

I

IMPRISONMENT. See Prison

INDIA, PAKISTAN, BANGLADESH

In the Indian subcontinent, all sexual minorities—homosexuals, bisexuals, transgenders, *kothis* (“feminine men”), and *hijras* (considered members of the “third sex”)—have been (and are still) subjected to social, cultural, religious, and political oppression because of who they are and their sexuality. Homophobia is very present in the region, even if it takes on different forms than its usual manifestation in the West. In the past, homosexual relations were tolerated or condemned depending on the situation, but in Indian society overall, at least until recently, homophobia has been as discreet as homosexuality.

According to Hindu philosophy, the world in which we live is but one of many universes existing in time and space. Nothing is absolute or permanent, except for the divine yet completely unfathomable principle *brahman*, which is the source of everything. Everyone lives many lives, passing from one to the next, which allows for many kinds of changes (e.g., gender, orientation, or identity); in this concept, the life one has lived determines what is to follow. Gender is not constant and is never an absolute part of an individual's identity because, like the body, it is simply an envelope covering the soul, which has neither gender nor sex. Thus, it is no surprise in Hindu mythology to find stories that evince a kind of sexual ambivalence, even if the dynamic is expressed in heterosexual terms. Sexual ambiguity and the fluidity of genders is a key part of this mythology.

The literary works of Ancient India often describe men with prostitute boys in non-pejorative terms, and whose roles in the daily life at court were per-

fectly normal. The *Kama Sutra* has an entire chapter on *auparashtika* (oral sex), in which the masters enjoy the fellatio performed by their male servants. The *Rajatarangini* (river of kings), the chronicles of the kings of Kashmir, describe the licentious mores of King Kshemagupta; in another historical text, the Tamil epic poem *Silappatikaram* (the jeweled anklet), a king of the Ganges plains pays tribute to a king of the Chera dynasty by giving him many gifts, including “a thousand *kanjuka* [boy prostitutes], with long flowing hair.” Erotic drawings of women embracing can be found carved in relief on temple walls, as well as in miniature on paintings. According to ancient architectural treatises, a temple is not complete unless it has representations of erotic figures, because sensual pleasure (*kama*) is as important as earthly duties (*dharma*) and spiritual goals (*moksha*). In the *Valmiki Ramayana*, one of many mythological texts, the *rakshasa* women of King Ravana's harem make love together, and in the *Padma purana*, the king's two wives engage in sexual relations in order to give birth to a child after the monarch's death.

However, while philosophy might have recognized the essential diversity of things, society imposed an absolute submission to the sacred responsibilities (also *dharma*), the first responsibility of a man at the head of a Hindu family being to make children in order to perpetuate the cycle of life and to pay off the debt contracted at birth. Procreation was so important that the ancient legal texts (the *Dharmasastras*) specified severe punishments for men who did not fulfill this responsibility (castrated, impotent, or homosexual men were all grouped together under a generic term, *kliba*). Hence, the real question for Hindu gays and lesbians was **marriage**. Homosexuality could be ignored so long as it did not interfere with heterosexual marriage, which allowed one to procreate and thus fulfill one's

dharma. Homosexuality, meanwhile, risked leading one to **debauchery** and **sterility**.

In the *Manusmriti*, which contains all the rules of conduct according to orthodox Brahmanism, a *kliba* is excluded from inheritance, sacrifices, and rituals. Sexual relations between men are forbidden, along with the following: wounding a priest, “inhaling liquors or other products that should not be consumed,” incest, bestiality, anal and oral intercourse between men and women, sexual relations taking place in a cart drawn by a cow, sexual relations with a menstruating woman, and sexual relations during the day. Some of the punishments included bathing fully clothed, fasting, purification (by eating five products of the cow: its urine, dung, milk, curdled milk, and butter), and social ostracism through loss of caste. The *Manusmriti* also prescribes chastisement for women who have sexual relations with other women. If a young girl seduces and sleeps with another, she must pay a fine of 200 *panas*, plus double what the father of the “victim” would receive from the family of a future husband, as well as endure ten lashes of the whip. But if the perpetrator is a mature woman, the chastisement is even more severe. Her head is immediately shaven, two fingers are cut off, and she is made to ride across town on a donkey. The punishment of lesbians was thus manifestly more severe than that reserved for male homosexuals.

The *Narada purana* states that any transgression of the rules of caste, such as the spilling of semen outside of the vagina, will lead a man to *Reto-bhojana*, one of the many lower regions of the Hindu universe, where he must subsist by consuming semen, after which he will fall into *Vasakupa*, a deep, narrow, and greasy well where he must live for seven years, before being reborn as a lower life form. In the *Arthashastra*, an ancient secular text, a category exists called *ayoni* (non-vaginal sexual relations, with men or women), which are only lightly punished. In this case, relations between men are sanctioned against by heavier fines than those involving women. However, overall, homosexuality appears to be a minor offense. Thus, in the *Manusmriti* as well as the *Arthashastra*, certain homosexual offenses are less severely punished than some heterosexual ones, such as adultery with a person of a different caste.

Whatever the case, all of the ancient texts which describe sexual categories assigned a greater value to heterosexual relations than homosexual ones (which are often denigrated), insisted on the subordination of women to men, and, of course, justified the caste sys-

tem. The texts also make reference to those who were effeminate, impotent, or otherwise inadequate. In short, this philosophy accepted and favored gender diversity, yet Indian society was founded on a strict masculine/feminine dichotomy, forcing people who did not conform to live on the fringes, or to conform in some small way to the heterosexual norms. Nonetheless, there were apparently no violent persecutions of homosexuals during these ancient times, and even fewer executions, unlike the Western world.

With the introduction of the Persian, Turkish, and Arabic cultures in the tenth century CE, the phenomenon of urbanization culminated in a concentration of the elite in the cities of the Indian subcontinent. The cosmopolitan flavor of these Muslim centers fostered homoerotic attitudes that became apparent in medieval stories, presented without any pejorative commentary. The booming cities and numerous markets created a culture of the bazaar, founded on interactions between men of all classes, castes, and communities. Men would also congregate in taverns, houses of entertainment, and brothels. Dargah Quli Khan's description of Delhi indicates that the tombs of Islamic saints were a favorite meeting place for men attracted by homoerotic relations.

Many consider the Qur'an's condemnation of homosexual relations to be without appeal; its condemnation is connected to the Hebrew peoples, Lot, and the destruction of **Sodom and Gomorrah**. At least eight passages explicitly condemn the sin of Lot's people. *Sharia*, the Islamic law based on the *ahadith* (traditions) and on the words of the prophet Muhammad, also condemns homosexuality. It is said that the Prophet declared that any man who has anal relations with a woman, man, or child will appear on the Last Day, stinking like a corpse; God would then nullify the man's good deeds on earth, and he would perish in the flames of hell. Al-Nuwayri, who compiled the *ahadith*, suggested that both the active and passive partners engaged in homosexual relations be stoned. He recounted, too, that the first caliph, Abu Bakr, had a sodomite buried head-down under the debris of a wall, as punishment for his crimes. Others advocated setting those condemned on fire or throwing them from the top of a minaret. However, the Hanafi school, which tended to be the dominant school of thought in India, was much less severe in the condemnations it pronounced on homosexuality. Besides, it was often difficult to establish one's guilt, as according to the

sharia, at least four witnesses to the anal penetration in question were required.

During the twelfth century, the idea that the essence of God was unfathomable became prevalent, and that His beauty could only be perceived through the contemplation of His creations, which were the witnesses (*shadid*) to His magnificence. Within this perspective, the Sufis and other mystical poets of Persia often used homoerotic metaphors evoking the beauty of a young boy. This practice was severely condemned by many, most notably the Hanbali theologian Al-Jawzi, who considered this poetic and mystical discourse to be a mix of sodomy and idolatry, and thus doubly sinful.

By the nineteenth century, with the establishment of the British Empire in India, new laws founded on English legislation were introduced. These included the condemnation of fellatio and sodomy in Biblical terms, leaving no room for non-conformist identities or sexual conduct. The colonial government imposed its classification of acts "against nature," and the resulting anti-sodomy laws have remained valid to this day, even though English law was abolished in 1967. Section 377 of the Indian penal code stipulates that any person engaging voluntarily in "carnal intercourse against the order of nature" is subject to a punishment of up to ten years in **prison**.

British missionaries and educators in India often denounced the customs of marriage, family, and sexuality that they found to be primitive, permissive for men, and degrading to women. With Victorian morals as reference, they criticized arranged marriages, marriages involving children, the dowry system, polygamy, polyandry, and matrilineal family structures. They condemned the licentiousness of the Hindu gods, the homosexual relations of the Indian kings, and their indifference to the aspirations of their subjects. Indians raised in the Western way would take up the same colonial discourse, affirming that although Indian culture had originally been very close to that of Victorian culture, it had fallen into **decadence** during the Middle Ages. They would hasten to add that homosexuality was foreign to Hindu culture, and thus strongly condemn it, as in the West, then internalize the homophobia that was part of Victorian Puritanism. Monogamous, heterosexual marriage was idealized and presented as the only acceptable type of sexual activity.

In light of this, the British reproached the Muslims for their inclination toward unnatural vices, and accused them of having brought the "abominable vice"

into India since the start of their invasions, as early as the tenth century. The Urdu and Persian literary elite responded by working actively to purge the canon of any texts that evoked the "love of boys," which was now thought of as an "ignoble stain sullyng their reputation." Some attempted to justify the homoerotic desires described in the *ghazal* (traditional Persian and Urdu lyrical poems) by explaining that, no doubt, the poets had thought the evocation of a woman to be inappropriate for poetry about love. More often, though, the explanation simply said that the poem was really addressed to God.

In reality, Section 377 has, to date, rarely been used in India to punish homosexual relations between consenting adults. Among the thirty-six cases tried since the law's inception, most have concerned matters of rape. However, the **police** use it in conjunction with other laws concerning vagrancy, begging, and indecency, and often to bully or blackmail homosexuals surprised in parks or other public places. The law is also invoked to further condemn defendants accused of rape or murder. As well, the absence of any mention of penetration or the penis has permitted the law to be used to intimidate lesbians, particularly in cases of women who have run away together, or whose relationship has become public.

Police harassment constitutes a large part of modern homophobia in India. It is difficult to estimate the number of cases of extortion that homosexuals are subjected to, given that there are obviously no police records on the topic. The fear of being **outed**, which could be disastrous for some, forces many homosexuals to simply give in to such demands without a fight. As well, the police regularly carry out raids on known gay pick-up spots and make arrests; verbal, physical, and sexual assault are common police practice. Although such treatment exceeds the boundaries of the law, the police can usually count on the support of the state. Further, they rarely target the affluent or the educated, people who would most likely be able to defend their rights; instead, they focus on people of modest means, unable to oppose authorities and even less able to make their situation public, all of which make them an easy target for police harassment.

Given their visibility, *hijras* and *kothis* are faced with a similar situation. The *hijras* form organized communities that include castrated men as well as transsexuals, transvestites, homosexuals, and hermaphrodites. They are often despised, badly treated, and exiled from the

mainstream, even though they are supposed to have a recognized place in Indian society, especially at weddings, births, and festivals. Unfortunately, few employment opportunities are available to *hijras*, so many must turn to begging or prostitution. For many homosexuals of the working class, becoming a *hijra* is one of the few options socially open to them. However, the confusion that exists in popular culture between homosexuals and *hijras* is an unfortunate by-product of social homophobia, which refuses to recognize homosexuality as legitimate. Meanwhile, the *kothis*, who are biological men who adopt feminine identities but without castrating themselves or cross-dressing, suffer less than the *hijras*; however, their feminine mannerisms, highly visible, also make them easy targets for the police.

State-supported police intimidation encourages a culture of silence and intolerance, practiced by many levels and institutions of Indian society. Often, the sexual minorities themselves refuse to acknowledge their own marginalization and oppression, because doing so would increase their feelings of fear and **shame**. Most Indian families prepare their children for heterosexual marriage from the start, and the pressure to marry begins early. Sexuality is not a topic of discussion in public or at home, and the refusal to marry is a serious offense within families, particularly for women who have limited personal and financial autonomy. Often, duress and violence are used in order to force consent. A homosexual relationship can be tolerated, so long as it is disguised as nonsexual and does not get in the way of marriage and procreation. Under these conditions, many homosexuals enter into heterosexual marriages and subsequently go on to lead double lives.

In 1987, the marriage of two women police officers in the Madhya Pradesh Special Armed Force, Leela Namdeo and Urmila Srivastav, rocked public opinion and made newspaper headlines, resulting in both women being immediately fired from the service by reason of "unjustified absences" and "conduct unbecoming a servant of the State." Recently, a new and extremely troubling phenomenon has appeared: joint **suicides** by lesbian couples. Most are women in small towns or villages who declare their mutual commitment, but despair of ever being allowed to openly love each other or live together. In 1996, the film *Fire* caused a huge controversy over its story of a homosexual relationship between two married women within a Hindu family, in an environment filled with traditional symbols. In protest, activists from the right-wing polit-

ical party Shiv Sena invaded theaters showing the film in Mumbai, Delhi, and Calcutta. Moreover, Shiv Sena found many allies within Indian **feminist** groups who also opposed the film, which according to them was guilty of "doing a disservice to the cause of women."

In Indian society, lesbians generally encounter more problems than gay men. With public space being largely masculine, homosexual men can at least find a place, however limited and perilous it may be. But lesbians are in general relegated to the private sphere, the only place where female sexuality (hetero and homo) is allowed to express itself. In addition, defenders of the heterosexual patriarchy are able to control and contain female sexuality through violence and intimidation. In such an environment, there is even less room for a bisexual identity to develop, **biphobia** being as common among homosexuals as it is among heterosexuals. Nonetheless, bisexuals are slowly becoming more visible, but often come out of one **closet** simply to enter another.

More and more homosexual men and women are being subjected to aversion **treatment** and therapy, a sign of the homophobia within India's psychiatric community. Even though patients undergo treatment voluntarily, their "consent" is rarely well-informed. At best, these treatments violate the subject's right to privacy, and at worst are a form of torture. There is also a growing trend in newspaper advice columns, in which unqualified "experts" and various celebrities dispense homophobic counsel to would-be homosexuals. Such advice includes consulting a doctor, resisting desires, or seeking out the company of the opposite sex.

Researchers and scholars have until recently remained noticeably silent on the issue, even in those fields related to Marxism, feminism, and post-colonial studies. However, in order to keep up with Western **media** and so as to not appear too backwards, the English-language press has progressively been covering the Indian gay rights movement more favorably. At the same time, the national-language press tends to be increasingly hostile to anything seemingly related to "Western influences," clearly revealing its homophobic and indeed sex-phobic prejudices. Newspaper articles condemning lesbianism in India, which connect it to Western influence, seem to neglect the fact that lesbian marriages and suicides involve women from the lower classes who do not speak English, and thus have no connection with the said Western phenomenon.

Pakistan, which has had a long common history

with India, also retained Section 377 in its penal code, declaring homosexual relations punishable by a sentence of ten years in prison and corporal punishment that can include as many as 100 lashes of the whip. In Pakistan, since the re-establishment of Islamic law (*sharia*) in 1990, homosexual acts have been punishable by stoning. As in India, the law is rarely invoked, but it makes the blackmail, ransoming, and harassment of homosexuals more likely. Homosexuals arrested are also sometimes raped. *Jamaat-e-Islami*, a right wing Islamic political party, has re-affirmed the illegality of homosexuality, stating that it "will not be accepted, not by the State, not by Islamic society." Obviously, and despite this, homosexuality has not disappeared from Pakistan, but it has been banished to the shadows and silence. Nonetheless, in the northwest region of the country, the Pashto culture permits men to take younger men as lovers, yet without being perceived as homosexual.

Like Pakistan and India, Bangladesh condemns homosexual relations through Section 377, which are punishable from ten years in prison up to a life sentence. Here again, the police invoke the law solely for extorting blackmail and harassment, and homosexual men are sometimes subjected to sexual aggression by the police or by street ruffians, known as *mastaans*. Bangladeshi society as a whole lives in denial of homosexuality, most notably the media, which never mentions the subject. Thus in Pakistan and Bangladesh, as in India, the same law against homosexuality—a legacy of English colonialism—remains in place despite the fact that Britain itself long ago abolished it.

—Mario D'Penha

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INQUISITION

The original Inquisition refers specifically to the Catholic tribunal established by Pope Innocent III in the twelfth century, necessarily religious both in its origins and its structure, whose purpose was to protect the purity of the doctrine of the faith (in broad terms, it refers to the judgment of heresy by the Roman Catholic Church). This court carried out research (*inquisitio*) detailing various infringements of the faith, and crimes of **heresy** and apostasy through all of Christianity; such acts were punished through what became known as the *auto da fé*, the ritual of public penance of condemned heretics and apostates. Faced with a massive increase in all forms of heresy, Pope Lucius III called together a synod at Verona in 1184, during which he proclaimed a Constitution that assigned bishops to the duty of maintaining the faith. The resulting papal bull known as *Ad abolendam* became the founding text of the first Inquisition, known as the Episcopal Inquisition. As of the thirteenth century, the Medieval Inquisition (or Papal Inquisition) was established as a specific, unique, and universal court to deal with heretics. In the papal bull entitled *Ille humani generis* of February 8, 1232, Pope Gregory IX assigned the Dominican Order to

the task of repressing heresy, who were later joined by the Franciscan Order.

On Friday October 13, 1307, Philip IV the Fair, the King of France, as part of a scheme to plunder his rivals, ordered the arrest of approximately 140 members of the Knights Templar, a 200-year-old military order that supposedly answered only to the Pope, thus beginning one of the largest trials of the Middle Ages. The king undertook this after confiding in his Dominican confessor, the Inquisitor General of the Kingdom, Guillaume de Paris, and without first consulting Pope Clement V. Among the main charges against members were the denial of Christ, idolatry, and profanation. The inquisitors interrogated them, often accompanied by torture, about one of the Knights' rituals in particular: one that involved kissing a superior's anus through his uniform, followed by kissing the bare navel, then the mouth. One of the accused revealed the obligation of a fourth kiss, on the penis. Between October 14 and mid-November of 1307, the accused were interrogated about their homosexual practices, given that relations with women were formally prohibited by the order. Of the 140 arrested, seventy-six confessed to having practiced sodomy, and some even added that it was part of the rules which new members had to follow: "... and if any brother should come to him to be bawdy with him, he should submit and endure without repugnance: as he is commanded to do so by the statutes and laws of his order" (excerpt of a letter from Commissioner Odard de Molinier to Philip IV, about the Templars at Beaucaire). One hundred and two members acknowledged that the kiss on the anus was a prelude to sodomy. Pope Clement V, under pressure from Philip IV, issued a papal bull on November 22, 1307, which ordered the arrest and subsequent interrogation and torture of members in England, Castile, Aragon, Sicily, and Italy, as well as the seizure of their property. The goods confiscated were sequestered by Philip IV's men, despite the formal opposition of the Pope. On March 18, 1314, the four leaders of the Knights Templar, including the Grand Master of the Order, Jacques de Molay, were brought to the public square of Notre Dame in Paris. There, de Molay publicly retracted his confession, followed by Guillaume de Charrai. That very evening, both men were sent to be burned at the stake on a small island in the Seine River, between the King's garden and the Augustinian monastery. In total, fifty-nine members were burned at the stake that year, nine in Senlis and

a large number in Provence.

Less than two centuries later, in Spain, a new tribunal would carry out the Catholic Church's repressive work against homosexuals. With the signing of the papal bull of November 1, 1478 (*Exigit sinceræ devotionis affectus*), Pope Sixtus IV gave life to the Spanish Inquisition. The request had come directly from the Catholic monarchs Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella of Castile as a means to maintain Catholic orthodoxy in their kingdoms; this would be the most unique characteristic of this new court, that which brought together papal will with that of Spanish political powers at the highest level. The court was constituted as a council under the name *Consejo de la Suprema y General Inquisition*. It originally had four members, all ecclesiasts, one of whom held the title of Inquisitor General.

It is not known today what pushed Pope Clement VII, by a decree on February 24, 1524, to entrust the repression of sodomy within the Aragon peninsula to the sole tribunal of the Inquisition. The decree made explicit mention of the homosexual habits of the Moorish minority, and of the threat of "putrid contamination of the healthy faithful by these few black sheep." The repression of Aragon homosexuals in Spain began later, under the reign of Philip II (beginning in 1560) and would continue unabated until the end of the seventeenth century.

The Spanish Inquisition made a distinction between "perfect" sodomy (where it involved two males) and "imperfect" sodomy (when it took place within a heterosexual relationship); however, nine cases out of ten concerned homosexual relations. Later, the tribunal's jurisdiction over matters of sodomy grew to also encompass those on ships, which maintained regular connections to the region, as well as those populations on the new continent, which were subject to the tribunal at Cartagena de Indias (Colombia), established in 1610. Between 1560 and 1630, the three Aragon tribunals (in Barcelona, Valencia, and Zaragoza) investigated the majority of those accused, who were most often clergymen or peasants. Other groups were also singled out: sailors, slaves, students, and shepherds. They all shared in common a tendency for social instability and had few local roots. However, this did not prevent a few nobles from finding themselves at the mercy of the court. The Moors, targeted by Pope Clement VII's decree of 1524, only made up a small percentage of those accused (8.2%) between 1560 and 1609 (the date when they would be expelled from the country). The number of

Even in those democracies where freedom of expression is considered a fundamental right, forms of homophobic censorship can still be found. In France, the case of homosexual media is a good example. In the early decades of the twentieth century, attempts to publish homosexual magazines were thwarted based on grounds of their being "an offense against good values" as written in the penal code (for example, the magazine *Inversions* in 1924); and as of 1949, the law pertaining to publications aimed at youth, which banned the display of "offensive" magazines as a result, forced many gay publications out of business (with the exception of *Arcadie*, which managed to survive solely through subscriptions from 1955–75). Publications which fell victim to this law included *Futur* and *Juventus* in the 1950s and 60s, and those published by FHAR (Front homosexuel d'action révolutionnaire) and other gay liberation groups in the 70s; they were regularly prosecuted, including Pierre Guénin, a pioneer in gay men's publications in France.

Even the well-known magazine *Gai-Pied* had its share of confrontations with French authorities over censorship. Miraculously escaping the censors during its first years of existence (mostly thanks to the support of the intelligentsia, which was earned through publishing articles and interviews with the likes of Michel Foucault and Jean-Paul Sartre), the magazine was targeted for banning in March 1987 by the Minister of the Interior, Charles Pasqua. In response, *Gai-Pied* received as much support from journalists (seeing the threat as an attack on freedom of the press), as from politicians; with regard to the latter, sympathizers not only came from the left (such as Jack Lang of the Socialist Party, who was seen at the Paris Book Fair with a copy of *Gai-Pied* under his arm) but also from the right, such as Minister of Culture François Léotard (who by doing so provided another example of the great tolerance of the "liberal" right, which had the effect of rupturing government solidarity). What is interesting about the *Gai-Pied* affair is the anachronistic nature of its proposed censorship. Only a dozen years earlier, a similar ban would have been met with a quasi-general indifference; now, it was widely considered inappropriate, and a thing of the past, clearly demonstrating that censorship requires the cooperation of both state and society. If the latter applies sufficient pressure, the former has no choice but to concede.

Self-censorship is by its nature more subtle than intellectual or institutional censorship. Carried out by

homosexual authors, this type of censorship comes from internal, not external, pressures, and can be the result of numerous circumstances: for example, the inner turmoil of one who is uncomfortable with his or her homosexuality, or the internalization of dominant social norms. Self-censorship could also be a preventative or precautionary mechanism to shield one from criticism, or even a strategy aimed at deceiving external censors. It has been said that Nobel Prize-winning author Roger Martin du Gard would not let his novel *Le Lieutenant-colonel de Maumort* be published until after his death (it was finally published in 1983, twenty-five years after he died), which some have construed as an example of self-censorship. But what can be said about André Gide (who was Gard's longtime friend) and his long hesitations before finally publishing *Corydon*, against the advice of others, which resulted in a veritable scandal over its content? Further, there has been little that has not been said about Marcel Proust and the meanderings in his work on the subject of homosexuality. Who really is Albertine of *La Recherche du temps perdu* (*In Search of Lost Time*), an obvious object of Proust's desire, and whose point of view is Proust's, that of the narrator, or the character of Charlus? And what is one to take from the terrible passages devoted to "women-men" at the beginning of *Sodome et Gomorrhe* (*Cities of Pain / Sodom and Gomorrah*) (Vol. 2), the indulgent account of the sexual encounter between Jupien and Charlus in *Le Côté de Guermantes* (*The Guermantes Way*) or the bordello for men in *Temps retrouvé* (*The Past Recaptured / Time Regained*)?

Proust clearly represents a borderline case of self-censorship, but one which is fundamental and to which most homosexual authors can relate. It is thus quite significant to see writer Jean-Louis Bory quote Proust as part of an article entitled "Le Refus du masque" (Refusing the mask), in which he recalls his own self-censorship:

From my very first piece, I knew that one day or another I would get around to writing plainly about this subject [of homosexuality]. For far too long I would avoid it, I would procrastinate, I would ... in the end ... cheat, in the same way that Proust cheated. It was in one of my first novels (entitled *Usé par la mer* [Worn by the Sea]) where I finally dealt with the subject frankly (yet still hypocritically), by telling the story of the love of a man named Félicien with a certain ... Georgette, who (extraordinarily) was

in the military. It is possible; there are some in the AFAT (Army Women's Auxiliary). The feminization, the Albertine side to my Georgette, was so awkward it was transparent—Georgette even had tattoos! And naturally, no one was really fooled. But I still wasn't proud of it; it was still evading the subject. And yet in the same book, I described a passionate relationship between Mr Bonaventure, a film presenter, and Mr Suzanne, a hairdresser. Again, I made a little progress, but it was simply a nod. And the subject is really too serious for a simple nod. Then, in a later book, *Un Noël à la tyrolienne* [A Tyrolean Christmas], I described, much more precisely, the love between a man named Aloys and a man named Pierre. But even then I was already thinking of the next book, to be entitled *La Peau des zèbres* [The skin of zebras]. I burned my bridges. We can see that Aloys is really named François-Charles, and he was in love with Pierre. Here we find again Félicien from *Usé par la mer*, and become aware of the true nature of the relationships. The mask was terribly transparent now, but it was still a mask, in so far as the "I" that I used was the "I" of a novel. You knew that it was François-Charles or Félicien who was doing the talking. You could say to yourself: "Okay, here it's François-Charles, and here it's Félicien ... but where is the author in all of this?"

—Hervé Chevaux

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CENTRAL EUROPE. See Europe, Central & Eastern

CHINA

To the Chinese, sexuality is something natural, and to indulge in it on a moderate basis is considered a key to one's health and longevity. Thus, erotic practices for their own sake were not to be condemned nor legislated against; in addition, the Chinese did not believe that one's personality was centered around one's sexual orientation. However, a careful study of historical Chinese literature identifies some reticence against homosexuals, beginning in particular during the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1912) dynasties. It was not until the twentieth century, with the intrusion of Western ideologies and Western medical and psychiatric theories, that this reticence was transformed into a radical and systemic homophobia, manifested mostly in ostracizing "deviants," including loved ones.

Marriage was considered vital by most families in order to ensure descendants, but even so, it was not necessarily an obstacle to masculine or sapphic love. Once the familial relationship is duly met, nothing forbade a spouse (at least, not the man) from loving someone else or seeing a young man on the side (all it took was finding an accommodating wife). On the other hand, it was inconceivable and antisocial for one to refuse to marry; only Buddhist clergy were permitted to avoid this obligation (not that this granted the celibate any greater legitimacy).

Perdition's Favorite

Many works written by ancient China's moralists and chroniclers speak out against debauchery, but it is the excesses of passion and the abuse of wine and women (or young men) that they condemned, and not the act itself. The philosophers warned against the deleterious influence of royal favorites, catamites, or eunuchs on those managing the affairs of the empire. Historians made examples of fallen kingdoms and imperial houses ruined by men who fell victim to their passions. The fate of the state or even a family was too important to subject to irrational ardor, and chroniclers castigated the useless sycophants who lured the rulers into trouble.

Buddhism Against the Sins of the Flesh

Buddhism, which first appeared in China around the first century CE and exerted a profound influence on the religions of the Middle Kingdom between the sixth and ninth centuries, introduced the concept of the sins of the flesh. Sexuality in general was considered an obstacle to spiritual life. It was mostly the female temptress that one must resist (Buddhist texts were written by men for men, after all); there was a recognition of homosexuality as well, which was usually condemned, but only slightly more than heterosexual acts. In **India**, a system of rules for both laymen and men of religion was developed which was far more detailed than China's interdictions against crimes such as rape and adultery. All Buddhists were required to abstain from lustful acts, including those with men. The *Vinaya*, the curriculum of rules and procedures for Buddhist monks, which describes all variants of sexual acts, was more precise. Penetration with ejaculation, regardless of the orifice or the partner, would mean exclusion from the community. Mutual masturbation among monks would incur a slight penance, and nuns would not incur any. Sins committed with a *pandaka* (definitions vary, but usually a transvestite or a eunuch) were punished less severely than if they were committed with a woman, but more so than if they were committed with a virile man. There were also rules set out so monks might avoid temptation, such as governing their quarters, baths, and latrines. Nonetheless, these rules did not prevent monks or nuns from having relationships, whether they be masculine or sapphic, and pederast traditions, such as that of monks and their catamite *chigo* in Japan.

Toward a Moral Order

During the Song dynasty (960–1279), a kind of Puritanism arose that was inspired by neo-Confucianism and influenced by Buddhism which insisted on abstinence and mastery over desire. This tendency became government orthodoxy by the beginning of the Ming dynasty. Certain members of the elite viewed the increasingly urbanized societies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as hedonistic and the empire as incompetent while outside threats loomed (such as the Japanese and the Manchurians); as a result, they reacted negatively against what they perceived as dilatorism and the corruption of traditions which threatened their security. The Qing Empire, taking care to get scholars on their side, carried out a campaign of moral renewal, which included confining sexuality to heterosexual marriage.

Shanshu, or morality books, which began to appear during the Song dynasty alongside treatises on public morals, as well as *gongguoge*, or "ledgers of merit and demerit" (which rated acts as either good or bad deeds), had a strong influence during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Based on the Buddhist idea of retribution but representing a syncretism of popular Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, these texts promoted an ethic that was zealously strict. Hostile to the concepts of adultery and debauchery, at least two texts from the seventeenth century criticized same-sex male love affairs, in which concubines and male prostitutes were denounced, as well as pederasty and the frequenting of brothels.

The law began to address sodomy (but not lesbianism) around the middle of the Ming dynasty. Previously, two literary sources (though not legal texts) of the Song dynasty made mention of a Zhenghe era law which allowed for the arrest and beating of the capital's prostitutes for indecent offenses. Anal penetration (though not necessarily with a man) was criminally unclean, likened to introducing refuse into the mouth, as noted by a Jiajing era (1522–67) amendment to the legal code established during the Ming dynasty which made it punishable by 100 strokes of a cane. The code of the Qing dynasty adopted the same laws, but grouped them under a coherent category, "Fornication." These laws were designed to address not only the kidnapping and rape of male youths (which may or may not cause their death), but also consensual sodomy (*jijian*). Those convicted of these crimes were punished by 100 strokes of a cane and were forced to wear a cangue (a

device used for public humiliation and corporal punishment, similar to the stocks but instead of being fixed in place, the board had to be carried by the prisoner) for a month. The seduction of a boy younger than twelve was also considered rape. Essentially, the same scale of punishments was used for all sexual crimes. The application of this legislation against kidnapping, rape, and murder is well-documented by the archives of the Minister of Justice and the royal courts. It is more difficult, however, to find evidence of actions taken against consensual sodomy, which did not require the approval of the central authorities.

The end of the Ming dynasty and the beginning of the Qing saw the arrival of a homophobia that was more asserted by certain authors. In a culture where social norms were considered more important than laws with regard to governing the populace, sexual passivity was seen as subverting the hierarchy of the sexes as well as social status. It was associated with servility and prostitution (both particularly visible under these two dynasties), and brought with it a fear of dishonor, gossip, and sometimes even blackmail. The fickleness of male prostitutes (whose chief preoccupations were money and privilege) only fueled more distaste. The first homophobic **insults** that began to appear mostly referred to the "feminine role," but more generally, love between men was judged to be absurd (without any real explanation why) and a pitiful substitution for heterosexuality (when it occurred in **prison** or in the **army**, for example). The union of the *yin* and *yang* was considered the ultimate design of heaven and earth, and the love of a woman was part of the order of things. The love of boys was thus a curiosity, made unclean because of anal penetration (which in turn made its pleasure incomprehensible and "**against nature**"); and when combined with a refusal to marry, it was evidence of a supreme immorality.

Medical Discourse & the Bourgeois "Morals"

This new intolerance, however, did not obstruct those with a taste for cross-dressers, nor did it dampen same-sex affairs between students or scholars. But the intrusion of the West in the twentieth century intensified the spread of homophobia, condemning homosexuality to silence. Traumatized by the humiliations inflicted by both Westerners and the Japanese during the Opium Wars, the intelligentsia of the early twentieth century called for a complete intellectual, cultural, and political "modernization" of the country, based on for-

eign examples. The fall of the empire in 1911 and the May Fourth Movement of 1919 opened the floodgates to a disjointed sort of Westernization which identified tradition and Confucianism as the source of all troubles. Democracy and science (viewed as social and moral virtues) became the new idols. But intellectuals and students, in their desire to shake off the chains of ancient standards, did not realize that they were endorsing a narrow and petit-bourgeois mentality, not to mention blind scientism, all of which had an impact on the course of homophobic attitudes.

Medical and psychiatric discourse on sexuality and the concept itself first appeared in China via translations (works by Havelock Ellis, the British sexual psychologist, were published there in 1926 and 1947), and was crystallized as a result of essays by Chinese **medical** doctors and **psychologists** during the 1920s and 30s, which incorporated Western ideas. The term "homosexuality" (*tongxinglian*) along with its crazy trappings appeared in the 1920s and displaced all of the ancient theoretical concepts on the subject. The new Chinese discourse incorporated all of the associated ways of thinking: homosexuality was an "anomaly" (i.e. transitory and curable), an "**inversion**," and was now under the jurisdiction of medicine and **psychiatry**. Medical literature on the art of lovemaking and on how to create beautiful children lent credence to the idea that medicine dictated matters of sexuality. The ancient preoccupation with social and moral correctness produced a sexology that was more normative than the previous one, which was analytical and focused on the individual's search for pleasure. Concerned for the "quality" of the population, theorists began to steer the subject toward eugenics, whereby all examples of non-procreative sexuality (e.g., prostitution, masturbation, sodomy) were considered either sicknesses to be stamped out (by any means, including electroshock therapy) in the name of the **family** and the state, or a "social scar" that was condemned to absolute silence. The subject became taboo: China produced *nothing* on the subject of homosexuality between 1940 and 1980; even Taiwan and Hong Kong had nothing to say on the subject until the 1970s. There were not even any public, inflammatory diatribes (à la Heinrich **Himmler**) to be found in literature published by the Chinese government, whether nationalist or communist. Between 1950 and 1970, one could almost seriously deny that gays and lesbians even existed in China, or claim that homosexuality had somehow

been "eradicated" (in the same way as venereal diseases). Embraced by the totalitarian regimes and popularized by the **communists**, this was the general opinion in mainland China until the 90s (and in Taiwan until the 80s), isolated as it was from Western ideas on the subject. In fact, it was not until 2001 that the Chinese Society of Psychiatry took homosexuality off its list of mental illnesses.

Christianity and its accompanying homophobic arguments had little influence, except in Hong Kong. Psychiatric discussions aside, Westernization translated into a realignment of mores with the "civilized" habits of the Victorian nineteenth century, as well as a desire to "eliminate the barbaric elements of the past" and a leap to follow the latest foreign fashions. Thus, the only permissible relationship was a strictly monogamous, heterosexual one, resulting in marriage. The traditional marital obligation, now reinforced, took on a homophobic pallor; young boy lovers were no longer silently tolerated, nor were same-sex games between boys and between girls. One was only to court (or be courted by) a member of the opposite sex. Moral conventions dictated that the unmarried and the homosexual, because they contradicted the procreative, patriarchal norms, were pushed to the outermost fringes of society; in this way, homophobia was expressed more through ostracism than laws. Constrained to marriages of convenience, Chinese homosexuals lived in fear of being discovered, which would result in a loss of face as well as employment. The impossibility of privacy in a society that focused on the family, not to mention cramped lodgings within plain view of anyone, did not help matters. However, there were almost never any violent public reactions against homosexuals, no "gay bashings." Even certain examples of homoeroticism were tolerated, provided they did not advocate a different way of life, nor use the word "homosexual" (considered barbaric and taboo).

Repression

If social norms were the greatest enemy of Chinese homosexuals, the courts were not far behind. From 1865, then again in 1901, the English introduced their own legislation in the colony of Hong Kong, condemning those convicted of sodomy to life in prison, of crimes of indecency between men to two years' isolation, and of attempted sodomy or indecency to a maximum sentence of ten years. Most of these laws were finally abolished in 1991 (however, men younger

than twenty-one who engage in sodomy can still be jailed for life), bringing local laws in line with legislation in Britain passed in 1967, but not before drawing fierce opposition from the colony's Chinese elite.

The modern Republican civil code established in 1929–30 (still in use in Taiwan), based on the European continental model, removed sodomy as a crime. However, this legislation was not always recognized (even in recent years in Taiwan), nor did it stop police harassment in gay and lesbian locales.

Referencing the Soviet model, the communist People's Republic of China after 1949 took its own repressive approach to homosexuality. The communists' preoccupations were often the same as those of the Qing lawmakers, but imprisonment did not play as large a role as in other totalitarian systems. No article of law expressly forbade homosexuality, contrary to what could be found in the Soviet Union's laws. This did not prevent homosexuality from being repressed in China (as was any expression of sexuality outside of wedlock), but the absence of a strict legal qualification confused the issue somewhat. In a country where communities handled their social problems without need for regular recourse to a judicial system, the "work units" (*danwei*), the name given to places of employment in communist China which also held sway over individuals' entire way of life, had access to an efficient arsenal of control over its subjects: the maintenance of personal files, warnings, exclusion from the Party, demotion, and exile. In this system entirely run by the state, these chastisements which targeted an individual's (and his or her family's) reputation and means of existence were formidable. Most moral offenses were (and still are) handled in these ways. Keeping in mind the general arbitrariness of the regime, as well as its periods of anarchy, an entire range of legal punishments were applied to "bad elements" and other "counter-revolutionaries." It was in this way that transvestite performers popular before the communists took power were deported and many homosexuals were executed (under aggravating circumstances, it seems, the latest being in 1977) and sentenced to prison or internments of variable length at camps for "re-education through labor" (*laogai*). Evidence of homosexual behavior was enough to justify extending a convict's prison sentence, on the basis of political crimes. Article 160 of the 1979 penal code "clarified" the issue somewhat, establishing the crime of "hooliganism," a catch-all phrase to describe brawls, mob violence, the undermining of public order, vio-

lence against women (from indecent behavior to conducting orgies), and other acts. It was under this article that the legal repression of homosexuality continued, resulting in lengthy prison or internment sentences until the 80s. The criminal code reform of 1997 abolished the crime of "hooliganism" but at the same time criminalized "gatherings resulting in **debauchery**." As a result, there were widespread police crackdowns on homosexual gathering places, resulting in fines, detention, and even blackmail. Further, the suspicions of those in power regarding any citizens' initiative not under their control essentially doomed any attempt to form gay associations.

Opening Up to Change (and its Limits)

China's much-vaunted openness since 1978, two years after the death of Mao Zedong, has been rather selective. Foreign motion pictures, television programs, and the latest trends were all making their way into China with increasing ease, with the exception of the gay liberation movement. The popular image of Americans as perpetuated by the **media** was that of the well-groomed, "normal" heterosexual couple which included a blond-haired, heartthrob male hero; China's view of popular culture was (and is) seen through rose-colored glasses, and as a result was blind to anything that swayed from the heterosexual norm. Cultural standards have already changed, though. Fifteen years ago, two men or two women holding hands in the street would not have shocked anyone; it was simply an expression of friendship. A man and a woman holding hands, however, was shocking, given the Chinese abhorrence for public displays of sexuality. Now, the opposite is true; the former is now viewed as evidence of homosexuality.

In Hong Kong and Taiwan, homosexuality was condemned to absolute silence by the press until the 1980s. In the People's Republic, the silence was lifted only partway, enough to popularize the word and the concept. In commercial businesses, homosexuality became acceptable because it helped to drive voyeuristic and sensationally-inspired media, which increased sales. But at the same time, homophobia thrived, given that homosexuality was linked to a wide range of criminal behaviors and social ills: murder, rape, prostitution, **suicide**, and **AIDS**. News on gay rights demonstrations and the gay movement in the West simply served to illustrate how commonplace foreign **vice** was; the image of the gay community was summed up in the image

of the drag queen. Vigorous action on the part of the *tongzhi* ("queer") movement, which started in Taiwan and Hong Kong in the 1990s, obliged journalists to exercise more objectivity, though not consistently.

The universal decline of classical schooling, combined with a general lack of education, has cut the Chinese, gays and lesbians included, off from their roots, and the silent **tolerance** of homosexuality in the past has fallen to the wayside without need for **censorship**. It would seem that ancient texts remain available, but the most erotic passages (heterosexual as well as homosexual) are banned or excised. This, coupled with the complicity of scholars, has led to distorted heterosexual interpretations of the known texts and anecdotes. In this way, what is nothing more than imported puritanism takes on the guise of custom or Confucianism. Many Chinese leaders have preached with sanctimonious and ethnocentric zeal on how homosexuality "violates Chinese tradition, and the natural way of things," and in doing so (since the 1970s) cast it as a foreign vice from a decadent West. Accordingly, gay or lesbian activists are portrayed as being uniquely Western or Japanese.

Despite having been inspired by concepts both foreign and traditional, homophobic discourse in China, supported by the regime, seems to be firmly established and resistant to change (no matter how highly praised in the Western world).

—Laurent Long

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SOUTHEAST ASIA

Southeast Asia is a complex region of very diverse cultures, spanning eleven countries, each with their own highly varied traditions and ethnic groups. This region has for centuries been a cultural crossroads for a varied range of influences: Chinese, Indian, Muslim, Animist, Hindu, Buddhist, and more recently, Western and Christian. These influences were added on top of previous cultural traditions, though often without any real mixing, to the point where within even a single country the various social groups can have very different cultures.

Given that each country in this region was influenced differently by the influx of cultures, the degree and type of homophobia varies from country to country. **Islam**, for instance, is very strong in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei, but not in other countries where the Muslim community is far smaller. Thailand has never been colonized by Europeans, and this is undoubtedly why it has managed to escape a strong Puritanical influence. On the other hand, the Philippines spent almost 500 years under Spanish dominion, then American, and the majority of the population is Christian, at least officially. Yet in that country, there is no specific law against homosexuality. However, Singapore, Malaysia, and Myanmar (all countries colonized by the British) have laws explicitly targeting homosexuality, based on the Indian and Imperial British penal codes. The existence of these laws has contributed to the justifica-

tion of state-approved homophobia, most notably in Singapore.

Insofar as homophobia is a cultural phenomenon, it is difficult to generalize about it in Southeast Asia, given that the region is not culturally homogenous. However, it is possible to examine the various cultures and the types of homophobia that each is susceptible to producing.

Indigenous Cultures

In the region there are many indigenous cultures; so again, it would be unfair to simply generalize. Nonetheless, certain common points can be seen in these cultures, especially when compared with the construction of homosexuality (and homophobia) in the Western world.

None of the principal languages of the region has a specific word for the terms "homosexual," "gay," and "lesbian," which shows that homosexual orientation is not objectified like it is in the Western world. This is not to say that homosexual behavior is unknown in these cultures, but that they do not designate sexual orientation as a specific gender aspect, or as the basis of an identity. However, there are often social ramifications for homosexual behavior in these cultures, especially when it seems as though these actions are subverting masculine and feminine social norms.

In Thai culture, for example, it is very important that an individual fulfill his or her social role, and in doing so give him or herself a positive image. To the indigenous cultures, homosexual behavior is not bad in and of itself (contrary to Western cultures where it is often seen as sinful or **against nature**), but it is considered an inappropriate tendency, and of little benefit to a person's social role.

Marriage is an important part of this social role. Through their agrarian traditions, these cultures see children as an essential crutch for their old age. The Buddhist belief that every action has a consequence pushes people very strongly to conform to the norms, because they fear the ill effects of their own desires. Thai culture draws a large distinction between public image and private reality. Also inspired by **Buddhism**, Thai society tolerates private deviations from the public norms, and while indulgence may find a way to express itself, this does not indicate social acceptance. Despite the fact that there are few legal or institutional sanctions against homosexuality, in a culture that is ideally non-confrontational, the very fact of acting against

the social expectations of others is enough to provoke harsh reactions. Those whose homosexual behavior was revealed would often experience a deep sense of **shame** and dishonor.

Though the languages of Southeast Asia have no indigenous word to designate homosexuality, they do have a rather large vocabulary to identify transgender people: *kathoey* in Thailand, *acault* in Myanmar, *bakla* in the Philippines, *bapok* and *pondan* in Malaysia, and *waria* and *banci* in Indonesia. Transgenders are completely visible, openly subverting social norms, yet they are seen in general as an implacable phenomenon and most of the indigenous cultures have grudgingly conceded their place in society. Albeit, a limited place: transgender people are marginalized, considered as inferiors, and assigned to very specific social roles. In the Philippines, for instance, *baklas* usually are found working in beauty salons, as maids, or vendors in the open-air markets. They are also found in the entertainment industry, as part of the sex trade, offering their services to heterosexual men. Interestingly, they are also given a specific place in the processions of the **Catholic Church**. In Thailand, aside from these religious functions, the social niche occupied by the *kathoey*s is more or less the same. They appear from time to time on television, but not due to any social acceptance, but simply because of an occasional theatrical or comic interest.

Within these niches they are tolerated; however, **tolerance** should not be confused with acceptance. Any time people of the so-called "third sex" attempt to leave the confines of their traditional niches, they encounter serious resistance. In 1996, for example, despite winning the Thailand championship, a volleyball team with six *kathoey* players (which called itself "the Iron Ladies") encountered a large amount of hostility when it was suggested they be recruited for the national Olympic team.

Chinese Communities

The waves of migration from **China** toward Southeast Asia have gone on for roughly the last 1,000 years, but have increased within the past century. In certain countries, especially Thailand, the Philippines, and Vietnam, these immigrants have been assimilated into the local population, adopting their languages and customs. The transition was made easier by religion: Buddhism in Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Myanmar, and **Christianity**, to which the Chinese in the Philippines soon converted. In traditionally Muslim countries,

such as Malaysia and Indonesia, the Chinese communities were a little more segregated. Whatever the case, whether more or less assimilated into the local populations, the Chinese still constitute distinct communities and make up a specific cultural group in Southeast Asia.

Chinese culture places a great importance on an individual's duties and familial responsibilities. This is further reinforced by the hierarchical structure of the extended family, which leaves little room for personal decisions regarding lifestyle. Undoubtedly, the society's patriarchal character makes matters of gender particularly strict. Nonetheless, the masculine ideal is not presented as some sort of swaggering machismo, but rather as an expression of wisdom, self-control, and sacrifice for family and social values. And the feminine ideal is based on respect for men and on the observation of familial virtues in the role of mother, grandmother, or wife.

Like many of the indigenous Southeast Asian cultures, the Chinese communities did not make sexual orientation a basis for identity. Originally, Chinese culture more or less tolerated homo-affective and homoerotic relationships, so long as marriage and progeny were assured. Marriages were traditionally arranged by the respective families; no one married for love, and no one expected men to stay monogamous. Those who had the means often had multiple lovers, and it did not matter whether one had an extramarital affair with a man or with a woman.

However, the region's Chinese communities have since assimilated a few of the West's sexophobic and homophobic attitudes. In fact, the era in which these migrations took place is not without importance. Many Chinese came to Southeast Asia during the Qing dynasty and the beginning of the Republic, bringing with them the habits of the time. Humiliated, Chinese society felt as though it was in decline, compared to Western technological and military might. The Chinese questioned and rejected a good number of traditional Confucian values, including the old tolerance of different sexualities, which were now considered to be a waste of spirit and energy. In lieu of this, the Chinese adopted more Puritan principles (which were more in line with contemporary Western views), and those who immigrated to Southeast Asia only saw these opinions reinforced by the influence of the European colonial regimes. Along with the Puritanism came a strong homophobic sentiment, rooted in Judeo-Christian

traditions, though none of these communities (except for the Philippines) would couch it in biblical terms. Instead of calling homosexuality a **sin**, a **perversion**, or an illness, it is considered a failure to live up to one's responsibilities. This kind of homophobia reprises the traditional themes of obedience to one's **family**, the necessity of marriage and male descendants, and gender roles. But contrary to the old indifference, **heterosexism** and monogamy are now strict requirements.

Nonetheless, the first signs of a gay and lesbian awareness opposing this social homophobia have started to appear in the Chinese world, especially in Hong Kong and Taiwan. In China proper, many films exploring alternate sexualities have been produced. Little by little, these films and magazines are trickling into Southeast Asia, but their impact is undoubtedly limited to Singapore and Malaysia (where the Chinese language is still spoken currently). Having adopted the local languages in other regions, other Chinese communities are less likely to be aware of these evolutions.

Colonialism & Christianity

Thailand aside, most of Southeast Asia was under European or American control during the first half of the twentieth century, and some regions had been colonized long before. Even Thailand, though officially independent, sought to shape itself according to the Western mold. Even today, the cultural impact of this influence is apparent. The elite in Southeast Asia are generally more westernized than the rest of the population; though when it comes to sexuality, their culture is often made up of the habits and conceptions of a much older westernization. Those who, during the colonial era, had parents rich enough to send them to schools run by Christian missionaries, were usually steeped in the Western morals of the day. These ideas were then assimilated by the cultural elite and transmitted to the next generation.

Under these conditions, the sexual morals of the Southeast Asian elite often appear outdated, lingering over debates and values that had their day in the Western world thirty to fifty years ago. Contrary to how it was perceived in the indigenous and Chinese traditions, homosexuality is now objectified—though because of the lack of a visible gay culture, it is often confused with the phenomenon of transgenderism. Homo-affective and homoerotic behaviors are considered illegitimate and often seen through the medical lens of psychopathology. From the Western world,

these elite have also inherited an aversion to physical contact between people of the same sex. The men of this class are notorious for refusing to shake hands with another man or lean on a man's shoulder—habits that are quite common in the indigenous cultures, to whom they represent nothing more than friendship.

In Singapore, where the anti-sodomy laws promulgated by the British were kept after independence, the opinion of the elite makes itself clearly known by way of state-sponsored homophobia. The **media** and the **cinema**, in particular, are under close surveillance for the depiction of images that dare to portray homosexuality in a positive light. **Censorship** is far less severe for heteroerotic depictions than for homoerotic imagery, which risks being labeled as pornographic. In 1997, the administration rejected, without giving any reasons, a request to create a gay and lesbian association. In 2000, it rejected again a request for a public forum on homosexual issues. This time, the refusal included a justification: given that homosexual acts were forbidden by law, the forum could not be authorized. Also, sex education taught in Singapore presents homosexuality in a very negative way, thus perpetuating ignorance and homophobia.

In Malaysia, struggles between factions within the ruling party made for liberal use of these anti-sodomy laws. Anwar Ibrahim, once deputy prime minister, who was seen as a rival by Prime Minister Mahathir, was convicted of sodomy, then sent to **prison**. Many Malaysians saw this less as a sign of the reinforcement of state-sponsored homophobia, but more as a purely political maneuver—though it certainly did not improve the public perception of homosexuality. In Thailand in 1996-97, the Rajabhat Institutes Council (an institution managing thirty-six training establishments for teachers) wanted to exclude students "of deviant sex or gender." Following public protests, the proposed law was finally abandoned. But the attempt itself clearly reveals the homophobia among the university elite, who are obviously far less understanding than the general population.

While Christianity was an import that accompanied European imperialism, it remains a religious minority, rarely making up more than 5% of the population with some exceptions: in Singapore, the number of Christians is closer to 15% of the total population, and ninety percent in the Philippines. In fact, Christianity is so deeply rooted in the Philippines that it has almost become an indigenous culture of its own, with its own

specific rituals where the *baklas* have their role along with everyone else. Yet even in the Philippines, as in the rest of Southeast Asia, the more recent growth of Christianity is mostly linked to **Protestant** churches, many of whom practice a very conservative and literal form of the religion.

In Singapore, any public debate concerning homosexuality always stirs up violent objections from those following the Christian tradition. Arguments invoking sin, the concept of it being against nature, and biblical references are inevitably brandished. Choices, an **ex-gay** association (based on the American organization Exodus), has been operating in the area since 1990. It is a charismatic organization that boasts of its conversion therapy and uses all sorts of pressure to accomplish its ends. The organization is very media-savvy, and has access to numerous missionary-run schools, using these to instill guilt and **self-hatred**.

To demonstrate the role Christian culture plays in the debates surrounding homosexuality, it is sufficient to recall what took place in Hong Kong in the 1980s (though Hong Kong is today part of China, and not part of Southeast Asia proper). During that decade, after a series of **scandals** and blackmail implicating high-ranking **police** and government officials, the British colonial government ran a public poll regarding the **decriminalization** of homosexuality. In response, the churches and Christian associations immediately launched their own corresponding crusade against homosexuality.

Socialism

Socialism is another Western influence that is felt in Southeast Asia, though it mostly applies to Vietnam and, to a lesser degree, Laos and Myanmar. Vietnamese culture is strongly influenced by China, so much so that the same attitudes found in China are shared by Vietnam. In short, despite there being no legal repression as such, homosexual behavior is widely condemned and often leads to ostracism. There is a strong social pressure for a person to marry and have children.

As socialism began to take hold in the region, it added another layer of social control and conservatism. Even though homosexuals in Vietnam were not specifically targeted, the government did single out "individualists." It was this policy that led to the Vietnamese police arming patrols with scissors to cut the flares off of bell-bottom pants, seen as a manifestation of

Western **decadence** and capitalism. In this climate of social intimidation, homosexuals and marginalized people of all types simply felt it would be too dangerous to express themselves.

Nonetheless, thanks to Confucianism, socialism in Vietnam is only a moderate cultural power. It is an open secret among the literati of Hanoi, for example, that the country's two official poets, Huy Can and Xuan Dieu, lived together for a very long time. Huy Can was even an appointed minister with the socialist regime and played an important role within the political establishment. Obviously, this Confucian and socialist regime is capable of looking the other way, when necessary.

In one village in the 1990s (80% of Vietnam is rural), a lesbian marriage was to take place and both families organized a large party to celebrate the occasion. However, as the news made its way around the world, the authorities decided to intervene, no doubt concerned about their public image. In general, though, things are usually more liberal.

Islam

Ninety percent of the Indonesian population and 60% of Malaysians are Muslim. The practice of Islam in this part of the world is relatively moderate and quite accommodating of pre-Islamic customs. Because of this, the cultural practices of these people often seem closer to those of their indigenous roots than that of Muslim fundamentalists.

Nonetheless, it is clear that Islam does not approve of homosexual behavior. Given the local culture of silence on these subjects, Muslims with homosexual tendencies are obliged to keep it secret, sharing only with their closest friends. Visibility can lead to ostracism from one's family, mockery from friends, and pressure from the mosques and from elders. Once discovered, lesbian relationships usually result in forced marriages, arranged to maintain a normal appearance. Under these conditions, homosexual relationships and affairs are usually conducted furtively and secretly.

For a few years now in Indonesia and Malaysia, many groups have called for a stricter form of Islam, such as Wahabbism. In general, their goal is to enforce *sharia*, Islamic religious law, to "cleanse" certain social and meeting places that (as far as they are concerned) only serve to promote the **vice**. In regards to sexuality, they strongly extol sexual abstinence prior to marriage, and the segregation of the sexes.

In Kaliurang (close to Yogyakarta) on November 11, 2000, the militia of one of these groups, armed with clubs, knives, and machetes, attacked an AIDS center which was essentially made up of *waria* and homosexual men. In their published declaration after the fact, members of the group used the presence of gays and *waria* there to justify their attack, proving that their action was not motivated by AIDS, but by homophobia, pure and simple. And this has not been an isolated incident. Frequently, men wearing Arab garb harass gays, *warias*, and their businesses. It remains to be seen if the number of these militant fundamentalist Muslims will increase, and if their homophobic activities will multiply with them.

The Sex Trade

The sex trade in Southeast Asia is worth mentioning because its negative connotations affect general attitudes toward homosexuals. Homosexual prostitution is present in almost every country in Southeast Asia (even in socialist Vietnam), but it is in Thailand that the phenomenon has taken on an unprecedented scale. Previously, the sex trade was geared toward locals; today, in certain areas, the clientele is foreign, to the point where sexual tourism is now virtually considered an economy unto itself. As well, recent information suggests that many pedophiles come to Thailand, Cambodia, and the Philippines specifically looking for young boys.

Those countries with a rampant sex trade have started to deal with the situation, either out of pride or simply for the public good. In 2001, Thailand's then Minister of the Interior Purachai launched a campaign to limit the excesses of the sex trade and the entertainment industry, a move that was well received by the general population. To date, the campaign has been carried out with moderation, respecting both homosexual and heterosexual meeting places, though from time to time the police, citing a need for stricter measures, have used this argument to harass homosexuals. For several months in 2001, the gay baths in Bangkok were regular targets for police raids, and television networks aired several reports on the "indecent" performances found in gay bars.

If the number of homosexual tourists continues to increase, involving a growing number of men in these countries, it is possible that a return to stricter rules will simply reinforce general homophobic attitudes. As well, if pedophilic tourism also continues to grow, one

can only imagine the furious comparisons that will be drawn between **pedophilia** and homosexuality. Therein lies the danger that should be recognized.

Western Liberalism & a Gay & Lesbian Awareness

Few countries have not been touched by the ideas and values of contemporary Western liberalism, and Southeast Asia is no exception. The young elite class, especially those educated abroad, are the most susceptible to applying these ideas in their home countries.

Among these young elite, some have adopted Western styles, including the concept of sexual identity and of coming out, and the vocabulary of human rights. Those who are heterosexual often become more sympathetic to non-discrimination, diversity, and the recognition of non-traditional sexual orientations. Nonetheless, given that these youths are few in number and concentrated in the capital cities, the social changes this generation can bring about are somewhat restricted. Still, the gay scene is becoming increasingly visible in Manila, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Ho Chi Minh City, and Bangkok, if the growing number of homosexual bars and nightclubs is any indication. Even in heterosexual entertainment venues, an ambiguous sexual orientation can be quite fashionable.

Many Singaporean playwrights are introducing homosexual themes and content in their plays, and cinematographers in Thailand and the Philippines are integrating homosexual elements into their films—as demonstrated by *Satee lek (The Iron Ladies)*, a light-hearted Thai film and box office hit which told the true story of the aforementioned volleyball players.

This gay and lesbian visibility has created a certain tension, if not an outright change in social attitudes. In Singapore's online community, despite the restrictions imposed by official censorship, the liberal viewpoint is being expressed more and more freely. Instead, it is the proponents of homophobia who have to defend their point of view, where previously their prejudices were considered so self-explanatory that there was no need to defend them. Inasmuch as homophobia is obliged to justify itself, this situation then paves the way for debate and change in public opinion.

For the past few years, government ministers in Singapore have had to declare their official policy on the subject. According to them, the laws against sodomy that currently exist are never enforced against consenting adults. Similarly, the liberal elite have started pushing for the relaxation of censorship. Things are

improving, albeit slowly.

Under these conditions, it would be a mistake to believe that homophobia will progressively disappear altogether. Of course, Western liberalism is growing, but so are Christian conservatism and Muslim fundamentalism. As well, given that homosexuality is a new concept in the cultures of certain regions where it did not previously exist, concurrent with an increase in the valorization of free expression, homophobia is just as likely to grow in strength. In fact, there is growing evidence that gay bashing, previously unknown in Southeast Asia, is now sadly on the rise in the region.

—*Au Waipang*

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—*Buddhism; China; Communism; Hinduism; India, Pakistan, Bangladesh; Islam; Japan; Korea; Oceania; Protestantism.*

SPAIN

Spain has always occupied a peculiar place in the Western world. The establishment of enduring populations of Romans, Visigoths, and later Arabs in the Iberian Peninsula has fashioned a land of many faces. In this country of three principal religions—**Islam**, **Judaism**, and **Catholicism**—each community adopted its own model of male dominance, organizing and positioning the virility of its male population in opposition both to the feminine and to homosexuality. However, the presence of Islam as of the eighth century, including its persistence in Aragon (and in El Levante until the early seventeenth century) contributed to the Spanish attitude and mentality being undeniably tolerant.

Anxious to regulate the dissolute mores of the clergy which called to instruct the people and to lead by example, Christians of the Middle Ages based their repressive model on the sparse homophobic material of the Old and New Testaments (particularly from Leviticus, certain passages from St Paul, or from the writings of St Augustine and the Patristic tradition). The Penitentials (from the seventh to eleventh centuries), which were intended to guide the practice of confessors, made reference to homosexual practices, but nowhere did they declare that this **sin** was worse than any of the other erotic practices incriminated. However, in the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas established a hierarchy of hedonistic sins, whereby any erotic practice outside of **marriage** was considered a sin. Homosexuality was assigned to the gravest category of sins "**against nature**," alongside masturbation and bestiality. This homophobic concept would have a crucial influence on Christian morality and western culture from the end of the Middle Ages until today.

Under the rule of the Spanish Visigoth kings of the sixth and seventh centuries, the punishment reserved for homosexuals in the *Lex Visigothorum* (642–49 CE) was castration, shaving of the head, excommunication, banishment for life, and a hundred lashes of the whip. The arrival of the Arabs in 711 had the effect of instilling a climate of tolerance towards homosexuality. Nonetheless, the northern territories remained Christian, and those that the *Reconquista* returned to the Castilians, over time, adopted a Castilian version of the *Lex* and all of its homophobic articles under the name of *Fuero Juzgo*. In 1265, Alfonso X the Learned set out to unify the municipal legislative texts, and composed

subject of homosexuality remains highly influential.
—Sandra Boehringer, Thierry Eloi, and Flora Leroy-Forgeot

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—*Art; Catholic Church, the; Damien, Peter; Decadence; Essentialism/Constructionism; Fascism; Greece, Ancient; Heresy; History; Literature; Pasolini, Pier Paolo; Sappho; Theology.*

J

JAPAN

Homophobia in Japan is a complex issue, the origins of which are both ancient and recent; the real debate is on whether the phenomenon is indigenous to Japanese culture or imported from elsewhere. Today, a certain number of Japanese homophobes still insist that China is to blame for the first appearance of homosexuality in Japan, with the establishment of Buddhist monasteries in the eighth and ninth centuries. Opponents of this view however, respond that it is actually *homophobia* that, in many ways, was imported. In this view, homophobia in Japan first appeared in the sixteen century under the influence of Jesuit missionaries, and again during the nineteenth century, in the wake of Japan's opening up to Western powers. The truth, however, as writer Tsuneo Watanabe demonstrated so well, is much less black and white.

Japan's rich homosexual history began between the ninth and twelfth centuries among the monastic class, then the warrior and the bourgeois classes at the time of the Edo period, beginning in seventeenth century. It was among the samurai of the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries that sexual relationships between men more clearly developed, or more precisely, between an older man and a young page (*koshi*), homosexuality being exalted as "the flower of the *bushido*," or the flower of "the way of the warrior." Love between two men, who had no interest in reproduction, was considered less burdened and more pure than the love between a man and a woman. Later, in Edo's bourgeois milieu during the time of Tokugawa (between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries), homosexuality was often expressed through effeminacy (the usual word for homosexual being *Yokama*, or passive and effeminate) and prostitution. In this respect, the theater played a central role, contributing to Japanese gay culture by way of the

onnagata, where the very popular actors who specialized in playing female roles in kabuki often offered themselves as prostitutes to customers following the performances. Homosexual practices in ancient Japan appeared to have been rather widespread, so much so that it would have been possible to consider bisexuality the norm; however, this is clearly refuted by the fact that female prostitutes greatly outnumbered male ones. It also must be noted that, if ancient Japanese culture was highly **tolerant** toward male homosexuality, its views of lesbianism were quite the opposite: female sexuality that served no male pleasure and that did not lead to the conception of a child was considered totally unacceptable.

The first great wave of homophobia in Japan coincided with the arrival of Jesuit missionaries in 1549; François Xavier saw the "crime of **Sodomy**" everywhere he looked. During a visit to a Zen monastery, he discovered with horror that "among the bonzes [monks], the **unnatural** and abominable **vice** was so popular, that they committed it without any **shame**." He immediately began to scold them, which provoked nothing but surprise and laughter. Later in his visit, Xavier realized that the *samurais* and the *daimyos* (feudal lords) shared the same morals as the bonzes. He then explained to them that the three great sins were infanticide, idolatry, and the "abominable sin," to which his audience reacted disdainfully. A *modus vivendi* was established; commoners contented themselves with jeering at the missionaries in the street: "Look! These are the men who say that we are not to sleep with boys!" Watanabe contends that there is no doubt that the Jesuits' ultimate failure in Japan, starting with their harsh persecution at the hands of the Japanese in 1597, was largely due to their virulent homophobia.

That being said, indigenous homophobia began to develop at the end of the Tokugawa period (eighteenth

to nineteenth century), when Japan adopted a policy of national isolation. Certain *shoguns* tried to forbid male prostitution, which they saw as a cause of social disorder associated with sympathetic suicide (too often, a lover would commit *seppuku* upon his beloved's death) or crimes of passion (jealously often ended in a blood bath, as depicted in Nagisa Oshima's 1999 film *Taboo*). Furthermore, Take, a woman who not only passed herself off as a man but also as a judge, was found guilty of the "corruption of public morals" in the 1830s and forced into exile. There is thus the impression that Japanese homosexual culture was already beginning to crumble by the time Western powers were forcing Japan to open up (1853).

Whether or not that is true, homophobia in Japan intensified with the arrival of Westerners and the imperial restoration of Meiji in 1868. Just like their sixteenth-century predecessors, nineteenth-century missionaries were scandalized by the spectacle of sexual behavior they discovered, and the casual attitude many Japanese displayed toward sodomy. As a result the imperial Japanese government, rather self-conscious with regard to the West, endeavored to adopt the morals of the large Western powers in order to make Japan respectable in the eyes of the world. Thus, homosexuality in Japan was then considered an archaic and unhealthy tradition that was best abandoned, as were mixed baths, which had so scandalized the British. The Meiji period (1868–1911) was marked by the adoption of strict sexual standards, and the promotion of absolute sexual identities (e.g., men must not have any feminine traits, and women must submit to the "good wife and wise mother" maxim). An 1873 law, reestablishing an 1841 prohibition, called for ninety days of **imprisonment** for anyone who committed the crime of "sodomy"; the law was relaxed in 1883 and the incrimination of sodomy was replaced, under the influence of the French, by the more vague category of "indecent assault": for example, the seduction of a sixteen-year-old minor, regardless of gender, became punishable by two months of hard labor. Above all, social intolerance of homosexuality increased dramatically, as proven by a media campaign in 1899 against the "bad morals" of certain students at the University of Tokyo (with one newspaper reminding readers that "homosexual acts are punished as crimes in every civilized country" and demanded that it be the same in Japan). It was no surprise that the Meiji period saw the disappearance of the *samurais*, who transformed themselves into businessmen

and administrators, and the decline of the *kabuki* tradition, limited to solely presenting an ancient repertoire. However, the westernized **armies** of Meiji, Taisho, and Showa (Hiro Hito) preserved a part of the *samurai's* homosexual heritage. The best in Meiji's army came from the province of Satsuma, whose warriors were particularly famous for their "Spartan" homosexual traditions, and the idea of the sympathetic suicide, often adopted by *kamikazes* attested to the survival or resurgence of a certain military love of men. To this day, a part of the nationalist intelligentsia in Japan has maintained nostalgia toward the *bushido* ("the way of the warrior") and, in certain cases, its erotic content. Such was the case of author Yukio Mishima (1925–1970), who was much attached to a part of his paternal lineage, populated with *samurais*, and through it, to an ascetic and masculine ideal. His novel, *Confessions of a Mask*, loosely based on his own life, is representative of the taboo that became homosexuality in World War II-era Japan. In the book, the young hero's trials are no less difficult than those of an adolescent "queer" in Great Britain during the same period. The American occupation of Japan from 1945 to 1952 replayed similar mechanisms from the Meiji period: homosexuality was banned in the American army beginning in 1943, and once again the winner's homophobia was imprinted upon the loser's subconscious.

The redefinition of sexual identities in Japan, established during the Meiji-era 1870s remains largely intact to this day; it can be at least partially attributed to the conservative traditions of Japan's imperial governments. Thus, although the notion of sin has never taken root in Japan, social constraints against homosexuality have become even more prevalent than in the West. Family pressure in favor of **marriage**, regardless of the participants' sexual orientation, is considerable: in general, Japanese gays and lesbians bow to this un-written rule, placing themselves under the socially protective umbrella of heterosexual marriage. Since the Meiji Restoration, and notably since the Imperial Rescript on Education of 1890, **school**, **family**, and society in general teach that "all Japanese are similar" and therefore must all be alike. Accordingly, homosexuality is not bad for moral or religious reasons, but because it is different from the norm (for example, according to Japanese law, it is not a sexuality, but rather a "simulacrum of sexuality"). It is understandable that under these conditions, coming out is quite difficult. For one, anyone "accused" of being a homosexual is often ridi-

culed, although the physical manifestation of gay bashing remains rare; additionally, openly declaring oneself as different, is to break with the fabric of daily "normalcy" and aspire to an individualism that is totally foreign to traditional Japanese culture. Homosexuality is also often something which no one speaks about openly in Japan. To shed light on the pervasiveness of this taboo, it should be noted that even if Japanese law does not forbid gays and lesbians from serving in the armed forces (the Self Defense Force, established in 1954), no Japanese military personnel ever dared reveal his or her homosexuality before 1998.

In the 1990s under the influence of the West, the plight of homosexuals in Japan began to change. Some courageous gay and lesbian groups, the most important being OCCUR, have been leading a fight for legislative change in Japan. In 1997, after seven years, OCCUR won a court case against the Metropolitan Government of Tokyo, which had excluded gays and lesbians from getting rooms at the Tokyo Youth Hostel. Today, the fight against homophobia in Japan centers on a critical revision of the moral code set up at the end of the nineteenth century, which will improve the lives of women as well as gays and lesbians.

—Pierre Albertini

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—Buddhism; China; Comic Books; Korea; Southeast Asia.

JUDAISM

Jewish reprobation of homosexuality is based on three passages from the Torah: Leviticus 18:22 ("You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination"), Leviticus 20:13 ("If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death"), and Deuteronomy 23:18 ("There shall be no temple harlot among the Israelite women, nor a temple prostitute among the Israelite men"). The first Jewish interpretation of biblical laws stems from the Targum, an ancient Aramaic paraphrase or interpretation of the Hebrew Bible read in Palestinian synagogues at the beginning of the Common Era. Leviticus 18:22 is interpreted literally, while Leviticus 20:13 specifies only that stoning is a suitable punishment. However, the Targum of Deuteronomy 23:18 does away with the obsolete terminology of sacred prostitution; one of its critical revisions (*onkelos*) reformulates the interdict this way: "None of the sons of Israel shall take a serf for a wife." In short, these sources speak briefly to what they consider to be a Canaanite or Egyptian **vice** that has nothing to do with Israel. Moreover, according to Jewish legend, when the Bible refers to the Egyptian named Putiphar as a "eunuch," it is because he acquired Joseph for sexual purposes, and was emasculated by a divine miracle (Targum PsJ Gn 39:1 and LvR § 86).

During these ancient times, the episode involving the city of **Sodom** (Gn 19) was originally not connected to Palestinian ideas of "sodomy." The city's vice was mainly the result of brazen greed due to its riches, which led to the poor treatment of travelers there, as indicated in Ezekiel 16:49 and Flavius Josephus.

Ancient Judaism

The ancient texts preceding the time of the Mishnah and the Talmud offer some interpretations of homosexuality. Ancient texts produced in Eretz-Israel (land of Israel from biblical times) purport that homosexuality was a non-Jewish tradition, and instead originated among those who also resorted to prostitution and composed hymns to the glory of sodomy (LvR ad Gn 18:3–4). The texts also state that certain pagan kings took themselves for gods and, as punishment, God cursed them to sexual submission *modo foeminarum* (like that of a woman). However, some believe, on the basis of the word "abomination" in Deuteronomy