

French intellectual life in the third quarter of the century, his thoughtful attitude toward the phenomenon, in combination with his sympathy for other marginalized groups, helped to prepare the way for the flourishing of France's gay community after 1968.

Sartre's understanding of homosexuality, like his perception of the situation of women, evolved slowly. His early story "Childhood of a Leader" (1938) portrays a spoiled upper-class boy who is seduced in preparatory school by an older student, and then joins a parafascist organization by way of compensation. Although not directly homophobic, this presentation did tend to lend some support to the theory (reflected also in Alberto Moravia's *The Conformist*) that there is a link between early homosexual experience and right-wing commitment: the **fascist perversion**. Included in the play *No Exit* (1944) is an articulate lesbian, Inès Serrano. In Sartre's novel sequence *Les chemins de la liberté* (1945–49), the homosexual character Daniel shows a fascination with militarism and fascism: he welcomes the German occupation.

His one major nonfiction study of a minority, *Anti-Semite and Jew* (1946), offers a number of interesting perspectives; in fact, inasmuch as it views the Jews as fundamentally defined by the enviroing hostility of society, his analysis may be (mutatis mutandis) better applicable to homosexuals than to its ostensible subject. However, Sartre's major involvement with homosexual questions arose from his association with Jean Genet, to whom he had been introduced by Jean Cocteau. Sartre's project of writing a preface to one of his friend's works grew into a sprawling 600-page book (*Saint-Genet: comédien et martyr*, 1952), in which the philosopher discusses issues of freedom and self-understanding from an existentialist standpoint. Genet's atypical experience, as foundling, thief, and worshipper at the shrine of the dominant male, may

have skewed Sartre's view of an identity in which he had no immediate personal stake.

In 1971 Sartre assumed, at some risk to himself, responsibility for publishing the manifesto of the Front Homosexuel d'Action Révolutionnaire, a radical **gay-liberation** group. Nine years later he gave an interview to two French gay journalists. In the colloquy he acknowledged that some key characters in his work, such as Mathieu in *Chemins de la liberté* and Roquentin in *Nausée*, were uncertain of their masculinity, an uncertainty that corresponded to the writer's own sense of self. He likened becoming homosexual to becoming a writer as two creative responses to otherwise intolerable pressure. As regards the status of homosexuals in France in 1980 ("this prudish society"), he held that they should renounce the hope of blending in and remain aloof, seeking "a kind of free space, where they can come together among themselves, as in the United States, for example."

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Ward Houser

SATIATION THEORY

The traditional critique of luxury holds that indulgence in one vice, even a relatively mild one, sets the tyro on a path toward ever more serious involvement. In the modern language of addiction, one develops a tolerance to the intake of the entry-level stage, causing one to increase the dose, to which one then develops a new tolerance, and so on. For writers of nineteenth-century popular medical tracts, **masturbation** was the first step toward ruin; the practiced pervert, in this view, always began by laying "violent hands" on himself.

In the Old Testament, Ezekiel 16:49 links the sodomites with other forms

of luxurious indulgence. This notion has a current folk version which maintains that older men and women turn to same-sex relations when they can no longer experience the pleasures of "normal" love or have supposedly become impotent with the opposite sex. Such a view was sustained in the otherwise remarkably tolerant remarks of the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer. The common belief, which has little foundation, that prostitutes are often lesbian in their own preferences is ascribed to the fact that they have had too many men. Oddly enough, this notion of homosexual orientation as the outcome of surfeit and repletion is the mirror opposite of the psychoanalytic claim that homosexuality is a type of arrested development. For critics, the appetite governing same-sex love is always too little or too much, but never "just right."

There seems to be little empirical support for this folk view. Some people do change their sexual orientation, but usually for other reasons than satiation with their previous mode of erotic fulfillment. They may be responding more fully to feelings that they have always had, but have been suppressing; or they may wish to explore a side of their nature that has been neglected through lack of opportunity. But such a shift is rarely undertaken out of a mere sense of "jadedness." It is possible that for some individuals sado-masochistic practices have the function of restoring interest in sexual pleasures that have become too anodyne.

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SAUNAS

See Bathhouses.

SCANDINAVIA, MEDIEVAL

In this article Scandinavia has the extended sense that includes not only the three European countries of Norway, Sweden, Denmark, but also Iceland. The extant sources for the history of homosexuality in the Scandinavia of the Middle

Agas, which is to say the period just before the introduction of Latin Christianity (about the year 1000) and the three centuries following, record no positive attitudes toward the phenomenon. There are no accounts of comradesly love, of fidelity and heroism on the battlefield, of institutionalized pederasty such as have been transmitted by the literature of other peoples at a similar stage of cultural development. The textual material that has come down to us—undoubtedly reflecting a process of selection and editing—stigmatizes the passive-effeminate homosexual as slothful, cowardly, and unmanly—as the object of other males' sexual aggression and humiliation.

Folk Attitudes and Customs.

There is no word in Old Norse or in other Germanic languages for what came to be called sodomy in Medieval Latin, so that the criminal offense owes its inception to Christian teaching. Yet there was a term *argr* which was broader in its meaning: the Roman writer Tacitus in the twelfth chapter of the *Germania* had to paraphrase it in Latin as *ignavos et imbelles et corpore infames*, "slothful and unwarlike and sexually infamous," specifying that such individuals were punished by drowning in a swamp. And in later vernacular sources the word *argr* (with the variant *ragr*) is mentioned alongside *stroðinn/sorðinn* and *sannsorðinn* as one of three *fullrettisord*, "words whose utterance amounts to a capital offense." The man who is the object of such insults has the right to bring whoever uttered them to court or even to assault and kill him so as to avenge his honor. The three latter terms are past participles applied to one who has been used sexually by another male. In the same category of heinousness were insults likening a man to a female animal (*berendi*). The *argr* carried the further stigma of practicing sorcery (*seiðr*), which was in principle a female art, as the *Ynglinga saga* says, "such *ergi* [*argr* conduct] accompanies this sorcery that it was deemed shameful for men to busy themselves with it;