

in a few cases both parents agree to bring up the child together ("coparenting"). In the latter situation it is essential for the parties to sign an agreement drafted by a lawyer, so that custody battles do not occur later. Some potential lesbian mothers prefer to obtain the semen from a sperm bank—where the donor renounces all rights—so as to avoid the possibility of a custody dispute.

After establishing a new household, the lesbian or gay male parent will date others of the same sex, which often leads to a permanent arrangement. There are then two persons of the same gender to raise the child. Sometimes the lover is called "aunt" or "uncle," but many children accept calling both "mother" or "daddy."

The Children. It is generally considered advisable for the lesbian or gay parent to "come out" to the children at an early age, indicating that she or he is "different." If the child learns of his or her parent's homosexuality through hostile remarks of playmates and relatives, they may have a negative reaction. In general girls accept the news of the orientation with some ease; boys initially resist, but then also usually come to accept.

Studies have shown that children of lesbian and gay parents are no more likely to become homosexual than those of heterosexual parents. Many lesbian and gay parents raise their children in traditional sex roles, others in less determinate modes. Sometimes boys are subject to "reverse sexism" on the part of lesbian separatist parents, or this result may occur indirectly, as when a lesbian mother is told to leave an all-women commune when her son reaches the age of twelve. On the whole, however, lesbian mothers and gay fathers—despite the economic difficulties that they often face—prove loving and supportive parents for their children.

Custody Problems. For the last hundred years, the usual position has been that when divorce occurs the mother is the best person to raise the children. With the

current general questioning of sex-based privileges, this principle too is less firmly situated than formerly. Hence the heterosexual father in a divorce case is more likely to contest the granting of custody to a lesbian mother. In many instances the court battles that ensue are the result of bitterness that has accumulated over the course of an unhappy marriage. Such procedures are expensive for the litigants and often disturbing to the children. Inasmuch as custody decisions are never final, a lesbian mother may later have her right to keep her children challenged. In some cases the lesbian or gay parent is simply seeking visitation rights, but these too may be contested. Gradually a body of law is being developed which makes custody and visitation decisions more predictable, if not always more just.

To deal with these and other problems support groups of lesbian mothers and gay fathers have been formed. Many members find, however, that they derive benefit from these groups even when they are not experiencing any problems. Being a homosexual parent is a life situation all its own, and sharing experiences in a positive atmosphere is rewarding.

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PARIS

From the high **Middle Ages** onward Paris was the political and cultural capital of **France**. After the religious and political turbulence of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the city emerged in the eighteenth century with its modern

role as the *ville-lumière*, a major international center of intellectual endeavor and tastemaking.

The Eighteenth Century. Although the philosophes, the era's influential intellectuals, did not always reside there, Paris was the natural fulcrum of the Enlightenment's effort toward social reform. Significantly, the last public executions for sodomy, those of Bruno Lenoir and Jean Diot, were carried out in the Place de Grève in 1750. Despite the advance of the new ideas, the Old Regime remained an uncertain environment for sexual experimentation, as the Marquis de Sade's twenty-six years of imprisonment, much of it in the Bastille, attests. As early as the eighteenth century, it is clear that the Paris police kept records of the "infâmes," as they were called, even if no individual or mass arrests ensued. Certain areas of the city, notably dark and dead-end streets, were cruising grounds and even the scene of orgies after nightfall. The safest path to pleasure was membership in an erotic club. In 1777 *L'Espion anglois* of Pidansat de Mairobert carried an account of the Société des Anandrines, a group of lesbians who assembled for mutual gratification. A few years later the novel *Le Diable au corps* by Andréa de Nerciat, published only in 1803, described the doings of an aristocratic erotic club.

Denounced by the philosophes as relics of medieval barbarism, the old laws against sodomy were swept away in the wake of the French Revolution, and a brief epoch of freedom of the press ensued, as illustrated by two surviving pamphlets, *Les enfans de Sodome* and *Les petits bougres au manège*, which implicate several prominent members of the National Assembly.

The Nineteenth Century. The Napoleonic period and the Restoration saw the emergence of a new bourgeois capitalist culture, by definition amoral and pleasure-seeking—an ethos well captured in the many volumes of Honoré de Balzac's *Comédie humaine* which has as its back-

drop the France of the July Monarchy. In the 1840s the bohemian subculture of the Latin quarter emerges fully into view. A subculture characterized by freedom from family ties and restrictions, and therefore by erotic licence, it was immortalized in Henry Murger's *Scènes de la vie de Bohème* (1847–49). Also, at this time the first studies of the criminal underworld of Paris were published, with information on the blackmail that could still be practiced against wealthy and prominent homosexuals because of an intolerant public opinion.

It was the Second Empire (1852–1870), in the massive urban reconstruction projects of Baron Haussmann, that created the modern visage of the Paris of the great boulevards. Behind their showy façades lurked a fascinating underworld—a second city as it were. The contrast between the wealth of the aristocracy and haute bourgeoisie and the poverty of the masses favored prostitution in different forms, especially on the part of the handsome and well-built but poorly paid professional soldiers. It was this type of sexual commerce that underlay such groups as the Société des Emiles, a circle of prominent figures of the Second Empire who were discovered by the Paris police in 1864 to have members of elite regiments of the French army at their disposal. Other records kept by the police showed how young men who had prostituted themselves could then drift into crime as a profession. While homosexual activity as such was not a crime, the authorities could still intervene when they saw fit under statutes that loosely penalized sexual "immorality" (*délits contre les mœurs*).

From 1871 to 1945. Under the Third Republic, Paris did not lose its reputation as a center of vice; it even became a haven for wealthy homosexuals and lesbians who chose or were forced into exile from the English-speaking world with its prudery and intolerance. Englishmen such as Oscar Wilde could find Paris an inviting haven for their pleasures, while the bohe-

mian quarter could shelter Paul Verlaine, whose poems include a series that frankly celebrate homosexual love. Lesbians from the English-speaking world, such as the wealthy Natalie Barney and her lovers Renée Vivien (Pauline Tarn) and Romaine Brooks, as well as the modernist Gertrude Stein and her companion Alice B. Toklas, found Paris a congenial home. The world of the upper-class French homosexual was recorded on the immortal pages of Marcel Proust's *Sodome et Gomorrhe*, in which the character of the Baron de Charlus is supposed to have been modeled on Robert de Montesquiou-Fézensac.

Under the Third Republic erotic publishers such as Isidore Liseux and Robert Carrington could produce their wares in both French and English, reprinting the classics and bringing out new volumes, including translations of the early studies on "sexual science" that had begun to appear in Germany and Austria but could not be sold openly in England. French erotic literature flourished at the turn of the century, with lesbian love as a frequent theme, though usually from the standpoint of the male voyeur. One of a series of novels celebrating the adventures of a fictional Club Gérando even ascribed a different sexual practice to each of the Cities of the Plain, with sodomy as the starting point.

Interwar Paris remained a mecca for the foreign homosexual, some with literary pretensions ("the lost generation"). For foreigners and locals alike, a clandestine gay subculture existed unknown to the average citizen. Each Mardi Gras there was a Magic City gay costume ball on the left bank which thousands of people attended following an old tradition. However, the attempt to create a homosexual monthly entitled *Inversions* (1924-25) foundered when a prosecution inspired by the interpellation of Catholic deputies triumphed in court. The Paris of the 1920s lagged behind Berlin in the extent and openness of its homosexual activity.

The Depression years were far more sombre, but one significant event occurred whose homosexual background has not been fully appreciated: the 1938 assassination of Ernst vom Rath, a secretary at the German Embassy, by a young Polish Jew, Herschel Grynszpan, who had met him at the café *Tout va bien* in the capacity of a pimp arranging encounters with French hustlers. This event served as the pretext for "Crystal Night," November 9, in which Jewish synagogues and businesses in Germany fell victim to pogroms organized by the Nazis that spelled the virtual end of Jewish community life in that country. Paradoxically, the murderer fell into the hands of the Germans when France fell in 1940 but could never be tried because Hitler feared the humiliating exposure of the "martyr" vom Rath as a homosexual.

After World War II. Postwar Paris saw the appearance of the first French homophile organizations and their publications. An early journal named *Futurs* (1952-55) had contacts with the movement organized around the C.O.C. group in the Netherlands, but expired after 17 issues. Longer lived was *Arcadie*, a monthly that began in 1954 and lasted into the early 1980s. Its pages carried the most serious and intellectual discussions of that period, when the German movement was barely reviving and the American one was young and inexperienced.

The coming of the Fifth Republic was a setback, as the De Gaulle regime had its clerical-authoritarian overtones of puritanism, but the radical demonstrations of May 1968 and after saw the dam break, and Paris sprouted a diversified gay subculture inspired by that of the United States, with its network of organizations, bars, bathhouses, and erotic bookstores, some with incongruous American names such as Fire Island and The Broad. Gay political groups spanned the spectrum from far left to far right. Beginning in 1979 the journal *Gai Pied*, explicit in its illustra-

tions and advertising, became the leading French gay publication, covering life in both Paris and the provinces. Homosexuality became a respectable theme in the world of the literary salons and publishing houses whose debates set the tone for the intellectual life of France and many other countries. After the decline of the influence of Jean-Paul Sartre and his existentialism, new sets of intellectuals, structuralist and post-structuralist, took the stage in Paris, attracting followers at home and abroad; prominent among them were Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault.

The steadily increasing prosperity of France as a whole has brought the consumer society within the reach of many gay Parisians, who have not spurned the pleasures of fine clothing, entertainment, and foreign travel. A gay radio station, Future Génération, broadcasts twenty-four hours a day, and the Minitel system makes computer dating possible. Paris hosts the only successful gay church that originated in Europe, the Centre du Christ Libérateur. Less favored by the new prosperity is the large section of the working class of North African origin, known colloquially as "les Beurs." Retaining a strong sense of family solidarity and aspects of Mediterranean homosexuality, these mainly Muslim French citizens are subject to stereotyping by the majority, a situation complicated by the fact that many hustlers are Beurs. An attempt to establish a gay mosque in Paris failed. Although the French capital is less renowned as a gay center than Amsterdam and Berlin, the overall attractions of Paris still suffice to draw enormous numbers of foreign gay and lesbian visitors.

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PARTICULAR FRIENDSHIPS

This term has been applied mainly to the emotional attachments of adolescents, particularly in closed institutions such as boarding schools, monasteries, and convents, who are passing through the "homosexual phase" of their development, but it is sometimes extended to the affectionate pairings of adults. Used in French as early as 1690 in a text entitled *Examen des amitiés particulières*, it was adopted by Joseph-François Lafitau to describe male-male relationships among the members of Amerindian tribes. In 1945, the novelist Roger Peyrefitte adopted the term for the title of his novel (*Les amitiés particulières*; in English, *Special Friendships*) about the tragic love affair of two schoolboys at an exclusive Catholic boarding school in France on the eve of World War I. Internationally famous, the work has become a classic of adolescent male love and so consecrated the term in that specific meaning.

The text of 1690 describes those involved in a "particular friendship" as constantly seeking each other's company, sharing their most intimate cares and griefs, and covertly violating the rules of the institution, while keeping others at a distance and excluding them from their conversation. The authors who recount such friendships agree that physical intimacy may, but need not be part of the mutual affection. Such writers include the novelists Honoré de Balzac (*Louis Lambert*), Paul Bonnetain (*Charlot's amuse*), Camille Ferri-Pisani (*Les perversis—Roman d'un potache*), Jehan Rictus (*Fil de fer*), Alain-Fournier (*Le grand Meaulnes*), and Amédée Guiard (*Antone Ramon*).

The British public school has an analogous phenomenon, but far more strongly tinged with sadomasochistic elements because of the system of "fagging"