

glis, Lithuanian *anglis*, Russian *ugol'*, Polish *wggiel*, Albania *thëngjill*—all with the primary meaning “glowing coal.” The second English word figures in *inglenook*, “the nook or corner beside the hearthfire, chimney corner”; however, influenced by the erotic associations of the homonym, *inglenook* itself acquired the meaning “female pudendum.”

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INJUSTICE COLLECTING

The Vienna, then New York, psychoanalyst Edmund Bergler (1899–1962) developed the theory that the basic neurosis is psychic masochism, and that homosexuals are neurotic “injustice collectors.” In Bergler’s view the provocative behavior observed in his patients arises in the following manner. They create a situation in which some substitute for the mother of early childhood is perceived as “refusing.” Not realizing that they are themselves to blame, they become aggressive in righteous indignation and self-defense alternating with self-pity, while “unconsciously enjoying psychic masochism.” Under the façade of pseudo-aggression are hidden deep self-damaging tendencies. The psychic masochist in the homosexual “habitually transforms conscious displeasure into unconscious pleasure,” so that he can resign himself to the punishments resulting from the humiliation and insult heaped on him by an intolerant society. Instead of learning to avoid punishment, the homosexual actually enjoys it, and by turning displeasure into pleasure he “takes the sting out of the pain and defeat of his tormented existence.” Such were Bergler’s idiosyncratic views.

While it is true that a homosexual with self-damaging tendencies (and such people do exist) is likely to encounter reprisals from a society permeated with Judeo-Christian homophobia, only a shrinking minority of homosexuals are of this type. Moreover, early writers denying the pathological character of homosexual-

ity pointed to the success with which many closeted homosexuals deceive intolerant heterosexuals in their entourage with the skill of an accomplished undercover agent or spy. But the “injustice collector” mentality may also have had the function of preserving the individual’s self-esteem in the face of society’s condemnation and rejection. Instead of internalizing the values of the homophobic culture, he can in effect say: “You are the wrongdoer, and I am the one to whom the injustice is being done.” The alternative would be to accept the stigma of being a sinner, a criminal, and a monster—which a rational subject could scarcely do without a total loss of self-respect. Whatever therapeutic results Bergler scored with his homosexual analyses seem to have been with individuals whose superego had been unable to ward off society’s castigation of their behavior and the ensuing guilt and self-reproach. Then his very success with them attracted ever more to his couch, so that his “patient universe” became skewed in the direction of such guilt-ridden personalities.

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INQUISITION

During the Middle Ages the Roman Catholic church established special ecclesiastical courts to detect and punish heretics, blasphemers, witches, and sorcerers. Stemming from the Latin for “investigation,” inquisitions may be divided into the episcopal phase, which began informally by 312, the papal phase, which began in 1232, and the royal phase, which lasted in Spain from 1478 to 1834. It was the royal Spanish Inquisition which was