



IBYCUS (SIXTH CENTURY B.C.)

Greek lyric poet. Ibycus sprang from a noble family of Rhegium in Magna Grecia. His lyrical narrative poems liberally endowed myths with pederasty. Refusing to become a tyrant at home, he went to the court of the pederastic tyrant Polycrates. Wealthy from commerce and piracy, Polycrates raised Samos to the forefront of Hellenic art and literature. In fear of conspiracies, he burned the palestrae (gymnasia), forcing Pythagoras into exile, where he became one of the first homosexual exiles and émigrés. Soon thereafter the Persians crucified him in 522 and sent Ibycus and Simonides into exile, where Ibycus sang of love in his old age—especially of love for the tyrant's son.

The Alexandrian scholars collected his poems in seven books: choral poems and encomia, and a great many love poems, hardly any of which have survived because of the ravages of time and Christian disapprobation. Cicero deemed him more amorous than Sappho's compatriot Alcaeus—perhaps the first pederastic poet, or even Anacreon—and the *Greek Anthology* described him as one who "culled the sweet bloom of Persuasion and of the love of lads." Because Horace, Catullus, and some poets of the *Greek Anthology* imitated him, one can derive a fair picture of his carefree, insouciant, promiscuous loves. To one of his eromenoi he wrote: "Euryalus, offshoot of charming graces, object of the fair-haired maidens' care, Cypris and mild-eyed Persuasion have reared you in the midst of rosy flowers" (fr. 6).

William A. Percy

IDENTITY

Individual identity may be defined as a sense of the unity and persistence of personality or core consciousness, an awareness of a stable framework of self, related to but separate from the surrounding environment. One of the pitfalls of the term is that the existence of a *sense* of identity as so described may be considered tantamount to proof that such a unitary, persistent, stable self is an actual fact. This last assumption has sometimes been rejected (e.g., by Buddhists). Psychologically, identity seems to be much more fluid objectively than subjectively. While the word is in common circulation, it remains an ambiguous term, and even to some psychologists a dangerously misleading one.

Basic Features. In 1690 the English philosopher John Locke wrote of identity in the psychological sense as "that sameness of rational being." By 1820 Washington Irving had posited the idea of loss of identity in the case of a character who was not sure whether he was himself or another person. In the 1960s the psychoanalyst Erik Erikson popularized the notion of an "identity crisis" as an "interval between youth and adulthood" when one seeks to achieve an inner and outer coherence following a break away from the parent-derived identity and the beginnings of a new adult sense of self.

In addition to the concept of an individual identity, there is the notion of a group-derived but individually self-applied social identity which may be lifelong (e.g., being a female or an Italian) or may change over time (e.g., being a football player or a stockbroker). Group-derived identities are seldom unitary in any sense, as each indi-

vidual feels a part of more than one group. A modern phenomenon seems to be an increasing tendency to build social identities around **subcultures** rather than local geographic units, nations, classes, and occupations.

Sexual Aspects. Today, some gay liberation spokespeople perceive the process of **coming out** as one of forging a gay identity which supersedes or takes precedence over all other group-derived identity; others reject this view as reflecting an excessive separatism, regarding the homosexual element in personality as not radically sundered from the identity-deriving elements predominant in heterosexuals. The gay-identity position has also come under attack from a neo-nominalism that insists that scientifically there is no such thing as a "homosexual" as a noun, but rather the word can only be used as an adjective describing a kind of behavior open to any human being; the advocates of this position would not, however, deny the existence of a (sub)culturally-constructed sense of identity independent of scientific standing.

Some prefer to address the question in terms of self-concept. Yet is the self unitary, or a bundle of subselves, or lacking in substance altogether? The second and third formulations may explain some aspects of cognitive dissonance with respect to homosexuality, as seen in the case of the late Roy Cohn, a protagonist in the **McCarthy** hearings, who seemed both to deny and to affirm his homosexuality. This phenomenon may be also be explained if one thinks of the self as a mediator between public identity or persona ("normal") and the private identity (in some individuals, expressed only in fantasies). There are other individuals, such as the poet John Berryman (1914-1972), whose homosexual side emerges only in **alcoholic** bouts, but here it may be more properly said that it was his behavior which was otherwise repressed, not his identity. If Berryman had acted homosexually whether drunk or sober, but only felt

himself to be gay when drunk, then one could speak of a repressed identity.

Homosexual behavior need not be related to identity at all, but may be seen as a casual or situational or revenue-producing activity only. To take a clear case, the **macho prisoner** who uses another male as a substitute female until he is released never deals with any sense of homosexual identity, peripheral or central, public or private. There seems to be a requirement for a socially mediated model of "homosexual identity" which an individual can conceive of applying to himself before the question can even arise. Perhaps relevant here is the question of a "**bisexual identity**" which has often arisen in individuals without reference to a group or subculture at all, but based on models provided by the general culture.

In the integrative process that occurs with the acknowledgement of one's homosexual identity and its management in the course of life, it may have varying degrees of centrality. How does homosexuality migrate from one personality region, say from a peripheral one to a central one and then out again? How does it achieve the status of a *master identity*, only perhaps to become less dominant later? Perhaps such questions must await answers to more preliminary enigmas such as how sexual orientation itself can change over the course of time.

Clearly many questions remain for further research. Since the matters discussed in this article are among the thorniest addressed by the human sciences, one cannot expect that perfect clarity will be soon achieved—and perhaps it never will.

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IMMATURITY THEORY

When confronted with a teenager's homosexuality or lesbianism, parents will often exclaim, "It's just a phase. S/he will grow out of it." While this view reflects popular ideas of personality growth, it also finds a learned prop in the psychoanalytic idea that human bisexuality is a halfway house along a path that is always directed toward a final goal of heterosexual maturity. In keeping with this premise the persistence of a homosexual pattern in adult life is ascribed to "arrested development."

The immaturity notion also accords with the folkloric view that a "little experimentation" is permissible, as long as it does not "become a habit." This motif borders on the concept of deviant sex as self-indulgence, a flight from the serious responsibilities imposed by raising a family. In clinical sessions psychiatrists have had recourse to the reproach of immaturity as a lever to induce young clients to give up their homosexuality.

Of course there are individuals who try a few homosexual acts in youth and, having then found that this is not where their major interest lies, come to live essentially heterosexual lives. Other young people, aware of the stigma that still attaches to homosexuality, cling to the immaturity notion as a device of denial, refusing to accept as long as they can their homosexual orientation. In the recent past, some of these persons would contract a heterosexual marriage in hopes of putting the "immaturity" behind them. Such expedients have rarely been successful. This denial can result in unhappiness both for those who embrace it and for

others who are emotionally and socially involved with them.

Conceptually, the immaturity theory makes an incongruous contrast with its opposite, *satiation*.

IMMIGRATION

Today's world has become concerned with immigration, not only because millions have migrated but also because the rise of the modern state and its definition of nationality has made the matter fraught with complications. Homosexuals live in a certain degree of tension with the environing society and have fewer ties to keep them rooted in the communities where they grew up. For this reason, they tend to migrate, not just to large cities with their convenient anonymity, but even across national borders. In the past, conflict with the law often sent homosexual men in precipitous flight to escape long prison terms or even a lynch mob, while voluntary exile amounted to a commutation of a severe penalty: in either case the individual whose homosexual activity was exposed ceased to be a member of society. If he was fortunate, he might settle in another part of world where his past was unknown and could not easily be discovered; and here, too, he could resume the series of casual liaisons that had become part of his lifestyle.

A visit of few days as part of a vacation trip is technically an act of immigration, even if the foreigner has no intention of residing permanently or becoming a citizen of the host country; and many are the homosexuals who either prefer exotic sexual partners or, possessing discretionary income but without families to accompany them, enjoy travel abroad, even to distant lands, in search of erotic adventures or pleasures denied them in the communities where they reside.

The Evolution of American Law. Homosexuality as an issue for the authorities that control immigration, in the United States the Immigration and Naturaliza-