

*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 In some traditions a primordial hermaphrodite has been replaced by twins (e.g., Yami and Yama).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-

ous. At the close of the nineteenth century the terms migrated from German into other major European languages.

*Sources of the Concept.* While the word heterosexual may be relatively new, the ingredients of the concept are of venerable antiquity. The late coinage of the word reflects the fact that, until recently, "heterosexual norms" were silently assumed and discussion seemed superfluous. Hence the sources of the concept are sometimes elusive. Moreover, in the ensuing account one should bear in mind that the entrance of the pair homosexual/heterosexual into the dictionary presupposes a binary contrast—even a stark opposition—which may be absent in older approximations of the notion.

Historically, the core of the concept of heterosexuality has been linked with procreation and its consequence—the family. Whether we think in terms of the modern compact nuclear family or the extended family found in many societies, the members are typically related by lineage which is established by procreation. (While the custom of adoption is well attested historically, this procedure works by the assimilation of the adopted children to the dominant pattern established by those procreated by the "natural" parents.) Yet although all human beings come into the world by procreation, not all need practice it: many cultures have provided niches for individuals who wished to dedicate themselves to ritual celibacy or priestly homosexuality (as seen in the *berdache* and *kādēsh* traditions).

*Plato.* In hindsight we may detect a first attempt to give a theoretical formulation to the distinction between heterosexual and homosexual in *The Laws*, a late work (ca. 380 B.C.) of the Greek philosopher Plato. "When the male sex unites with the female for the purpose of procreation the pleasure so experienced is held to be according to nature, but when males unite with males or females with females, to be considered contrary to nature." (I 636b–C; cf. also VIII 836B–839A). From this passage

we can see that "according to nature" equates in effect with heterosexuality. In proposing that same-sex acts be labeled as unnatural, Plato also merges, for the first time in recorded history, male and female homosexual conduct, which up to this time had been categorized separately. The behaviors are combined because the overarching contrast *natural* vs. *unnatural*. No doubt Plato was influenced by a pervasive Greek tendency to look for purpose. What is the purpose of copulation? The only answer that appeared was the engendering of offspring.

*Christianity.* Reappearing in highly charged language in Paul's Epistle to the Romans (1:26), Plato's rejection of same-sex relations as unnatural echoed through the subsequent history of Christian ethics. Yet if Christian tradition agreed that homosexual behavior was unnatural per se, this exclusion did not mean that all *heterosexual* behavior was permitted. Fornication and rape, though "natural," were nonetheless sins. Logically, the Christian approach entails four categories: (1) marriage; (2) celibacy, which are both permitted; as against (3) illicit (heterosexual) copulation; (4) same-sex conduct, both forbidden. In this analysis what we would call heterosexuality appears on both sides of the ledger (1 and 3). In order to reach the modern contrast reclassification was needed, extracting two contrasted behaviors from the scheme and fusing them into a single positive concept: heterosexuality.

Another vexed question has recurred in many different guises over the centuries. Is it appropriate to discuss same-sex conduct exclusively in terms of behavior—same-sex acts—or are there persons whose identity or character is homosexual, regardless of the frequency of this or that act? In medieval times this ambiguity lurked in the term *sodomite*, which could refer either to a basically faithful "son of the church" who had fallen into such sins, but who could confess and be returned to the fold, or to one who was obstinately and seemingly irremediably immersed in such

practices—the sodomite with a capital S. In the former view heterosexuality is in effect universal and can only be disregarded on an occasional basis; in the latter situation it has a nemesis—homosexuality.

*The Enlightenment and the Rise of Modern Psychiatry.* The eighteenth-century Enlightenment grappled with these problems by attempting to secularize the concept of the natural. But earlier confusions lingered. Nineteenth-century psychiatrists, however, took a more radical step with their doctrine of perversions, which implicitly defines what later came to be called heterosexual normality by contrasting it with the abnormal. The procedure might be compared to paring a cheese: the mouldy and inedible “abnormal” parts are stripped away revealing the nutrient substance within. What remains after the subtractions is that which is mandatory: sexual normality. Since this healthy core was by definition nonpathological, it was not a legitimate object of psychiatric concern. To vary the metaphor, shoe fetishism, coprophilia, necrophilia, and homosexuality are, so to speak, so many obscure bypaths (“deviations” or “perversions”) from the great highway of normality. The majority, who are already traveling this main road, should simply continue to do so. As for the bypaths, closer inspection revealed a significant criterion of difference. Most of the perversions observed by Krafft-Ebing and others of his ilk did not involve persons as objects. Such behaviors as shoe fetishism and umbrella fetishism could be separated off from the rest; they were later to be dubbed “paraphilias.”

This double sequence of separations left standing, when all was said and done, a fairly straightforward contrast between heterosexuality and homosexuality as forms of sexual conduct between two or more consenting adults. Moreover, increasing acceptance of birth control and abortion made it possible to begin to separate heterosexuality from procreation.

Heterosexuality could in fact become more like homosexuality: an avenue of pleasure and personal fulfilment. So matters stood for decades. In the 1940s Alfred Kinsey attempted a new formulation in a seven-step scale from exclusive heterosexuality to exclusive homosexuality. Insisting that we speak of these patterns as behaviors rather than fixed character types, Kinsey looked forward to a dissolution of the binary contrast between heterosexuality and homosexuality in favor of a behavioristic approach, one inherently pluralistic and nonjudgmental. Whatever the other merits of Kinsey’s work, which are considerable, this hopeful outcome has not been attained.

*Doubleness of the Heterosexual Concept.* For those who reject psychic androgyny (as most do reflexively) another problem looms. In keeping with the postulate of psychosexual dimorphism, two norms are needed: an aggressive, dominant one (male); a yielding, receptive, nurturant one (female). Thus contemporary traditionalists who defend obligatory heterosexuality must grapple with the fact that it articulates itself into two norms, according to the genitalia of the individual. If two, then why not three or four permitted patterns?

*Gay Liberation Views.* For the most part theorists of the gay liberation movement contented themselves with asserting the parity of homosexuality with heterosexuality: “gay is just as good as straight.” The two were to be viewed simply as different lifestyles. In the early 1970s, however, some radical feminists argued that all heterosexuality signified complicity with male domination, and sought to persuade, with some (mostly temporary) success, even their straight sisters to abandon the questionable practice. Other voices, holding that feminism means empowerment, spoke in favor of the right of each woman to make her own choices, even if they be heterosexual.

In the 1970s some gay radicals adopted the term *heterosexism* (modeled

on sexism]. The new word apparently serves as a pejorative label for "straight chauvinism," an excessive prizing or favoring of heterosexual persons and values. The term had little success in the United States, but was taken up in the 1980s by some sectors of the British Labour Party. Unfortunately, the label heterosexism suggests hostility to heterosexuality itself, alienating many Britons who might otherwise have been sympathetic. The matter has been exploited by Conservatives as part of their campaign against the "loony left."

*Conclusion.* By and large normality (= "heterosexuality") remains an unspoken assumption underpinning much popular thinking. There are few considered explorations or defenses of heterosexuality as such; none seems required. Thus the suggestion of one Southern clergyman that libraries and bookstores contain "heterosexual sections" to help the public rally to its norms has not been taken up. Moreover, the AIDS crisis has probably given new life to the folk certainty that heterosexuality is best. Battered but unbeaten, this belief survives as part of the inherited social amalgam that makes up the deep structure of modern societies, the tacit body of unexamined postulates that form a kind of collective "operating procedure." But as many converging forces in modern international civilization push toward cultural pluralism, a more explicit analysis of the place of this pivotal yet still obscure concept is sure to appear, situating it within a constellation of ideas about sex and gender.

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### HILLER, KURT (1885–1972)

German writer and political figure active both on the left and in the homosexual movement. In the published version of his doctoral dissertation (1908), Hiller formulated arguments for the control over one's body that were to become

important for supporters of homosexual and women's rights. As a journalist, essayist, and poet he evolved an aphoristic style reflecting the strong imprint of Friedrich Nietzsche's work and possessing affinities with early Expressionism. A collaborator of Magnus Hirschfeld's on the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee in Berlin, he also sought to influence socialist politics through his Activist Movement. At the close of World War I he pioneered in applying the topical notion of (national) minorities to homosexuals as a group. As an independent thinker and writer under the Weimar Republic, he represented almost the mean of opinion on the German left. In 1933 he was arrested by the Nazis and beaten almost to death in the Columbia Haus in Berlin. Escaping to Czechoslovakia and then to England in 1938, he returned to Germany after the war, where he settled in Hamburg and attempted without great success to revive the homophile movement and the famous petition for abolition of Paragraph 175 of the Penal Code. His collected essays and articles brandish a style virtually untranslatable into English, so that his literary fame is confined to the German-speaking world.

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### HIPPIES

See Beatniks and Hippies; Bohemia.

### HIPPOCRATIC CORPUS

The Greek Corpus Hippocraticum is the collection of approximately 60 medical treatises ascribed to Hippocrates of Cos (460–circa 370 B.C.), about whose biography little is known for certain, though in his lifetime and afterward he enjoyed the renown of a great physician. In