

aged Aleksandr Voitov of the Russian Museum in Leningrad. According to this source, a member of the Russian aristocracy had written a letter accusing Tchaikovsky of a homosexual liaison with his nephew, entrusting it to Nikolai Jakobi, a high-ranking civil servant, for transmission to the Tsar. Jakobi, also a former pupil of the School of Jurisprudence, feared the disgrace which the scandal would bring on the institution and hastily summoned a court of honor that included six of Tchaikovsky's contemporaries from the school. On October 31, 1893, after more than five hours of deliberation, the court supposedly resolved that the composer should kill himself. The arguments against this story are considerable. Homosexuality was too extensively tolerated among the upper classes in Russia at that period for the matter to have had such serious import. Moreover, the intervals of freedom from censorship that followed the Revolutions of 1905 and 1917 gave sufficient opportunity for the publication of the facts, had the tale been true. It is more likely that Tchaikovsky died of cholera after accidentally drinking a glass of contaminated water.

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## TEAROOMS

See Toilets.

## TELEOLOGY

Teleology (from Greek, *telos* "end") is the character attributed to nature or natural processes of being directed toward an end or shaped by a purpose. As such, the concept has been deployed as a criterion of the morality of sexual acts.

*Classical Thought.* Teleology was a favorite concern of the Greeks. The pivotal discussion is Aristotle's treatment of final cause, "that for the sake of which a thing exists" (*De generatione animalium*). According to those belonging to the

school of Aristotle (the Lyceum) or philosophical sects based on his teaching, each object had an end or purpose at which naturally it should aim. Nature designed the sexual organs, they maintained, for procreation upon which the future of the race depended. To direct the penis to other orifices than the human vagina, its predestined container, was to act against nature.

Another strand derives from Plato. Although Aristotle recognized that some individuals were homosexual "by nature," that is congenitally, while others acquired that sexual orientation through experience and practice, on the whole his numerous and often contradictory writings argued that homosexuality was something to be explained, and therefore not clearly a part of the given, of the world of nature in the ordinary sense. In the work of Plato, however, the concept of nature was more clearly evaluative. In the *Laws*, his last dialogue, the old Plato—whose earlier dialogues had praised pederasty as inciting love of truth and beauty—condemned homosexual acts as against nature.

While a minority of Greeks observed homosexual behavior among animals, those who denied it there argued that its absence was proof that such conduct was at best artificial, rather than natural. Although some argued that what made man superior to animals was exactly his improvement over nature, the majority of later Greek thinkers felt that it was best to act in accord with nature. This doctrine typified the Stoics, who dominated ancient philosophy during the late Republic and the first two centuries of the Roman Empire. Most but not all teachers of the "Second Stoa," centered in Rome and catering to old Roman disapproval of pederasty as a Greek import, decried homosexuality as against nature: Seneca, Musonius Rufus, and Epictetus.

*Judeo-Christian Attitudes.* Philo Judaeus of Alexandria combined the Greek doctrine that homosexuality was unnatural with the peremptory injunction pre-

served in Leviticus that Judaism had taken from **Zoroastrianism**, the Persian state religion. St. Paul merely echoed this ban in the first chapter of Romans, citing the Flood and the destruction of Sodom as proof of divine disapproval of unnatural sexual conduct. William Benjamin Smith (1850–1934) speculated that this Pauline passage, which makes no mention of Christ or **Christianity**, is a self-contained essay on the revelation of God's wrath taken from an anonymous Jewish source. St. **Clement of Alexandria**, an assiduous student of Greek philosophy, held that "one must follow nature herself when she forbade [pederastic] excesses through the disposition she gave the organs, having given virility to man not to receive seed but to eject it" (*Paedagogus*, X, 87, 3).

Constantius and Constans, the sons of the first Christian **Roman emperor**, Constantine the Great, inscribed the condemnation in Roman law. In a tortuously worded edict of 342, they first decreed death for homosexual offenses and forbade sexual relations between man and wife in any fashion that did not involve penetration of the vagina by the penis. Theodosius the Great resumed this tradition, followed most horribly by Justinian, who proclaimed that sodomites if unpunished brought famines, earthquakes, and pestilences on society.

*Medieval and Modern Times.* Medieval theologians continued and developed this **Patristic** approach, which the Scholastics Albertus Magnus and Thomas **Aquinas** greatly strengthened in accord with the new reverence for Aristotle's teleological system. Aquinas claimed that even rape was preferable to sodomy, because it was, after all, a penis-to-vagina act. The revival of Roman law, as interpreted by Christian jurisconsults in the twelfth century, stressed the idea of nature. Curiously, it was the early **Middle Ages**, and not classical antiquity, that elevated Nature to the status of a goddess, and her supposed decrees were adduced in

the condemnations of homosexuality of **Alan of Lille** and Jean de Meun.

Even apart from the peremptory condemnation in the Mosaic law and the legend of the destruction of **Sodom** deriving from Genesis 19, the **ascetic** motif in Christian morality, which sets Christianity apart from the other **Abrahamic religions**—Judaism and Islam—that have no such ideal of an asexual humanity, would alone have sufficed to render all non-reproductive sexual activity immoral. Dualistic and **gnostic** thought imbued Pauline Christianity with an intense pathological rejection of the body and its erotic functions, conditioned by the proximity of the sexual and the excretory organs that made disgust an inescapable component of the Christian attitude toward sexuality and especially toward homosexual activity. The fantasies of Scholastic writers in Latin Christendom bear witness to this irrational hatred of homoerotic feeling and behavior. A legal author of the fourteenth century, Luca da Penne (ca. 1320–ca. 1390), went so far as to call the sodomite worse than a murderer, because he aimed at destroying not just a single human being but the entire human race, and declared that if such a culprit had been executed and could be brought back to life several times, each time he should be punished more severely than the preceding one. Paradoxically enough, such views were maintained alongside the glorification of virginity, which if it became universal would effect the end of the human race just as surely as any form of non-procreative sexuality. Other legal writers held that God could wreak vengeance on an entire community for the crime of a single individual, so branding the sodomite as an enemy of society to be blamed for every manner of collective misfortune.

*Modern Critiques of Teleology.*

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw the popularity of the "argument from design" as a proof of the existence of God. Even deists like Sir Isaac Newton

(1642–1727), himself possibly homophobic, argued that the perfect mechanism of the universe required a clockmaker—a “prime mover” as Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas had supposed. The things of the world manifest such order, so it was claimed, that they could only have reached their present state through the purposeful guidance of a creator who endowed each thing with its own specific character, which man should not seek to alter. Hence the penis is suited only for placement in a vagina, not in an anus or mouth. The argument oddly neglects the point that the penis has a dual function: it serves to urinate (presumably not in the vagina) as well as emit semen. If it can have two distinct types of emissions, why must it have only one proper vessel? Conversely, if God had been opposed to putting the penis in the mouth or anus, could he not have shaped these latter organs in such a way as to make penetration difficult? Voltaire ridiculed the argument from design because by it one could demonstrate that God had foreseen ships, since he provided harbors for them, and eyeglasses, since he gave noses a bridge.

Of course modern biologists recognize purpose in the world, in the limited sense that birds build nests in which to hatch and raise their young and spiders weave webs to trap insects. What they generally do not hold, however, is that some cosmic mind has predetermined the purposes of all living things.

Even today, however, Aristotle’s discarded model of a grand teleology ruling nature inspires Roman Catholic and much other Christian doctrine. In spite of all subsequent criticism and the repudiation by the physical and biological sciences of the concept of “Nature” as a personified feminine principle whose intentions are somehow frustrated by non-procreative sexual activity, these religious thinkers persist in their antiquated views. Though scarcely metaphysicians and unwilling to discuss how many angels could dance on the head of a pin, Hitler

and Stalin were as convinced as any Roman pope or Southern Baptist that homosexuality is unnatural. The most recent pronouncements of the Roman Catholic church still teach that homosexual acts are “intrinsically disordered because they lack finality,” which is to say that they are immoral because they cannot lead to procreation—as if any good would result if every sexual act did have procreative consequences. The prospects for world population densities would be horrifying. In the twentieth century the increasing longevity of the population and the need to maintain the proper equilibrium with available resources has forced heterosexuals to adopt birth control techniques ranging from periods of abstinence and the use of the condom to abortion to keep the procreative consequences of their own sexual activity within bounds. Yet even most of those branches of Protestantism which do not completely reject birth control and other forms of non-procreative sex (as the Catholics and Orthodox do), still tend to condemn homosexuality as against the law of God and nature. It is incumbent on thinkers not beholden to a revealed religion to expose such positions as inconsistent, and above all to affirm that they embody no inherent logic sufficient to compel a secular, pluralistic society to adopt them.

*William A. Percy*

## TELEPHONE

*See Phone and Computer Sex.*

## TELEVISION

Although the technology on which it is based came into existence as early as 1923, it was only in the early 1950s that television became a fixture of American domestic life, gradually elbowing the Hollywood film out of its primacy in the entertainment field. Establishing itself in Europe at the same time, television eventually spread throughout the globe, even to the poorest Third World countries. While in America most television stations are