

was the conviction that crimes against religion and morality, which included heresy and sodomy *par excellence*, should not be the object of criminal sanctions unless they harmed third parties or the interests of society in general. It is therefore all the more regrettable that in the English-speaking world, where freedom of conscience and toleration of sectarianism in religion came comparatively early, the place of buggery in the scheme of medieval intolerance was overlooked and the statutes adopted from canon law were perpetuated as bulwarks of morality.

See also **Christianity**; **Patristic Writers**.

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HERMAPHRODITE

The hermaphrodite, a human being fusing male and female characteristics, is the physical embodiment of the principle of **androgyny**. In mythology and art, hermaphrodites may be divided horizontally (where developed breasts may signal the female on top, with a complete penis below) or, more commonly, vertically (one side containing a breast and half of a vulva, the other side flat-chested with half of a penis). Sometimes hermaphrodites are regarded positively, standing for a desirable equality and balance between the sexes. Other traditions despise them as symbols of an unacceptable blurring of categories. In some instances the fusion seems relatively successful; in others, presenting a mere juxtaposition of forms, the result is grotesque. In behavior the hermaphrodite may be predominantly male or predominantly female. Cross-cultural data suggest that "male" hermaphrodites, who are likely to be viewed favorably, are much more frequent than "fe-

male" hermaphrodites, whose image is generally negative. With respect to their origin, some hermaphrodites result from the merger of a separate male and female person; others come into the world in a fused form, only splitting later into a separate male and female.

Scientific Research vs. Cultural Traditions. Early in the twentieth century the work of Franz Ludwig von Neugebauer demonstrated that in nature true human hermaphrodites, with fully developed male and female organs, are extremely rare—virtually nonexistent. What does occur is a situation where an individual is born with more or less complete organs of one sex and rudimentary or vestigial ones of the other. In other instances both sets may be undeveloped. For the first few weeks the human embryo is undetermined as to sex, and the hormones that effect the determination sometimes do not fully accomplish their task. Since our society dislikes the ambiguity of any anatomical intermediacy, the perceived flaw is usually surgically corrected and the individual takes his or her place as a "real" man or woman. In contrast with the sexual dimorphism of mammals, true hermaphroditism is the rule in many lower animal species, such as snails and worms, and in many kinds of flowers.

Cross-culturally there is no close link between physical and cultural hermaphroditism: the Greeks, who had a well-developed concept of the mythological hermaphrodite, were accustomed to kill hermaphroditic babies after birth. What is of greatest interest is in fact the cultural (that is imaginary) aspect of hermaphroditism, for it is a vehicle of feelings and speculation about gender, gender roles, and sexual orientation.

European Mythological Traditions. In Greek the word *hermaphroditos* stems from a fusion of the name of a male god, Hermes, with the goddess of love, Aphrodite. According to a story in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (IV, 285–388), the god Hermaphroditos was in fact the son of the

union of Hermes and Aphrodite, but he was originally male. The nymph Salmacis fell in love with him. Repulsed, she successfully beseeched the gods to unite her body forever with his. Immersion in the waters where this fusion took place reputedly turned the bather into a hermaphrodite.

In another myth Kainis was a maiden who formed a liaison with Poseidon. At her request he turned her into a powerful warrior, Kaineus. After his death, he became a woman once more.

Another case of serial hermaphroditism is that of the blind seer Teiresias. Chancing one day on a pair of coupling snakes, he disturbed them, wounding the female. He was punished by being turned into a woman. Seven years later he repeated the experience, and became a man once more. On being asked by the gods whether sex was more pleasurable as a man or a woman, he said that nine parts out of ten belonged to the woman.

In the *Symposium* Plato sets forth a myth in which human beings were originally double beings: the man-man, the woman-woman, and the man-woman. When split the last, the hermaphrodite, yielded heterosexual men and women who yearn to reunite with a "better half" of the opposite sex. According to homiletic commentators, the first man Adam in the Hebrew creation myth of Genesis was androgynous until Eve was extracted from his body. Since the creator made Adam in his own image, the implication is that Yahweh was himself androgynous.

Later Greek and Roman art shows many representations of hermaphrodites, most notably in monumental sculpture. These images stem ultimately from age-old concepts of fertility, but their enhanced popularity in the Hellenistic age (323–30 B.C.) probably reflects the fact that this was an age of changing sex roles. The androgynous features of these statues served to pose the question without offering a specific answer.

In medieval travel lore Hermaphrodites lived in their own country in Asia, where European visitors claimed to have observed them. Anatomically, these exotics were divided vertically, with one set of organs on the left and the other on the right, so that copulation face to face was an easy matter. This notion of a nation of a civilization of hermaphrodites has inspired some modern science fiction writers; the most notable example is Ursula Le Guin's *Left Hand of Darkness* (New York, 1969), which works out the cultural consequences in considerable detail.

Modern Visions. The hermaphrodite or androgyne became common in French nineteenth-century writing. Inspired by Emanuel Swedenborg, Honoré de Balzac wrote a novel, *Séraphita* (1835), about a double-sexed being. The most consistent theoretician of the androgynic vision was probably Joséphin Péladan, who influenced artists as well as writers. In fact the androgynous figure—usually depicted as an effeminate youth—is a recurrent figure in the iconography of the so-called decadent painters, from Simeon Solomon to Leonor Fini. In the twentieth century Carl Gustav Jung's interest in the matter sparked a rediscovery of hermaphroditic beings in alchemical imagery of the sixteenth and seventeenth century.

Cross-dressing can sometimes give the impression that the wearer is a true androgyne, and in the popular imagination cross dressers and effeminate homosexuals are physically hermaphroditic. This confusion has probably been unwittingly abetted by the fashion of turn-of-the-century psychologists to refer to bisexuals as "psychosexual hermaphrodites," and more recently by some spokespeople for the gay movement who emphasize getting in touch with the "submerged" half of one's personality. The late twentieth-century fashion among men of wearing a single earring is probably a muted version of the vertical hermaphrodite.

Tribal Cultures. Among the North American Indians the Trickster is a figure of ambiguous sexuality. Primarily a male, he not only wears female dress but gives birth to children. He carries his detached penis in a box, and is thus self-castrating. When he wishes to have intercourse, he sends it separately to the woman. In real life the *berdache* type is sometimes called "he-she" or "man-woman" in Indian languages, but is not regarded as a true hermaphrodite but as a man who has abandoned the male gender role for the female.

Among the Dogon in West Africa, a mythical figure draws outlines of a male and a female on the ground before the newborn baby, who touches the outlines and is possessed by two souls. If the child retains the foreskin or the clitoris he remains two-souled and androgynous, with no inclination to procreation. In order to join the proper sex the male must be circumcised, the female must undergo a clitoridectomy. Among the Australian aborigines, subincision in the male achieves the opposite result: the creation of a "male vagina," which may be reopened and bled in later life.

India. The mythology of India abounds in androgynous and hermaphroditic beings. The great Hindu deities usually have an accompanying female manifestation; thus in art Shiva is often shown partially fused with his female alter ego, Parvati. In some traditions a primordial hermaphrodite has been replaced by twins (e.g., Yami and Yama). Folklore abounds in tales of men who were made womanish by the curse of a god and of male child bearing. There are also legends of individuals were alternated from month to month as king and queen. In Tantrism the male adept or yogi must activate the female principle within himself that is personified by the dormant goddess Kundalini. Only by this means can he experience full wholeness, the internal union of the male and female divine principles. In Buddhism

the male Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara becomes a female, Kuan Yin, in China.

A central feature of the Hindu belief system is transmigration of souls, so that an individual can be reborn as a member of the opposite sex or an animal. This idea was already known to Plato who describes cowardly men being reborn as women in the *Theatetus*. Some Hindus today hold that male homosexuals are individuals whose immediately previous life was that of a woman.

In north India today there is a distinct social grouping of some 100,000 homosexuals known as Hijra or Hinjra. These men wear female dress and perform female tasks, including prostitution. They are commonly believed to be eunuchs or physical hermaphrodites. While medical data are lacking, it is unlikely that many qualify in the anatomical sense. Rather the Hijra myth of self attests to the persistence of the androgynous ideal in Indian civilization.

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HETEROSEXUALITY

The word *heterosexual* was invented by the same man who coined *homosexual*: the publicist and translator Károly Mária Kertbeny. The words appear for the first time (as far as is known) in Kertbeny's German-language draft of a private letter to Karl Heinrich Ulrichs of May 6, 1868. Although Kertbeny subsequently wavered in his choice of *heterosexual*, the contrasting pair was popularized some years later by Gustav Jaeger, supported by the analogy of such pairs as homogeneous/heterogene-