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**Social morals –a history between tolerance and refusal
About homosexuality and it`s social, religious and legal status (20th century)**

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Summary

Keywords: homosexuality, morality, morals, sexuality, church, sexual deviation, tolerance, discrimination, homophobia.

The subject of this thesis, *Social morals – a history between tolerance and refusal. About homosexuality and its social, religious and legal status (20th century)* falls into the complex and mental factual dimension of history, referring to aspects which, for several centuries, existed in the social, religious, political, legal and scientific debates. The option for selecting this subject is linked to the personal interest, for complex aspects of the historical and contemporary social, a social which always concealed in its depths sensitive issues about which the social sciences and history were cautious. The sociology and history avoided for so long to approach the morals, under their various components, but nowadays they need to be revealed with honesty and scientific exigency.

Over the past few years, one could notice in the local and international media an increasingly insistent focus on the issue of social morals, implicitly on issue of homosexuality.

This topic was excluded from public debates for a long time, this fact being explained by the long history of collective intolerance against homosexuality, on one hand, by the existence of this phenomena in the hidden aspects of social life and by its interest, rather the lack of interest of sciences to clarify this type of historical manifestation in a multi-dimensional manner.

Homosexuality is frequent as a topic, with a certain curiosity or by virtue of certain initiatives intended to be reparative, humanist (protecting the human rights) or ideological, but it is rather present in certain registers of culture, such as cinematography, theatre, literature, television and radio, music, festivals, fashion, marketing, etc. The cultural-artistic environment deals with the homosexuality with a certain tolerance, especially the Hollywood film register, with a trend to accommodate the global public opinion to controversial manifestation or to incite, shock or to attract the public interest for commercial purposes. Irrespective from which direction the attention over the morals is drawn, implicitly over the homosexuality, these are constantly feeding a series of questions: *Since when the homosexuality exists? Which were the particularities of its condition in different historic periods? What is homosexuality? Which are its biological, pathological, psychological, legal explanations? What attitudes should be adopted regarding the reality of homosexuality and its contrary, the homophobia? How should the homosexuality be seen in the horizon of morals?* This questionnaire concerns also the collective, public, intellectual and individual debate, but in our opinion the most significant is the pluridisciplinary scientific debate.

Social sciences, including the science of history, is interested, for some time, in the phenomena incorporated in morals, marginality, psychology and social pathology. The scientific requirements impose objectivity, impartiality being interested by the presence of social attitudes and mental components which are revealed at societies' level rather than by the psychological or other motivations of homosexuality. Throughout its long journey, the history deals with the topic of homosexuality since antiquity until present day. For the ancient, Greek and Roman society, the homosexuality represented an illicit manifestation, in the long medieval speech of Church and subsequently it shall become a mental illness of the modern society and, in the end, a lifestyle alternative for the contemporary.

The Western historiography investigated in part the status, condition and the manner of mental and cultural reference of homosexuality. The history, in its long term, is revealing for the

strong influence of the religious in the social establishment of the barrier between good and evil, decent and indecent, legal and illicit, namely between what were called *good and bad morals*. Be it the category of insiders, priests in the Antiquity, be it the church in the medieval and modern periods, the religious principles and rules established the distinction between *moral and immoral*. Not only for the mentioned philosophers, but also for all thinkers of 17th century and early 19th century, there were moral and ethical arguments which made them consider the homosexuality as being wrong and unacceptable. Only toward the middle of 19th century a certain possibility for debate and clarification was opened, in anthropological, biological, psychological, medical, hygienic, etc. plan to discuss the issues related to sexuality, libido and their causes. However, doctors from the late 19th century designated the homosexual persons as a special, vitiated category, classifying homosexuality as a disease.

The Church considers it, without any concession, a serious sin, and the representatives of other sciences such as psychologists of the 19th century considered it a psychological deviation, fact which had significant consequences for the emergence of a new approach of the legislative status of sexuality.

This research involves a detached and honest investigation, without any shade of plea to a cause or another for the knowledge of morals, the condition of homosexuality and the people who assume a homosexual identity. Our approach is difficult as we are trying to use scientific methods for historical and historiographical sources which we have readily accessible. Starting from the premise of thorough and impartial documentation regarding this so controversial topic, we have established, as an important criteria, to present in this paper the various perspectives existing in the Romanian society, and through comparative studies with the European or global society related to the homosexuality. This ensures a complex, hermeneutics, pluridisciplinary, comparative analysis and not only an overview, more or less detailed of certain cases which are separately mentioned, in the historical, political, religious, legal, cultural, social and anthropological, medical, psychological and psychiatric register.

Our research starts hermeneutically from the assumption that the attitude towards the homosexuality was different along the studied period due to different certain historical and historiographical criteria by which the topic of homosexuality was discussed. Moreover, still from a hermeneutical point of view, the research aims certain fundamental references in respect

to the visions, attitudes and behaviours towards homosexuality: Church, State and Civil Society. As a comparative approach, the paper is oriented towards the study of the status of homosexuality at international level, on one hand, and the status of homosexuality in two different regimes between 1948-1989 and 1989-2000 respectively in Romania.

The social and legislative status of homosexuality differs from one state to another, with major differences between the rights to which the homosexuals are currently entitled in most of the European states, especially in the Western countries, and the fragility of such rights invoked in other European states, including Romania.