

which was followed by a string of critical and popular successes for the next two decades: *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947), *The Rose Tattoo* (1951), *Summer and Smoke* (1952), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955), *Orpheus Descending* (1957), *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1959), and *Night of the Iguana* (1961). From the mid-1960s until his death, Williams' plays met with less success and many critics found his later works derivative, repetitious, and often self-indulgent. But if his last, more experimental and autobiographical phase was less successful than his early canon, the plays are not dramatic failures: *Confessional* and *Out Cry* (1971), *Small Craft Warnings* (1972), *Eccentricities of a Nightingale* (1976), *Vieux Carré* (1977), *Crève Coeur* (1978), and *Clothes for a Summer Hotel* (1980).

Williams stated that he "slept through the sixties" and that both his personal and his professional life shifted in 1963 with the death of his lover of fourteen years, Frank Merlo; in 1969, he was briefly committed to a mental institution, and he later admitted a serious alcohol and chemical dependency during this period. With the publication of his sexually explicit *Memoirs* in 1975, the homosexual themes only implicit in his early drama became central to his work, and his biography began to eclipse his art as he gained an increasing celebrity status as an artistic renegade. Early accused of employing the "Albertine Stratagem" by disguising gay males as women in such works as *Summer and Smoke* and being excessively coy about homosexuality in such plays as *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, he was, in many of his last works, direct in presenting openly gay characters and themes.

This autobiographical tendency was always most explicit in his fiction. A story such as "One Arm" (1948) is much more direct in its treatment of homosexuality than the plays of the period, and his handling of sexuality became increasingly explicit as he moved from *The Knightly Quest* (1966) to *Moise and the World of*

Reason (1975). His two collections of poetry, *In the Winter of Cities* (1956) and *Androgyne, Mon Amour* (1977), are lyrical explorations of homoeroticism, echoing many of the themes of his plays.

Whether women or gay men, Williams' protagonists are always sensitive people, artists of life on the perimeter of contemporary society, battling against brutal forces which seek to crush and destroy them. Isolated and damaged by the larger world, his characters inhabit poetic and subjective worlds, yearning for a more delicate and civilized past but maintaining a noble stance in the face of seemingly inevitable annihilation. His canon is a testament to the strength and dignity of the isolated individual in a mechanistic world.

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Rodney Simard

WINCKELMANN, JOHANN JOACHIM (1717-1768)

German archeologist, art historian, and prose writer. Born the son of a shoemaker in Brandenburg, Winckelmann's diligence at Latin school and at the universities of Halle and Jena laid the foundation for his later scholarly achievements. After laboring for several years as a village pastor and schoolmaster, in 1748 he obtained a post as librarian to Count Heinrich von Bunau near Dresden, giving him indirect access to the court of Augustus III, who had made the city one of the leading centers of Central European culture. Then in 1754 he transferred to the service of Cardinal Passionei in Dresden itself. Here he began to study actual art masterpieces which he had previously

known only from engravings, and this immersion, catalyzing the knowledge that he had gained through many years of insightful reading of Greek literature, brought forth his first statement of artistic theory. Winckelmann's pamphlet *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauer-Kunst* (Thoughts Concerning the Imitation of Greek Works of Painting and Sculpture; 1755) contained the talismanic formula that was to reverberate through his own work and that of subsequent interpreters of Greek art: "noble simplicity and tranquil grandeur."

In order to settle in Rome, where he could examine the vast collections of ancient art that had been assembled there, Winckelmann converted to Roman Catholicism. Securing the support of Cardinal Albani, Winckelmann made the eternal city his base for the rest of his life. After publishing a number of technical volumes on archeology and antiquities, Winckelmann brought out his magnum opus, *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (The History of Art of Antiquity), at the end of 1763. In this work the archeologist proposed two major innovations: he isolated Greek art from such competitors as Egyptian and Etruscan art, viewing it as sui generis; and he established an overarching developmental sequence of stages for Greek art, wherein the achievements of each individual artist could be seen as responding to governing principles. By implication, Winckelmann argued that the central characteristics of Greek art had an absolute and transcendental value, and hence were valid for his own (and every) epoch.

In 1768 he traveled north to Germany and Austria, where he was received with signal honors by the empress Maria Theresa at the Viennese court. On the return trip south Winckelmann found himself in Trieste with time on his hands while waiting for a boat. In his inn he struck up an acquaintance with an adventurer, one Arcangeli, who seems to have

shared his homosexual tastes. Unfortunately, his sleazy companion became covetous of Winckelmann's wealth, and stabbed him to death on June 8, 1768. Although a police report exists, the exact relation between the scholar and the adventurer will probably never be known.

Winckelmann held that handsome young men, particularly those of aristocratic birth, were particularly capable of receiving his teachings of beauty and scholarship. While he never visited Greece, he was certain that the country had brought forth a superior human type, which the artists had simply refined. His appreciation of Greek beauty is grounded in his exaltation of the ephebe, the male adolescent, as the ideal reconciliation of the male and female principles. Accordingly Winckelmann's aesthetic reflects a criterion of **androgyny**, and this feature recurs in the work of the many neo-Classical artists who adhered to his ideas down to the end of the nineteenth century.

Winckelmann was fortunate to live in a time in which contemporary art was discarding the decorative paradigms of the rococo, and he was privileged to guide it into new channels, those of neo-Classicism. Although he enjoyed a European reputation (his most important works were translated into French almost immediately after their appearance), his profoundest influence was in Germany, where his following was not confined to those involved in art and archeology but struck chords in everyone seriously interested in culture. This broad influence was made possible by his German style, which was both limpid and eloquent. His general approach, which has been aptly termed aesthetic paganism, was grounded in his homosexual appreciation of the beauty of the ephebe, but he knew how to confine himself to the results of his perceptions without risking offending his readers by proclaiming too openly their source. Perhaps it would not go too far to compare his role in discovering and conveying transcendental aesthetic values to the priestly

function of the primordial **shaman**, whose homoerotic orientation gave him special insights.

More concretely Winckelmann called upon German philology to focus its attention on the whole spectrum of the heritage of ancient Greece; his **Hellenism** helped to lay the foundations for a century of supremacy of German classical scholarship. He also had a salutary effect on the discipline of art history, which for a long time afterwards was virtually a German monopoly. He showed that the history of art need not restrict itself to connoisseurship or the biographical study of great masters, but could instead aspire to lay bare the governing laws which made art works what they were and not otherwise. Moreover, he held that art has a history in the most meaningful sense, a history that only a clear concept of organic development could explain. Thus, while Friedrich Nietzsche and others were to show a century after his death that his insights into the specific character of Greek art were incomplete, in that they overstated the elements of tranquility and equipoise, the ideals of scholarly dedication for which Winckelmann stood have remained of lasting significance.

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Wayne R. Dynes

WITCHCRAFT

Witchcraft is the form of sorcery allegedly practiced in Western Europe between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries. Sorcery itself is universal, found in almost every period and every human culture as a set of magical beliefs and practices intended to manipulate the phenomena of nature for the benefit of the sorcerer or his client. Most sorcery is operative, that is to say, the practitioner has the capacity, through spells and para-

phernalia, to compel occult forces to do his will. The medieval notion of witchcraft, however, was contractual: the witch had to elicit the patronage of a demon by making a pact with him. As contemporary legends and documents attest, this contractual relationship parallels the feudal bond between liege and lord.

Witchcraft and Christianity.

Christian theology, taking **Old Testament** texts and **New Testament** stories of demonic possession as its point of departure, transformed the earlier notion of the sorcerer into that of the witch or wizard as the agent of Satan and accomplice of his infernal legions. It further made a logical connection between witchcraft proper and **heresy**, namely any belief obstinately held contrary to the orthodox teaching of the church.

The witchcraft delusion that obsessed European society from 1450 to 1700—hence from the end of the **Middle Ages** until the onset of the **Enlightenment**—is a major problem for the historian that has not yet been fully resolved. Many theories have been advanced to explain the reasons for the phenomenon and the real background, if any, of the belief system cherished by the witch hunters. Earlier investigators often were animated by a **Protestant** or anti-clerical bias that led them to place the blame solely on the Roman Catholic church and Catholic theologians. It is true that Pope Innocent VIII on December 5, 1484 issued the bull *Summis desiderantes*, confirming the support of the papacy for inquisitorial proceedings against presumed witches, and this text became a preface to the *Malleus maleficarum* (Witches' Hammer) published by two Dominican inquisitors in 1487 and reissued in 29 editions, 16 of them in German, down to 1669. The *Malleus* was far more influential in that it colorfully detailed the diabolical orgies of the witches and convinced a credulous public that a plot of cosmic dimensions hatched by Satan himself threatened the very foundations of Christian society.