaxants. This practice acquired a certain popularity—and notoriety under the name of *fistfucking*—in a sector of the gay male leather/S & M community in the 1970s. A few lesbians have also reported engaging in it. A medical term, apparently uncommon, has been proposed for handballing: brachiproctic eroticism.

It need scarcely be stressed that handballing is dangerous in all its variations, as puncturing of the rectal lining may lead to infection and even death. Although handballing does not directly expose the passive partner to AIDS or to sexually transmitted diseases, by scratching or scarring the rectal wall it may create tiny portals for the invasion of microbes during a subsequent penetration. With the new emphasis on safe sex in the 1980s, handballing has greatly declined, and it will probably be relegated to history as one of the temporary excesses of the sexual revolution.

Historical precedents are elusive. It may be conjectured that the recent resort to the practice is due to medical knowledge of operations in which the anus is dilated, since the ordinary individual scarcely credits that such enlargement is possible or desirable. In a late Iranian version of the binding and riding of the god of darkness Ahriman by the hero Taxmoruw, the demonic figure breaks loose by means of a trick and swallows the hero; by pretending to be interested in anal intercourse the brother of Taxmoruw manages to insert his arm into Ahriman's anus and retrieve the body from his belly. The brother's arm—the one that entered the demon's anus—becomes silvery white and stinking, and the brother has to exile himself voluntarily so that others will not become