Still if one examines such indicators as residential enclaves ("gay ghettoes"), self-help groups, religious organizations, travel guides, and distinctive taste preferences, homosexuals do indeed qualify—perhaps more than most groups. How many American ethnic entities can count as many bookstores, for example, as gays and lesbians? Another feature is the sense of identity and shared fate with homosexuals in other countries, cultures, and political and social systems—together with the emergence of gay subcultures modeled on the American one throughout the non-Communist world. With minimal social skills a foreign homosexual can pick up partners in a bar, bath, or cruising area. This facility suggests another paradoxical concept: that of a transnational minority.

The idea of homosexuals as a minority has obvious appeal to would-be political leaders as an organizing tool. But it also meets resistance from the rank and file who reject the role of "professional gays." Moreover, the concept of homosexual identity is of recent origin, and it may not last. As yet unmeasured is the impact of the social construction theory of historical development, which denies the stability of the homosexual orientation. To put it most sharply, if there are no homosexuals, they cannot be organized—as a minority or anything else. Then again, to the middle class, "minority" usually connotes underprivileged, oppressed, persecuted people, not members of a group who may on average be wealthier, more educated, and more intelligent than the majority in the given country. The affluent homosexual can retreat into a world of private clubs, social groups, and exclusive institutions invisible to the larger society. Thus the concept of homosexuals as a minority may appeal rather to the two extremes—street people and gay leaders—while having little to offer to the mass of homosexuals in between. While in principle the matter of political practicality should be separated from the epistemological question of whether homosexuals are a minority, in real life the two are closely related.

In recent years the magnitude of the overall minority question has been recognized not only in the United States, but in such European countries as Britain, France, and Germany, where populations are changing. World demographic shifts and new migration patterns are likely to make the minority concept even more complex, while the place of homosexuals within it will remain scarcely less problematic.

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Wayne R. Dynes

MISHIMA YUKIO (1925–1970)

Japanese writer of fiction, drama, and essays. Born in Tokyo as Hiraoka Kimitake, the son of a government official and grandson of a former governor of Karafuto (now southern Sakhalin), he preferred to emphasize his descent from the family of his paternal grandmother, which belonged to the upper samurai class. He attended the Peers' School, where non-aristocrats were often treated as outsiders, and where Spartan discipline prepared young men to be soldiers rather than poets. A story entitled "The Boy Who Wrote Poetry" has strong autobiographical elements stemming from this period of his life, and describes the boy's fascination with words.

Mishima's mentors at the Peers' School not only encouraged him to study the Japanese classics but brought him into contact with the Nipponese Romanticists, a group of intellectuals who stressed the uniqueness of the Japanese people and their history. His later devotion to Japanese tradition, however, was tempered by fascination with the West. As a student he was much taken with the essays of Oscar Wilde, and even after war broke out with Great Britain and the United States, Mishima

continued to read—generally in Japanese translation—authors who had been denounced as "decadent." But unlike most postwar writers, who distanced themselves from the literature of the Tokugawa period and earlier, he read the classics for pleasure and inspiration.

A story entitled "The Forest in Full Flower" so impressed Mishima's adviser that he proposed publishing it in *Bungei bunka* (Literary Culture), a slim magazine of limited circulation, but of high quality and with a nationwide readership. To protect the identity of the author, still a middle-school boy, the editors gave him a name of their own invention, Mishima Yukio. The work was published in book form even during the war, when the paper shortage was acute. Mishima himself took care not to be conscripted, and was more concerned about his own writing than about his country's defeat in 1945.

His first full-length novel, *The Thieves* (1948), was an implausible and unsuccessful portrayal of two young members of the aristocracy who are irresistibly drawn toward suicide. In the same year he was invited to join the group that published the magazine *Kindai bungaku* (Modern Literature). He was an outsider here too, because he was essentially apolitical in a left-leaning milieu, though his criticism of postwar Japan's business and political elite was that in their craze for profit they had forgotten Japan's traditions.

In July 1949 Mishima published the most self-revealing of all his works, the novel *Kamen no kokuhaku* (Confessions of a Mask), which made his reputation and continued to be ranked among his finest work, even when his corpus had grown to some 50 books. Yet the homosexual tendencies of the hero, which keep him from desiring the girl he loves, so baffled the critics that some imagined the intent to be parody. Neither then nor later was the novel read as a confession of guilt. Japanese readers interpreted the work as an exceptionally sensitive account of a boy's gradual self-awakening, with the homosexual elements attributed to sexual immaturity or explained as symbolic of the sterility of the postwar world. In *Confessions of a Mask* Mishima boldly countered every convention of the novels that had served him as models: the hero fails to win the hand of the girl he loves because he can no longer endure the mask of the "normal" young man that society and literature forced him to wear. The intensity and truth of his revelatory insights justify the novel's reputation, and the combination of truth and beauty made the work a landmark in his development as an artist.

With his literary reputation in hand, Mishima then began to compose works of popular fiction with largely financial motives in mind. He continued until the year of his death to devote about a third of his time each month to writing popular fiction and essays in order to be free the remainder of the time for work on serious fiction and plays. In a novel entitled *Kinjiki* (Forbidden Colors; 1953), Mishima sought to show the discrepancies and conflicts within himself, "as represented by two 'I's." The first "I" is Shunsuke, a writer of sixty-five, whose collected works are being published for the third time. Despite the acclaim accorded to his literary work by the world, he experiences only a horror of his aging self. The second, contrasting "I" is Yuichi, a youth of exquisite beauty, first seen by the older man as he emerged from the sea after the swim. Yuichi is a spiritually uncomplicated sensualist who enjoys the act of love, but for that reason far more a narcissist than a homosexual—true to Mishima's own character in this respect. The novel is strongly misogynist: Shunsuke uses Yuichi to wreak his revenge on several women whom he detests. The novel was also chauvinistic: the foreigners among the characters are deliberately absurd.

Mishima's private life at this time resembled Yuichi's. He patronized Bruns-

wick, a gay bar in the Ginza, where he met the seventeen-year old Akihiro Maruyama, who had just begun a golden career from which he was to graduate to the theatre, where he became the most celebrated female impersonator of his day. Mishima had reservations about the gay bars, as (in keeping with the pederastic tradition) he intensely disliked effeminate men and sought both male and female company— in the Japanese phrase "a bearer of two swords"—while preferring the male.

After passing the peak of his literary career, he became more of a public figure than ever. In 1967 he secretly spent a month training with the Self Defense Forces, and in 1968 he formed a private army of 100 men sworn to defend the Emperor, the Tate no Kai (Shield Society). From the same period is an essay deploring the emphasis given by intellectuals to the mind and glorifying the body instead. On November 25, 1970, he committed suicide in samurai style to publicize his appeal for revision of the postwar Japanese constitution that would allow his country to rearm. However one may judge his political views, Mishima was the most gifted Japanese author of his generation, and he retains a secure place in the literature of his country and the world.

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MODERNISM

The literary and artistic currents that came forcefully to public attention at the end of the nineteenth century and favored stylistic and thematic experiment are known collectively as modernism. High modernism, the age of the pioneers, is generally accepted as lasting until about 1940. After that date modernism expanded beyond its early base, becoming more dif-

fuse. In the 1970s many critics and historians concluded that modernism had, for all intents and purposes, come to an end, having been overtaken by post-modernism. Even though there was no consensus as to the meaning of the new term, its introduction signals the possibility of assessing the meaning of modernism itself as a period which had attained closure.

Although some would trace its roots to the later eighteenth century, most scholars concur that modernism was a response to the complexities of urbanization and technology as they reached a new peak in the later decades of the nineteenth century. The hallmarks of modernism vary from one medium to another, but they may be summed up as a new self-consciousness, irony, abstraction, and radical disjunction of formal elements. Among the trends highlighting the first stage of modernism are **aestheticism**, with such figures as Oscar **Wilde** and Walter **Pater**, and **decadence**, with Paul **Verlaine** and Arthur **Rimbaud** as central figures. Modernism entered a new phase in the second decade of the twentieth century, with such movements as Cubism and non-objectivism in painting, imagism in poetry, and twelve-tone music. This phase is sometimes known as high modernism, with late modernism ensuing about 1940.

The bearers of high modernism, such as Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis, Guillaume Apollinaire and F. T. Marinetti, Pablo Picasso and Marcel Duchamp, were reacting against some features of incipient modernism as they perceived them: the so-called "fin-de-siècle," associated with over-refinement, decadence, and homosexuality. Consequently, we find in these writers and artists a strong element of masculism, leading them loudly to disdain "pansies," and to treat women as mere adjuncts in their creative endeavors.

The case of Pound shows a gradual hardening of attitudes. In the winter of 1908 he was dismissed from Wabash College, ostensibly for a minor heterosexual escapade. Yet to a friend he remarked af-