

group of miscellaneous statutes having nothing remotely to do with this subject) was motivated by the Reformers' intent to prosecute the monks for "crimes against nature" and then to dissolve the monasteries and confiscate their property. Dissolution of monasteries and enactments against sodomy were two different issues.

The unique features of the English tradition in this sphere are first, the use of the term **buggery** as the legal designation for the crime, though in ordinary speech in England the word was long considered obscene and offensive; and second, the frequent commutation of the penalty of death by hanging (not burning at the stake, as some wrongly assume) to exposure in the pillory, which was described by contemporary observers as worse than death because of the ferocity with which mobs, and particularly women eager to punish enemies of their sex, pelted the defenseless sodomites with missiles and filth of every kind. It is uncertain just how and when this penalty began, but there is evidence that the pillory was used to punish sexual immorality well before the reign of Henry VIII, possibly even as early as the time of Richard II (late fourteenth century). The standard histories of English law begin in medias res by relating the abuses to which the pillory led in the mid-eighteenth century and then its abolition for all offenses except perjury in 1816. In Great Britain it was finally abandoned in 1837, and the United States Congress followed suit in 1839.

The sixteenth-century sodomy statutes remained on the books until the thinkers of the **Enlightenment**, beginning with Cesare **Beccaria** in 1764, denounced the death penalty as a relic of medieval superstition and intolerance.

The number of persons executed for "buggery," "crime against nature," and the like in jurisdictions subject to the British crown was probably no more than three a year for the whole period from 1561 to 1861, when the death penalty was abolished in favor of life imprisonment. Thus

the scores of victims of the law cannot be compared with the hundreds and thousands who were executed or simply killed just for holding "heretical" beliefs during the Reformation conflict in the sixteenth century. In fact, the really significant feature of the English legal development is its lateness in both directions: the criminalization of sodomy only in 1533, the abolition of the death penalty only in 1861, and the retention of the offense in the criminal codes of the English-speaking world long after the influence of the Enlightenment and of classical liberalism had reshaped almost every other area of the law. But few as the executions may have been, they left an enduring stamp on public opinion. And the United States Supreme Court's fateful decision in *Bowers v. Hardwick* (1986) denying the right of privacy to consensual adult homosexual behavior keeps alive the legal tradition that stems from the law of 1533, reinforced by the unrelenting hostility of religious conservatives and fundamentalists.

See also Canon Law; Law, Feudal and Royal; Law, Municipal.

Warren Johansson

SLANG TERMS FOR HOMOSEXUALS IN ENGLISH

The several national varieties of English offer hundreds of slang terms for homosexuals, a few of them traceable to the seventeenth century, but most dating from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Some may be heard wherever English is spoken (e.g., **gay**, **queer**); many more are limited in their area of use ("jasper," "poofter," "moffie"). Nearly all these terms were devised by heterosexuals and so tend to express in their meaning or derivation the hostility, the contempt, the hatred, and the fear that straight people have felt toward gay sex and those who practice it.

The corpus of slang also reflects long-standing and still prevalent misunderstandings of homosexuality. Recent

exposures of and challenges to these misconceptions have made as yet little impression on the **language**, and although individuals may have modified their usage, offensive, misconceived, and otherwise objectionable terms continue to be used.

Gay people have themselves adopted many of these terms, because until recently their understanding of themselves and their sexuality differed little from the views of the society in which they lived.

Basic Categories. Almost all terms for male homosexuals fall into four simple categories: first, those taking or assumed to take the "active," masculine role, the insertor role, in anal intercourse; secondly, the "passive," feminine role, the receptor role, in anal intercourse; thirdly, effeminate men who may be gay (there is some overlap between the latter two categories). Finally, for United States English, a category of fellator (cocksucker engaged in oral activity) is needed.

A similar typonymy, without a fourth category corresponding to fellator, applies to terms for lesbians. First, masculine, "active"; secondly, (ultra-) feminine, "passive"; and, thirdly, mannish women who may be lesbian. Again, there is some overlap between the first and third categories. Even though early sexology distinguished cunnilinctrixes from **tribades**, calling the former "sapphists" and "Lesbian lovers" (this original sense became obscured when these terms became generic for female homosexuals), English slang does not seem to have developed similar categories. There are many slang terms for those who perform oral sex on women ("cuntlapper," "-licker"; "muffdiver," "plater"; "gamahucher," "gamahucker," "gamarucker," and so forth) but none is specifically homosexual in application.

These categories mirror the traditional equation of biological sex and **gender** role, whereby male anatomy entails masculinity and female anatomy femininity. From this psychobiological determin-

ism flow crude popular notions of male and female sexuality generally and an erroneous conception of homosexuality that has not yet been completely dispelled. It is the belief that for a man to renounce the "active," definitively male role of penile penetration and submit to the "passive," female role of accepting the intromission of a penis, he must be a female, either psychically or both mentally and behaviorally.

Slang embodying this simple **active vs. passive** categorization according to roles in sexual activity can be found reduplicated again and again, in different English-speaking countries, in different periods, and in specific close knit or exclusive groups. In particular, whenever men are kept in isolation from women, it is likely that a system of slang corresponding to this pattern will arise. Examples of such masculine worlds in which **situational** homosexuality occurs are **prisons**, navies (and other armed forces to a lesser extent), boarding schools, among **seafarers** and **hoboes**. Even today there are relatively few slang terms that do not assign or imply a role in sexual activity, and these—"queer," "homo," "poof[ter]," "les," "lez," "lez-zie," "gay"—have usually become general only recently. A few other words are sometimes neutral when used by homosexuals: **fag(got)**, **queen**, **dyke**.

Male Terms. By far the largest number of male slang terms fall into the categories of male passivity and **effeminacy**, which imply the renunciation of one's maleness. By contrast, the active insertor terms seldom imply femininity or the loss of masculinity. Very often they refer expressly to taking the active role in anal intercourse: "arse-king," "arse/ass-bandit," "arse-burglar," "booty-bandit," "bud sallogh" (Irish, "shitten prick," obsolete), "backdoor(s) man," "gentleman of the backdoor," "backgammoner," "inspector of manholes," "dirt-track rider," "turd-packer," "dung-pusher," "poo-jabber." The Australian prison slang for the active partner "hock" has the same implication, for it

is rhyming slang on "cock." One of the equivalent American terms, "jocker," is likewise probably derived from "jock," which means "fuck" as a verb and "cock" as a noun. In the case of the synonym "wolf" the association is the same but metaphoric rather than direct.

The key to understanding a large number of passive/effeminate terms is the supposed reversal of gender and sex roles: the adoption of behavior deemed "natural" or appropriate to the opposite sex. A man who is passive must in some sense be a woman; even one who is **raped** is judged to have "lost his manhood" and becomes *de facto* a woman. Many slang terms for the passive homosexual directly personify him as a vagina or an anus: "gash," "pussy," "gentleman pussy," "sea-pussy," "boy-pussy," "boy-snatch," "boy-cunt," "bum-boy," "poonce" (from Yiddish for "cunt"), "brownie-queen," "browning-sister" or "queen," "mustard-pot," "jere."

Another common procedure is to apply a word that has female reference. The most direct method is to use a female name. The oldest known slang term "Molly" is an example, and "Marjery," "Mary-Ann," and "Charlotte-Ann" are further obsolete instances. Other nineteenth-century examples still survive: "Miss Nancy," "Nance," "Pansy" (and other **flowers**), "Mary," "Betty," "Dinah," "Ethyl," "Nola" have been recorded in the United States and in Australia the (obsolete?) "Gussie" (from Augusta). Or it may be any one of the large number of words normally used of females: "aunt[ie]," "chicken," "fem[me]," "girl," "bitch," "belle," "mother," "queen," "sis[sie]," "sister," "wife," and the like. Or it may be a word that refers to stereotypically feminine behavior: "limp-wrist," "broken-wrist," "flit," "mince," "prissy," "swish." (See **Women's Names for Male Homosexuals**.)

Another way of seeing male homosexuals as women is to view them as **hermaphrodites**. This confusion has seen the word "hermaphrodite" corrupted into

"morphodite," "morphydite," "morphrodite," and in South Africa "moffie." It has also yielded "freak."

One of the most prolific sources of feminine words has been male **prostitution**. Evidence of this phenomenon in London exists from the **Middle Ages**, and late nineteenth-century writers on homosexuality such as Havelock Ellis and "Xavier Mayne" (E. I. Prime-Stevenson) state that it was widespread throughout Europe and the United States. The prostitution took two main forms. Highly masculine men, especially soldiers, who were poorly paid, made themselves available as "active" partners. The older tradition involved very effeminate men, often cross-dressers, who frequented certain taverns or bars; sometimes their activity was outright arse-peddling, but often it seems to have been sex in return for a good time paid for by the masculine male. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries such effeminate men were called **mollies** (from "Moll," the pet-form of Mary, which meant "harlot" or "hussy") and the places where they operated were molly-houses.

The semantic transition from "harlot" and/or "slatternly woman, hussy" to "effeminate passive homosexual" and hence "homosexual" generally is the source of some of the most common terms for homosexuals. Such words include **fairy**, "nancy" or "nance," "queen/quean," and, contrary to popular myth, "fag" and "faggot." Above all there is the term "gay" itself, which in its present sense has not been traced earlier than the 1920s but which clearly derives from the earlier slang sense of "sexually dissolute, promiscuous, libertine," a sense often applied to female prostitutes. Other less familiar examples of this shift include "aunt[ie]" (originally meaning "brothel-keeper, old prostitute"), "ginch," "hump," "kife," "twidget," and "skippy."

The long tradition of male prostitution in London has meant that working-class Londoners have had a long exposure to it. London slang, particularly Cockney

rhyming slang, is very rich in terms for effeminate homosexuals, many of which live on in Australian slang. One nineteenth-century term was "sod," which survives as a mild term of abuse, its original sense largely forgotten. It in turn gave rise to the rhyming slang "TommyDodd," shortened to "Tommy." More important is "poof" ("pouf"), attested from 1833, which has yielded the elaborated Australian form "poofter" (now spread to New Zealand and Britain) and the rhyming slang "horse's hoof" or "horses" (Australian variant, "cow's hoof") and "iron hoof" or "iron." The variant form "puff," attested from 1902, may have originally been only a spelling variant rather than representing a different pronunciation; however that may be, it has spawned "collar and cuff" or "cuff" and "nigh enough" or "enuff." "Queer" has yielded "Brighton Pier," "ginger beer," shortened to "ginger," "King Lear," and, some have argued, "jere" and "gear." In Australian English "queen" has given rise to "pork and bean" and (poor example) "submarine."

United States English is rich in terms for homosexual fellators. Other varieties of English have no such slang, although associated terms such as "blow-job" and "head" (neither necessarily homosexual) have recently begun to penetrate other Englishes. The earliest written record of the word "cock-sucker" occurs in John S. Farmer and W. E. Henley's *Slang and its Analogues*, vol. 2 (1891), and interestingly they define it as "fellatrix." In the United States, however, the word applies to a homosexual, is one of the most taboo of words, and is also one of the strongest terms of abuse. The American homosexual's predilection for fellatio is long-established, for already in 1915 Havelock Ellis recorded the slang term "head-worker." Later synonyms include "blow-boy," "flute(r)," "cannibal," "gobbler," "larro" (back-slang), "mouser," "muzzler," "dick-sucker," "dick(ie)-licker," "skin-diver," "nibbler," "lapper," "lick-box."

Lesbianism. Terms for lesbians are far less common than those for homosexual men, a fact that is consonant with the greater invisibility of the lesbian in the past. No term now current can be traced earlier than the 1920s. In the eighteenth century lesbian practices were referred to as "the game of flats," but there was apparently no term for the practitioners. In the late nineteenth century two spinsters living together were referred to, in parts of the United States, as being in a **Boston marriage**. The phenomenon of "tomboyishness" was widely recognized and far less deprecated than the male equivalent "sis-sihood," yet it was not commonly or usually associated with lesbianism.

The word lesbian itself has given rise to many shortenings: "les(s)," "lessie," "lez," "lezzie," "lezzo," "lesbie" and the associated pun "lesbie-friends," "lesbo," "lesley"; and the jocular elaboration "lesbyterian." All of these are generic. Most other terms fall into the **butch-fem**/**fluff** categories and most seem to be of United States origin.

The oldest term seems to be "bull-dyke(r)" or "bull-dyking woman." The latter was also shortened to "B. D. woman." These terms first appear in black circles in the 1920s, and "bull-dyking" and "B. D." occur in the blues. The most plausible etymology of the "-dyke" element, which later became an independent word with the same sense, is that it derives from the late nineteenth-century slang "dike" meaning "to dress up formally or elegantly." This derivation would suggest the priority of "bull-dyker" over "bull-dyke," which accords with the evidence. There are also corrupt forms "bull-dagger" and "boon-dagger," and "bull" too has become an independent word. "Dyke" has spread to other English-speaking countries, and is often reinforced with the word "diesel."

Other masculine-lesbian terms include "butch," "amy-john" (from "amazon"), "jasper," "stud," "baby-stud," "tootsie."

The feminine, "passive" lesbian is a "fem[me]," "fluff," "fairy-lover," and "lady-lover." This last is used generically.

Conclusion. Language and particularly slang mirrors salient facts about the society in which it is used, and this is true of all the slang names for homosexuals that have accumulated over the past two centuries. They show in their meaning and derivation the popular understandings of homosexuals and homosexual behavior and sexual activity. That the understanding and perceptions involved are so frequently wrong makes the task of overcoming prejudice and ill-will so much harder, for the detritus remains embedded in the language. It is no accident that English has so few slang terms that mean homosexual, pure and simple, without reference to sexual roles and acts.

Studies of the slang vocabularies of other Western European languages have shown that they are as rich as English. In all modern languages, apparently, money, inebriation, and sex are all especially productive of popular terms. However, homosexual vocabularies are highly insular: even Spanish and Portuguese, so similar in other ways, show hardly any commonality in their slang terms for gay men and lesbians. Nonetheless, the whole group of Western languages displays some common semantic elements: gender reversal (imputation of effeminacy to gay men and masculinity to lesbians); use of **women's names** as generic terms for male homosexuals; inheritance of medieval Christian words of the "bugger" and "sodomite" families; and adaptations of psychiatric and medical terms. Occasionally slang terms migrate from one language to another, as French *tante* to German (also variant: *Tunte*), and (probably) in loan-translation form to English as *aunt(ie)*. In recent years the English word "gay" has entered these languages, and others as well.

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Wayne R. Dynes, *Homolexis: A Historical and Cultural Lexicon of Homosexuality*, New York: Gay Academic Union, 1985; Gershon

Legman, "The Language of Homosexuality: An American Glossary," in George W. Henry, *Sex Variants*, New York: P. B. Hoeber, 1941; *Guild Dictionary of Homosexual Terms*, Washington, D.C.: Guild Press, 1965; Bruce Rodgers, *The Queens' Vernacular*, San Francisco: Straight Arrow Books, 1972.

G. S. Simes

SLAVERY

The institution of slavery, under which one human being was the property of another and his labor power could be exploited by the owner with no remuneration beyond bare subsistence, existed from the dawn of history down to modern times. In some countries of the New World the agricultural sector abandoned slavery only in the second half of the nineteenth century. Most studies of slavery have concentrated on the economic aspect, fewer on the social and political. Only a very few have entered into the sexual exploitation that slavery entailed, and these tended to focus on the problems of marriage and childbearing rather than on the homosexual side.

General Considerations. The person of the slave belonged to the master, and could be used for sexual gratification as well as for economic gain. The slave could not in most cases refuse the master's advances, whether they were heterosexual or homosexual. The inferior status of the slave translated into the passive role in homosexual intercourse, which was always assigned to the party of lower rank. In ancient city-states the free citizen was forbidden to prostitute himself without loss of status, so that the profession of prostitute could be exercised only by slaves or foreigners and sometimes by freedmen. For this reason handsome young males captured in battle or in slavehunting raids were likely to find their way into **brothels**, a fate preferable to the hard labor imposed on slaves in the mines and latifundia of the magnates and great landowners. It was no disgrace for the slave to be subordinated sexually to the master, but simply part of