

mario mieli

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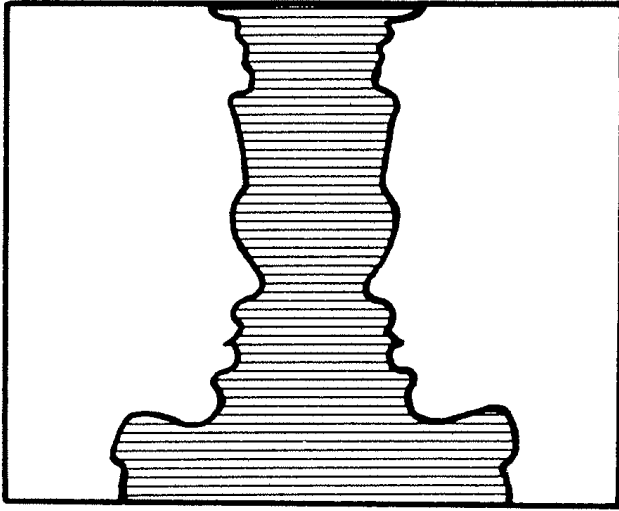
liberation

elements of a gay critique

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Mario Mieli, an Italian, came to London in 1971 as a student and joined the Gay Liberation Front. The following year he returned to Italy, where he helped to found *FUORI!*, the radical gay movement and magazine, in which he has remained active for many years.

**mario mieli**

**homosexuality  
and liberation**

**elements of a gay critique**

translated by david fernbach

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# introduction

The English publication of Mario Mieli's *Homosexuality and Liberation* truly shows the international character of the gay movement. For Mario himself lived in London for two years, during the heyday of the Gay Liberation Front (1970-72), in which he was one of the more notable activists. And this personal involvement of Mario and other Italians in the British gay movement, in its early, radical stage, contributed to the founding of *Fuori!* (= come out), the revolutionary collective and magazine started in Milan in 1972. The Italian gay movement has certainly shared a lot of its history with the movement in Britain and elsewhere, but it has also had its own particular experiences, and developed original and important ideas. So with the translation of Mario's book into English, the international exchange can perhaps flow back again, and just as the Italians were helped from Britain, we can now learn valuable things from them.

There are several significant differences between the political and cultural context in which the Italian gay movement developed, and that in the English-speaking countries. Two of these are the hold of the Catholic church, that great apparatus of sexual repression, which immediately makes sexual politics a sharper issue; and the general crisis of Italian politics and society, with the presence of a large revolutionary movement. This made it rather easier for the gay liberation movement in Italy to maintain its original radical stance for a longer time and resist being dissolved into an apolitical 'gay community' and a meek civil rights movement. Thus, while the attempt at a specifically gay critique of existing society more or less came to an end in Britain

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by 1973, when the radical elements of GLF either drifted into a purely personal liberation, or were taken in tow by the straight left, in Italy the work of *Fuori!* and the revolutionary gay collectives continued right through the mid 1970s. And Mario Mieli's book represents the most comprehensive presentation of the standpoint these have developed.

A further important difference between Italy and the English-speaking world is the position of psychoanalysis. In Britain, and still more so in America, the psychoanalytic tradition has been predominantly clinical and conservative, which has made any radical appropriation of Freudian ideas that much more difficult. In the United States, in particular, psychoanalysis was so well integrated into the psychiatric establishment that the American feminist and gay liberation writers who were such a major influence on our thinking in the early days of the movement were almost universally and sharply hostile. (Even the work of Norman O. Brown and Herbert Marcuse, so influential on the American 'new left' of the 1960s, was submerged by the tide of righteous anti-Freudian wrath.)

In the Latin countries, however, the grip of Catholicism prevented psychoanalysis from being co-opted into the dominant ideology via clinical practice, so that the subversive side of Freudianism came more sharply to the fore. French and Italian feminists, in particular, saw in Freudian theory a weapon for understanding and challenging the social construction of femininity. And as elsewhere, the gay movement in Italy developed its ideas in close association with the women's movement.

Mario Mieli brushes aside superficial objections to Freud based on 'anti-gay' or 'anti-woman' statements taken out of context, to get down to the core of Freudian theory: the conception of an originally undifferentiated desire, or Eros, which is 'trans-sexual' in that it knows no division of gender, and which persists beneath the repression induced by society, in the timeless realm of the id. Homosexuality, then, is not merely universal, and 'congenital' in every human being, it is one in an infinite range of choices of object and aim that is far wider than simply 'bi-sexual'. An Eros liberated from social repression (social in origin, but internalised by the ego's repulsion of forbidden ideas from consciousness) will thus regain this trans-sexual character, not knowing gender

either in subject or object, but relating to anatomical differences simply for what they immediately are.

It is precisely on the basis of this Freudian concept of Eros that Mario proceeds to challenge and expose the theories of homosexuality as 'pathological' which grew up even within the psychoanalytic movement in its early years. In descending order from Ferenczi down to Irving Bieber and Robert Stoller – the 'psychonazis', as Mario calls them – these psychologists have merely reproduced the prejudices of heterosexual society, often in so crass a way that they can be refuted simply by the immediate lived experience of gay people. Indeed, the only experts on homosexuality are homosexuals.

Mario goes into considerable detail on the persecution of gay people from Biblical times through to the modern age, and shows how the present fashion for 'tolerance' is merely a more subtle manner of upholding the heterosexual Norm. And he investigates, again basing himself to a fair degree on Freudian concepts, the effects on society as a whole of the repression of the trans-sexual Eros by institutionalised heterosexuality. Writing as a gay man, Mario essentially deals only with the form this takes on the male side. It means, first of all, the repression of the male's own femininity, which among other things gives his relationship with women a false and alienated character. (Only gay men, Mario argues, can really love women – and in the full erotic sense.) It means the repression of a same-sex object choice, which re-surfaces, however, in 'sublimated' forms, in the phenomena of sport, patriotism, and the male bonding that is the present basis of 'social cohesion', as well as in the systematic violence practised against gay people by those 'heterosexual' men who have greatest difficulty in repressing their own homosexuality. It means the repression of the 'pregenital' erotic components, and anal eroticism in particular, which again makes its return in the acquisitive ethos of capitalism. The implications of institutionalised heterosexuality, then, go far beyond the specific problems of gay people.

Thus far, Mario Mieli's ideas are not too dissimilar to those developed by Guy Hocquenghem in his *Homosexual Desire*.<sup>1</sup> Hocquenghem already trod the path of retrieving the Freudian Eros from its overlay of heterosexist prejudice, and using this as

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an instrument for a theory of gay liberation. Besides Mario's explicit references to Hocquenghem, there are a number of common themes, such as Freud's analysis of the Schreber case, repressed homosexuality as a cause of paranoia, the connection between the repression of homosexuality and that of anal eroticism, and so on. From then on, however, there is a parting of the ways. Hocquenghem's book is closely based on the *Anti-Oedipus* of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, and views the contradiction between the heterosexual Norm and homosexuality as fundamentally one between the triangular Oedipal structure (father/mother/child) into which capitalist society squeezes the continuous flux of erotic desire, and a component trend of desire that refuses Oedipalisation. In the impersonal sex so characteristic of the (male!) homosexual world, Hocquenghem sees a clear mark of superiority, a 'plugging in' of 'desire machines' that corresponds to the original and underlying nature of the pre-Oedipal Eros, this kaleidoscopic flux. In so far as Hocquenghem connects this with the wider movement of social liberation, he does so through the analogy with wild-cat strikes, and the ecological and women's movements, which allegedly express, if in different ways, a similarly immediate 'production' of desire, as opposed to the parties, trade unions, etc., with their elaborate organisations and strategies, that would correspond to the restricted Oedipal 'reproduction'.

Despite the shared point of departure, Mario develops his argument in a different and far more fruitful direction. The *Anti-Oedipus* tendency, in my view, is flawed by taking a valuable but one-sided insight, and building it up into an entire philosophical system. Deleuze and Guattari, and following them Hocquenghem, did not stop at criticising, very justly, the evident failings of the nuclear family (as the microcosm of phallocracy, and for the suffocating intensity of its characteristic emotions); they pitched their critique at a level where it equally attacks any process of humanisation, and any genuine intersubjective communication. Yet the alleged superiority of the gay 'pick-up machine' does not show through in Hocquenghem's own writing, any more than it does in the real world. For no matter how pleasurable impersonal sex may often be, it is clearly no substitute for more 'totalising' relationships, such as are enjoyed – as the high point of social

experience – in all human societies, no matter how different from our own. Indeed, it would be impossible to explain how the Oedipal structure reproduces itself in our present nuclear family, with all its failings, were it not that this still provides, at least in its more successful examples, a totalising relationship that is not to be found elsewhere. Hocquenghem ends up by reflecting precisely the split in human sexuality that the present nuclear family perpetuates, between over-intense intersubjective bonds within the primary group, and a lack of genuine human communication outside of this. He merely champions one side of the contradiction against the other, instead of seeking to overcome it.

One immediate and important contrast between Mario and Guy Hocquenghem is that Mario writes explicitly as a gay person, which Hocquenghem does not; he draws openly on his own personal experience, not just on theoretical concepts and empirical facts. On the question of Oedipus, Mario takes a fairly agnostic position, being aware of the questionable assumptions in the classic Freudian theory, and the critique of this by various anti-psychiatric and anti-psychoanalytic tendencies, but not required by his own major concerns to go into this debate in any detail. Yet he certainly rejects the brutally reductionist interpretation of erotic desire assumed by Hocquenghem, and takes Eros as embracing – given that there *is* a human society! – both the casual erotic contact of the pick-up, and the total intersubjective intimacy that can only be established at the level of the whole personality, as well as everything in between. Of course, Mario has the advantage of writing five years after Hocquenghem, and with the experience of a more successful gay movement than the French. The point is, however, that the real joy of gay sexuality (which for Mario, again unlike Hocquenghem, is far more than just sex between two men) comes through loud and clear as Mario's starting point. So that the gay communist culture that Mario presents as the alternative to present society is inevitably far more attractive than Hocquenghem's mere 'plugging in'.

Mario goes on to develop a whole area that lies quite beyond Hocquenghem's 'problematic'. While a certain Marxist analysis of society is tacitly assumed in Hocquenghem's book, Mario is expressly concerned to develop the implications of his 'gay critique' for the overall Marxist project of social revolution. Here again,

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the Italian context is important, for there is no other European country – West or East – where radicals can discuss so openly and without embarrassment the alternative of a communist society. Mario argues that the complete disinhibition of homoerotic tendencies is a *sine qua non* for communism, given that only this liberation can guarantee the achievement of a totalising communication among human beings, independent of their sex. Here it is readily apparent how Mario's broader and more 'humanist' interpretation of the Freudian Eros has implications that are in no way shared by the *Anti-Oedipus* school. Yet Mario goes still further. If – as he and Hocquenghem both agree – the satisfaction of erotic desire is all that we live for, then the liberation of Eros, in Mario's interpretation, actually *is* communism. 'Transsexuality' and communism are one and the same. If we attain unfettered libidinal communication, then we have communism; it is simply that the class division and the sexual division (masculine/feminine and heterosexual/homosexual) conspire to thwart this wonderful potentiality.

We come, then, to Mario's conception of the relationship between the class and sexual contradictions. The weakness of the attempt at a gay Marxism in the English-speaking countries, in the GLF time and immediately after, was our inability to synthesise these two dimensions of the social structure into a single unitary system. We realised that both the class division, and the division of sex and gender, were barriers to a truly human form of society, and we understood a little about how the two things interacted. But precisely the influence of American radical feminism, which had been so stimulating to the early gay movement, blocked the way to a higher-order synthesis. By stressing so sharply the biological level of the sexual division, as the material base underlying gender, this radical feminism led us into a dilemma: either try to explain the class system as a by-product of biology, or drop the new and radical perspective on sexual relations and drift back into traditional Marxism. By rejecting the concepts of psychoanalysis, we deprived ourselves of the very instrument that was needed to understand the specific level of gender at which gay oppression was established.

Now if Mario sees the liberation of Eros and the achievement of a classless society as essentially two aspects of the same

transformation, this follows from his interpretation of the class and sexual contradictions, as they exist in the present society, as two aspects of the same system of oppression. Present society is capitalist society, and capital is the 'automatic monster' that prevents human beings from ordering their social relations on the basis of reason and love. It is only the systemic logic of capital that produces the antagonisms between women and men, and between heterosexuality and homosexuality. (Through the structure of the family, though Mario does not go into this in detail.) Yet these contradictions once produced, they are every bit as real as the class contradiction. It is in no way as if the rule of capital can be overthrown by a 'socialist' revolution of the traditional kind, waged simply on the terrain of class struggle. The struggle for communism can only succeed if it is waged as a struggle to liberate desire, the trans-sexual Eros, a goal which is objectively possible, Mario argues, in the context of potential abundance that capitalism has brought about. Thus the representatives of the repressed erotic tendencies, in particular women and gays, have a privileged role to play in the struggle against capital. And by making this connection to the totality, Mario's argument provides the necessary basis for a genuinely radical gay movement, a movement that struggles for gay liberation as an inseparable component of human liberation as a whole.

It is this connection that I see as the most valuable achievement of the Italian school of gay Marxism that Mario Mieli represents, and which raises the entire level of debate to a higher level than that reached in the English-speaking countries. And yet taking this level as achieved (and it will still need a good while to percolate through in our part of the world), Mario's is only one possible position, and I myself have serious reservations about it, no matter how stimulating I find Mario's book.

First, while I agree that Freudian theory is absolutely indispensable for any perspective of gay and human liberation, I would disagree that it is sufficient simply to interlock this with Marxism. Crucial as the Freudian concept of Eros undoubtedly is, it is not adequate to define the human 'essence', even in Mario's broad interpretation. The Freudian Eros is so powerful a concept because so many forms of pleasure can be shown to have



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a bodily, i.e. sexual, character, even when this is denied. But I still believe there are perfectly genuine satisfactions that are not reducible to sensual pleasure, e.g. specific satisfactions of the spirit (or of the brain, if you want to be more materialist), and here again, the 'other' dimension that a comprehensive theory of liberation must contain is wider than that derivable from Freud.

Mario also dismisses the biological level of the sexual contradiction in too summary a fashion. The women's movement has raised various questions about possible innate differences between male and female. Whatever the answer to these might be, it is necessary for a theorist who makes the claims that Mario does to take up a position in the debate. Reduction of the biological division to simply a question of gender is the reverse error to that made by the American radical feminists.

A further aspect of the biological level involves the 'relations of procreation'. The perspective of a radical breakdown of gender is only possible thanks to the new ability of the human species to reproduce itself with an average of just over two pregnancies per adult woman, and thanks to the divorce between (hetero)sexuality and procreation introduced by effective contraception and artificial insemination. But now that procreation is at long last truly becoming the production of human beings in the full sense of the term, the transformations already effected are more likely to be simply the first step, the equivalent of the neolithic revolution in use-value production, rather than the last. Again, there is much speculation as to the possible implications for the future development of the human race of techniques of extra-uterine gestation and genetic engineering, and Mario is perhaps wise not to get drawn into this. Yet his arguments on the breakdown of gender too readily assume this to be the re-establishment of a natural order that class society has disturbed, rather than a historical achievement that might well need support, among other things, from transformations of our biology.

Then there are criticisms to be made about Mario's Marxism. While Mario strays far indeed from orthodox Marxism in some respects, there is one strand in his thinking that anchors him firmly to this – too firmly, I believe. That is his conception of capital as a spontaneous mechanism, an 'automatic monster' to which all ideological and political forms are subordinate and

merely functional. This is a particularly significant strand in Italian Marxism, inherited from the pre-First World War 'maximalists', through Bordiga (the first leader of the Italian Communist Party), down to contemporary theorists such as Jacques Camatte, whom Mario expressly refers to here and there.<sup>2</sup> Today, this tradition seeks support above all in Marx's *Grundrisse*, but the political spirit that inspires it is still the quest for a once-and-for-all, total revolution. Capitalism continues essentially unchanged, until The Revolution changes everything. Even in Italian Marxism, this is counterposed by the far more concrete tradition of Gramsci, no less committed to the goals of communism, but rather more down to earth in its view of the complexities of history, both before, during and after any revolutionary break.

Mario looks forward, therefore, to a final crisis of the capitalist system. Since the traditional Marxian version of this, in terms of economic collapse, class polarisation through to civil war, imperialist world war, etc. seem rather less viable today, and since the sexual contradiction, however important, cannot be vested with such an explosive dynamic, Mario indicates – though only in passing – the ecological crisis: again a perspective developed by Camatte. And yet even if this could provoke a total change of system, it would seem to fly in the face of the other economic assumption, so important to Mario, that capitalism has already produced – globally? – a situation of potential abundance.

A total revolution implies a cohesive, unified subject, classically 'the proletariat'. Mario very understandably rejects the identification of this subject with the male industrial working class and its Communist Party. Yet he still uses this conception of the ideal subject of the revolution to attack the 'former extra-parliamentary left', on the one hand, and the now increasingly reformist gay movement on the other. But for better or worse, social change has to be made by the masses, it can't just be brought about by the tiny minority who have the most advanced ideas. And this crucial mediation is missing from Mario's theory.

Were it not for this 'ultra-revolutionary' concept of the capitalist system and its transformation, I believe Mario would have been far better placed to integrate into Marxist theory the vital elements of the sexual contradiction that he exposes so well. For example, I would see the specific role of the bureaucratic state in relation

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to the capitalist economy as increasingly important today. And the state apparatus surely depends very much on the psychological structure of masculinity for its support. This would also help explain the great similarities of social organisation between the capitalist West and the soviet East, where there is certainly no question of capital being an 'automatic monster'. The monster, in both cases, is at least as much a political as an economic one. But then we would draw on the Marxism of Gramsci rather than that of Bordiga, and the process of change would lose its appealing once-and-for-all character.

I am sure this book will generate a good deal of debate in the gay movement. (It would be nice if it had some effect on the straight left as well, though from past experience I'm not too optimistic.) This debate can only help the practical advance of liberation. For what is positive in Mario's arguments far outweighs any weaknesses. He re-asserts the radical character of gay consciousness, showing how our marginal position in society brings us that much closer to the underlying trans-sexuality, and closer to piercing the 'veil of Maya' that conceals the true reality of things. He shows how in the interlocking theoretical framework drawn from Marx and Freud, homosexuality stands right at the centre, in a crucial position. He writes not only as a gay person, but as an open queen, and a queen who is not put out to be viewed as crazy, as a *folle*, because he knows very well that to break the barriers of gender is indeed crazy in terms of the present social order. He shows how gay people, like any other oppressed group, have their own original and unique mode of struggle, and he demonstrates this himself in his writing, which is full of specifically gay humour and sensibility.

Finally, and perhaps most important, Mario's book is not just the product of cogitation, even collective cogitation. As any successful gay theorist must, Mario has worked to combine theory and practice in his own life. In the early days of the gay liberation movement, he would wear outrageous costumes in public to challenge the gender system. He went on to struggle against his own conditioning by gender, in his case the attraction of the butch he-man, and learned, as he mentions here, to enjoy totalising, gay relations with women based on a shared femininity. And he

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was not afraid to take the 'schizophrenic' trip, which he presents not as a 'mental illness', but as a legitimate voyage of discovery. Very frequently, therefore, Mario's arguments convince by the way they express his own lived reality – a reality that is by no means just eccentric or idiosyncratic, but deeply reflects the gay experience and our struggle for liberation.

## **preface**

This book grew out of a university thesis on homosexuality. That fact is responsible, I believe, for some of its limitations, and in the first place for a certain discordance of style, between the stilted tones of academia and the less inhibited gay mode of expression. There is also a discordance of content, in that some themes have been investigated more deeply, while others have remained more or less at the level at which they were originally drafted.

The thesis was essentially on male homosexuality, even if many of its arguments bear on homosexuality in general. As a gay man, I have preferred to discuss female homosexuality as little as possible; for only lesbians can really know what lesbianism is, rather than just speaking about it in the abstract.

I hope this book will promote the liberation of the gay desire among all who now repress it, and will aid gay people who are still enslaved by the sense of guilt induced by social persecution to free themselves from this false guilt. It is high time to root this out, as it only helps to perpetuate the deadly domination of capital. It is time to oppose both this determination and the heterosexual Norm that contributes to maintaining it, by guaranteeing among other things the subjection of Eros to alienated labour and the divisions between men, between women, and between women and men.

I am deeply grateful to Rosa Carotti, Adriana Guardigli, Corrado Levi, Manolo Pellegrini and in particular Francesco Santini for having helped me write this book. I also want to thank

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## homosexual desire is universal

### 1. *The Gay Movement Against Oppression*

The present gay movements have developed in the countries of advanced capitalism, i.e. where capital has reached the stage of 'real domination'.<sup>1</sup> But already at an earlier stage, homosexuals had organised themselves into a movement, for the first time in history. This happened first of all in Germany, in the second half of the nineteenth century, with the work of Karl Ulrichs and the subsequent foundation of the Scientific Humanitarian Committee in 1897.<sup>2</sup> England, too, saw a similarly early, if less structured, gay movement at that time, and this was followed in the early part of the present century in Holland, Austria, the USA, Soviet Russia and other countries. The homosexual movement did not invariably take the fixed organisational form that distinguished the Scientific Humanitarian Committee and its international offshoot the World League for Sexual Reform, but in many countries, even without producing specific formal organisations, it still gave rise to a wide debate on homosexuality, involving for the first time a considerable number of cultural and political 'personalities', and bringing to light problems and arguments which had up till then been passed over in silence, in deference to one of the severest of taboos.

The violent persecution of homosexuals by Nazism, Stalinism and fascism destroyed this movement, and with it the very memory of this first major international homosexual self-assertion, re-establishing once more the absolute ideology of the heterosexual Norm. Due to this setback, it was only through the research of



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the new gay movement, originating in 1969 with the New York Gay Liberation Front, and subsequently spreading to several other countries, that those of us born in more recent decades became at all aware of the existence of an earlier gay movement, and came to see ourselves as engaged – contrary to what we had believed – in a second wave of the liberation movement and not in its first. Some of the questions that we raise today, for example, involve themes that were already tackled by the first gay movement. And one of these, in particular, still concerns homosexuals today as much as at any time in the past, i.e. what reasons does society have in excluding and so harshly persecuting us?

To this and other questions, we have tried to reply with a research starting from our own personal experience. Whether by talking together at general meetings about our existential and social condition as homosexuals, or by going more deeply into the analysis of individual experience through the work of smaller consciousness-raising or 'awareness' groups. As a result, we have begun to understand better what we are, and why we have been oppressed, in the process of coming together on the basis of our common desire and in the perspective of liberation.

The new gay movement has also resumed the historical and anthropological investigations started by the first wave, shedding light on the persecution of homosexuals across the centuries and on the historical origin of the anti-gay condemnation, a condemnation that is almost invariably made out by the ideology of heterosexual primacy to be natural. And if the old movement had a strong commitment to psychological research, in the new movement groups have formed that concern themselves rather with psychiatry, struggling against the anti-homosexual persecution perpetrated in the guise of psychiatric treatment. The gay movement totally rejects the reactionary prejudices against homosexuality displayed by mainstream psychiatry, and revolutionary homosexuals also oppose the new 'progressive' but completely heterosexual view of homosexuality that is presently widespread in anti-psychiatry circles.

The work of consciousness-raising has also brought us face to face with elements of psychoanalytic theory that refer to homosexuality. We have discovered in psychoanalysis some

important ideas, such as that of the unconscious, for example, and repression, ideas which we can integrate at least temporarily into our own gay science. As a result, we have reached the firm conclusion that the hatred generated towards us within heterosexual society is caused by the repression of the homoerotic component of desire in those individuals who are apparently heterosexual. The general repression of homosexuality, in other words, determines the rejection by society of the manifest expressions of the gay desire. The question now is what it is that provokes this repression; and we believe we shall discover the hidden motives for this by combatting the repression itself, i.e. by spreading the pleasure and desire of homosexuality.<sup>3</sup> It is in the struggle for liberation that we shall come to understand why we have up till now been slaves – and we are all slaves, both gay and straight alike.

But if repression is a psychoanalytic concept, it was also psychoanalysis, in modern times, that first upheld the universality of homosexual desire. In Freud's words, 'in all of us, throughout life, the libido normally oscillates between male and female objects'.<sup>4</sup> Why, then, we might ask, if everyone is also homosexual, do so few people admit this and enjoy their homosexuality?

## *2. Polymorphous 'Perversity', Bisexuality and Trans-sexuality*

*The hermaphrodite was a distinct sex in form as well as in name, with the characteristics of both male and female, but now the name alone remains, and that solely as a term of abuse.*

PLATO<sup>5</sup>

Underlying the presence in every individual of an erotic trend directed towards persons of the same sex, psychoanalysis has established an infantile 'perverse' polymorphism. According to Freud, the child is constitutionally disposed to be 'polymorphously perverse', and all the so-called 'perversions' form part of infantile

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sexuality (sadism, masochism, coprophilia, exhibitionism, voyeurism, homosexuality, etc.). In fact, 'a disposition to perversions is an original and universal disposition of the human sexual instinct and . . . normal sexual behaviour is developed out of it as a result of organic changes and psychical inhibitions occurring in the course of maturation'.<sup>6</sup> Among the forces that inhibit and restrict the direction of the sexual drive are, above all, 'the structures of morality and authority erected by society'.<sup>7</sup> The repressive society and the dominant morality consider only heterosexuality as 'normal' – and only genital heterosexuality at that. Society enforces on children an *educastration* designed to repress those congenital sexual tendencies that are deemed 'perverse'. (Even today, in fact, more or less all infantile sexual impulses are considered 'perverse', including heterosexual ones, the child having no right to erotic enjoyment.) The objective of educastration is the transformation of the infant, in tendency polymorphous and 'perverse', into a heterosexual adult, erotically mutilated but conforming to the Norm.

The majority of psychoanalysts recognise sexual expressions even in the very first months of life, and have established steps of sexual development that we can sum up as autoeroticism→homosexuality→heterosexuality. But this is in no way a 'natural' evolution; it rather reflects the repressive influence of the child's social and family environment. There is nothing in life itself that requires the child to 'grow out' of autoeroticism and the homosexual 'stage' in order to attain this exclusive heterosexuality. The environment in which we live is heterosexual (in the first place the family, the cell of the social tissue). And as such it forces the child, through a sense of guilt, to abandon the satisfaction of his auto- and homoerotic desires, obliging him to identify with a mutilated monosexual (heterosexual) model. But of course this does not always succeed.

Psychoanalysis defines the first expressions of eroticism as 'undifferentiated', or only little so. In other words, the selection of an object, for the infant, is due more to circumstances than to biological sex (and to circumstances that can change even in the course of a day). Little girls are also lesbian, and little boys are also gay.

To those who still wonder whether they are born homosexual

or become so, we must reply that everyone is born endowed with a complete range of erotic capability, directed first of all towards the self and the mother, then gradually turning outward to 'everyone' else, irrespective of their sex, in fact towards the entire world. They become either heterosexual or homosexual only as a result of educastration (repressing their homoerotic impulses in the first case, and their heterosexual ones in the second).

At this point, however, we might pause to consider whether these tendencies are actually repressed in the strict sense. According to Georg Groddeck, for example, no heterosexual really represses all his homoerotic desires, even if he believes himself to have done so. Rather than repressed, the majority of people most commonly exhibit a latent homosexuality (just as the desire for the opposite sex is latent, as a general rule, in gays). According to Freud, again, 'we have two kinds of unconscious – the one which is latent but capable of becoming conscious, and the one which is repressed and which is not, in itself and without more ado, capable of becoming conscious'.<sup>8</sup> To be quite correct, we should therefore speak of both latent homosexual desires and others that are effectively repressed. But since it is not always easy to distinguish the two, I shall speak sometimes of latent homosexual desire and in other contexts of the repression of homosexuality, without establishing too fine a distinction and thus using the concept in a somewhat elastic sense. In any case, faced with skilled seduction by a gay person, it is not repression that wins out; sooner or later, all heterosexuals give in. All straight men are latent queens.

In actual fact, latent homosexuality exists in everyone who is not a manifest homosexual, as a residue of infantile sexuality, polymorphous and 'perverse', and hence also gay. A residue, because homoeroticism has been repressed by society, and hence condemned to latency and sublimated in the form of feelings of friendship, comradeship, etc., as well as being converted, or rather distorted, into pathological syndromes.<sup>9</sup>

I shall use the term 'trans-sexuality' throughout this book to refer to the infantile polymorphous and 'undifferentiated' erotic disposition, which society suppresses and which, in adult life, every human being carries within him either in a latent state, or

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else confined in the depths of the unconscious under the yoke of repression. 'Trans-sexuality' seems to me the best word for expressing, at one and the same time, both the plurality of the erotic tendencies and the original and deep hermaphroditism of every individual. But what exactly is this hermaphroditism?

In psychoanalytic theory, the contention of 'perverse' infantile polymorphism goes hand in hand with the theory of original bisexuality. (And this theory will also make clearer what I mean by trans-sexuality and the trans-sexual nature of our underlying being.) The theory of original bisexuality was first put forward – among other reasons – to explain the causes of so-called 'sexual inversion' (i.e. homosexuality).<sup>10</sup> Its roots lay in the discovery of the coexistence in the individual of somatic factors common to both sexes. This was well summed up by Daniel Paul Schreber, even though he was not a medical man but a crazy queen: 'In the first months of pregnancy the rudiments of both sexes are laid down and the characteristics of the sex which is not developed remain as rudimentary organs at a lower stage of development, like the nipples of the male'.<sup>11</sup>

The same applies to the female clitoris. Results of this kind showed that sex is not so simple, but that monosexuality rather conceals a certain bisexuality (a hermaphroditism). According to psychoanalysis, we are all bisexual beings.

This question has been comprehensively studied by genetic theory and endocrinology. In the words of Gilbert Dreyfus:

Although genetic sex is determined by the composition of the fertilising spermatozoon, so that the father alone is responsible for the genetic sex of his offspring, the embryo undergoes in its early development a phase of apparently undifferentiated sexuality. It is only in the second month of foetal life that the rudimentary genitals begin to differentiate, so as to end up – after a long process and according to whether the first growth of tissue later develops or atrophies to make way for a second growth – with the formation of a testicle or an ovary. But even in adults, there remain in both sexes residues of the other, as evidence of the dual male and female development of the embryonic gonads and the double reproductive system with which the embryo is

initially endowed.<sup>12</sup>

It can happen, in this embryonic development, that discrepancies arise between genetic and genital sex. This gives rise to combinations of male and female characteristics, causes of 'pseudo-hermaphroditism', 'inter-sexuals', or better, cases of manifest trans-sexuality.<sup>13</sup>

But not all these 'cases' are determined simply by unusual physiological conditions. There are many conscious transexuals, for example, who are physiologically every bit as male as the butchest heterosexual. What does it mean, then, to be manifestly transexual today?

In general, we call 'transexuals' those adults who consciously live out their own hermaphroditism, and who recognise in themselves, in their body and mind, the presence of the 'opposite' sex.

At the present time, these manifest transexuals are still subject to the contradiction between the sexes and the repression of Eros, which is the repression of the universal trans-sexual (or polymorphous and hermaphroditic) disposition common to all human individuals. Persecuted by a society that cannot accept any confusion between the sexes, they frequently tend to reduce their effective trans-sexuality to an apparent monosexuality, seeking to identify with the opposite 'normal' gender to their genital definition. Thus a female transexual feels herself a man, opting for the male gender role, while a male transexual feels himself a woman. A human being of 'imprecise' sex has a much harder time just getting around than does a male person who seems, by all external signs, to be a woman, or vice versa. This is why people who recognise themselves as transexual in the present society often want to 'change' (genital) sex by surgical operation, in Casablanca or Copenhagen, or rather more frequently, restrict themselves to strict psychological identification with the 'opposite' sex.

Society induces these manifest transexuals to feel monosexual and to conceal their real hermaphroditism. To tell the truth, however, this is exactly how society behaves with all of us. In fact we are all, deep down, trans-sexuals, we have all been trans-sexual infants, and we have been forced to identify with a specific

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monosexual role, masculine or feminine. In the case of manifest transsexuals, or those rare persons who have not repressed their trans-sexuality in growing up, the social constraint produces the opposite effect from what it does in 'normal' people, in as much as a male person tends to identify with the feminine role, and vice versa.

As we shall see, manifest transsexualism does not necessarily involve a particular propensity for homosexuality. There are many heterosexual transsexuals. But when, for example, these are males who feel themselves to be women, but who also sexually desire other women, their heterosexuality is then, in a certain sense, homosexuality. Far from being particularly absurd, transsexualism overthrows the present separate and counterposed categories of that sexuality considered 'normal', which it shows up, rather, as a ridiculous constraint.

In any case, in those people who recognise themselves as transsexuals today, we can see the trans-sexuality (bisexuality) that is latent in everyone. Their particular condition has brought them more or less close to an awareness, potentially a revolutionary one, of the fact that every human being, embryologically bisexual, maintains for his or her whole life, both in the biological and psychological aspects, the presence of the other sex. I believe that the resolution of the present separate and antithetical categories of sexuality will be trans-sexual, and that trans-sexuality discloses the synthesis, one and many, of the expressions of a liberated Eros. I shall often return to this argument later on.<sup>14</sup>

For the time being, I simply want to stress how 'our hormonal bisexuality is amply demonstrated',<sup>15</sup> and how the determination of 'definitive' and manifest sex membership at birth generally signifies only the predominance of this sex in the individual, and does not eliminate altogether the 'opposite' sexual presence.

From the phylogenetic standpoint, registration of such biological, anatomical and endocrinological data leads to the conception of 'an originally bisexual physical disposition [which] has, in the course of evolution, become modified into a unisexual one, leaving behind only a few traces of the sex that has become atrophied' (Freud).<sup>16</sup>

The transposition of this conception into the mental field was of particularly great importance, leading to the interpretation of

homosexuality 'in all its varieties as the expression of a psychical hermaphroditism'.<sup>17</sup> But if the theory of psychical hermaphroditism helped psychoanalysis to demonstrate the possibility of so-called sexual 'inversion', it also raised very far-reaching questions as to the fixation of the sexual drive in so-called 'normal' people onto 'objects' of the 'opposite' sex. 'Thus from the point of view of psychoanalysis the exclusive sexual interest felt by men for women is also a problem that needs elucidating and is not a self-evident fact based upon an attraction that is ultimately of a chemical nature.'<sup>18</sup> According to Groddeck, it is more difficult to explain why heterosexual impulses are averted than to understand why there exist in all people homosexual tendencies, which as he sees it, 'necessarily follows upon self-love'.<sup>19</sup>

Is there a close relationship, then, between hermaphroditism, physical and mental, and homosexuality? Yes, in that homosexuality is congenital in everyone and hence expresses the polymorphism of our underlying trans-sexual and hermaphroditic being. In the same way, too, the erotic tendencies directed towards the 'opposite' sex form part of our polymorphism, so that these are equally expressions of this underlying hermaphroditism. Both homosexual desire and desire for the other sex derive from the trans-sexual nature of our underlying being.

This is shown all the more clearly in the fact that heterosexuality is itself often accompanied by what the doctors, in repressive language, call 'morphological and hormonal disturbances'. Continuing to borrow this hateful medical jargon, heterosexual men can also be 'hypomale' and 'effeminate'. The hormonal characteristic that accompanies these forms of 'hypomale' is 'a collapse of the androgen/oestrogen ratio, as a result of a fall in the numerator and a rise in the denominator'.<sup>20</sup> Manifest heterosexuality, therefore, is often accompanied by clear expressions of physical hermaphroditism.

On the other hand, despite the stereotype that identifies the gay man as 'effeminate', a high percentage of manifest homosexuals do not show any particular form of 'hypomale' or 'effeminacy'. To sum up, there is no direct correspondence between 'hypomale' and male homosexuality, nor between 'hypofemininity' and female homosexuality. 'Male' women may be decidedly heterosexual, and very 'feminine' women can be gay.



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As for the presumed relationship between 'mental effeminacy' and male homosexuality, and conversely for women, Freud noted:

The literature of homosexuality usually fails to distinguish clearly enough between the questions of the choice of object on the one hand, and of the sexual characteristics and sexual attitude of the subject on the other, as though the answer to the former necessarily involved the answers to the latter. Experience, however, proves the contrary: a man with predominantly male characteristics and also masculine in his erotic life may still be inverted in respect to his object, loving only men instead of women. A man in whose character feminine attributes obviously predominate, who may, indeed, behave in love like a woman, might be expected, from this feminine attitude, to choose a man for his love-object; but he may nevertheless be heterosexual, and show no more inversion in respect to his object than an average normal man. The same is true of women; here also mental sexual character and object-choice do not necessarily coincide. The mystery of homosexuality is therefore by no means so simple as it is commonly depicted in popular expositions – 'a feminine mind, bound therefore to love a man, but unhappily attached to a masculine body; a masculine mind, irresistibly attracted to women, but, alas! imprisoned in a feminine body'.<sup>21</sup>

To put it more simply, a butch-looking man can equally well be a queen, while a man with a slender and refined body can be doggedly attracted to women. A pure young girl can be a lesbian, and a strapping schoolmistress can be completely heterosexual. That is the way of the world.

In conclusion, we can say that neither manifest homosexuality nor heterosexuality necessarily correspond to any specific mental, somatic or hormonal characteristics; both the gay desire and the desire for the other sex are expressions of our underlying transsexual being, in tendency polymorphous, but constrained by oppression to adapt to a monosexuality that mutilates it. But the repressive society only considers one type of monosexuality as 'normal', the heterosexual kind, and imposes eduction with

a view to maintaining an exclusively heterosexual conditioning. The Norm, therefore, is heterosexual.

*3. The Assertion of Heterosexuality and the Misconception of the Woman Within*

The theory of bisexuality was originally postulated by psychiatry as the basis for an etiology of 'sexual inversion'. We have seen how psychoanalysis, while it took over this theory, was however also forced to investigate the causes for the fixation of desire on 'objects' of the opposite sex on the part of people considered by society as sexually 'normal'. The question now arises as to why, in the course of development, the individual passes from an 'undifferentiated' erotic disposition directed towards both sexes, such as is characteristic of the infantile libido, to a fixation (whether hetero- or homosexual) on one sex alone as the object of desire.

The immediate reply is that this happens by the work of eduction, or by the influence on the individual of society and the 'external' world in which a monosexual Norm prevails, transmitting the repression from generation to generation. At all events, the monosexual Norm is decidedly heterosexual, and the eduction that seeks to make it universally prevail brings it about that monosexuality presently takes the form of heterosexuality among the majority of people. The Norm is based on the mutilation of Eros, and in particular on the condemnation of homosexuality. It is clear from this that only when we understand why the homoerotic impulse is repressed in the majority, by the whole mechanism of society, will we be able to grasp how the exclusive or at least highly predominant assertion of heterosexual desire in the majority comes about. On the other hand, the problem of the repression of homosexuality is clearly connected, today, with the assertion of an exclusively or at least prevalently homoerotic desire in us gay men and women, because, historically, it is the repression of homoeroticism that makes so large a contribution to characterising the present-day expressions of manifest homosexuality.

We know how the little boy is forced in growing up to develop,

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above all else, those tendencies that are an expression of his psychological 'masculinity'. It is the society that forces him to do this, and in the first place via the family, just as, through education and the family, society forces the little girl to develop those aspects of her personality that are expressions of psychological 'femininity'. In this way, eduction tends above all else to negate the mental and biological hermaphroditism that is present in us all, in order to make the little girl into a woman and the little boy into a man according to the counterposed models of the heterosexual polarity. The psychological 'masculinity' and 'femininity' that are respectively demanded from the little boy and girl in the process of education (which is above all a relation of subordination to the parents, and more generally, to all adults), simply reflect the contingent and mutilated historical forms which society makes into something absolute, and which are based on the subjection and oppression of women, the estrangement of the human being from himself, and the negation of human community.

The little boy is forced by society and the family to take his father as a model for his own life. He must aspire to be like him in every respect, but he can only do so at the cost of the full flowering of his own potential, i.e. by a mutilation. The father, in fact, has already suffered eduction, so that the son can only identify with him at the price of his own mutilation. Gradually, through this identification, the child, like his father, comes to project onto the mother and other women the 'feminine' elements that exist within his own psyche, elements that are not to be admitted to consciousness, leading him to be ashamed of them, despite the deep attraction that they hold as fundamental components of his own being. This is responsible for one of the greatest disasters that has happened to our species: the refusal by the man to recognise the 'woman' in himself, i.e. to recognise his trans-sexuality.

In Jung's words, the father becomes the model for the son's persona: 'The persona is a complicated system of relations between individual consciousness and society, fittingly enough a kind of mask, designed on the one hand to make a definite impression upon others, and, on the other, to conceal the true nature of the individual.'<sup>22</sup>

Through this identification with the father, society forces the little boy to construct for himself an artificial personality, in keeping with the Norm prevailing in the 'external' world, and also providing a defence against the dangers of this world, the pitfalls that threaten on the stage where personas interact.

And yet: 'The construction of a collectively suitable persona means a formidable concession to the external world, a genuine self-sacrifice which drives the ego straight into identification with the persona, so that people really do exist who believe they are what they pretend to be.'

The son cannot identify with the father, and hence cannot construct a personality like his, except by sacrificing himself, his trans-sexuality and in particular his 'femininity': 'The repression of feminine traits and inclinations naturally causes these contrasexual demands to accumulate in the unconscious'.<sup>23</sup>

A drastic repression of homosexuality takes place already in early childhood. The father (re)presents himself as a decisively heterosexual persona, rejecting overt erotic contact with the son (who for his part, however, desires without undifferentiation, and hence also desires the father). Other adult males, in deference to the taboo against paedophilia, similarly reject sexual relations with the little boy. In an analogous way, the mother and adult women reject sexual relations with girl children, even if the mother does generally maintain a greater erotic intimacy with children of both sexes than does the father. Sexual relations between children themselves are also repressed, and in particular homosexual relations.

The anti-homosexual taboo, which is particularly severe, very soon leads the little boy to recognise that homosexuality is forbidden, that it may only be spoken of, if at all, in a derogatory sense, and that you must be ashamed of your gay impulses, just like your 'femininity'. In the eyes of the child, homosexuality is soon seen as associated with 'feminine' tendencies. It is only culturally, however, that sexual attraction between males is linked with femininity – though this culture influences the child in a negative way right from his birth.

The repression of homosexuality is revealed by the harshness with which the child is forced to reject his gay desire, and hence to repress it (though of course this does not always succeed).

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Identification with the father is largely based on the repression of erotic desire for him. This identification forms a kind of introjection of the father, and in this respect alleviates or facilitates his rejection as a sexual object. According to Freud, 'the character of the ego is a precipitate of abandoned object-cathexes', and 'it contains the history of these object-choices'.<sup>24</sup> 'When the ego assumes the features of the object, it is forcing itself, so to speak, upon the id as a love-object and is trying to make good the id's loss by saying: "Look, you can love me too – I am so like the object".'<sup>25</sup>

With the rejection of the father as an 'object' of love for the child, and the replacement of this with identification, homosexual libido is transformed into narcissistic libido. This transformation, determined by the incest taboo as well as by the condemnation of homosexuality, lies at the root of the 'normal', heterosexual, anti-homosexual ego, at the root of its ego-ism. The heterosexual male, repressing his gay desire, introjects homosexual 'objects' and sets himself up as the sole 'homosexual object', transforming homosexuality into autoeroticism and imposing his autoeroticism on women in heterosexual relations. But this is an alienated autoeroticism, based on the renunciation of the father as sexual 'object' and more generally on the repression of the gay desire and the sacrifice of the 'feminine' components that are associated with homosexuality and incompatible with identification with the father and the Norm. It is this alienated male autoeroticism that women increasingly reject; it involves a focusing of male desire for the male, making him into a blind and egoistic condensation of masculinity that seeks to impose itself on women, who embody the femininity that he has negated and is ashamed of in himself. Heterosexual males see in women that portion of themselves which they have been forced from infancy to conceal and repress, and this is why they 'love' women in such a sadly inadequate way.

The 'normal' male ego, then, is largely determined by a series of abandoned homosexual object-cathexes, these being transformed into narcissistic libido and subsequently directed at heterosexual goals. Onto these heterosexual 'objects' the male projects the 'femininity' he has had to repress. The woman, then, is subject to the male in two ways: the man forces on her both his masculinity (a condensation of alienated homosexual desire) and

his own 'femininity'. Woman is not recognised as an autonomous being, but defined purely in relation to the male, and heterosexuality, as it presents itself today, is based on this negative definition of women and tends to perpetuate it. The Norm maintained by a repressive society marked by male supremacy cannot but be heterosexual.

As an Italian feminist has written:

Femininity is a drag show, it is the male projection of an idea of woman after he has censored and suffocated her, expelled her and put her in a gynaeceum. This representation is all his work, a whole system of representations, a historical scene that he seeks to direct . . . In all this, there is still no such thing as woman . . . Women, historically, do not yet exist, and the goal of the women's movement is to give women a specific historical reality.<sup>26</sup>

To return, then, to the little boy. Since he has to repress them, his 'feminine' mental traits are projected outwards, i.e. transferred, onto a person of female sex, generally the mother. A kind of 'homosexual' intimacy is established between mother and son; the mother alone can understand her son's need for a 'feminine life', and she can in part satisfy this (among other things, the demand for kindness, tenderness, protection, to be loved, to have his needs catered for). Forced to repress his 'feminine' component in order to identify with the father, the boy is obliged to repress, too, his own propensity to be giving, tender, sensual, maternal.<sup>27</sup> This particularly leads him to seek tenderness, affection, sensuality, the giving and maternal side, in his mother. And this is why, in adulthood, men force women into a corresponding role.

The mother, for her part, 'regards [the child] with feelings that are derived from her own sexual life: she strokes him, kisses him, rocks him and quite clearly treats him as a substitute for a complete sexual object' (Freud).<sup>28</sup> And yet the mother is forbidden any overtly sexual love for her child, so that her erotic relationship with her son is expressed in an indirect and alienated form, and the boy really does serve her as a mere substitute. This first suppressed sexual relationship leaves a harmful trace in the

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erotic life of us all. To quote Myriam Cristallo:

The mother-child relationship in bourgeois society thus exhibits a double set of contradictions. The first is that education in sexual love is given by the mother, in the privacy of the family milieu . . . thus excluding a wider dialectical relationship with other people. The second, which is closely interwoven with the first, is that this education is vitiated as soon as it is transmitted, since it derives from the concrete experiences of the parents, formed on the alienated terrain of the love market.<sup>29</sup>

In general, it is through his relationship with his mother that the boy forms his first idea of woman. The formation of this idea involves, besides direct contact with the mother, the gradual projection onto her and other women of the boy's own 'feminine' mental component, and the inherited collective image of woman that every man carries within him, the deposit of all the experiences that previous humanity has undergone in regard to woman and her oppression.

Jung gave the name of 'anima' to the image of woman formed in the accumulated male unconscious from the repressed 'feminine' traits and tendencies, and from the presence in the unconscious of an inherited collective image of woman. The anima, then, comes to define the 'feminine' element present in the man, while the 'animus' is the corresponding 'masculine' element in the woman. Though as Jung himself admits: 'If it was no easy task to describe what is meant by the anima, the difficulties become almost insuperable when we set out to describe the psychology of the animus'.<sup>30</sup>

At all events, according to Jung, it is precisely the projection of the anima or animus that respectively orients the boy's sexuality towards the mother, and the girl's towards the father, stimulating the man, in adult life, to seek the woman emotionally and sexually, and vice versa. Heterosexuality dissolves into an interchange of projections: 'A man, in his love-choice, is strongly tempted to win the woman who best corresponds to his own unconscious femininity – a woman, in short, who can unhesitatingly receive the projection of his soul.'<sup>31</sup>

Heterosexuality involves the projection of the other sex that is

latent within us onto persons of the 'opposite' sex. It is determined by the repression of both trans-sexuality, or the original mental hermaphroditism, and of the so-called 'perverse' tendencies, in particular homosexuality.

The young boy desires without differentiation, but he is forced to identify with the father, repressing – as we have already seen – his homoerotic impulses and adapting himself to a heterosexual model. Male heterosexuality, therefore, as it presents itself today, is based on the repression by the man of his 'femininity' and the renunciation of the gay desire, and as such it represents a form of alienated sensuality, founded on the estrangement of the human being from himself. Male heterosexuality involves a misconception of self, and hence also a misconception of the other. By projecting his 'femininity' onto the woman, the man no longer recognises either the woman or his own 'femininity'. His exclusive heterosexual desire is an aspiration to totality through the misconception of the woman within himself, of woman as she really is.

The liberation of Eros and the achievement of communism pass necessarily via the (re)conquest of trans-sexuality and the overcoming of heterosexuality as it presents itself today. The struggle to (re)conquer life is equally, and above all, a struggle for the liberation of the homoerotic desire. The gay movement is fighting to negate the negation of homosexuality, because the diffusion of homoeroticism will qualitatively change our existence and transform mere survival into life. With reference to the concluding essay in the *Grande Encyclopédie des Homosexualités*,<sup>32</sup> Luciano Parinetto maintains:

If we accept the fundamental male-female bipolarity in human sex, and if at the same time we recognise the capitalist and Oedipal repression of the feminine in the male, then, because something is only repressed if it proves too attractive, we must say to 'normal' people: 'You are the homosexuals' . . . The homosexual and feminist challenge, like the atheist challenge to God, does not just seek to put a positive valuation on something that has emerged under capitalism in a marginalised form. If it does not want to confirm sexual roles in the very act of negating those on which it is itself based, it must present itself as a step towards trans-sexuality,



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i.e. something totally different, both from so-called 'normality' and from the dialectical opposite of this.<sup>33</sup>

Parinetto is undoubtedly right. But I must add that the achievement of trans-sexuality can only follow from the work of the women's movement and the complete liberation of homoeroticism, as well as the other components of human erotic polymorphism; nor must the utopian ideal of trans-sexuality, if it is to serve as a 'concrete utopia', be divorced from the concrete dialectic presently under way between the sexes and between the different sexual tendencies (in particular heterosexuality and homosexuality). Only the struggle of those who are the historical subjects of the basic antithesis to the male heterosexual Norm can lead to overcoming the present opposition between the two sexes, and that between genital heterosexuality and homosexuality or other so-called 'perversions'. If trans-sexuality is the inherent goal, it can only be achieved when women have defeated the male 'power' based on the sexual polarity and homosexuals have abolished the Norm that prohibits homosexuality. Besides, given the very important functional role for the perpetuation of capitalism of the subordination of women and the sublimation of certain 'perverse' erotic tendencies in labour, the (re)conquest of trans-sexuality will coincide with the fall of capitalism and the rejection of alienated and alienating labour: the struggle of homosexuals and women is essential to the communist revolution.<sup>34</sup>

And if trans-sexuality is the inherent goal of the struggle for the liberation of Eros, it is a goal that already exists and has always existed in the timeless unconscious, as a repressed potential that is today beginning to re-assert itself against capital and its Norm. You can use your own anima (or animus) to understand this.

### *4. Neurosis as the Negative of 'Perversion'*

The original and far-reaching theory of bisexuality or 'ambisexuality' (Ferenczi) does not clarify the causes of so-called 'sexual inversion', but it does justify it. According to Otto Weininger, author of *Sex and Character* (1903) and a keen upholder

of the theory of bisexuality, homosexuality is neither a vice nor unnatural, given that any man, being also female, can equally well desire another man (who is himself also a woman), just as any woman, being at the same time male, can equally well desire another woman (who is also a man).

But this justification of homosexuality is not good enough; in fact it falls fully within the essentially reactionary perspective of tolerance. Weininger simply tried to fit homoeroticism into the bipolar pattern of heterosexuality. Homosexuality is explained in terms of heterosexual categories. I believe, rather, that homosexuality contains, among its secrets, the possibility of understanding psycho-biological hermaphroditism not as something *bi*-sexual, but rather as erotic in a new (and also very old) sense, i.e. as polysexual, trans-sexual. The heterosexual categories are based on a rejection of the underlying hermaphroditism, on the submission of the body to the neurotic directives of the censored mind, on an ego-istic vision of the world-of-life as determined by the repression of woman and Eros, by compulsory sexual morality, by the negation of human community and by individualistic atomisation. It is no good trying to use the bisexual and therefore heterosexual categories of our alienated reason, superimposed on the latent and the repressed, to plumb the depths, for we shall only fail to appreciate the full scope of the repression that chains us to the status quo. We revolutionary gays want rather to raise ourselves to trans-sexuality, as a concrete process of liberation.

For the time being, I simply want to emphasise once again how even the heterosexual psychiatric and psychoanalytic theories of bisexuality reveal the historical contingency of the concept of erotic 'normality'. But this notwithstanding, psychoanalysis has still studied homosexuality only as a form of 'deviance', and has never questioned those erotic manifestations that are considered 'normal' and their absolutising by ideology. Psychoanalysis, in other words, has not deeply investigated the causes of *heterosexual* inversion, since it is too attached to heterosexual primacy. In this case as in so many others, psychoanalysis proves only too loyal to capitalist ideology and flinches from the logic of its own insights, from drawing 'extreme' theoretical conclusions. But these inevitably surface at times, even if it avoids concentrating any real critical attention on them.

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Given the reduction of original 'bisexuality' to heterosexual monosexuality, Freud was evidently disinclined to class heterosexuality as an 'aberration', which would have meant, in fact, eliminating the concept of 'aberration' altogether. On the contrary, he took homosexuality as the very prototype of a 'perversion', prejudging his analysis from the very start. As I see it, however, the concept of 'aberration' should be replaced by that of mutilation, for all the presently existing forms of sexuality, each separate from one another, represent mutilations with respect to the potential polymorphous unfolding of Eros.

According to Freud, then, only genital heterosexuality is not *ipso facto* 'deviant'. Even oral sex between man and woman is classed as a 'deviation in respect of the sexual aim', i.e. a 'perversion'; and this despite his assertion in the same essay that 'no healthy person . . . can fail to make some addition that might be called perverse to the normal sexual aim'.<sup>35</sup>

Sexual activity, in fact, is considered 'normal' or 'perverse' simply as a function of standards that are relative and specific to the historical epoch. As we shall see, there are economic and social causes at the root of the repression of Eros and the classification of sexual acts and tendencies as 'aberrations'. As Freud himself maintained in a more general reflection:

We must learn to speak without indignation of what we call the sexual perversions—instances in which the sexual function has extended its limits in respect either to the part of the body concerned or to the sexual object chosen. The uncertainty in regard to the boundaries of what is to be called normal sexual life, when we take different races and different epochs into account, should in itself be enough to cool the zealot's ardour. We surely ought not to forget that the perversion which is the most repellent to us, the sensual love of a man for a man, was not only tolerated by a people so far our superiors in cultivation as were the Greeks, but was actually entrusted by them with important social functions.<sup>36</sup>

But despite this and other similar statements, Freud never asked what were the specific reasons that led Western civilisation,

over the centuries, to transform so radically its attitude towards homosexuality. It was sufficient that 'the sensual love of a man for a man' was deemed an abomination by his contemporaries for Freud to class it among the 'perversions'.

And yet Freud still did not consider homosexuality as *ipso facto* 'pathological'. On the contrary, in his view:

It is by no means only at the cost of the so-called *normal* sexual instinct that [psychoneurotic] symptoms originate – at any rate such is not exclusively or mainly the case; they also give expression (by conversion) to instincts which would be described as *perverse* in the widest sense of the word if they could be expressed directly in phantasy and action without being diverted from consciousness. Thus symptoms are formed in part at the cost of *abnormal* sexuality; *neuroses are, so to say, the negative of perversions*.<sup>37</sup>

Freud refused, then, to view either manifest homosexuality or the other 'perversions' as necessarily pathological. On the contrary, psychoneurosis derives in part precisely from the conversion of so-called 'abnormal' sexuality into pathological symptoms. And the neurosis that afflicts present human society as a whole is caused above all by the repression of Eros, the mutilation of an Eros reduced to monosexuality (almost always heterosexual).

The neurosis of us gay men and women (and there is no reason not to speak of a specific neurosis of homosexuals, given that we are all, gay or straight, more or less neurotic under present conditions), is not a function of our homosexuality, but is rather due to the translation into pathological terms of the heterosexual component and the so-called 'perverse' tendencies – which, as against homosexuality, we have in general repressed or at least 'quasi-repressed', to a greater or lesser extent.

It is readily apparent, too, that the neurosis from which we homosexuals suffer depends also, and above all, on the social persecution inflicted upon us simply because we are gay. In other words, it is the psychoneurosis of 'normal' people (based largely on the pathological conversion of homosexuality and other repressed 'perversions') that condemns the manifest expressions of homoeroticism, this being the main factor involved

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in the neurosis of homosexuals. The psychoneurosis based on the oppression and repression of homosexual desire is the chief cause of the psychoneurosis of us manifest homosexuals. What is pathological and pathogenic is not homoeroticism, but rather its persecution.

### *5. Oedipus or The Other*

*Work in this field is pioneer work. I have often made mistakes and had many times to forget what I had learned. But I know, and am content to know that as surely as light comes out of darkness, so truth is born of error.*

JUNG<sup>38</sup>

No one has succeeded up till now in working out why some people become gay and others straight. Yet it is not difficult to see why the majority of people are straight, and only relatively few gay. This, as I have shown, is a function of the social oppression which tends to reduce the original polymorphous richness of Eros (trans-sexuality) to a rigid heterosexuality. But why some individuals still become gay, despite the very strong condemnation of homosexual tendencies, is something that we do not as yet understand. Just as all the various hypotheses so far formulated as to the historical origin of the anti-homosexual taboo still do not give us an exhaustive and certain explanation, so too it is very difficult to establish what induces us gays not to identify with the Norm and to recognise our desire in homosexuality.

Homosexuality is as old as the species, in fact even older, and yet ever renewed, even if today we are still just taking the first steps towards understanding it. And since the voices of gay people have generally been condemned to silence, only very few speak to us out of the past. We could make a comprehensive review here of the various opinions of psychoanalysts and psychonazis as to the reasons leading to the prevalent assertion of homosexual desire. But this has already been done by others,<sup>39</sup>

and with very little to show in the way of results. In general, they draw on psychoanalysis in an attempt to give a 'scientific basis', somehow or other, for their more or less contradictory judgements on homosexuality. I prefer, rather, to shed a critical light on this argument in the practical perspective of liberation, and will therefore restrict myself to considering two or three of these theories involving the relationship between homosexuality and the Oedipus complex; theories which, for one reason or another, I find particularly interesting.

There are those who consider heterosexuality as the 'normal' solution to the Oedipus complex, and homosexuality simply as an 'inverted' solution. In this sense, homosexual men would have experienced a particular exasperation, deep torment and the feeling of being irredeemably betrayed by their mothers, leading them to drastically distance themselves from the female 'object'. Given that the mother whom they love belongs exclusively to the hatred rival, the father, they would then renounce not only her but also any other woman, directing their desire solely towards the male. Freud offers us a similar interpretation, *mutatis mutandis*, in a 'case' of female homosexuality.<sup>40</sup>

But what specific factors determine such a distancing from the sex of the loved parent, instead of a concentration of desire on him or her? In other words, what, from the Oedipal standpoint, is the original differentiation between gays and straights? For on the basis of the classical conception of the Oedipus complex in its 'normal' or 'positive' form, even those who become heterosexual feel themselves betrayed and tormented by the evident superiority and exclusiveness of the parental relationship, which prevents the realisation of the desired love relation between daughter and father, or son and mother. And yet, if they are male, they do not renounce the female sex in general as they have had to renounce the mother. On the contrary, it is on women that they fix the 'object' of their sexual impulse, while, if they are female, they focus their desire on the male sex, instead of withdrawing from it. Freud suspected the existence 'of some special factor which definitely favours one side or the other [i.e. heterosexuality or homosexuality], and which perhaps has only waited for the appropriate moment in order to turn the choice of object in its direction'.<sup>41</sup> But he did not even try to give evidence of this.

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According to many psychoanalysts, the entry into the Oedipal phase, the characteristics of the complex and its dissolution, are determined by the way that the oral and anal phases have been traversed. The English school of psychoanalysis stresses the importance of infantile oral aggression, its 'projections' and the function of these in the assertion of homosexuality. In his essay on Leonardo da Vinci (1910), Freud viewed the oral 'fixation' on the penis as a direct displacement of the primary attachment to the breast. Homosexuality would then derive from a 'fixation of the erotic needs on the mother'.<sup>42</sup>

In 1921, Freud came to the following conclusion:

The genesis of male homosexuality in a large class of cases is as follows. A young man has been unusually long and intensely fixated upon his mother in the sense of the Oedipus complex. But at last, after the end of puberty, the time comes for exchanging his mother for some other sexual object. Things take a sudden turn: the young man does not abandon his mother, but identifies himself with her; he transforms himself into her, and now looks about for objects which can replace his ego for him, and on which he can bestow such love and care as he has experienced from his mother. This is a frequent process, which can be confirmed as often as one likes, and which is naturally quite independent of any hypothesis that may be made as to the organic driving force and the motives of the sudden transformation.<sup>43</sup>

Once again, then, Freud does not even touch on what is of particular interest to us here, i.e. the specific causes and mechanisms of this transformation that leads to identification with the mother and the assertion of homosexuality at puberty. I would like to stress once again here the discrepancy in Freud's thinking. His theory of sexuality upholds the existence in each person of homoerotic tendencies, particularly so in children ('polymorphous and perverse'), and thus recognises a universal and congenital homosexuality; and yet Freud then goes on, as in the text just quoted, to inquire as to the genesis of homosexuality. But if homosexuality is congenital in us all, there is clearly no sense in investigating its genesis. What is necessary, rather, is to

investigate what it is that determines the repression of homosexual desire in most people, and makes possible its assertion in the minority.

Identification with the mother, it is true, is something of which many male homosexuals are consciously aware, alongside their identification with the father (whereas heterosexual men are generally only conscious of their identification with the same-sex parent). This emphasises the trans-sexual ambiguity of our being-in-becoming, closer to the underlying trans-sexuality than is the rigid monosexuality of straight people; our ambiguity is closer to the child's way of being. It is not for nothing that we are gay, that we are crazy queens; and in a better world, I think the 'education' of young people should be entrusted to gay men and women. Let little children come unto us!

I do not believe in the exclusive identification by homosexual men with their mothers (nor in the theory according to which gays are supposed to seek in their partner the substitute for their own ego). I believe, rather, as I have already said, that we are aware more than straight people of the identification with both parents, of the existence within us of both sexes. One thing, however, is certain: true love for his mother does prevent a man from accepting the heterosexual Norm that insults, objectifies and oppresses women. But this does not prevent us from loving other women, and I believe that the more homosexuality is liberated, the more it will be us gays who enjoy love and erotic intensity with women. Genuine love for the other sex cannot but be accompanied by the full desire, auto- and alloerotic, for one's own sex.<sup>44</sup>

It is also true, moreover, that historical and social factors place us gays far closer to the condition of women than are male heterosexuals, even if we still enjoy, to a variable extent, certain privileges and gratifications that are decidedly male, at the social, psychological and even sexual levels, for all the harshness of our persecution and exclusion from society.

In a society where the subordination of the female sex is closely bound up with with the erotic desire of the woman for the man (the greater part of women being heterosexual), and with male supremacy in the heterosexual relation, we can put forward the hypothesis that those men who generally abstain from sexual



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relations with women and do not treat them as sexual objects, experiencing instead desire for the male, stand to a certain degree closer to the condition of women, at least in some of its aspects. A gay man knows very well what it's like to go to bed with a straight man, someone who generally fucks women and from time to time goes with a queer just to test his potency (so he says). He knows what it means to be treated as a convenient hole, a sexual object on which the male, convinced of his own 'superiority', inflicts a mediocre, neurotic and egoistic desire. Many gay men, moreover, understand what it is to go around dressed 'as a woman', i.e. they know what it means to be considered a second-class human being, the second sex.

The precise extent to which homosexual men live situations similar to those experienced by women is impossible to establish. These situations, moreover, vary from case to case, and among gay men themselves, the more 'effeminate', i.e. the queens, often suffer humiliation and violence that those who pass as straight can only imagine with horror. I am quite content, however, to be an obvious, 'feminine' queen. It is a great destiny to possess and seek to live with clear awareness what the regular mass of people, in their accustomed idiocy, disparage and try to strangle. As a comrade from the French gay movement wrote: 'We demand our "femininity", the same thing that women reject, and at the same time we declare that these roles are devoid of sense'.<sup>45</sup> And Daniele Morini admitted:

It has been hard for me to recognise my desire as a queen for what it is. And even after breaking through two barriers ('I can't because I'm *not* homosexual'/'I can't because I'm too politicised to have an alienated desire'), I now face a further fear: that of discovering myself a woman with a desire explicitly tied to the male. The refusal to live an alienated role hides a fear of what might be revealed by living it to the full. Or perhaps the fear of being male?<sup>46</sup>

In trying to grasp what it is that enables some people to strongly assert their homosexual desire, despite the social condemnation of homoeroticism, I believe that we have to take into consideration the 'complete' Oedipus complex, i.e. both its

so-called 'normal' or 'positive' and its 'negative' or 'inverted' aspects. We need, that is, to take account of the 'triangular character of the Oedipus situation and the constitutional bisexuality of each individual' (Freud) – the constitutional trans-sexuality, I would rather say. To quote Freud again:

Closer study usually discloses the more complete Oedipus complex, which is twofold, positive and negative, and is due to the bisexuality originally present in children: that is to say, a boy has not merely an ambivalent attitude towards his father and an affectionate object-choice towards his mother, but at the same time he also behaves like a girl and displays an affectionate feminine attitude to his father and a corresponding jealousy and hostility towards his mother. It is this complicating element introduced by bisexuality that makes it so difficult to obtain a clear view of the facts in connection with the earliest object-choices and identifications, and still more difficult to describe them intelligibly.<sup>47</sup>

In order to form a full idea of the Oedipus complex, therefore, we need to bear in mind both the child's hetero- and homoerotic tendencies. If only the 'positive' aspect is taken into account, then infancy (and also puberty, which frequently involves a revival of the complex) will be interpreted in categories that are exclusively heterosexual. It is then impossible to grasp the full complexity of the Oedipal situation, given that infancy is 'polymorphously perverse', and not just heterosexual, or to understand the complexity of the pubertal stage, given that puberty, as is well known, displays a rich resurgence of gay desires, frequently more numerous and intense than heterosexual, in the context of the intensification of Eros that characterises this stage of development. For what reasons, then, need the young boy, given his 'undifferentiated' polymorphous disposition, be jealous of the mother and feel rivalry with the father, rather than the other way round as well? And why is the little girl jealous of her father instead of her mother? Psychoanalysis itself – as we shall see later on<sup>48</sup> – sees jealousy among heterosexual adults as a veiled expression of homoerotic desire. (In the case of a man, for

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example, jealousy over a loved woman who is involved with someone else indicates that it is unconsciously he who desires this other man.) But childhood is far less disguised. Homosexuality is not yet repressed, and in the boy's 'positive' Oedipal jealousy over the mother we must also recognise his desire for the father; the so-called 'positive' and 'negative' aspects of the complex are intertwined.

Freud goes on to say:

Analytic experience then shows that in a number of cases one or the other constituent disappears, except for barely distinguishable traces; so that the result is a series with the normal positive Oedipus complex at one end and the inverted negative one at the other, while its intermediate members exhibit the complete form with one or other of its two components preponderating. At the dissolution of the Oedipus complex the four trends of which it consists will group themselves in such a way as to produce a father-identification and a mother-identification. The father-identification will preserve the object-relation to the mother which belonged to the positive complex and will at the same time replace the object-relation to the father which belonged to the inverted complex: and the same will be true, *mutatis mutandis*, of the mother-identification. The relative intensity of the two identifications in any individual will reflect the preponderance in him of one or other of the two sexual dispositions.<sup>49</sup>

I do not believe that the different pattern assumed by the two identifications depends simply on the greater or lesser weight of the two sexual dispositions (homo- and heterosexual). I am sure that it also depends on eduction, or the social and family repression that forcibly leads the boy to identify with the father and renounce the male 'object', and the girl to identify with the mother and renounce the female 'object'.

We can put forward the hypothesis, then, that those who become homosexual, thanks to the particular richness of their predisposition to homoeroticism, fail to renounce the male (father) object, if they are themselves male, or the female (mother)

object, if they are female. And that the strength of the congenital homosexual disposition is reinforced by a certain tendency (whether conscious or not) on the part of the parent of the same sex to establish a homoerotic relation with the child, a special emotional bond.

In general, because of the anti-homosexual taboo (and the taboo on incest), the object-choice that the son makes for the father is castrated, negated, by the father himself; and similarly with the girl and her mother. This 'normally' leads to the predominant identification of the boy with the father and the girl with the mother. As Freud explains it, identification serves as a substitute for the forbidden 'object' – and the 'object' most strictly forbidden is that of the 'inverted' Oedipus complex. Prevalent identification of this kind with the same-sex parent leads to maintaining only the heterosexual type of object-choice, because this is based above all on the repression of homoerotic desire and because the parent introjected by way of identification is heterosexual. This would then explain the repression of homosexuality in so-called 'normal' individuals. It would follow, then, that homosexual desire is not repressed in those who find a certain response to their homoerotic object cathexis in the same-sex parent; those in whose infancy, therefore, the 'negative' or 'inverted' Oedipal tendency is not suddenly and brutally repressed, but finds a certain channel of expression in the dialectic of family relations. The renunciation of 'objects' of the 'opposite' sex would follow from a lack of need to identify with the same-sex parent, and hence with his heterosexual behaviour, as well as from the sense of guilt, or the internalisation of the social condemnation, which befalls those who do not completely identify in this way with the prescribed patriarchal model of male or female, i.e. who do not fit the Norm. The sense of guilt leads to a feeling of inferiority vis-à-vis 'normal' people, those who are endowed with an object-choice that society deems higher, positive, 'normal', etc.

We can thus put forward the hypothesis that the repression of desire for the other sex in homosexuals is actually due to the social condemnation of homosexuality, which leads the homosexual to feel guilty and hence unworthy of the choice defined as 'normal', i.e. an impossible candidate to please people of the other sex.

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Oppression, moreover, forces the homosexual to wage a constant struggle against both his external persecutors and his induced sense of guilt, the persecutor within, with a view to defending (alone against all) his 'anomalous' choice, his homoerotic desire, concentrating all his libidinal energy into this. The liberation of homosexuality in society and the extirpation of the sense of guilt (of false guilt) will therefore lead – I am convinced – to the rediscovery, on the part of gay people, of their erotic desire for people of the other sex, and the discovery of the particular attraction that persons of the other sex feel towards them.

I would have preferred not to force the reader to follow me through this complex and hypothetical argument, which at some points is certainly obtuse. But as I said, this field is difficult to explore, and only a few people have taken the trouble to do so. Various hypotheses may have been put forward, but none of these, I believe, is sufficiently interesting to reproduce here. I think that practical liberation, above all, will promote further analysis. Only the general emancipation of homosexuality will shed real light on the history of its oppression and its ever new resurgence, despite persecution, over the centuries.

The women's movement has discovered the importance of the love relation between every woman and her mother, i.e. the 'inverted' Oedipus complex. In a text written in 1974, a Milan feminist group explain how 'homosexuality in the broad sense, as a relationship with the mother, is the primary and basic relation for all women'. Melanie Klein 'stresses the Oedipal tendencies that "naturally" press the little girl towards her father, but this does not succeed in explaining why the father is always internalised as a sadistic father, if not by reference to the frustrated relation with the mother'. Rivalry with the male sex, however, is for women a consequence of this fundamental homosexual relation with the mother.

It is not by 'incorporating the father's penis' that the mother disappoints the little girl, but rather because she is possessed by the law of the father. It is only by way of desire for the mother than the 'penis' acquires great prestige in the eyes of the little girl, and becomes the object of admiration and desire . . . Only possession of the 'penis' guarantees

omnipotence and hence power over the mother (power to possess and destroy her). Identification/assimilation with the male, as a gesture of penis envy, thus precedes love for the male . . . In the little girl, sadistic impulses rapidly mingle with the fantasy of possessing a destructive 'penis', while the object of desire and aggression generally still remains the mother. With the man, she establishes instead a kind of 'paedophile complicity', or herself assumes masculine characteristics, or else repeats, through seduction and the sexual act, the symbolic introjection of the penis. Heterosexual love, therefore, is generally, for the woman, the reconfirmation of the masculine position. We would then be able to modify the customary assertion that the woman seeks the mother in the man, and say rather that through love for the man – the repeated reappropriation of the penis – the woman actually seeks to possess the mother.<sup>50</sup>

From the gay standpoint, as from the feminist, it is impossible to refer to the Oedipus complex without a complete recasting of the theories that bear on it, and without effectively taking into account the complex in its full extension. According to Deleuze, no one should 'believe that homosexuality is sufficient to escape from the classical categories of psychoanalysis: Oedipus – castration – death instinct'.<sup>51</sup> But even recognising that homosexuality, in the same way as heterosexuality, is based on the customary conception of the difference which finds its basis in the Oedipal triangle and which is challenged by our underlying trans-sexuality, we gays do not recognise ourselves in the classical Oedipal categories, because homosexuality, in a certain sense, negates Oedipus. Homosexual desire threatens the Oedipal reproduction. In Hocquenghem's words:

The direct manifestation of homosexual desire stands in contrast to the relations of identity, the necessary roles imposed by the Oedipus complex in order to ensure the reproduction of society. Reproductive sexuality is also the reproduction of the Oedipus complex; family heterosexuality guarantees not only the production of children but also (and chiefly) Oedipal reproduction, with its differentiation

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between parents and children.<sup>52</sup>

In dealing with the assertion of heterosexuality, we have seen how its supremacy, determined by way of the Oedipal phase, is based on the repression of homoerotic tendencies. The revolutionary homosexual struggle is thus waged against a form of oppression that is prior to Oedipus. Oedipus is negated by negating its premises. Deleuze, again, with a benevolent impulse, admits:

There is of course a revolutionary potential in certain homosexual groups. I believe this is not just because they are homosexual, it is rather that their homosexuality has allowed them to question the differences between the sexes. And through this questioning, they become able, in their marginal position, to tackle the problem of sexual desire as well.<sup>53</sup>

Thank you very much!

We revolutionary queens see in the child not so much Oedipus, or the future Oedipus, as the potentially free human being. We do indeed love children. We are able to desire them erotically, in response to their own erotic wishes, and we can openly and with open arms grasp the rush of sensuality that they pour out and make love with them.

That is why paedophilia is so strictly condemned. It sends messages of love to the child, whom society, through the family, seeks to traumatise, educestrate and negate, imposing on the child's eroticism the Oedipal grid. The oppressive heterosexual society forces the child into the latency period; but this is nothing but the deadly introduction to the prison of a latent 'life'. Paedophilia, on the other hand, 'is an arrow of libido directed at the foetus' (Francesco Ascoli).

# the ideology of oppression

### 1. *The Staging of 'Love'*

There is a real relation of opposition between heterosexuality and homosexuality, both in society as a whole and within every individual. Just as there is a dialectic between the sexes, so there is also a dialectic between sexual tendencies and forms of behaviour. In fact the way forward to the overcoming of monosexuality and the affirmation of the female sex and trans-sexuality runs directly via the development of this contradiction.

Save for some rare exceptions, which only confirm the rule, heterosexuality and homosexuality are mutually exclusive. These exceptions are the cases of so-called 'bisexuality', 'cases', in fact of people who experience conscious sexual attraction towards both sexes, and 'freely' indulge their bisexual desire. (Today, however, the fact of feeling attracted to both sexes is not in itself sufficient for overcoming the bipolar contradiction between the sexes, i.e. overcoming *bi*-sexuality.) These bisexuals, however, are almost all either predominantly heterosexual or predominantly homosexual. The former usually behave in a way that in essentials conforms to the Norm (they are exceptions, we can say, who only confirm the Norm), while the latter, as a general rule, can be more easily identified with 'homosexuals of strict observance' (as Francesco Pertegato calls them) than with the predominantly heterosexual bisexuals.

Bisexuality may be viewed as a compromise, often a rather poor one, between the repressive Norm and trans-sexuality. But revolution is not made through compromise. A revolutionary



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homosexual today, who might well have sexual relations with women, will certainly not define himself as bisexual, among other reasons because, if by bisexuality is meant the sum of heterosexuality and homosexuality, he will refuse to define his relations with women as heterosexual. He will rather say that these encounters are largely tainted by heterosexual conditioning, a conditioning that he seeks to combat and overcome. Heterosexuality, in fact, is the Norm based on the repression of Eros, and a gay revolutionary who does not accept the Norm will certainly not conduct his erotic relations with women in the heterosexual, 'normal', sense. He will far prefer to eliminate the heavy residues of heterosexuality that still encumber these. We shall take up this line of argument again below.<sup>1</sup>

In any case, among the majority of people today, manifest heterosexual desire rules out homosexual desire, and vice versa. And yet the specific predominance of the one does not exist without the simultaneous and antithetical latent presence of the other. Heterosexuality cannot be considered socially 'normal' if homosexuality is not judged a 'perversion'. The condition of homosexuals is the mirror image of a society that sees itself as heterosexual.

On the one hand, it is heterosexuality that holds 'power', we might say; heterosexuality is the Norm which the system upholds. Homosexuality, on the other hand, plays the role of the negative, the antithesis with respect to this institutionalised normality. As André Morali-Daninos wrote in a popular work:

Were homosexuality to receive, even in theory, a show of approval, were it allowed to break away even partially from the framework of pathology, we would soon arrive at the abolition of the heterosexual couple and of the family, which are the foundations of the Western society in which we live.<sup>2</sup>

Given that the parental couple on which the family is based is a heterosexual relation, the education of children and young people is necessarily stamped in a heterosexual mould. The goal of edacastration is the formation of a new heterosexual bond; every human being is constricted and mutilated by the dictatorship of

heterosexual genitality. (And genitality, in the language of the sexophobe-sexologists, means in fact the penetration of the female sex organ by the male, with the purpose of procreation.)

The ideology of heterosexual primacy affects the minds of very many so-called 'revolutionaries'. It is sufficient to read a book like *The Grammar of Living*, for example, to see how people like David Cooper are still tied to a conception of heterosexuality as the principal expression of Eros. Heterosexual ideology also structured the thinking of Wilhelm Reich, convinced as he was of the need for an 'evolution' that would abolish the earlier stages (pregenital, anal and homosexual) in order to attain the perfect heterosexual genital orgasm. Too many people claim to 'liberate sexuality' without putting the ideology of heterosexual primacy in question. The anus, in particular, remains proscribed (the male anus, of course).

Religion consecrates in matrimony the same heterosexual relationship that the state institutionalises. In this society, the conception of 'love' that is so heavily propagated is purely heterosexual in character. Erotic 'romanticism' – in the broad sense – is almost always heterosexual: *Death in Venice* is a rare exception, and even today, *Ernesto*<sup>3</sup> is seen as scandalous. If homoeroticism is banned from society, or at best merely tolerated, the ideal of heterosexual 'love' is broadcast in every possible way, and yet this much trumpeted 'love' is not love at all. What capital propagates is the alienation of love; the so-called 'normal' couple is based on an alienated bond, given that the objectified and stereotyped woman is not woman but rather the negation of woman, and the phallic and deficient male is not man but the negation of both man and woman. The spectacle of heterosexuality cannot be identified with any deep amorous desire. Heterosexuality as it presents itself today is simply the dominant 'normal' form of a mutilated Eros; and as well as the negation of homoeroticism it is above all the negation of love between persons of different sex.

The capitalist spectacle represents the maximum estrangement reached by the human species in the stage of its prehistory. And yet it is precisely the general spectacle character of contemporary society that leads those who reject it to recognise the hallmarks of a stage production in all the absolutisings of present and past: to understand how ideology

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passes off heterosexuality as the sole, 'natural' and eternal form of Eros. The revolutionary critique of the '*société du spectacle*' will unmask the ideology of heterosexual primacy.

Genuine loving desire is to be found only beneath and beyond the present contradictory expressions of 'love'. Perhaps love is the tendency towards overcoming the individualist, solipsist, idealist and 'normal' delusion; love is the tendency to annihilate the outworn neurotic and ego-istic categories of 'subject' and 'object'. Feuerbach, in his way, had an inkling of this. Marx too.

The advertised spectacle of alienated heterosexuality cannot but be anti-gay, whether explicitly or implicitly, given that the repression of homosexuality is indispensable to determining this type of heterosexuality. But if press, advertising and the mass media as a whole are constantly celebrating heterosexuality, fashion clearly reflects a homosexual aesthetic that is prostituted to capitalist production and exploited by the system.

Woman as object, sexy and 'captivating', well dressed and made-up, hair styled to perfection, an empty simulacrum that is put on the market as a commodity designed for heterosexual fantasy, is the creation of a male homosexual aesthetic fantasy (aesthetic in the original Greek sense), tailored to the sensual desire for the woman which is almost universally latent in us manifest homosexuals. What excites straight men is the image of an artificial 'woman' springing from the censorship of erotic desire for the female that generally characterises male homosexuals (photographers, fashion designers, hair stylists, make-up artists, film directors). More than a real woman, heterosexual men desire a disguised homosexual fantasy of 'woman', and this is what they masturbate over. Tiziana V. maintains that the woman-object, this feminine appearance, is really a homosexual desire, the desire for a cock. Manolo Pellegrini has drawn my attention to the way that the reified woman of pornographic magazines (of the *Playboy* type), photographed and posed as a general rule by gay photographers, is characterised by a stiffness of form (erect breasts, firm and protruding buttocks), whereas real women generally tend more than men to a softness of form, a relaxation of bodily tissues. What is the source of this desire by the gay photographer to depict, and by the heterosexual man to desire, a stiff, erect, firm body, such as is rarely met with in reality, if not

the secret intention on the gay man's part to display a male body, stiff and hard like an erect penis, and the secret desire for this on the heterosexual's part?

'Heterosexuality', therefore, is also imposed by the subjection of homosexual taste and fantasy.<sup>4</sup> Heterosexuality is imposed even when its content bears the clear sign of homosexuality. Heterosexuality is victorious.

Love between people of the same sex, on the other hand, is something taboo. It is not talked about much, not taken into account. If it is mentioned at all, this is almost a slip of the tongue. It is discussed only in terms of disparagement, commiseration, condemnation, disgust (or tolerance), in the way that people speak about a disease, a vice or a noxious social pest. Heterosexual society is marked by a deep form of 'racism', as Francesco Saba Sardi calls it, 'when confronted with the homosexual and deviants in general, prescribing the very language that it uses: the signifiers and allusions that are resorted to in denoting the "queen", the "dyke", the "queer", the "poof", and so on. The abundance of synonyms, and the euphemisms that always accompany them, bear witness to the attraction and the contorted curiosity that the phenomenon generates, not to mention the inevitable tendency to use what the English call "lavatory humour" in confronting such deviants, a humour that is denigrating and scornful. The same kind of jokes are told about both mad people and homosexuals'.<sup>5</sup>

In the eyes of the greater part of so-called 'normal' people, heterosexuality goes together with procreation, while homosexuality is ranked with vice and prostitution. It is commonplace that a bad woman is both a whore and a lesbian. The scornful conception of transvestism serves as a link between prostitution and homosexuality. And the 'invert' is an evil individual who does dirty things and seduces children in public gardens or poky cinemas.<sup>6</sup>

When a famous person such as Pasolini, for example, is brutally murdered by a young hustler, society opens its surprised eyes to this contradictory phenomenon hidden with it (and this is the only real connection between homosexuality and prostitution, leaving aside the prostitution which many transvestites are forced into). It finds that there are all these 'delinquent' young boys,

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who of course are really heterosexual – ‘It’s obvious that this Pelosi [the killer of Pasolini] can’t be a queer; if he did that kind of thing, it was simply because he was hungry’ – but who sell themselves for a few thousand lire and a plate of spaghetti to homosexuals in search of a bit of friendly company. In reality, of all the present expressions of the homosexual ghetto, none is so profoundly akin, so evidently conforming to the heterosexual society, as this parasitic and violent form of hustling. Perhaps this is why, to the eyes of ‘normal’ people, these so-called ‘heterosexual’ male prostitutes are so easily unnoticed. And in this way there passes unnoticed, too, one of the modes of exploitation that the heterosexual society inflicts on us gays.

### *2. The Dogma of Procreation*

We homosexuals suffer not on account of our ‘inversion’, but rather from the persecution inflicted upon us by society. More than the ‘origin’ of our homosexuality, we are concerned to shed light on the motives for its persecution, with a view to making clearer and more effective the battle we are waging against this. If people try and develop an etiology of homosexual behaviour, why don’t they also investigate the reasons for the fixation of desire, on the part of the majority, on ‘objects’ of the ‘opposite’ sex? The two questions are complementary, and neither can be resolved without the other. Indeed, an all-round etiological research, which would also take the second question into account, instead of avoiding dealing with it on the pretext that it concerns an erotic disposition and behaviour that are defined as ‘normal’, could well make a valid contribution to discovering the reasons that lie behind the persecution of homosexuality. As René Schérer said, we need not ask why a human being can become homosexual, but rather ‘why education has led him to establish a difference between the sexes in their capacity to provide pleasure, such that an exclusive heterosexuality can develop out of the absolute ambivalence of infancy’.<sup>7</sup>

The usual way in which heterosexuality is presented as ‘normal’ is through the equation of love with procreation. Nothing could be more fallacious; erotic desire and reproduction of the species

in no way coincide. To consider sexuality as having procreation as its goal is to apply a teleologically heterosexual – and thus inadequate – schema of interpretation to the complex multiplicity of the erotic function in human existence. As Georg Groddeck wrote:

The attempt to refer all érotic phenomena to the instinct of reproduction is one of the greatest stupidities of our time . . . Every bough of apple blossom, every flower and every work of man is evidence against so narrow an interpretation of the purposes of Nature. Of the twenty thousand ova capable of being fertilised which are born with the girl-child, only a few hundred are left by the time she has reached puberty, and of these, to take a high figure, a dozen come to fruition; and of the many millions of the man's spermatozoa, countless troops perish without even reaching a woman's body. People babble a great deal of nonsense . . .<sup>8</sup>

Procreation proceeds from a sexual act that is far from exhausting the entire vast range of desire, the full scope of its gradations. It was central to Gide's argument in his *Corydon* that 'the sensual pleasure, which the act of impregnation brings to each sex, is not, as you know, necessarily and exclusively linked with that act . . . It is not fertilisation that animals seek, but simply sensual pleasure. They seek pleasure, and achieve fertilisation by a fluke'.<sup>9</sup> Just as with the animals, so to consider procreation as the goal of human sexuality is to mystify heterosexual intercourse, attributing to it a 'metaphysical purpose'. It means misconstruing a pleasure which is in the first place an end in itself, or rather, the end of which is the satisfaction of the sexual impulse. It is an act of hypocrisy.

In nature, sex is not exclusively directed to reproduction. Among very many species of animals, for example, while females come on heat only for short periods of the year (oestrus cycle), males do not undergo such pauses. And then, precisely when they are on heat, many female animals frequently develop homosexual relations. The sow acts the boar, the mare acts the stallion, the cow acts the bull, etc., mounting other females, and frequently even males.<sup>10</sup>

Many people see in sexuality the goal of procreation, but they

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refuse to recognise this teleology as their own judgement. And misunderstanding it in this way, they tend to absolutise it, imputing to nature a historically determined peculiarity of human thinking. As a result, we have to suspend judgement in order to understand what really lies in Eros, beyond all prejudices, with a view to being able to live and enjoy this in freedom.

The persecution of homosexuality is part and parcel of the wider context of general sexual repression. The dogma of procreation as the sole true goal of sexuality grew up historically as the ideological underpinning for the effective reduction of Eros to monogamous heterosexuality, and at the same time, as a justification for the condemnation placed by society on all other libidinal tendencies, with a view to sublimating these and directing them into the economic sphere. If it became necessary to explicitly stress that the purpose of sexuality was *reproduction*, this was in order to conceal the true purpose of sexual repression: the exploitation of women and men in *production*. We shall return to this fundamental argument later on.<sup>11</sup>

At all events, we can see how absurd it is today to continue rejecting homosexuality as alien to procreation, when our planet is suffering among other things from overpopulation. The principal cause of this is nothing but the oppressive persistence of the anti-gay taboo.

The procreation dogma also forms part of patriarchal religion and culture. It is the expression of a male society, in which women, who are the real subjects of procreation, are chained to a subordinate role. Adriana Guardigli has drawn my attention to the fact that only women can really understand and know what procreation involves, and how reproduction is linked with sexuality. By oppressing women and sexuality, society represses the procreative instinct that forms part of Eros, and the female Eros in particular. The present ambivalent (love and hate) relations between parents and children are equally bound up with the repression of this instinct.

### *3. The Psychonazis*

Freud's view, in which homosexuality, while a 'perversion', was

precisely not a pathological syndrome, is far from shared by all psychoanalysts and psychiatrists. This is shown by the comprehensive repression that the psychoanalytic school brought to bear on the more threatening aspects of Freudian thought – even Wilhelm Reich, for example, was caught up in the very repression he denounced, particularly on the question of homosexuality.

Sandor Ferenczi, for instance, took an explicitly contrary view to Freud as far as homoeroticism was concerned. In 1909, he defined homosexuality as a psychoneurosis, also maintaining that he did not believe in any universal and congenital homosexuality.<sup>12</sup> In October 1911, at the third congress of the International Psychoanalytic Association held in Weimar, Ferenczi proposed a distinction between subject- and object-homoeroticism:

A man who in intercourse with men feels himself to be a woman is inverted in respect to his own ego (homoeroticism through subject-inversion, or, more shortly, 'subject-homoeroticism'); he feels himself to be a woman, and this not only in genital intercourse, but in all relations of life.

This latter type of homosexuality, according to Ferenczi, forms 'a true "sexual intermediate stage" (in the sense of Magnus Hirschfeld and his followers), thus a pure developmental anomaly'. (Note the facile simplicity of his definition.)

To the figure of the passive homosexual 'suffering' from this 'subject-homoeroticism', Ferenczi counterposed the 'true active homosexual':

The true 'active homosexual' . . . feels himself a man in every respect, is as a rule very energetic, and there is nothing effeminate to be discovered in his bodily or mental organisation. The object of his inclination alone is exchanged, so that one might call him a homoerotic through exchange of the love-object, or, more shortly, an object-homoerotic.

It is this 'object homoeroticism', according to Ferenczi, that constitutes a neurosis – an obsessional neurosis, to be more precise. Describing 'object-homoeroticism' as a pathological



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syndrome, Ferenczi admitted that he found himself 'in opposition with Freud, who in his "Sexualtheorie" describes homosexuality as a perversion'.<sup>13</sup>

It is clear that, while the label of 'perversion' that Freud applied to homosexuality shows up the reactionary basis of his position towards gay people (even if it is 'inappropriate . . . to use the word perversion as a term of reproach'),<sup>14</sup> other psychoanalysts, including many who were personally close to Freud, such as Ferenczi, could be more overtly reactionary in defining homosexuality as pathological in itself.

On the other hand, however, Ferenczi's line of argument is full of contradictions. In some of his writings, where he deals with the question of homosexuality less directly, he cannot avoid tacitly accepting the existence of a congenital homosexuality, i.e. the universal presence of the gay desire.<sup>15</sup> But if (as these texts suggest) any human being can be viewed as also homosexual, are we then all affected by obsessional neurosis or a 'pure developmental anomaly'?

No, Ferenczi would say, the reason being that he still distinguishes between 'neurotic' and 'healthy' people. Clearly, from his point of view, homosexuality shows itself to be a psychoneurosis or anomaly only when it is manifest, i.e. when it defeats the resistances and escapes repression.

I believe I speak for many homosexuals if I say that, on the contrary (and here we find ourselves closer to Freud's own line of thought), the general neurosis that affects everyone in our society is largely a function of the social suppression of the gay desire, its forced repression and its conversion into pathological symptoms.

Ferenczi, it would seem, was unwilling to draw such a conclusion. His privileged condition as a heterosexual male, conforming to the Norm, prevented him from discovering the major role played by the repression of homosexuality in the etiology of the neurosis that torments our society and civilisation. To discover this, he would have had first of all to recognise his own 'obsessional neurosis' and the anomalous character of his own development as against a free pansexual 'evolution'. He would then have had to consider how it is possible to be truly well and 'healthy' except by liberating one's own desire for people of the same sex. Manifest homosexuality does not in itself guarantee happiness, but there is

no genuine liberation without the liberation of the gay desire.

I have mentioned how the majority of psychiatric studies on (male) homosexuality always tend to separate into rigid compartments the categories of 'masculine' homosexuals (Ferenczi's 'object homoeroticism') and 'feminine' ones ('subject homoeroticism'), according to the traditional counterposed models of heterosexual role ascription and the strict differentiation between the sexes. Those psychiatrists and psychoanalysts who venture upon the study of homosexuality find themselves unable to refrain from applying to it categories of interpretation that are completely heterosexual. As for the anti-psychiatrists, they are better at making sense of Lacan than they are at understanding homosexuality. ('Would you like some Lacan?' 'What is it, a new soft drink?')

In psychoanalytic interpretations, then, we homosexuals find only a very distorted picture of ourselves; almost invariably, the views of psychoanalysts fully match the stereotyped and fallacious ideas that ignorant heterosexuals have of us. (And as far as homosexuality is concerned, all heterosexuals are more or less ignorant.) Far from starting from the appearance of our 'external' life, our exclusion from society, with a view to attaining, by critical analysis, the reality of our condition as homosexuals, psychoanalysis, weighed down with prejudices, applies categories of interpretation taken over from the typical heterosexual view of homosexuality. In other words, it proceeds simply from appearance to appearance, sowing illusions, erecting obstacles to criticism and reinforcing the prevailing ideology.

Positions that are essentially equivalent to Ferenczi's are met with very often in the history of psychiatry and psychoanalysis. It is only too common for doctors to classify the great majority – if not all – 'cases' of manifest homosexuality as neurotic and psychopathological. In their view, homoeroticism is neurotic as an 'infantile fixation of the libido, in particular a fixation at the sadistic-anal stage'; 'by its failure to dissolve the Oedipus complex and its persistent narcissism'; 'by its repression of heterosexuality'; or finally, 'because of defective sexual development in earliest childhood, arising from some profound deception in connection with the opposite sex' (Wilhelm Reich).<sup>16</sup> These are the themes most commonly encountered.

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Then there are those who see the cause of homosexuality as lying in the 'panic fear' experienced towards the mystery of the other sex. 'We consider homosexuality to be a pathological biosocial, psychosexual adaptation, consequent to pervasive fears surrounding the expression of heterosexual impulses' (Irving Bieber).<sup>17</sup>

Hypotheses of this kind immediately show themselves up as uncritical and illusory by the way that they try and understand us on the basis of the prejudice that heterosexuality can be taken as 'normal' in some absolute sense. And yet, if we follow the psychoanalytic theories pertaining to the 'pathogenesis' of homosexuality, we cannot avoid considering heterosexuality too, by analogy, as a neurosis – by its repression of homosexuality, for example, or by the panic fear it displays of sexual relations with people of the same sex. Paraphrasing Bieber, we could say: 'We consider heterosexuality to be a pathological biosocial, psychosexual adaptation, consequent to pervasive fears surrounding the expression of homosexual impulses'.

It is no fun to play hide-and-seek with psychoanalysts – or rather, psychonazis – nor is it useful to confront them on their home ground. These doctors are awash with stupidities for which the anti-homosexual taboo in their unconscious is responsible, and it is certainly not necessary to take their 'views' seriously. And yet too many people, even today, believe they are right, and find in their prejudices support for their own, so that it is impossible for us to completely avoid dealing with them. We should bear in mind here what Domenico Tallone wrote on the psychiatric equation of homosexuality with sickness: 'I would prefer not to have to embark on arguments on a theme which is so completely imbecilic, were it not that this imbecility is still far too successful at replacing good sense with vacuous results backed by academic titles'.<sup>18</sup>

It is clear that, unless we simply take over the current prejudice that considers heterosexuality as *ipso facto* 'normal' and 'natural', and homosexuality as 'abnormal' and 'unnatural', then to say that the majority of 'cases' of manifest homosexuality are psychopathological, and that homoeroticism is a neurosis, forces the admission that heterosexuality too is psychopathic and a disease. So that we may well ask what point there is, and especially

in whose interest it is, to diagnose homosexuals as 'neurotic', and can see how absurd it is to claim to 'cure' homosexuality as a 'sickness' on the basis of the heterosexual standpoint of the psychonazis, which takes itself to be healthy, but is in actual fact neurotic.

But why is homoeroticism deemed 'abnormal' and 'unnatural'? If the animal being of man is considered the essential aspect of his 'nature', we see immediately that homosexuality is common among the animals, in certain species actually more widespread than heterosexuality, and female homosexuality just as much as male.<sup>19</sup> Homosexuality is extremely common among primates, and very many sub-primate mammals are also homosexual, to mention only lions, dolphins, dogs (who hasn't seen two male dogs fucking, or two females, for that matter?), cats, horses, sheep, cows, pigs, rabbits, guinea-pigs, rats, etc. There are also birds that are often gay (ducks, for instance).

And yet this kind of evidence is no help for opening the eyes of the stubborn. Blinkered heterosexuals use the concepts 'natural' and 'unnatural' according to their own convenience. We can quote what Eurialo De Michelis has to say, for example, in his essay titled 'Homosexuality Seen by a Moralist': 'What force is there in the irresistible argument that "unnatural" love is also found in the animal world? It may be something innocent in beasts, but not so in man, given that human life is particularly made up of that which distinguishes man from the animal world'.<sup>20</sup>

Let us leave the animals alone, therefore, having seen that they, too, have 'unnatural' loves, and that human life involves something else. Out of some seventy-six differing forms of human society studied by the anthropologists Clellan Ford and Frank Beach, homosexuality was disapproved of and more or less suppressed in only twenty-seven (just over a third). The anti-homosexual taboo that characterises our Western civilisation is thus not a structural element of 'human nature', but rather has a sure, if mysterious, historical origin. Sodom and Gomorrah were not destroyed for nothing.<sup>21</sup>

Finally, we have already seen how psychoanalysis itself, in the words of Freud, declared the universal presence of the homoerotic desire in human beings. I would deduce from all this that heterosexuality, in so far as it bases its own alleged primacy on

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the completely false assertion that homosexuality is 'unnatural', 'abnormal' or 'pathological', demonstrates rather that it is itself pathological. More precisely, if love for a human being of the 'opposite' sex is not in fact in an absolute sense pathological, then heterosexuality as it presents itself today, i.e. as the Norm, is pathological, since it bases its primacy like a despot on the oppression of the other erotic trends. This heterosexual tyranny is one of the factors determining the modern neurosis, and (dialectically) it is also one of the severest symptoms of this neurosis.

Many psychiatrists and psychoanalysts, in their role as deluded cops for heterosexual capitalist authority, distinguish various types of homosexuality from the medical and psychological standpoint: according to them, we should speak not of homosexuality but rather of homosexualities. In the same vein, then, we might speak of heterosexualities instead of simply of heterosexuality.

There are doctors who differentiate the various types of homosexuality according to the age of the love 'object': paedophilia or pederasty, if this is a child or adolescent, gerontophilia if the person is old. But what if the sexual 'object' is somewhere in between?

At least as far as paedophilia is concerned, the Greek etymology makes no distinction of sex: *paidos* can refer equally to a young boy or girl. Should we then distinguish paedophile heterosexuality from other forms of heterosexuality? In fact, when so-called 'normal' people disparage the 'perversion' of paedophilia in relations between people of different sex, they certainly don't refer to it as heterosexuality (in as much as this is their synonym for 'normality') nor even as paedophilia (given that their ignorance leads them to consider this term as simply synonymous with male homosexuality). They prefer to speak just of 'perversion' period, or, still worse, of 'bestial crime'. For 'normal' people, the man who has sex with a little girl is not a heterosexual but a monster. And yet *Lolita* sells very well. It's found on the bookshelves of the best families, in their fantasies and in their secrets.

There are even those doctors who make a show of distinguishing homosexualities according to the supposed modality of sexual

'technique' (anal, oral, etc.). But once again, what is the sense of this distinction if one individual can exhibit several 'homosexualities'? Does he go in for anal sex, sucking cock, kissing, cuddling and masturbation in turns, or even at one and the same time, is he active or passive with his partners, or active and passive with two partners simultaneously? But from the point of view of 'technique', one and the same person can equally exhibit several heterosexualities: anal sex, for example (even if the *Last Tango* was banned in Italy), as well as the most traditional genital/frontal heterosexuality. Finally, what would these confusion-mongering doctors say of those who enjoy at one and the same time various forms of both heterosexuality and homosexuality? Of a person, for example, who, having his sister's fist up his arse, himself fucks the sister's boy-friend while masturbating the boy-friend's little sister and sucking off his father-in-law. (Whose father-in-law?)

With all their distinctions, as useless as they are high-falutin, our doctors only model themselves after the uncle (to keep it in the family) in the poem by Catullus:

Gellius,

hearing his uncle anathematise the mere mention  
as well as the performance of love and love's ways  
determined to take full advantage of the situation  
by promptly assaulting his aunt. Uncle  
was discreetly unable even to refer to the event.  
Gellius could do as he wished.

If he buggered the old man himself  
Uncle would not utter a word.<sup>22</sup>

Still more ridiculous is the distinction made by certain psychonazis according to the characteristics of the homosexual connection: 'relations at a purely instinctual level, or of a more complex erotic love' (Tullio Bazzi). And yet it is precisely this kind of differentiation that today enables the Church to deem homosexual relations as more or less sinful according to their character. (*More or less*, since they are still sins as far as Catholic morality is concerned.)

Finally, doctors often distinguish forms of 'true' homosexuality

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from other forms of 'spurious' or 'pseudo' homosexuality (Bergler, Schneider, Servadio, among other champions of this view).

1) 'True homosexuality' is found only when 'a man with feminine impulses is attracted to a man with masculine impulses and a masculine body'.<sup>23</sup> Only in this case, according to the doctors, is there a 'psychosexual inversion of the subject'.

2) It is not however a case of 'true sexual inversion' when a man with 'masculine impulses' is attracted to a man with a 'feminoid' body but 'masculine impulses'. In this case, they would say, the 'object' is unable to love the 'subject'. But why not? Might not the homosexual component that has previously been latent in him now surface, despite his 'masculine impulses' (which the doctors evidently equate with heterosexual desire)? We queens know perfectly well that there is no such thing as an incorrigible heterosexual. You need only catch him at the right moment (nor does it matter whether his body is 'feminoid' or 'masculine'). 'A homosexually experienced male could undoubtedly find a larger number of sexual partners among males than a heterosexually experienced male could find among females' (Kinsey).<sup>24</sup> There is nothing more gay than fucking with a guy who was previously convinced that he didn't feel any sexual attraction for other men, and who then, thanks to your artistry in seduction, suddenly starts to burn with desire in your arms. The medical differentiation between 'true' and 'pseudo' homosexuality is a castle in the air. Homosexuality is always true, and it truly exists even when it is not apparent, i.e. when it is still latent.

3) According to some of these doctors, it is impossible to speak of 'true' homosexuality in the case where 'a man with masculine impulses', is attracted to a man with a feminoid body and feminine impulses',<sup>25</sup> even if in this situation (they have to admit it – good for them!) 'it is possible for a reciprocal tie to be formed'. According to the psychonazis, in fact, as long as a man's 'impulses' remain masculine, it is impossible to speak of genuine psychosexual inversion of the 'subject' or 'true homosexuality'. Here we see the absurd effects of the notion of 'psychosexual inversion of the subject' as a *sine qua non* for 'true homosexuality', and the illusory dichotomy of 'subject' and 'object' (even if any subject is always also an object and vice versa). Our psychonazis take no account of this third 'case', considering it as an expression

of 'spurious' homosexuality, though as far as the 'impulses' are concerned, it is in fact symmetrical to, the first 'case', which in their view is the sole form of 'true homosexuality'. In this way, denying the aspect of reciprocity in the concept of 'true' homosexuality, they deny the possibility of a genuine homosexual relationship, and reduce 'true' homosexuality simply to an attribute of a certain type of 'subject'.

To sum up again: for many psychonazis, homosexuality is true only when accompanied by what they define as 'psychosexual inversion of the subject', since in this case 'the subject possesses a feminine psychosexuality and it is understandable that he should feel attracted to men'.<sup>26</sup> Only the perfect 'uranian', however ('the mind of a woman in the body of a man' – Ulrichs) would then be truly gay. All others are simply pseudo. Why on earth, then, do people generally lump together all men who want to make love with other men? Perhaps ordinary common sense knows better than the doctors?

It is not hard to see that these doctors, for all their sophisms and fine definitions, simply reiterate the commonplaces that apply to homosexuality 'interpretative' labels of a heterosexual stamp. According to them, you have to possess feminine psychosexual 'impulses' in order to desire a man. If you don't, then your homosexuality is simply 'pseudo-homosexuality'. It is clear, however, that the type of homosexual situation they define as 'true' homosexuality is in fact closer to heterosexuality. They are completely unable to see male homosexuality, for instance, as a relation between men, and reduce it essentially to a certain type of 'invert' with 'feminine' desires directed towards the male: the anti-gay taboo prevents them from understanding that homoeroticism is not just a parody of heterosexuality, but rather something quite different, and this leads them to spew out clouds of empty verbiage.

We, however, consider as truly homosexual any kind of desire, act or relation between people of the same sex. Isn't this obvious? Yes, but then ignorant heterosexuals don't seem to understand.

Included in this definition of what is truly homosexual, then, is the occasional erotic contact that a woman who in general only has relations with men might have with another woman (no matter whether she sees it like this or not); and similarly



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homosexual is the occasional contact that a man who generally has relations only with women might occasionally have with another man.

According to Kinsey *et al*, instead of using the terms 'heterosexual' or 'homosexual' as 'substantives which stand for persons, or even as adjectives to describe persons, they may be better used to describe the nature of the overt sexual relations, or of the stimuli to which an individual erotically responds'.<sup>27</sup> They are basically quite correct here, even if their proposal is rather abstract, and ignores the present situation; for, given the very real historical opposition between individuals who recognise their homoerotic desires and those who desperately deny these, it is impossible today to avoid distinguishing between manifest homosexuals and heterosexuals. In other words, it would be a dangerous and illusory terminological concealment of the real contradiction that exists between heterosexuality and homosexuality; this is a night in which not all cats are gay.

To return, then, to the views of straight psychologists. Many claim that at certain times, due to the effect of certain environmental factors, homosexual behaviour develops as a purely instinctual and palliative satisfaction. This is sometimes referred to as 'emergency' homosexuality, and is particularly to be found amongst members of an all-male 'community' who are deprived of contact with women, and vice versa. (Prisons, concentration camps, colleges, convents, ships, barracks, etc.) In actual fact, it is quite false even in these cases to speak of 'pseudo' or 'emergency' homosexuality. We have rather to recognise, here too, manifest expressions of a homoerotic desire which, while previously latent, now comes to the surface, given the particular environmental conditions, in a more or less alienated fashion (particularly due to the restrictive and inhuman conditions here).

There are even doctors who refuse to consider male prostitutes as 'true homosexuals', and would rather class these as 'amoral psychopaths' (Tullio Bazzi). But in this case, males who prostitute themselves to women could similarly not be considered true heterosexuals. Are they too, then, to be classed as 'amoral psychopaths'?

At all events, we see hustlers of this kind as homosexuals who, because of the oppression of homoeroticism and the poverty in

which they are forced to live, are only able to give expression to their homoerotic impulses when they can justify this, to themselves and to others, by the need to make money (however much of a pretext this might be).<sup>28</sup>

In conclusion, we should note the view of those who only consider homosexuality as a 'psychoneurosis' with people who, instead of being proud of their condition, are ashamed of it, fear it, and try to escape from it. But then it would follow that we could also define as psychoneurotic those heterosexuals who so desperately seek to deny that they have homosexual impulses, since it is precisely this intransigent denial that reveals their fear of recognising homosexuality in themselves, something which they cannot accept; what is neurotic about them is precisely that they are closet queens. Those homosexuals who are afraid of being so are neurotic, but so is the heterosexual society which rejects homoeroticism, deeming it shameful and base, and condemning it to latency or marginalisation. Those homosexuals who would prefer to be straight only reflect a society that represses homoeroticism.

But when a gay person does 'accept himself', then psychotherapy has to recognise that 'the results are virtually zero with those rare subjects who are prepared for such a cure'.<sup>29</sup> Some people might ask how it is possible for a homosexual to accept his condition, and at the same time undergo therapy designed to change this. Evidently it is sufficient for the doctors that a gay person is not freaking out day and night because of his homosexuality, to define him as 'self-accepting' and proceed, frequently, to try and 'cure' him. But a gay person who really does accept himself, who loves himself for what he is and what he does, and who loves other gay people, would never consent to any kind of 'cure' that sought to transform him into a heterosexual (not even if Delfine Serigie was to be the nurse).

In any case:

Even the orthodox psychoanalysts, generally so optimistic as to the possibilities of their method, are fairly sceptical in this regard. Stekel held that he had 'never seen a homosexual cured by psychoanalysis', and Nacht (1950) conceded that this condition 'is inaccessible to any kind of psychotherapy'.<sup>30</sup>

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It is obvious that you can't be cured of a disease that you haven't got.

### *4. So-Called 'Therapy'*

We have still to deal with the view of those who hazard a correlation between homosexual behaviour and hormonal balance, though as Dennis Altman points out, 'a correlation is far from being a cause'.<sup>31</sup> I have already noted how a so-called hormonal 'imbalance' can be found equally among heterosexuals as homosexuals. And as Dr Dreyfus reluctantly concedes, 'the doses of successive hormones systematically given to inverts have in no way enabled us to establish a specific hormonal formula for homosexuality'.<sup>32</sup>

Yet this has not prevented such doctors, more frequently than might be thought, from dabbling Nazi-style in experiments of hormonal 'therapy' for homosexuality. Even though the same Dr Dreyfus is forced to admit: 'Unfortunately I have not seen a case of male homosexuality, whatever might be its biological substrate, cured by the influence of hormonal treatment alone, however vigorously this is pursued'.<sup>33</sup>

A lot of these doctors are not just criminal, but imbeciles as well. Many frequently tend to confuse homosexuality with 'masculinity' in women and 'effeminacy' in men. And this despite the fact that Freud, as we have seen, already concluded that 'the degree of physical hermaphroditism is to a great extent independent of psychical hermaphroditism'.<sup>34</sup> Thus we end up with confessions such as that of Robert Stoller, a Los Angeles psychiatrist, who wrote: 'Masculine homosexual men are an exception I cannot discuss since I do not yet understand them'.<sup>35</sup> Exception after exception! But 'masculine' homosexual men, particularly in the USA, are just as common as 'effeminate' ones, even if the latter, naturally enough, are more readily observed.

It is clear that whenever a psychoanalyst departs from Freud and views homosexuality as *ipso facto* pathological, he develops a propensity to view 'therapy' as both possible and desirable. He sees 'a widespread error of pessimism among analysts about the possibility of therapeutic intervention in the case of homosexuality' (Gian Franco Tedeschi).

Freud, however, refusing to view homosexuality as a pathological syndrome, reached the following conclusion on the subject of therapy:

I have found success possible only in specially favourable circumstances, and even then the success essentially consisted in making access to the opposite sex (which had hitherto been barred) possible to a person restricted to homosexuality, thus restoring his full bisexual functions. After that it lay within him to choose whether he wished to abandon the path that is banned by society, and in some cases he has done so. One must remember that normal sexuality too depends upon a restriction in the choice of object. In general, to undertake to convert a fully developed homosexual into a heterosexual does not offer much more prospect of success than the reverse, except that for good practical reasons the latter is never attempted.

After this candid admission, Freud concludes:

As a rule the homosexual is not able to give up the object which provides him with pleasure, and one cannot convince him that if he made the change he would rediscover in the other object the pleasure that he has renounced. If he comes to be treated at all, it is mostly through the pressure of external motives, such as the social disadvantages and dangers attaching to his choice of object, and such components of the instinct of self-preservation prove themselves too weak in the struggle against the sexual impulses.<sup>36</sup>

Elsewhere, writing to the mother of one of his American 'patients', Freud stressed:

In a certain number of cases we succeed in developing the blighted germs of heterosexual tendencies which are present in every homosexual, in the majority of cases it is no more possible . . . What analysis can do for your son runs in a different line. If he is unhappy, neurotic, torn by conflicts,

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inhibited in his social life, analysis may bring him harmony, peace of mind, full efficiency . . .'<sup>37</sup>

This letter is perhaps the least reactionary of the positions taken by Freud on the subject of homosexuality. But psychonazis such as Ferenczi, Ernest Jones, G.B. Hadden, Irving Bieber, Erminio Gius, etc. all distanced themselves from Freud's own tolerance. Freud sat cowardly on the fence and did not succeed very well in washing his hands of them.

A few years later, Wilhelm Reich threw the Freudian view completely overboard, maintaining that 'any homosexual may cease to feel his inclinations under a very exact psychological treatment, whereas a normally developed individual never becomes homosexual under the same treatment'.<sup>38</sup> On the whole Angelo Pezzana is right to conclude that 'what Reich wrote on homosexuality rivals the keenest of our contemporary sexual fascists'.<sup>39</sup>

And yet despite Reich and his followers, a growing number of young people of both sexes, previously exclusively heterosexual, have moved in the other direction with the development of the feminist and gay movements, i.e. ever more people are ceasing to repress their homosexual desires. The 'good practical reasons' by which Freud did not deem it suitable to lead a heterosexual to homosexuality, are collapsing. Homoeroticism is breaking through the barriers of repression and is spreading. Thanks to the struggle of gay people, the whole world is becoming a bit more gay. Many young heterosexuals are finding that letting themselves be the object of homosexual 'contagion' is the most helpful therapy to solving many of their problems. 'Gay is healthy' was one of the first slogans of the American Gay Liberation Front.

But the executioners are not giving in. Many contemporary psychiatrists persist in dedicating themselves to 'curing' people 'affected' with homosexuality, having recourse not just to hormone treatment, but also to psychotropic drugs and psychotherapy, electric shock and (why not?) aversion therapy.<sup>40</sup> Their crimes are severe indeed, and capital permits them to act with impunity, just as only yesterday capital promoted the monstrous medical experiments of the SS.

At the same time, what is labelled 'perverse' still appears

absolutely and shamefully aberrant in the eyes of the great majority, and as such susceptible to (im)moral and (un)civil condemnation. Public opinion, in thrall as it is to the ideology of the epoch, is unable to see the historically relative character of definitions of 'perversion'.

Those who still invoke harsh penal sanctions against homosexuality today are apparently unaware that until a few decades ago, the legislation of many industrialised countries condemned certain sexual acts such as masturbation, fellatio and cunnilingus, which are today considered quite 'normal'.<sup>41</sup> But people who disparage homosexuals as 'inverts' are evidently untroubled as to the supposedly absolute value of their own prejudices. The great mass of people, in fact, think in this way, and the opinion of the majority of 'child-men' and 'child-philosophers' (Herman Hesse) is accepted as true judgement and made into something absolute. Capitalist ideology is decidedly anti-homosexual, and psychiatry and psychoanalysis, which have grown and developed as channels of bourgeois culture, almost invariably repeat its commonplaces. The natural character of the social and sexual status quo, as upheld by the dominant ideology, is not really put in question in scientific research. It is true that there does exist today an anti-psychiatry and an anti-psychoanalysis. But these have themselves remained essentially stuck in the one-dimensionality of contemporary scientific thinking, which the homosexual liberation movement is contributing to criticise. Stuck in the one-dimensionality of capitalist domination, which always changes its guise, but never its essence.

## fire and brimstone, or how homosexuals became gay

### 1. *The Homosexual Taboo and its Origins*

Freud already felt the need to take into account 'the fact that inversion was a frequent phenomenon – one might almost say an institution charged with important functions – among the peoples of antiquity at the height of their civilisation'.<sup>1</sup>

As a result of historical and anthropological investigation, the Danish psychiatrist Thorkil Vangaard came to recognise the universal presence of homoerotic desire. Robert J. Stoller, for his part, writes:

In other circumstances of time and place, contrary to what happens in our Western society, a homosexual act may be an important assertion of the individual's male identity, rich in the sentiment of a proud masculinity. Vangaard and Karlen relate cases where the homosexual act is used formally, publicly and in a religious context so as to transmit virility from man to boy and establish bonds of honourable virility between adult lovers.<sup>2</sup>

Géza Róheim described the customs of some Australian tribes among whom initiation rites and circumcision were accompanied by homosexual relationships between adults and young boys.<sup>3</sup>

Clellan Ford and Frank Beach stress the fundamental role that homosexuality plays among several peoples in North Africa, New Guinea and Australia. Marise Querlin has studied homosexual behaviour among certain North American tribes already mentioned

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earlier by Margaret Mead, and Ruth Benedict similar behaviour among the indigenous inhabitants of Siberia. Malinowski described the severe repression of homosexuality among the Trobriand people of north-eastern New Guinea.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, Freud also noted how, already in his time, the pathological standpoint of homoeroticism had given way, in scientific thought, to the anthropological.<sup>5</sup>

As John Lauritsen has summed up:

Homosexuality flourished throughout the ancient world: among the Scandinavians, Greeks, Celts, Sumerians, and throughout the 'Cradle of Civilisation', the Tigris-Euphrates Valley, the Nile Valley, and the Mediterranean Basin. The art and literature of these peoples offer testimony to an unhindered acceptance and often exaltation of same-sex love.<sup>6</sup>

The anti-homosexual taboo that marks our Western civilisation would appear to be of Hebrew origin. The ancient Hebrews were the first people in history to condemn homosexuality.

The Bible records two celebrated episodes of mass homosexuality, that of Sodom and Gomorrah (*Genesis 19-20*) and that of the Benjaminites (*Judges 19-20*).

In both cases, the inhabitants of Sodom, being informed of the arrival of the two angels, and the Benjaminites of Gibeah, apprised of the arrival of the Levite, tried violently to grab these visitors away from those who had extended hospitality to them (Lot in the first episode, the Ephraimite in the second), with a view to satisfying their libidinal desires; and on both occasions the hosts, out of respect for the sacred duties of hospitality, did not just refuse, but actually offered instead their own daughters. In one case as in the other, the Lord's revenge was visited in the most terrible fashion on the impious. Sodom and Gomorrah were completely destroyed by fire and brimstone, while the people of Gibeah and the other Benjaminite tribes who had run to their aid were confronted and annihilated in battle, at the Lord's command, by the other tribes of Israel, their



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cities and villages all abandoned to the flames, and men and animals put to the sword.<sup>7</sup>

The destruction of Sodom is ascribed by the Bible to Abraham's time, which means approximately 2000 B.C. And yet it seems clear that the anti-homosexual taboo was not imposed on the Hebrew people at so early a date.

An explicit prohibition on homosexuality is contained in the books of Moses. Mosaic law prescribed that men who had sexual relations with one another should be put to death, so that the chosen people should differentiate themselves from the practices of those around them. 'You shall not lie with a man as with a woman: that is an abomination' (*Leviticus 18, 22*; cf. *ibid.*, 20, 13).<sup>8</sup> In line with the divine punishment for the 'crime' of the people of Sodom, the capital punishment imposed by Hebrew law for this offence was that of burning.

It is more than probable, however, that Hebrew legislation against homosexuality did not in fact date back to the time of Moses, the exodus from Egypt and the conquest of Palestine. It seems rather that the legislative portion of the Mosaic books was compiled predominantly during the Babylonian exile (6th century B.C.), when the activity of priests and levites was especially intense.

In his pamphlet *Religious Roots of the Taboo on Homosexuality*, John Lauritsen explains why he inclines to the opinion of those scholars who see the anti-homosexual taboo among the Hebrews as having been imposed during the Babylonian exile. Earlier, homosexuality was not only accepted, it was actually vested with important religious functions; according to Lauritsen, male prostitutes followed a sacred vocation and practised their art in the Temple.<sup>9</sup>

We still do not know what precise motivations led the ancient Hebrews to condemn homoeroticism. John Lauritsen shows how unconvincing are the various hypotheses that scholars have put forward to explain this. For my part, I believe that only a deeper study of ancient Hebrew history from a homosexual standpoint will enable us to put forward some valid explanatory hypotheses. This work, however, still lies in the future.

What is clear is that there was some kind of connection between

the preservation of Hebrew national tradition, particularly that of monotheism, and the rejection of homosexuality. The Hebrews ended up by identifying homosexual 'practices' with the religions and customs of the heathen; the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, in their eyes, was provoked by the wrath of Jahweh at an alien people for their alien customs.

Some passages from the Old Testament link homoeroticism with the cult of Ashtoreth (the great female divinity of the northern Semitic peoples, who most probably represented the fertilised soil, and was the patron of sacred prostitution) and her heavenly spouse Baal, a cult which the Hebrews were particularly inclined to 'fall' into, particularly given their common habitation and mingling, in the land of Palestine, with the Canaanites (Solomon, for example, built altars to Ashtoreth, which were subsequently destroyed by the reforming king Josiah). It would seem that the Canaanite cult of Baal was linked with certain 'obscene practices'. It was also interesting for me to discover how, among the southern Semites, the corresponding figure to Ashtoreth, 'Athar, was a male divinity – a fact which has led some people to hypothesise the remote existence of the cult of an ancient divinity of androgynous character, only later differentiated into a goddess among the northern Semites and a male god among their southern relations. But these are only hypotheses, and there may be others that are more convincing.

What is certain, however, is that by way of Christianity, the Jewish condemnation of homosexuality has been handed down to us.

But what does it mean to speak of an anti-homosexual taboo in the present-day context?

According to Freud, 'the meaning of "taboo" . . . diverges in two contrary directions. To us it means, on the one hand, "sacred", "consecrated", and on the other "uncanny", "dangerous", "forbidden", "unclean"'.<sup>10</sup> Now in our society homoeroticism is certainly considered uncanny, dangerous, forbidden and unclean, a fact which is not difficult to establish. But can we also say that it is somehow treated as sacred and consecrated, something from which it is necessary to keep a respectful distance?

On the one hand, we have seen how originally, before it was persecuted, male homosexuality was something sacred among

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the Hebrews, being practised in the Temple in the form of prostitution, also how the Hebrews later came to connect homosexuality with the cult of a divinity worshipped by other peoples. The Judeo-Christian moral and religious tradition has marked Western society down to today. In a certain sense, therefore, we can say that today the anti-homosexual taboo conceals the originally sacred character of its object. Later on, ancient Greek culture also became a profound influence on Western civilisation, and among the Greeks, homosexuality certainly did originally have a sacred character, as well as being both erotic and chivalrous.<sup>11</sup>

Today, on the other hand, even when so many people no longer believe in the devil, homosexuality still keeps its diabolical connotations, as 'vicious', 'perverted', 'dishonourable', 'unclean' and 'revolting'. It remains a 'sin against nature', and as far as the Church is concerned, any sin is inspired by the devil. But the diabolical precisely serves as a medium between the sacred and the 'unclean'. 'It is precisely this neutral and intermediate meaning – "demonic" or "what may not be touched" – that is appropriately expressed by the word "taboo", since it stresses a characteristic which remains common for all time both to what is sacred and to what is unclean: the dread of contact with it' (Freud).<sup>12</sup>

In dealing with homosexuality, heterosexual society suffers from what Freud described as a 'taboo sickness', an obsessional neurosis; society is obsessed with the presence of us gays:

As in the case of taboo, the principal prohibition, the nucleus of this neurosis, is against touching; and thence it is sometimes known as 'touching phobia' or '*délire de toucher*'. The prohibition does not merely apply to immediate physical contact but has an extent as wide as the metaphorical use of the phrase 'to come into contact with'. Anything that directs the patient's thoughts to the forbidden object, anything that brings him into intellectual contact with it, is just as much prohibited as direct physical contact.<sup>13</sup>

Heterosexual society prohibits or at least rejects gay relations, erotic contact between bodies of the same sex, and in the same way it rejects any contact with open homosexuals, those who

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have not been forced into hiding, pushed into corners or excluded from society. It condemns, moreover, any idea or fantasy with a clear homoerotic content (so that gay thoughts and fantasies, especially those of heterosexuals, must remain secret). Many heterosexuals have decisively repressed their own homosexual desire, and even when this repression is not completely successful, they at least conceal their gay fantasies from others, as something intimate and essentially shameful, which is not to be communicated.

But the anti-homosexual prohibition owes its strength and its constraining character specifically to the relation with its unconscious counterpart, the latent and never eliminated homosexual desire, that deep necessity that cannot be consciously recognised: 'the basis of taboo is a prohibited action, for performing which a strong inclination exists in the unconscious'.<sup>14</sup>

We shall see later on how homosexual desire continuously shifts around, with a view to overcoming the barrier that forces it to remain unconscious, and seeks surrogates for the forbidden 'object', substitute 'objects' and practices that then also enter into the complex of phenomena that can be interpreted by the concept of sublimation of the gay desire (or else its conversion into pathological symptoms).

The anti-homosexual taboo is all the more severe in as much as the prohibition directs energy against a very strong inclination that exists in a latent state: for heterosexuals, homosexuality always represents an 'instinctual temptation'.

The inherent prohibitions on homosexuality are transmitted from generation to generation, by the tradition represented in the authority of society and the parents, and despite the fact that every single individual newly experiences, in the course of development, the congenital homosexual impulse in all its potential fullness. The gay desire remains very strong even among those peoples who have respected the anti-homosexual taboo for thousands of years. If this were not so, then the taboo would have no reason to be maintained with such rigour.

The society in which we live displays an ambivalent attitude towards the prohibitions which the anti-gay taboo imposes on it. At the unconscious level, both individual and collective, nothing could be more pleasant than to transgress it – but people are afraid. And fear proves to be more powerful than the impulse to

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enjoyment. According to Freud, again, 'the desire is unconscious . . . in every individual member of the tribe just as it is in neurotics'.<sup>15</sup> Reversing this statement, we might say that the population is neurotic because the desire to transgress, i.e. in this case to transgress the sexual Norm, is unconscious in each individual. For liberation, what we need is to be able to enjoy such transgression openly.

The manifest homosexual who has transgressed the anti-gay taboo becomes taboo himself, 'because he possesses the dangerous quality of tempting others to follow his example: why should *he* be allowed to do what is forbidden to others? Thus he is truly contagious in that every example encourages imitation, and for that reason he himself must be shunned'.<sup>16</sup> It is out of envy that we gays are pushed aside, insulted, derided and censured. In this way people try to exorcise and push aside the gay desire that our presence makes surface in society, forcing everyone to confront it. If other people did not punish and censure our homosexual transgression, they would end up wanting to do the same things as we, the transgressors, do. And it is true that, if the example of one person who has violated the anti-gay taboo should lead others to follow, then disobedience to the prohibition would spread by 'contagion'.

The object of the revolutionary struggle of homosexuals is not that of winning social tolerance for gays, but rather the liberation of the homoerotic desire in every human being. If the only result were that so-called 'normal' people should 'accept' homosexuals, then the human race would not have recognised its own deep homosexual desire, it would not have come to terms with the universal presence of this, and would go on suffering without remedy from the consequences of this repression. We revolutionary homosexuals, today, do seek to lead other people to follow us, to come with us, so that together we can undertake the subversion of the Norm that represses (homo)eroticism.

Today, the persistence of the anti-gay taboo provides a sure and potent weapon in the capitalist arsenal. It serves to stupefy people, to maintain a neurotic and submissive 'calm'. The taboo transforms into a source of horror and guilt one of the basic erotic tendencies, denying every human being the possibility of erotic relations with half the population, dividing people and keeping

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them apart, preventing love between man and man and woman and woman, and making a fundamental contribution to perpetuating the opposition between the sexes. People 'know very well' (even if they don't have a clear understanding) that they have homosexual impulses. The system can then play on their guilt, severely prohibiting homosexuality, on which it stamps the mark of infamy. 'Normal' people feel guilty because, underneath it all, they know that they are a little queer themselves. But the sense of guilt is the umbilical cord that chains the human species to capital and half strangles it. If we want to live, we cannot but make a clean break with all such monstrous bonds.

Today, the great fear that surrounds homosexuality is not sustained just on thin air. Deep down inside, everyone can sense the blood that has been shed over the millenia to keep the taboo respected and feared (including castration, imprisonment, exile, torture and death). Within him- or herself, each individual knows he or she is potentially condemned to the flames.

### *2. The Persecution of Homosexuals Over the Centuries*

The repression of homosexuals today, for all its harshness, is only the echo of a horrendous persecution perpetrated for thousands of years. As we have just indicated, the anti-homosexual condemnation of the Hebrews was spread throughout the West with the rise of Christianity.

Already at the end of the republican era in Rome, a *Lex Scantinia* was issued against 'male abuses' between free citizens, providing for a fine of 10,000 sesterces for the 'guilty' parties.<sup>17</sup> It is clear, therefore, that Christianity already found in Rome an ambience that was favourable to the punishment of homosexuality (but for what reason?). In the time of St Paul, this fine was raised to the confiscation of half a man's estate.

During the decline of the empire, legislation developed a severity that was previously unknown. In the 4th century Christianity became the official state religion. Shortly before, in 300, the Council of Elvira had decreed that 'sodomites' were ineligible for the Christian last rites. In 342 a decree of Emperor Constantine imposed the death penalty for the 'crime of sodomy'.

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A later legal code, that of Theodosius, Valens and Arcadius, condemned homosexuals to be burned alive in the square (390). For centuries, the punishment of burning, explicitly recalling the destruction of Sodom, was the penalty most frequently provided for in legislation.

In 538, Justinian prescribed torture, mutilation and castration for homosexuals; the capital punishment of beheading with a sword, already imposed for adultery, was subsequently extended to 'sodomy' also.<sup>18</sup> And yet under Justinian, a homosexual, even if he had confessed, was only beheaded if, after already being arrested once, he had shown evidence of persisting in his 'aberrant practices', thus refusing to submit to the rigorous canonical penitence imposed the first time. This apparent 'lenience' was however made up for by the fact that anyone could be accused of 'sodomy'. The most suspect evidence of a child or slave was sufficient to condemn a man to infamy and death, so that 'pederasty became the crime of those to whom no crime could be imputed' (Edward Gibbon).<sup>19</sup> In two successive edicts, Justinian defined homosexuality as a 'diabolical and unlawful lust', warning his subjects to abstain from such 'immoral and disgusting activities, which are not even committed by animals'. Evidently the emperor saw what it suited him to see, or perhaps he really had never seen two male dogs fucking. Justinian saw himself as the instrument of the 'just anger and revenge of God' against those 'guilty of sodomy', who, with their 'crimes', 'have provoked famines, earthquakes and pestilences'.

No less harshly repressive laws against homosexuality were issued in the following centuries, backed by the full weight of civil and ecclesiastical authority, from the early middle ages through to the French Revolution, and even beyond.

The *Lex Visigotha* condemned 'sodomites' to castration and harsh imprisonment, and, if they were married, to the immediate confiscation of their goods in favour of their sons or other heirs. Besides castration, this code also provided for the death penalty. The Danes, for their part, condemned 'sodomites' to be burnt (*Jura Danica*), while the *Capitulari Franchi* of Angesiso and Benedetto Levita provided for the death penalty for male homosexuals in the same way as for those guilty of incest and having sex with animals. A later *Capitulari* issued by Louis the

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Pious, king of the Franks and emperor (814-840), confirmed the penalty of burning for these 'crimes', drawing on Roman law.

According to these *Capitulari*, homosexuality was at this time most widespread among the Spaniards, Provençals and Burgundians, and this induced the legislators to recommend a rigorous application of the penalties provided for, in order that the 'unnatural vice' should not too gravely contaminate other peoples.

With the passage of time, homosexuals in some cities were no longer burned alive, but rather hanged in the public square and then killed with the sword (this was the case in many Italian cities, for example). The 'crime of sodomy' was included among the list of offences for which torture was permitted during the trial, with a view to extracting a confession from the accused and his 'accomplices'.

Instead of being burned alive or hanged, homosexuals from the nobility were generally rather beheaded, with the loss of all their feudal privileges, which could not be handed down to their heirs. And yet it is a well known fact that many aristocrats or well-off commoners managed to buy their way out by paying large sums of money to potential informers, or to the public authorities, making themselves liable to constant heavy blackmail.

In general, if the accused were less than eighteen years of age and their offence was limited to the 'passive role', then instead of being condemned to death, they were punished with the lash, long terms of harsh imprisonment, branded, or else, as in Spain and Sicily, sent to the galleys either permanently or for a long period.

The statutes of Tarvisius, 'with a spectacular sense of the macabre' (d'Avack), provided that 'a man [guilty of sodomy] is to be stripped of all his clothing in the public street, and impaled to the stake by a nail through his member, and remain there a full day and night; on the next day he is to be burned outside the city. A woman is to be stripped of all clothes and bound to the stake, and remain there a full day and night, on the next day she is to be burned outside the city'.<sup>20</sup>

It is clear, then, that lesbians were no less horrendously persecuted. Even later, the celebrated criminologist Prospero Farinacci (1544-1618) noted how he had seen 'several women



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who had offended in this way' burned in Rome.

Persons suspected of homosexuality were often punished atrociously even when there was no direct evidence of their 'guilt'. In Venice, one man accused of 'sodomy' in 1282 was condemned to the loss of both eyes, even though the court had not succeeded in extracting a confession.

In Tuscany, where homosexuality was very widespread, persecution was somewhat less harsh, since – in the judgement of certain jurists of the period – if the death penalty were imposed for every 'crime of sodomy', then the whole country would be covered with stakes and gallows. In Lucca, all the same, capital punishment was decreed for 'active sodomy', the 'passive' partner being condemned to a lesser penalty, though in Florence only recidivist homosexuals, caught *in flagrante delicto* for the second or third time, were condemned to the stake.

According to several historians and chroniclers of the time, homosexuality nevertheless became ever more widespread in Italy, particularly after the Black Death of 1348. Perhaps because, between the risk of catching plague and that of ending up burned at the stake, more people were prepared to risk the punishment in order to enjoy themselves before they died. At all events, statutes from around this time multiply and harshen still further the repressive provisions.

In Milan, during the 15th century, homosexuals were branded on the forehead. This is why, at a later date, people who wore a fringe that covered their forehead were called 'sodoma', and the fringe a 'copriculo' (arse-cover).

In the following centuries, the penal code remained substantially unchanged, 'and it was more or less identical throughout both Italy and the other European states, as can be seen from the statutes of Bologna (1561), Ferrara (1566), Milan, Rome, the Marches, etc. in the 17th century, the Florentine *Bandi* of 1542, 1556 and 1669, the Sicilian *Prammatiche* of 1504, the criminal codes of Charles V and Maria Theresa, the Portuguese *Ordinanza Regia*, the Spanish *Nova Recopilation*, etc.'<sup>21</sup>

In the Middle Ages, the persecution of homosexuals stood in close relation to the repression of heresy, as Thomas Szasz has demonstrated in *The Manufacture of Madness*:

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During the Middle Ages heretics were accused of unnatural vice as a matter of course. Indeed, so closely was sodomy associated with heresy that the same name was applied to both. In 'La Coutume de Touraine Anjou' the word *herite*, which is the ancient form of *heretique*, seems to be used in the sense of 'sodomite'; and the French *bougre* (from the Latin *Bulgarus*, Bulgarian), as also its English synonym (bugger), was originally a name given to a sect of heretics who came from Bulgaria in the eleventh century and was afterwards applied to other heretics, but at the same time it became the regular expression for a person guilty of unnatural intercourse. In medieval laws sodomy was also repeatedly mentioned together with heresy, and the punishment was the same for both.<sup>22</sup>

The term 'faggot', still used today in the United States to refer to male homosexuals, and almost always derogatory, derives from such medieval expressions as 'fire and faggot', and 'to fry a faggot', originally referring to the punishment inflicted on heretics and 'sodomites'. Those heretics who recanted, in order to escape the death penalty, were forced to wear the emblem of a faggot embroidered on one sleeve. Thus the word ended up as a symbol for the stake, and when heresy was no longer a problem requiring the death penalty, it remained to denote homosexuals. In 1533, during the reign of Henry VIII, the penalty for 'sodomy' in England was changed from burning to hanging. The death penalty itself, however, was only abolished in 1861, and in Scotland not until 1889.

In Spain, during the 13th century, homosexuals were condemned to castration and stoning. It remained for Ferdinand and Isabella to introduce the stake, in 1479.<sup>23</sup> In 1541, Nicolas V entrusted the Inquisition with full powers for the repression of homosexuality. In the 17th century in Portugal, laws provided for condemnation to the stake, or alternatively the lash and the galleys.

In Amsterdam in 1730 (today the gay capital of Europe!), two hundred men and boys were tried for 'sodomy', with a hundred and seventy condemned to death. Holland at this time saw a real hunt for 'sodomites', the streets being posted with notices inviting the population to denounce to the authorities anyone who was

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suspected of homosexuality.

Persecution by the state was backed up by religious morality, both Catholic and Protestant. In some states, as for example in Spain, the public authorities requested the ecclesiastical courts to try cases of 'sodomy'. Even today, the Church is still responsible, either directly or indirectly, for anti-gay repression.

The writings of the Church fathers are replete with references to homosexuality. St Paul gives Christ special merit for saving the Christians from this '*immunditia*' (uncleanness), the source of horrendous contamination and dishonour of body and spirit, and yet so widely diffused among the heathen (e.g. *Romans 1*, 26-27). 'An ancient Christian tradition, moreover, recorded by St Jerome and reiterated in successive centuries of ecclesiastical writings as a definite historical fact, actually held that the birth of the Saviour, the "redeemer of the natural order", brought the sudden death of all sodomites "living against nature", among them the poet Virgil.' But given the tremendous spread of homoeroticism in this period, it is clear that if this had actually happened, there would have been 'such a general decease that the Roman empire would have collapsed straight away'.<sup>24</sup>

St Augustine, 'who by his youthful libertine experience remains, of all the Church fathers, the expert on the sins of the flesh' (d'Avack), considered homosexuality a worse and more abominable vice than adultery and even incest. And according to Thomas Aquinas, later on, homosexuality was a shameful sin with which a person 'debased his own sex' and to which only bestiality, an even worse vice, was inferior, 'debasement of the species'. On the other hand, St Thomas considered masturbation a far worse sin than the rape of a woman, since 'just reason declares that the purpose prescribed for the sexual act is procreation'.

There is little point in tracing all the diverse positions taken on homosexuality by the theologians and canon lawyers throughout the centuries, nor in going into either the full range of punishments provided (including terms of imprisonment that were generally from ten years up to life), or again the various papal bulls against '*sodomia*', 'that horrendous wickedness', as Pius V defined it (1558). Homosexuality, by tradition 'that horrible sin not to be mentioned among Christians', was now defined by the canon lawyers of the 16th century, with baroque pomposity, as 'something

filthy, detestable, extremely grave, evil, disgusting, horrendous, immense and abominable', as well as 'a most loathsome, serious, foul, abominable and devouring sin'.

We are finally unable (unfortunately!) to follow in all its details the curious dispute among canon lawyers on the subject of *coitus interruptus* between men. The Church tried long and hard to establish whether a man who fucks another but does not come into his arse – *immissio veretri in vase praepestreo* without *effusio seminis* – should be considered less guilty than those who have ejaculated within. Nor can we follow the debates that surrounded female homosexuality; for having established that an 'unnatural' coitus with *immissio veretri* was indispensable for the 'crime of sodomy', the theologians were unclear as to in what sense it was possible to speak of genuine 'sodomy' in a relationship between women, given the absence of *immissio veretri*. Believe it or not, they ended up taking as the significant criterion the lesser or greater development of the clitoris of the woman on top. If a 'gynaecological' examination had established that the clitoris, by virtue of its singular development, could have served as a penis, then the court proceeded without further ado to torture, with a view to extracting confessions and 'imposing on both parties the appropriate penal sanctions'.<sup>25</sup>

Meanwhile, though the anti-homosexual taboo claimed countless thousands of victims in Europe, homoeroticism continued to prosper in those lands outside the influence of Judeo-Christianity. The anti-gay taboo was unknown in China, Japan, India, the Arab world, Africa, Australia, Siberia or pre-Columbian America.<sup>26</sup>

### 3. *Contemporary Legislation and the Homosexual Rights Movement*

In his 'philosophical novel' *Aline et Valcour*, the Marquis de Sade presents a visit to France by Zamé, the idealised legislator of an unknown Pacific island. In the course of his stay, the host accompanies him to the law courts, as busy as ever in their grotesque and summary sentencing. Zamé is here the narrator.

–What crime has that unhappy man committed, I asked.

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–He is a homosexual, I was told. You can well see that his is a terrible crime, it stops the growth of population, even destroys it, so that this scoundrel well deserves to be destroyed himself.

–Well argued, I replied to my philosophical friend, your reasoning is indeed that of a genius.

Zamé and his guide then immediately proceed to visit a monastery, where a young girl is taking her vows.

–What is this girl doing, my friend?

–She is a saint, I was told. She is giving up the world, and is going to bury in the depths of a nunnery the seed of twenty children that she would otherwise have borne for the state to play with.

–What a sacrifice.

–Oh indeed, sir, she is an angel, she has a place already in heaven.

–Quite outraged, and unable to bear such inconsistency, I turned to my friend and said: Sir, on the one hand you burn to death a man whose crime, you say, is that of restraining the population, while on the other hand, you now celebrate a young girl who is committing the same crime. You Frenchmen should bring your affairs into a logical order, otherwise it is quite understandable that any rational foreigner who visits your country should take it as the very centre of madness and absurdity.<sup>27</sup>

This was written by the Marquis de Sade, that outrageous libertine, in the Bastille, the year before the outbreak of the French Revolution. In the name of reason, ‘his work discloses the mythological character of the principles which religion says are the foundations of civilisation: the Decalogue, paternal authority, property’.<sup>28</sup>

In 1791, in the same spirit of the Enlightenment (Diderot had seen in homosexuality a natural remedy against both overpopulation and syphilis!), the French Constituent Assembly abolished the death penalty for the ‘crime of sodomy’.

In 1810, accepting a new draft legal code from his minister

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Cambacérès, himself gay, Napoleon finally legalised homosexuality; homosexual relations in private between consenting parties were no longer considered an offence in the countries where the Napoleonic code was enforced, among them Italy.

With the fall of Napoleon, Italian legislation partly reasserted its former persecutory character. In the Sardinian code of 1859, article 425 treated homosexuality as a crime, if associated with violence or scandal. Yet when the Sardinian code was extended to the Southern provinces in 1861, article 425 was abolished.<sup>29</sup>

Under fascism, although specific anti-homosexual legislation was not introduced, the island of Ventotene was set aside, among other purposes, as a place of confinement for gays. At the end of 1941, moreover, the old 1869 penal code for the army and navy was reintroduced, this providing particular 'disciplinary' sanctions (up to ten years forced labour) for 'crimes of unnatural passion'.

Present Italian legislation does not treat homosexual relations as a special type of offence. In fact, according to the ministerial statement on a new draft penal code:

This filthy vice . . . is not so widespread in Italy as to require the intervention of the criminal law. This should be standardised according to the principle of absolute necessity, and there is no justification for creating new offences unless the legislators should find forms of immorality that disrupt social life in an alarming way. This is happily not the case in Italy for the vice under consideration here. These reasons against the criminalisation of homosexuality have convinced me . . .<sup>30</sup>

So if homosexuality is not in itself a crime in Italy today, this depends on the statistical information available to our legislators. If these gentlemen should however realise that acknowledged homosexuals in Italy make up at least 4.5 per cent of the population, and so-called 'bisexuals' far more, it would then follow that homosexuality should perhaps be criminalised after all.<sup>31</sup>

In any case, as we can see from the ministerial statement on the diffusion of this 'filthy vice' in Italy, present legislation 'leans against homosexuality in indirect ways, in the sense that the

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condemnation of homosexuality can be taken into account when this comes up against certain other interests that are different from the interest involved in the struggle against homosexuality itself. Thus homosexuality can be punished when it is accompanied by extremes of carnal violence (or violent acts of desire), or when the obscene act is performed in a place exposed to the public; there is also the crime of "corruption of minors".<sup>32</sup> The accusation of *plagio*, moreover, can always be injected to liven up the charges against someone like Braibanti.<sup>33</sup>

But if present Italian legislation is relatively permissive as far as homosexuality is concerned, repression by the police is severe indeed. Moreover, if the law only indirectly threatens to punish, moral norms proclaim the conscious internalisation of a far more severe law.

In the course of the last thirty years, there have been various attempts to introduce specific anti-gay penalties. On 5 April 1972, for example, the Italian Centre of Sexology organised the first international festival of sexology at San Remo, at which certain people declared their 'intention to collect . . . information to support a legislative proposal by the Social-Democrat party which would put homosexuality outside the law'.<sup>34</sup>

A similar situation obtains in France. For a whole century, until the Vichy regime, there seem to have been no condemnations expressly for homosexuality. On 6 August 1942, however, Marshal Pétain published an anti-gay decree. Guy Hocquenghem has shown how the new French penal code drawn up after the Liberation contained an article that reproduced the fascist decree almost word for word. Article 331 of this code, adopted on 8 February 1945, punishes with 'a term of imprisonment from six months to three years . . . whosoever will have committed an indecent or unnatural act with a person of the same sex, under the age of twenty-one'. A second law on homosexuality, this time phrased in terms of 'public indecency', was voted in 1960 after the return of De Gaulle. Up till then, the penal code had not distinguished between homosexual and heterosexual 'indecency'. Article 330, paragraph 2 of the law of 25 November 1960, however, prescribes that: 'When the public indecency consists of an unnatural act with an individual of the same sex, the penalty will be a term of imprisonment from six months to three years and a fine of

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1,000 to 15,000 francs'. As Hocquenghem points out, heterosexual indecency is cheaper: a 500 to 4,500 francs fine only.<sup>35</sup>

In 1964, the French courts condemned 331 people for 'unnatural' acts, rising to 424 in 1966. A bitter police persecution continued to be waged against what deputy Paul Mirguet classed alongside tuberculosis and alcoholism as one of the most dangerous 'social diseases' (18 July 1961). The Front Homosexuel d'Action Révolutionnaire later adopted this phrase as the title of their first newspaper, '*Le Fléau Social*'.

In the Federal Republic of Germany, it was only recently (in 1969, and again in 1973) that the Bundestag modified paragraph 175 of the penal code that had made homosexual relations between males a criminal offence, although lesbian relations were not included.

Yet Germany was the country that had seen the first formation, anywhere in the world, of a gay liberation movement, at the end of the nineteenth century – even if this did have a 'petty-bourgeois democratic character', as Thorsten Graf and Mimi Steglitz put it.<sup>36</sup> In 1897, two years after the death of Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, the great pioneer in the struggle for homosexual liberation in Germany, the first official organisation seeking equal rights for gays, the Scientific Humanitarian Committee, was founded in Berlin.<sup>37</sup> This committee was set up and led for thirty-five years by Magnus Hirschfeld, author, among other works, of a kind of encyclopedia of homosexuality titled *Male and Female Homosexuality*.<sup>38</sup> The main activity of this organisation, for three decades, was a petition against paragraph 175 of the Prussian legal code. The signatories of this petition were not only homosexuals. It was signed by some six thousand 'personalities' of the day, half of these being doctors. On 13 January 1898 the Social-Democrat leader August Bebel took the floor in the Reichstag to support the petition, which Kautsky and Bernstein had also signed.

During the Spartakist period in Berlin, the homosexual question became highly topical, and it seems to have been discussed on all sides.<sup>39</sup> In December 1922, the Reichstag voted to draw the petition to the attention of the government, but the government rejected it, and for several years nothing more was done. Finally, 'on 16 October 1929 the Reichstag commission on criminal law



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decided that “immoral acts between males” should not be included in the new penal code. The provisions of paragraph 175 . . . were abrogated, with the support of both Communist and Social-Democrat deputies’.<sup>40</sup>

At the same time, the Scientific Humanitarian Committee sponsored a World League for Sexual Reform. In this cause, Hirschfeld and other fellow-workers travelled across the globe, especially in the United States, but also to the Far East and even China, everywhere holding meetings on the theme of homosexual emancipation. At the time of its greatest expansion (in the late 1920s), some 130,000 people belonged to organisations affiliated to the World League for Sexual Reform.

The triumph of fascism in 1933 prevented the abrogation of paragraph 175 from coming into force. Between 1933 and 1935, the gay movement was brutally smashed by the Nazis, and in 1935 the laws against homosexuality were not only reintroduced, but actually strengthened. The penal sanctions of paragraph 175 were extended to include the ‘crimes’ of homosexual kissing, embracing, and even fantasy.

The last of a series of bulletins from the Scientific Humanitarian Committee was published in February 1933 by Kurt Hiller.<sup>41</sup> Magnus Hirschfeld emigrated to France, where he died a short time later. In 1933, a Nazi attack wrecked the Berlin Institute for Sexual Science, where both the Scientific Humanitarian Committee and the World League for Sexual Reform had their offices. More than ten thousand books in the Institute’s library were destroyed. A bust of Hirschfeld was carried in a torchlight procession and thrown onto the flames.

In June 1934 Hitler decreed the purging of the SA, Ernst Röhm’s ‘brown-shirts’. In the ‘night of the long knives’, Röhm was caught by the SS in bed with a young man, and executed in the Munich prison of Stadelheim. The greater part of the SA leadership, who were holding a jamboree at Weisse, in Bavaria, were murdered on the spot. The yellow press organised ‘the stupid staging of “moral crimes” which had long been common knowledge’ (Thomas Mann).

From then on, the concentration camps began to swell with homosexuals, their uniforms bearing on the chest and right trouser leg a pink triangle some seven centimetres high, to distinguish

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them from the Jews, Gypsies, political detainees, etc. Later, homosexuals from other countries occupied by the Nazis were sent to concentration camps in Germany and Austria.<sup>42</sup> These 'inverts' were often castrated by doctors officially entrusted with this task; many died as a result of forced labour or disease, others ending up in the gas chambers. Today, the homosexual liberation groups in West Germany have adopted the pink triangle as their badge.

We do not know exactly how many gay men and women were exterminated in the camps, though the homosexual victims of Nazism must have totalled some hundreds of thousands. 'An exact estimate is impossible', write John Lauritsen and David Thorstad, 'because homosexuals, especially those in the military, were routinely shot without trial. The concentration camp records, which would have provided information, were systematically destroyed when the German defeat became apparent'.<sup>43</sup>

We do know, however, that between 1937 and 1939 alone, some 24,450 men were condemned to imprisonment in Germany for 'unnatural acts'.<sup>44</sup>

In England, as mentioned above, the death penalty for the 'crime of sodomy' was abolished only in 1861 – and in Scotland not until 1889. In the late nineteenth century, an influential campaign for homosexual liberation was waged in Great Britain by the socialist writer Edward Carpenter, destined to occupy a leading place in the gay pantheon. His works were known in many countries, being translated into German, Italian, Norwegian, Dutch, Bulgarian, Russian and Japanese. The anti-homosexual hysteria that broke out in England after the Oscar Wilde trial prevented the publication in some countries of Carpenter's masterwork *Love's Coming of Age*. But several decades before, the appearance of *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman, whom Carpenter had twice met and highly esteemed, had already exerted a notable emancipating influence among Anglo-Saxon homosexuals.<sup>45</sup>

The trial of Oscar Wilde, accused of 'gross indecency' for his homosexual relationships, took place in London in 1895:

The Wilde affair was a turning-point in the literary and social life of England, as the Dreyfus affair had been in

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France. Certainly England was not divided politically and there was not the slightest doubt about the guilt of the culprit, but in both cases the conservative elements felt themselves threatened.<sup>46</sup>

It is said that trains leaving for the Continent were packed with anxious gays. And the Irish, too, began to stir, spreading the view that Wilde had been slandered by the 'abominable English judges'. The same protests were issued in 1916, when one of the greatest Irish patriots, Sir Roger Casement, was charged with secret dealings with the German enemy. In order to prejudice the jury, the police issued to them Casement's homosexual diary. The judges succeeded in antagonising his own supporters, both in Ireland and the United States, who publicly denounced his homosexuality. Still today, many Irish nationalists continue to maintain that the Casement diaries are not genuine, but were rather fabricated by the police and courts in order to slander and turn public opinion against him. In their eyes, it seems, homosexuality is incompatible with greatness of spirit and heroism.

It was only in 1967 that homosexuality was legalised in England and Wales. Paradoxically, the anti-gay statute is still in force in Scotland and Northern Ireland, so that a homosexual who is a 'free' citizen in London and Cardiff, becomes a criminal if he moves to Edinburgh or Belfast! Nor does the legalisation of homoeroticism apply to the armed forces or merchant navy.

Swiss laws permit 'unnatural' relations between adults, but 'protect' young people under twenty and punish 'abuses' of their 'inexperience'. Gays can thus be condemned for making love with minors, even when these consent.

Legislation in Denmark, Sweden and Holland is more permissive. These states contain the best organised homosexual ghettos in Europe, and within certain limits the police protect the good functioning of the "perverts'" activities. Far smaller ghettos have also grown up in France and West Germany. In England, on the other hand, a more overt repression is directed against the ghetto meeting-places. There do not exist, at the present time, safe gay baths or orgy rooms in bars and dance halls. Each day, magistrates condemn dozens of homosexuals arrested on cruising grounds the night before.

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In Belgium, it was only in 1965 that a specific law on homosexuality was voted. Under the rubric of the 'protection of youth', this made a criminal offence of 'indecent assault' committed without violence against a youth of less than eighteen. And a certain Captain Tilmant of the Belgian police wrote in the *Revue de la gendarmerie belge* (1969, iv):

For the purposes of adequate prevention and firm repression, the police force must endeavour to have a thorough knowledge of that secret world [of the homosexual] where, we understand, witnesses are rare and informants reticent . . . In the case of homosexuality more than in any other, the old adage 'the police are only as good as their files' takes on its full meaning.<sup>47</sup>

In Austria, homosexuality was legalised only recently (1971). Even so, gay people are not allowed to form organisations of an explicitly homosexual character. The gay community in Vienna is one of the most constricted in Western Europe.

In Japan, however, one need only reach the age of thirteen to be officially authorised to dispose of one's body in gay relations; no other country in the world has such a low age of consent. Japan, in fact, still preserves a historic, if contradictory, tradition of tolerance towards homoeroticism.<sup>48</sup>

In the USA, with the exception of Illinois, Connecticut, Hawaii, Oregon, Delaware, Texas, and (since 1975) North Dakota and California, homoeroticism is still considered a crime in its own right. (It was only recently that the Californian legislature repealed a law which had been on the statute books for more than a century, and punished homosexuality with penal servitude and castration.) The penalty provided for varies from State to State, but around ten years' imprisonment is often prescribed.

Besides police violence and corruption, and the severe legal repression which American homosexuals face in all those States where homosexuality is still not legalised, the very existence of anti-gay laws poses a constant threat, and at times even strengthens the forms of open discrimination that gay people must confront every day. In some States, it is difficult for gays to find work; they must carefully conceal their sexual inclinations if they are to be

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accepted, and they are forced to live in constant fear of being discovered or sacked, with very little chance of finding new employment, given the cause of their dismissal. Besides, the majority of landlords are not prepared to rent housing to gay people; it is very difficult to find accommodation, except for those able to pay highly inflated rents. Even in the privacy of their own homes, homosexuals have to be extremely careful. If their neighbours find out they are gay, they are very likely to be denounced and evicted. Finally, in schools, hospitals, prisons and barracks, if a homosexual is discovered, or someone is even suspected of homosexuality, he finds himself isolated, mocked, segregated and even beaten up by both his 'superiors' and his 'comrades'.<sup>49</sup>

But it is in no way as if the USA was particularly backward. We have to admit, in fact, that on the whole America today is the most gay of the capitalist countries. Even in countries where homosexuality is not considered a crime in itself, such as Italy for example, similar forms of discrimination are an everyday fact. We shall see shortly how the legalisation of homosexuality does not in fact bring full rehabilitation of homosexuals in the eyes of public opinion, nor does it do much to lighten the burden of repression that weighs on their shoulders.

In very many other countries, homosexuality is still completely outlawed. This is the case, for example, in Spain,<sup>50</sup> Portugal, Greece, and Israel,<sup>51</sup> not to mention the 'socialist' or Third World countries. It is worth mentioning the official reply of the German Democratic Republic to a letter from the international liaison group of London GLF in February 1972, which reveals how 'socialist' East Germany deals with the problem of homosexuality. According to that country's official representative, the problem does not exist there, as there are no homosexuals.<sup>52</sup> No comment needed!

As far as the USSR is concerned, the tsarist legislation against homosexuality was repealed in December 1917. This testifies to a certain relaxation towards homoeroticism on the part of the proletarian state power at the time of its birth (and this in a country that had passed suddenly from feudal to socialist legislation). In a pamphlet titled *The Sexual Revolution in Russia* (1923), Dr Grigorii Batkis, director of the Institute of Social

Hygiene in Moscow, wrote:

Concerning homosexuality, sodomy, and various other forms of sexual gratification, which are set down in European legislation as offences against public morality – Soviet legislation treats these exactly the same as so-called ‘natural’ intercourse. All forms of sexual intercourse are private matters. Only when there’s use of force or duress, as in general when there’s an injury or encroachment upon the rights of another person, is there a question of criminal prosecution.<sup>53</sup>

When the Soviet Union sent delegates to the first international congress of the World League for Sexual Reform held in Berlin in 1921, Russia was already beginning to display a clear counter-revolutionary tendency. The defeat of the revolution in central Europe dealt the Soviet Union a blow that led to the establishment of a bureaucratic capitalism.<sup>54</sup> But the USSR continued to send delegates to successive international congresses of the League (held in Copenhagen in 1928, London in 1929, and Vienna in 1930; a fifth congress, originally due to be held in Moscow on the theme of ‘Marxism and Sexual Problems’, was in the event held in Brno, Czechoslovakia, in 1932).

The *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, published in 1930, showed how the USSR, while now entering into the years of full counter-revolution, still maintained at this time an attitude of ‘toleration’ towards homoeroticism:

In the advanced capitalist countries, the struggle for the abolition of these hypocritical laws is at present far from over. In Germany, for example, Magnus Hirschfeld is leading an especially fierce and not unsuccessful struggle to abolish the law against homosexuality . . . It is already obvious that the Soviet evaluation of the features and characteristics of homosexuals is completely different from the West’s evaluation. While understanding the wrongness of the development of homosexuality, society does not place and cannot place blame for it on those who exhibit it. This breaks down to a significant degree the wall which actually

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arises between the homosexual and society and forces the former to delve deeply into himself.<sup>55</sup>

Then, very suddenly, the full weight of the counter-revolution came down upon Soviet gays. In March 1934, a law was introduced in the Russian Federal Republic providing up to eight years' imprisonment for homosexual acts. This law was the result of Stalin's personal intervention. Its definition of homosexuality was confined to males. The non-Russian republics were subsequently requested to inscribe this statute in their own legal codes without modification. The Soviet press launched a vicious campaign against homosexuality, now defined as a symptom of the 'degeneration of the fascist bourgeoisie'. In both tone and content, this attack was virtually identical to the anti-gay campaign waged at the same time by the German Nazis. And as in Germany, so in the Soviet Union, too, the persecution went unheard. Those arrested included a large number of writers, musicians and other artists; they were condemned to various terms of imprisonment or deported to Siberia. These mass arrests led to panic among Soviet homosexuals, and were also followed by a large number of suicides in the Red Army. In Stalin's eyes, any kind of itch in the arse was a capitalist trick, with extermination the only solution.

Today, Soviet doctors are not even aware of the etymological roots of the term 'homosexuality'. Thus according to the third (1971) edition of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*:

Homosexuality (from the Latin *homo* and *sexus*) – a sexual perversion consisting in unnatural attraction to persons of the same sex. The penal statutes of the USSR, the socialist countries, and even some bourgeois states, provide for the punishment of homosexuality (*muzhelozhestvo* – sodomy between males).<sup>56</sup>

There can be no doubt that persecution is far sharper today in the Soviet Union, Cuba<sup>57</sup> or Poland than in England, France or Italy. We have seen how, in almost all the countries dominated by capital, more tolerant legislation has been introduced; and yet tolerance is still the negation of liberty. Tolerance is repressive.

In actual fact, the 'freedom' that is guaranteed homosexuals by

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the law is reducible to the freedom to be excluded, oppressed and exploited, to be the objects of moral and often physical violence, and to be isolated in a ghetto that is generally dangerous and almost always blatantly squalid. As Francesco Saba Sardi writes:

Late capitalist society, while it may extend to homosexuality the legal sanction of tolerance, still imposes on homosexuals a mark of infamy, ridicule or compassion, confining them to a more or less gilded ghetto in which the homosexual is induced to act out his role in a caricatured way. Just as the Jew, in the ghetto or concentration camp, became the Jew of the anti-Semitic and Nazi campaign, so this smarmy and cunning Jew, the masochistic Jew, has his counterpart today, at least in certain respects, in the 'queen'.<sup>58</sup>

In one of the European countries where homosexuals have attained the highest degree of political emancipation, Holland, they still remain marginalised, relegated to a functional ghetto, and imprisoned in the gilded cage that is gay Amsterdam. (Even if, we must add, you can enjoy yourself far better and more relaxedly in the Amsterdam saunas than in the toilets of the Piazza del Duomo in Milan . . .)<sup>59</sup>

Besides, and this should always be stressed, repression in the countries of capitalist domination remains very severe, despite the official legalisation of homosexuality:

In cases of indecency, action may be taken against someone who does not repel an indecent caress quickly enough . . . one simply needs to stay too long in a street urinal to be convicted of indecency . . . [and] policemen may go as far as incitement (in Turkish baths, for instance) in order to provoke the offence. Repression does not merely delight in poking into people's underpants, it seeks the outrage, it provokes it in order to condemn it (such police behaviour is frequent in the USA).<sup>60</sup>

*Agents provocateurs* of this kind also infest the gay community in England, Germany, France and Italy, almost everywhere in fact. On one occasion in London, I was all but seduced by a very



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attractive policeman who came into the toilet at Shepherd's Bush dressed in black leather and started masturbating, his handcuffs at the ready to catch the queens.

### *4. The Church: From Obscurantist to 'Progressive'*

Despite the massive anti-erotic campaign waged by the system, and the obtuse despotism of the heterosexual Norm, the countries dominated by capital have seen in the last few years the first stirrings of a very slow maturing on the homosexual question on the part of many people. This is true even if, in the same measure that people start to speak of homosexuality, the embarrassed ignorance and the mass of reactionary prejudice that characterise the general approach of 'normal' people to those who are 'different' also come to light, and the distance between those who openly reject homoeroticism and those who are more tolerant and 'progressive', in reality proves to be very small.

The Catholic Church, for centuries the harsh judge of 'sodomites', has decisively confirmed its backward positions. The Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in its *Declaration on Certain Questions of Sexual Ethics* (January 1976), took pains to distinguish between 'homosexuals whose inclination, deriving from bad education, lack of normal sexual development, contracted habit, bad example or other similar cause, is transitory or at least not incurable, and those homosexuals who are definitively such by virtue of a kind of innate instinct or pathological constitution judged incurable'.<sup>61</sup>

As can be seen here, the Church still uses the psychonazi distinction between 'spurious homosexuality' or 'pseudo-homosexuality' and 'true homosexuality'.<sup>62</sup> It is not by chance that Father Roberto Tucci, director of Radio Vatican, 'recognised in the *Declaration*, with reference to homosexuality, a greater attention to certain scientific findings . . .'<sup>63</sup>

The *Declaration* fails to mention again the 'first kind' of homosexuals (those whose 'aberrations' are 'transitory or at least not incurable'), perhaps being unwilling to give aid and succour to all the pseudo 'pseudo-homosexuals' among the clergy, and even ensconced on its leading bodies.

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As far as the second category are concerned, i.e. the incurable 'true homosexuals', the Sacred Congregation recommends that 'in pastoral activity' they should be 'received with understanding and sustained in the hope of overcoming their personal difficulty and social disadvantage. Their guilt is to be judged with caution; but no pastoral method should be used which . . . accords them a moral justification. According to the objective moral order, homosexual relations are acts lacking the essential and indispensable moral criterion'. 'Homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered, and they can in no case receive any kind of approval'.

Reactionary judgements of this kind, however, actually promote the homosexual liberation movement. For if on the one hand they perpetuate the guilt of the Catholic homosexual who sticks obstinately to his faith, on the other hand they lead a growing number of Catholic gays to abandon the Church, break with a religious tradition that is sullenly repressive and adopt a view of the world and of life that is different, less conformist, and hence potentially more disposed towards a revolutionary awareness.

But for quite a few years now, the Church (or capital) has been inventing structures of recuperation, even in dealing with gays who are less subdued by religious morality. Today, the Church also includes a dissenting wing. Thus some members of the clergy are beginning to take up positions in favour of an 'emancipation' of homosexuals, opposing the stigma of an 'unnatural' sin that is traditionally imposed on gays by the Church.

Among the Franciscans, there is the case of Father Vittorino Joannes.<sup>64</sup> Don Marco Bisceglia, a priest in Lavello (near Potenza), whom the local bishop deprived of his parish, maintains that it is not homosexuals 'who are destined for Hell, but rather those who exclude, insult, deride them and drive them to despair and suicide'.<sup>65</sup> The former nun Marisa Galli, known already for the dissent she expressed on the question of divorce, candidly stated:

As an Italian Catholic religious, I feel guilty for the evil we have inflicted on so many homosexual brothers with our attitude, in such contradiction to the message of the gospel. They really have the right to denounce us for our slanders. The treasures of the Vatican would not be enough to compensate those whom we have injured with our prejudices,

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our sexual illiteracy and our ignorant and conscious cruelty.<sup>66</sup>

No, the treasures of the Vatican would not be enough. Too many 'sodomites' have died over the centuries on the fires of the Holy Inquisition; and too many homosexuals believe, still today, because of what the Church assures them, that they are 'sick people who therefore need to be cured; and that anyone who speaks in favour of homosexuality, even if this is his own reality, commits a sin against God by going against nature'.<sup>67</sup>

Outside Italy, and particularly in Holland, noted independent Catholic theologians, such as Pfeurten, Oraison, Biet, Gottschalk, and the least obnoxious of them, van de Spijker,<sup>68</sup> have re-examined the entire Church attitude towards homoeroticism from a 'progressive' standpoint. Monsignor L'Heureux, moreover, the bishop of Perpignan, declared in a radio broadcast on 18 October 1974:

It is absolutely necessary to reach a clear definition on this question, in order to make possible a pastoral activity that can aid homosexuals to attain the sacraments more readily, to fill themselves more deeply with the word of God, to meet collectively, whether among themselves or with others, in order to reflect on the necessities of the Christian life, and finally not to blame themselves for acts they might be led to commit, and which might seem abnormal in relation to the Christian tradition.<sup>69</sup>

We should note how, for the first time here, by using the conditional 'might seem', a Catholic bishop has opened the possibility of a new reflection on homosexuality in moral theology. But this paternalistic attitude is a false facade. Above all, Monsignor L'Heureux is concerned to aid homosexuals 'not to blame themselves', even though it is clear that it is not in fact homosexuals who blame themselves, but rather that they are blamed by society in general and the Church in particular. Self-reproof, when it is present, simply reflects the condemnation inflicted by external persecution.

More precisely, Monsignor L'Heureux says that homosexuals should be helped 'not to blame themselves for acts *they might be*

led to commit'. Why 'might be' and not 'are'? And 'led' by whom or what? Taken as a whole, in fact, this sentence has a decidedly ambiguous ring to it. And when read in the context of the entire declaration, it can well be interpreted as an invitation to gays to extirpate the roots of their guilt by renouncing homosexual 'practices' ('not to blame themselves for *acts*'). What the bishop of Perpignan grants with one hand, he withdraws with the other, just like a conjuring trick. And on top of that, the prize is simply the integration of homosexuals into the Church.

The Protestant denominations have recently adopted still less conformist attitudes, in the same operation of recuperating homosexuality once it surfaces. For some two years, for example, the general meetings of the London Gay Liberation Front were regularly held at Notting Hill Gate in the All Saints church hall, and the meetings of the transvestites and transexuals group actually in the sacristy. There are also churches that organise religious services expressly for gays, above all in the USA.

On the other hand, those churches that do not insist on ecclesiastical celibacy are generally more disposed to admit more or less openly the homosexuality of many priests – and this with less hypocrisy than the Catholic Church. In the USA there are more than twenty branches of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, a special church for homosexuals, led by Rev. Troy Perry. Troy Perry has also celebrated a good number of gay marriages.<sup>70</sup>

The prospect of marriage between homosexuals is of still greater interest to the system than to even the gay reformists. In the USA, the press, which passed over almost in silence the massacre of thirty-one homosexuals in New Orleans in 1973 (one of so many slaughters by the hetero-state), published several articles in the course of that year celebrating marriage between two women or two men.<sup>71</sup> In Sweden and Norway, the press and tv discuss the right of homosexuals to marry, while the moderate gay organisations confine their demands to complete acceptance on the part of society. The heterosexual status quo, by way of its 'progressive' wing, is working for a total integration of homosexuality, its re-entry into the structure of the family – by the back door, of course.

*5. Repressive Desublimation and Reformism*

It is impossible to avoid showing up this implicit or even explicit intention to recuperate homosexuals that lies behind the new 'progressive' attitude of certain churches and states. It is necessary also to stress how the slow evolution of religious morality and of certain strata of public opinion towards more understanding and tolerant positions tends partially to replace the traditional form of aggression towards us gays by an attitude of protection. But if aggression is phallocratic and protection paternalist, phallocracy and paternalism are simply two sides of the same patriarchal coin. As Oscar Wilde said during his trial: 'The one disgraceful, unpardonable and to all time contemptible action of my life was my allowing myself to be forced into appealing to Society for help and protection . . .'<sup>72</sup>

The protection of homosexuals, 'permissive' morality, tolerance and political emancipation all go together, within certain limits, in the countries of capitalist domination, all these aspects proving in substance functional to the programme of commercialisation and exploitation of homosexuality on the part of capitalist enterprise. The commercialisation of the ghetto pays well: bars, clubs, hotels, discos, saunas, cinemas and pornography provide important footholds for those seeking to exploit the 'third sex'. Capital is working for a repressive desublimation of homosexuality. 'Sexuality is liberated (or rather liberalised) in socially constructive forms. This notion implies that there are repressive modes of desublimation . . .'<sup>73</sup>

The system deploys the same manoeuvre with respect to other so-called 'perversions'. Voyeurism, for example, is one of the most profitable 'perversions' for capital (cinema, pornography, etc.), while remaining in reality repressive. People go to the cinema to see a commodity make love, and this involves a repressive desublimation of the voyeuristic component of our desire, instead of us watching one another make love, enjoying and understanding ourselves and fusing voyeurism with other forms of pleasure. Repressive desublimation and commercial exploitation are inseparable; Eros remains geared to work and the production of alienating commodities, to the extent that its repressive desublimation provides a market for these.<sup>74</sup>

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Tolerance, on the other hand – ‘repressive tolerance’, as Marcuse calls it – simply confirms our marginalisation. Toleration of the homosexual minority, in fact, without the majority putting in question the repression of their own homoerotic desire, means recognising the right of those who are ‘deviant’ to live on the basis of their ‘deviance’ and hence to be marginalised. And this favours the highly increased exploitation of homosexuals on the part of the system that marginalises them.

In the Italian cities, in Spain, Greece, Portugal and other countries noted for their generally backward customs, a semi-clandestine industry of the ‘third sex’ flourishes, based on ties of strict convenience between entrepreneurs, the police and organised crime. In the United States, too, the great majority of bars where gay people meet are controlled by the Mafia. Paradoxically, the laws of the State of New York still consider homosexuality as such a crime, though New York City, along with Tokyo and San Francisco, contains what is undoubtedly one of the most extensive, most magnetic and best organised of homosexual ghettos in the world (including its nearby outcrops of Fire Island and Provincetown). Further evidence of the ‘rational character of capitalist irrationality’ (Marcuse) is given by the link that exists between economic organisations revolving round the exploitation of homoeroticism, and the judicial system. What is prohibited can be sold at a higher price.

What we need to bear in mind, above all, is the effective linkage in capitalist society between aggression and protection, as two sides of the same relationship to us gays. There is no middle zone between the two. In the last instance, the homosexual must be the object of aggression, so that he can then be protected and effectively exploited. On the other hand, protection and integration provide gays with palliative gratifications as well as inuring them to submission and weakening the force of their protest (and apparently, its very motivations). It is clear that neither aggressors nor protectors are aware of the mechanisms that exist between violence and protection, nor are they concerned to become aware of these. Protection provides the medium linking aggression to exploitation, a fact which only revolutionary gays have properly understood.

By far the greater part of homosexuals, even today, remain

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trapped in the illusions of political emancipation within the existing inhuman capitalist structures. Far from being surprising, this must be viewed as the product of thousands of years of habituation to the Norm (both 'normal' and normative), which induces homosexuals, the transgressors, to feel guilty. In the hope of integration, many gays indulge the fantasy of having the father-system forgive sins that they have not in fact committed. But the sense of guilt is essentially functional to perpetuating the rule of capital, and liberalisation and tolerance themselves provide footholds for the guilt feeling of those who are content merely to be tolerated, the better to be exploited. A homosexual has to feel in a certain sense guilty, in order to put up with the anguish and anxiety of the ghetto, and to renounce any genuine freedom. Capital, on the other hand, cannot forgive any sin. Firstly, because there are no such things, and secondly, because capital is itself a monstrous industry of sin.

The ideal of political emancipation does not involve any qualitative leap vis-à-vis the conditions of marginalisation and exploitation in which homosexuals are presently placed, nor a repudiation of the sense of guilt which would shed light on those really responsible for homosexual suffering. It is time for homosexuals to regain the energies that this guilt has confiscated, and channel them into a genuinely emancipatory struggle, both pleasurable and subversive.

The sense of guilt that the system induces in us is a false guilt, but at the same time it is the most intransigent enemy to homosexual liberation. We have to root it out, and to do this we must recognise it in its many and varied habitual disguises. To be aware of it is already to confront it, instead of continuing to be dominated by it.

This false guilt is the murderous agent of the system within us, the agent of death that torments us incessantly. As Corrado Levi has written: 'Our sickness is not that of being homosexual, but of having the sense of guilt. This has been induced and maintained in us by the father, and by those heterosexuals afraid of their own homosexuality'.<sup>75</sup>

The homosexual has been forced to internalise the social condemnation of homoeroticism, a condemnation that might any day strike at him. 'Normal' people, however, have adapted

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to the anti-gay taboo – internalising this condemnation in the most drastic fashion, and personifying the heterosexual Norm. They cannot refrain from ascribing guilt to anyone who transgresses the Norm, since such a person lives what they have repressed, and so by repression, discrimination and violence, they induce the homosexual to believe himself guilty. It is straight people who foment the sense of guilt in gays.

Corrado Levi shows how the feeling of guilt that often afflicts the gay person ‘has repercussions in a kind of inhibition in his behaviour in general’. In the course of consciousness-raising meetings held in Milan, ‘the connections between homosexuality and self-punishment became clear . . . and how this was stirred up by the police, the father, etc. The detailed analysis of the sense of guilt led to identifying and thus isolating our internalisation of the prevailing morality and values, which we can therefore proceed to repudiate together with the sense of guilt’. A gradual elimination of false guilt

is a result proceeding in parallel with the analysis and overcoming of the prevailing values, norms and behaviours. The sense of guilt is tied up with transgressions of the aims towards which the repression of homosexuality, which we are subjected to from childhood, is designed, and which in adulthood then becomes self-repression (with the compulsion to repeat), in the context of the present deformation of the individual by Oedipal-patriarchal education. And it is reinforced by the guilt that is imposed on sex and the body by the Judeo-Christian culture. It is symptomatic, to take only one effect of this sense of guilt, to note how many times, discovering themselves different from certain prevailing values and behaviours, the sense of guilt leads people to adopt other prevailing values and behaviours in a very rigid form, as a compensation for these transgression (ibid.).

We can thus understand how a homosexual, led by the system to feel guilt because he transgresses the anti-gay taboo, often tries in some form or other to vindicate himself in the eyes of society, to adapt to all its rules and become conservative and



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reactionary, repressive and death-dealing in his turn. The homosexual can thus be transformed into an instrument of capital. 'We know very well', observes Angelo Pezzana, 'that those homosexuals who have positions of power are precisely the people who combat homosexual liberation'.<sup>76</sup>

Apropos the 'discreet face of the *pédés*', some comrades in the French Groupe de Libération Homosexuel wrote:

Just as the black American movement had to struggle against the black bourgeoisie, which was violently opposed to the ghetto revolts and which mimicked the racist white society, in the same way we cannot say that any homosexual whatsoever is *a priori* on our side, 'even if . . .'. Because if every homosexual experiences sexual repression, this comes about in different ways according to his social position, his conditioning, and his ideas. What does he do at work? What does he do in his daily life? France under Giscard permits its homosexuals to live and survive with dignity, with *Arcadie*, in hypocrisy and disguise. This type of established homosexual is among the first to oppose our revolt. He is generally one of our enemies.<sup>77</sup>

The burden of condemnation that is internalised, and the conditions of unfreedom and desperation in which we live, still induce too many homosexuals to content themselves with one form of adaptation or another, to cultivate the fascist dress, home and smile of *Men in Vogue* (which at one time I myself tried to adopt and identify with), and/or to aspire to the attainment of further civil rights. The system only profits from this: 'The system is the Leopard inciting us to try and change everything in such a way that it all remains the same'.<sup>78</sup>

Even those gays involved in the liberation movement are not all fully aware of the need to wage the struggle in a totalising and revolutionary perspective, towards *human emancipation* instead of just *political emancipation*;<sup>79</sup> relatively few are aware as yet of the revolutionary force potentially contained in their condition, and of what they must do to translate this into deeds.

At the present time, the movement is made up of both revolutionary and integrationist homosexuals. The activities of

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different groups, moreover, often conflict with one another, though it is through such difficulties and contrasts that the movement dialectically grows and is transformed. Beyond the formal political distinctions between one organisation and another, one collective and the next, beyond the differences of interpretation and content, the gay movement as a whole is the historical movement for the liberation of homosexuality, even if it cannot but reflect, for the time being, the contradictions and limitations of the general social situation, which is predominantly counter-revolutionary.

The organisational structure of the gay groups themselves, while more elastic and gay, and less authoritarian, than the traditional or ultra-left political rackets, often remains, all the same, substantially hierarchical (even if the collectives scarcely ever recognise any official hierarchy). The effective leaders often tend – and sometimes unconsciously – to lead ‘their’ groups like little gangs to be more or less kept to heel, their own prestige and personal power being based on these. Still essentially *political* figures, they are as such patriarchal and reactionary, for all the feathers and glitter.

Besides, a certain inertia and the insufficient level of gay-subversive consciousness on the part of many members of the group, tends to assign ‘leader’ roles to a few people, and to confirm them in these roles, for all the discussions against authoritarianism and charismatic leaders that are held within the collectives, discussions which often boil down to dialectical clashes that are in actual fact a power play between rival leaders.

It is also the case that many homosexuals, consumed and obscured by the induced sense of guilt, the internalisation of the social condemnation, when they meet for the first time in liberation groups are suddenly assailed with remorse, often unconsciously, by the internal superego, which condemns them for having dared to disobey the social superego that has established their marginalisation and is opposed to a revolutionary awareness. Like the sons of Freud’s mystical primitive father, who after uniting in a homosexual bond find the strength to kill him, but are then overtaken by remorse and establish in memory and substitution for the father the totem, the phallic fetish, so the homosexuals who meet in liberation groups are largely powerless

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against the attack from the superego that immediately assails them, and find themselves forced to establish in their midst leaders, phallic and charismatic figures who 'command' them, personifying the authority of the superego that binds every individual member of the group with the sense of guilt.

On the one hand, we must not apologise for all the existing homosexual organisations. Only a critical attitude to their history, their formation and development, can shed light both on the importance of the gay-communist perspective, and on the revolutionary that is present, potentially or in actual fact, inside them.

On the other hand, even if not all of us gays are for the revolution, it is impossible to understand the homosexual question without making constant reference to the concrete individuals who set this in motion by their struggle and research. They provide us with keys for a revolutionary reading of the historical and social problematics that bear on homosexuality, of the ideological (and) psychoanalytic disquisitions on the 'perversions', even when they are themselves far from revolutionary. No one can better interpret the Freudian analysis of the Schreber case,<sup>80</sup> for example, than someone who has himself tried to establish what it means to be a crazy queen, to be condemned as such, to revolt against repression and the internalised form of the condemnation. However reformist a queen may be, he is always still a queen.

Oscar Wilde has been labelled both a camp conservative and a decadent socialist, but from the standpoint of homosexual liberation he was willy-nilly a revolutionary. It is true that today the system is infinitely better prepared to recuperate the moderate expressions of homosexual struggle than it was a century ago. Thus the sense of guilt that shows clearly through in the works of Wilde, and at times even dominates these, is less serious than the present sense of guilt that leads many gays into reformism, if we consider the present self-interested propensity that capital displays towards tolerance, compared with the very severe persecution of homoeroticism in nineteenth-century England.

The most radical expression of the homosexual liberation movement, both practical and theoretical, took place in the wake of the workers' and students' struggles of 1968 and 1969 in

Europe, and in the USA of the deep revolt stamped on American society, particularly on the minds of young Americans, by the ghetto insurrections and the temporary revolutionary assertion of the black movement.<sup>81</sup> At the same time, moreover, both in America and Europe the formation of gay groups was deeply influenced by the radicalisation and expansion of the feminist movement to be seen in the late 1960s. The subsequent reflux of these struggles, the counter-revolutionary stabilisation of capitalist power and the stagnation of social and existential discontent, have all notably contributed to a fragmentation of the gay movement.

In France, it became clear in 1974 that the Front Homosexuel d'Action Révolutionnaire, known as the most extreme of the European groups, had to all intents dissolved. This did not mean that the homosexual movement in France was dead. It was rather transformed and divided into smaller groups (the most important of which is presently the Groupe de Libération Homosexuel), which, from differing positions and without any pretence at uniformity for the sake of formal unity, are waging a struggle around objectives that are largely shared.

In Britain, the Gay Liberation Front, which had its heyday in 1971-72, gradually adapted itself to the confines of a para-reformist struggle, bringing it closer to the politics of the Campaign for Homosexual Equality, the British integrationist organisation. But this does not mean that there are not still revolutionary collectives existing in England.

In the USA, the leading role that was once held by the GLF is now occupied by more moderate groups such as the National Gay Task Force, particularly strong in New York, and the Gay Activists Alliance, an organisation that broke away from the GLF as early as 1969. This first split was provoked by disagreements within GLF between the more radical elements, who openly supported the Black Panthers and favoured an intensification of struggle, and the reformists, disposed to a politics that was showy but cautious, and who were against the gay movement giving support to other liberation struggles. In America, too, however, there are still various revolutionary homosexual collectives who do not form official organisations, but are the most advanced expressions of the real movement.

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In Italy, the federation of *Fuori!* with the Radical party clearly indicates the assertion of a counter-revolutionary, reformist political line in the homosexual movement. Symptomatic of this was the participation of *Fuori!*, which presented its own candidates on the Radical list, in the elections of June 1976, and the pathetic tone of the electoral campaign. In Italy, however, revolutionary homosexual groups have emerged in various cities, among them the Milan Homosexual Collectives and the autonomous collectives in Florence, Pavia, Venice, Padua, Naples, Catania, Cagliari, etc.

We may say, then, that if reformist homosexuals aspire to parliament, revolutionaries do not accept compromises with the political racketeers of the system, whether parliamentary or ultra-left. They continue to struggle for themselves as revolutionaries (and) homosexuals, knowing that only the firmest intransigence, the closest solidarity and the rejection of all politicking and casuistic manoeuvres can keep them free from capitalist recuperation, and actually promote the achievement of liberation.

### *6. The Gay Revolutionary Project*

Revolutionary criticism has shown how the ideology based on the capitalist mode of production, on the alienation of labour and the reification of the human subject, involves the absurd absolutising of contingent historical values, the hypostasis of opinions (scientific, ethico-moral, socio-political, psychological) that are in reality relative and transitory. This ideology upholds the 'naturalness' of the present system and mode of production, absolutising it in an ahistorical manner and concealing its underlying transience. What is hypostatized here by ideology as 'normal' and normative is nothing but the temporary appearance of something that is in reality changing, being transformed and developing together with the means and mode of production, with the dynamic of the contradiction between capital and the human species, with the entire movement of society. But if capital has so far withstood the revolutionary movement, and managed to repress it, in the same way its ideology has survived the upsurge and widespread progress of the theory of the

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proletariat, with respect to which it has sought – and often partially managed – a recuperation, without however touching the essence.

At 120 years' distance from the *Communist Manifesto*, people's heads are still filled with ideological absurdity. The ideology of wage-labour still marks the world-view of one-dimensional man, even though capital has reached the stage of real domination, in which

it is no longer just labour, a specific and determinate aspect of human activity, that has to be subjugated and incorporated into capital, but rather the entire human life process. The embodiment (*Einverleibung*) process of capital, begun in the West some five centuries ago, is now complete. Today capital is the common being (*Gemeinwesen*) oppressing people . . . With the development of cybernetics, it becomes clear that capital appropriates and incorporates to itself the human brain; with computer technology, it creates its own language on which human language has to be remodelled, etc. At this level, it is no longer just proletarians – those who produce surplus-value – who are subjected to capital, but everyone, the greater part of people being proletarianised. This is capital's real domination over society, a domination in which all people becomes slaves of capital.<sup>82</sup>

This real domination is characterised by the immanent tendency to socialisation which transforms capitalism into state capitalism, while the state, as a 'committee for running the common affairs of the bourgeoisie', comes itself to bear the capitalist hallmark. This general slavery tends to present itself as participation in the management of production by the workers. These are transformed into automatons, managing and administering the very system that enslaves them. So much so that the substitution of living labour by science and technology 'becomes the universal form of material production . . . [and] circumscribes an entire culture; it projects a historical totality – a "world"' (Marcuse).<sup>83</sup>

The necessary economic premises for the creation of communism are thus completely developed (and overdeveloped); capitalism itself has reduced necessary labour to a minimum. But people

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continue to work for capital, which now takes charge of all the activity that the proletariat performs in the factory, they continue to survive for capital's sake. This real domination so much subsumes human life, and determines people's thinking to such an extent, that even now – when it would be enough to stop the system's machinery for the species to be able to rediscover itself, its biological salvation and communist freedom – the revolution is still held up from asserting itself.

Ideology leads people to think according to the inhuman criteria of capital, and brakes the growth of a universal, communist awareness that would oppose itself once and for all to the cancerous domination of this automatic monster.

The struggle of women and the theoretical expressions of their movement have made it clear how this ideology is phallogentric, based on the subjugation of the female sex to the male at least as much as on the capitalist mode of production. And that the dominant ideology is also white and Eurocentric has literally been written in letters of fire by the struggle of black people, who, insurgent in the ghettos of America in the 1960s, and destroying the cities of capital, have reopened for the species the perspective of the communist revolution, the perspective of human emancipation.

And that 'finally' the ideology is also heterosexual, is something that we homosexuals have shown for the first time, in a forceful way, in the course of the last few years, from the founding of the New York Gay Liberation Front in summer 1969 through to today.

But through all its specific and persisting characteristics (bourgeois, male, Eurocentric, heterosexual), what we must recognise in this ideology above all today is capital itself, its real domination. Today, ideology is single, and strikes at different groups differently but in the same fashion. We have to get rid of it, in order to give life and thought back their free and human 'form' and 'essence', at present reified in the deadly cogs of the capital-machine. The 'privileges' that society cherishes today are revealed as in substance exclusively functional to perpetuating the system; the bourgeois, white, heterosexual male is also almost always an obtuse and unfortunate solipsist, the most despicable puppet of the status quo, which negates in him the woman, the

black, the queen and the human being.

If ideology is single and anthropomorphic, the (in)human mask of capital, we, on the other hand, are today far too divided, and above all divided from one another, despite all being in the same underlying situation, suffocated by the weight of the system. We are divided, but it is capital that confronts and divide us.

Cultivating the deep specificities of all our individual cases of personal oppression, we can advance to the revolutionary consciousness that sees in my specific case of oppression also yours (because you, too, hetero, are a negated gay), and in your specific case, also mine (because I, too, am a negated woman), so as to recognise an 'us all' beyond all historically determinate separation and autonomy, i.e. the negated human species. Revolution cannot but come from this recognition of our common repressed being, reflected today in separate forms in society, in those who live in the first person, vis-à-vis the repression, a particular aspect of human 'nature'<sup>64</sup> (being a woman, the homoerotic desire, etc.) that the system negates.

The proletariat itself, and the struggle of women, blacks and us gays, have all indicated the fundamental importance, in the perspective of human emancipation, of everyone who – in relation to the absolutised values of ideology – is considered marginal, secondary, anomolous or downright absurd. The life of the species is there. If the ruling ideology is absurd, the reality this veils can be discerned only by living what this ideology negates and relegates to a corner. Schizophrenia is a gate of access to revolutionary knowledge; and only loving a black person, knowing black people, can truly lead to understanding why communism will be black, of all colours.

A critical theory, growing as a function of a gay revolutionary project, cannot but take into account everything that is eccentric to the narrow confines of what the dominant subculture considers 'normal', permissible, rational. For us homosexuals, there is a clear alternative. Either to adapt to the established uni-verse, and hence to marginalisation, the ghetto and derision, adopting as our own values the hypocritical morality of heterosexual idiocy that is functional to the system (even if with that inevitable and visible variant that is difficult to renounce with a cock up one's arse), and hence to opt for a *heteronomy*; or else to oppose



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ourselves to the Norm, and the society of which this is the reflection, and to overturn the entire imposed morality, to specify the particular character of our existential objectives from our own standpoint of marginalisation, from our 'different' being, as lesbian, bum-boy, gay, in open contrast to the one-dimensional rule of hetero monosexuality. In other words, to opt for our 'homonymy'. As Sartre wrote about Gide:

In the fundamental conflict between sexual anomaly and accepted normality, he took sides with the former against the latter, and has gradually eaten away the rigorous principles which impeded him like an acid. In spite of a thousand relapses, he has moved forward towards *his* morality; he has done his utmost to invent a new Table of the Law . . . he wanted to free himself from other peoples' Good; he refused from the first to allow himself to be treated like a black sheep.<sup>85</sup>

Gide's position is not essentially different from that of all of us other homosexuals. It is a question of opposing the 'normal' morality and of choosing what is good and what is bad from our own marginalised point of view. If we aspire to liberation, we must reject the existing standards. It is a question of making a choice that rejects the Norm. But a gay moralisation of life, which combats the misery, egoism and hypocrisy, the repressive character and the immorality of customary morality, cannot take place unless we root out the sense of guilt, that false guilt which still ties so many of us to the status quo, to its ideology and its death-dealing principles, preventing us from moving with gay seriousness in the direction of a totalising revolutionary project.

We know that the discovery of what is hidden by the 'anomalous' label with which the dominant ideology covers up so many expressions of life, contributes to showing the absurdity of this ideology. But the gradual accumulation of evidence against the alleged absolute value of capitalist science and morality is only a secondary result of the analysis of those questions and arguments which public opinion considers more or less taboo. Above all, it is a question of discovering what these questions disclose about our own underlying 'nature'.

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A direct approach to the homosexual question shows the basic importance of the homoerotic impulse in any human being, and makes a contribution to tracing the issues inherent to its repression and its disguise. We know, in the words of Norman O. Brown, that 'it is in our unconscious repressed desires that we shall find the essence of our being, the clue to our neurosis (as long as reality is repressive), and the clue to what we might become if reality ceased to repress'.<sup>86</sup>

The revolutionary gay movement is struggling to (re)conquer our mysterious underlying being. Revealing the historical-existential secret that has up till now been gleaned and preserved in our marginal position, forced as we have been for millenia and for all the most oppressed years of our individual lives to remain secret, we homosexuals, with our voice and all the expressions of our presence, are beginning to reveal what is one of the world's basic mysteries. Perhaps homosexuality is indeed the key to trans-sexuality; perhaps it does point towards something that the repressive requirements of civilisation have been keeping down for thousands of years.

The repression of homosexuality stands in direct proportion to its importance in human life and for human emancipation. If we want to escape from the massacre that has decimated us in the past, the way forward lies via a better understanding of the ancient burden of condemnation that still weighs heavily on each of us even today, a better understanding of the theatrical and ambiguous way in which this massacre is perpetuated in our own time. In this way, we shall reach a better awareness of the revolutionary force that lies within us and our desire.

With its real domination, capital seeks to take possession of even the unconscious, that 'human essence' whose manifest expressions could not but be condemned to death by the systems of repression that preceded it. It may be successful, either because it is more difficult today for the unconscious to explode in an uncontrolled fashion, give the efficiency of conditioning, or because, by way of repressive desublimation, capital enables the unconscious to 'emerge' in alienated forms, in order to subsume it, to deprive men and women of it, and to deprive women and men of themselves. The logic of money and profit that determines the liberalisation of the so-called 'perversions' is not simply an

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economic fact; it promotes the submission to capital of the whole of human life.

This demonstrates the very complex task of our revolutionary project, to recognise and express a humanity that transcends capital, without offering ourselves up to be devoured by it. In fact, if this should happen, then capital would simply vomit us up again in its own forms, with a view to making use of us to reproduce a new 'humanity', even more programmable, because already programmed in advance.

This is why we have to take extreme positions, not yielding a single inch on the things that really matter, nor abandoning the intransigent struggle for the liberation and conquest of every aspect of our being-in-becoming.

It is due to the awareness of this that a number of homosexuals have stressed, in the last few years, the need to forge instruments for an autonomous ('homonomous') struggle of our own, working out our own theory and deepening the critique of capitalist liberalisation. The situation of those gays who see themselves taking part in a movement (historical, rather than simply formal) differs from that of André Gide in its collective character, in that the 'system' of homosexuality provides a belonging together in which more and more people feel involved. For us, it is no longer a question of an individual project to combat the prevailing morality, but rather of a conscious intersubjective project of our own gay responsibilities and goals, with a view to involving the whole of humanity. We homosexuals must liberate ourselves from the feeling of guilt (and this is one of our immediate goals), so that homoeroticism spreads and 'catches on'. We have to make the water gush from the rock, to induce 'absolute' heterosexuals to grasp their own homosexuality, and to contribute, through the dialectical confrontation and clash between the minority and majority sexual tendencies, to the attainment of the trans-sexuality which the underlying polysexual 'nature' of desire points towards. If the prevailing form of monosexuality is heterosexuality, then a liberation of homoeroticism, this Cinderella of desire, forms an indispensable staging-post on the road to the liberation of Eros. The objective, once again, is not to obtain a greater acceptance of homoeroticism by the hetero-capitalist status quo, but rather to transform monosexuality into an Eros that is genuinely

*Fire and Brimstone, or How Homosexuals Became Gay*

polymorphous and multiple; to translate into deeds and into enjoyment that trans-sexual polymorphism which exists in each one of us in a potential but as yet repressed form.

To conduct our struggle in a truly 'homonomous', original and originally subversive way, we lesbians and gay men have to suspend judgement on everything (ideals, theories, analyses, compartmentalised models, etc.) that has up till now both dragged us in and excluded us at the same time, as a product of the heterosexual majority. We have the task of reinterpreting everything from our own vantage point, with a view to enriching and transforming the revolutionary conception of history, society and existence.

We are fed up to the teeth with running along ready-made rails that do not take us into account, adhering to moral and theoretical systems which base their assumed reliability largely on our exclusion, on the banishment of homoeroticism (and only we ourselves can be clear about the way that this happens and why). We are tired of simply fusing our forces in with those who struggle for an ideal of the future which, even if utopian, appears to us as still too dangerously like the disgraceful present, since it does not take into account the homosexual question and its bearing on the goal of complete human emancipation.

Only we gays can know where our history is concealed, in the terrible and sublime secrets of public toilets, under the weight of the chains with which the heterosexual society has bound and subjected us to it, concealing the uniqueness of our (potential) contribution to the revolution and the creation of communism.

## heterosexual men, or rather closet queens

### 1. *Sport*

If homosexuality and the heterosexual society are in conflict, even when this is legally disguised, as in the more permissive and democratic countries, and a peaceful coexistence is proclaimed, the contradiction is still reflected in the existential universe of each individual. If One-Dimensional Man is a divided self, then the present incompatibility between heterosexual desire and homoeroticism makes a major contribution towards sharpening this split.

Given our original and underlying trans-sexuality, and recognising the polymorphous and 'perverse' disposition of the child to an eroticism that makes no exclusive distinction as to the sex of the object of its libidinal impulse, it is clear that each one of us has a hidden erotic attraction towards the sex that is not (or is scarcely) the focus of our conscious desire. We do not intend to discuss here the extent to which the repression of a given component of desire can be stable and definitive, rather to take a look at some of the results of the sublimation of homosexuality and/or its conversion into 'pathological syndromes'.

It is necessary to repeat that anyone who holds him- or herself to be 100 per cent heterosexual only conceals the high 'percentage' of their censored gay desire: 'The increasing number of obsessional homoerotics in modern society would then be the symptom of the partial failure of repression and "return" of the repressed material'.<sup>1</sup> But a 'failure' for what? Clearly for the absolute heterosexual Norm and its paladins, among whom we must count

Ferenczi himself.

We homosexuals, on the other hand, save for some very rare exceptions, are always at least somewhat aware of the persistence in us of an erotic desire for persons of the other sex. The standpoint of marginalisation or 'deviance' once again proves a privileged one, as against the understanding of the 'reality' of things simply in terms of the customary appearance that the prevailing ideology gives out as ontological.<sup>2</sup>

Very many social and individual phenomena can be interpreted and understood in terms of a sublimation of homoerotic desire. Sport, for example, is not simply a peaceful extraversion of the death instinct, or as Konrad Lorenz has it, 'a cathartic discharge of aggressive urge'.<sup>3</sup> It is also a masked expression of homoerotic tendencies, often permitting physical contact between members of the same sex; and it translates into the negative mode of antagonism and competition the unconscious positive feeling of mutual attraction. In his film *Women in Love*, Ken Russell illustrated the mechanism of this conversion very well, as well as its broad emotional scope, in the scene where the two male heroes wrestle naked in front of the fire. Converted expressions of homosexual desire can be similarly recognised in the mania for sport and the worship of sporting stars.

Proust asked himself 'why, when we admire in the face of this person a delicacy that touches our hearts, a spontaneous affability such as men do not possess, should we be dismayed to learn that this young man runs after boxers?'<sup>4</sup> But it is really no surprise that a tender and delicate man should be attracted to athletes, given that rougher and more virile men are too. And if someone should object that wanting to go to bed together is something else – true enough, but only because the homosexual desire is alienated, as a general rule, in sporting fans, who reject it and sublimate it in a hysterical fashion.

Oscar Wilde once scandalised a headmaster by quipping that 'Football is all very well as a game for rough girls, but it is hardly suitable for delicate boys'.<sup>5</sup> But Wilde's irony here conceals the trauma often experienced by homosexual adolescents, who, unable to sublimate the erotic desire that they feel for their schoolfriends, find it terribly frustrating to battle with them in competitive sports, and suffer terribly at times on this account. The homosexual

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idea of sport is very different from the traditional one. The gay schoolboy who detests physical education longs for a world in which, as in ancient Greece, physical exercise, sexual satisfaction and affection are no longer separate and opposing spheres. He knows very well, in fact, that his schoolmates, while kicking each other, actually desire one another. Instead of punching and beating, play should rather consist in people offering themselves physically to one another, with the erotic character of sado-masochism being openly recognised and combined with affection. The struggle of bodies can very well end up in forms of sex that are both tender and violent, and team meetings could well be transformed into a collective encounter in the scrum (a development already foreshadowed in rugby).

Today, the connection between Eros and sport is veiled with hypocrisy, even if hugging and kissing is already commonplace after a goal is scored. (What is the real goal?) And we know how in the locker room after the game, tousled and sweaty youths heatedly discuss their exploits in language full of sexual expressions, particularly the word 'fuck'.

In the municipal Turkish baths of London's East End, where young and not so young working-class heterosexuals regularly get together to massage each other's naked bodies on the steam-room benches, and the scent of mint and saffron fills the air, it is enough to close one's eyes for a moment and simply listen, to be struck by the incessant repetition of 'fucking' this and that. The desire to fuck is so strong, and at the same time so tightly repressed, that it is continuously expressed in language.

Capital, moreover, as shrewd as ever, is moving in to exploit the homosexuality that lies within and behind sport. The latest American sporting magazines, for example, publish gay small ads. Also, in the more 'advanced' capitalist countries, fashion imposes on gays the attractive and provocative garb of the athlete. On a Sunday afternoon in New York's Central Park, you get the impression that a cycle race is taking place; racing bikes, shorts and muscular thighs are *de rigueur*, the scene is perfectly produced. What goes on in the bushes, though, would undoubtedly surprise the passing heterosexual.

At times, too, the body-building cult has provided a medium linking sport with manifest homosexuality. A British magazine of

the 1950s, for example, advertised itself as: 'The finest, most thrilling International Physique Photo magazine. Packed with superb pictures of the World's most flawless physiques. Hi-Fi reproduction on glossy art paper. Plus inspiring articles by today's Champion body-builders'.<sup>6</sup> Inside, photographs of nude males in the pose of Greek statues: 'Stars from all over the world'. Another issue of the same magazine was titled 'Men and Sex', even though there was not a single article inside on male sexuality. It was clearly unnecessary to justify the title.

## *2. Male Bonding and Friendship*

In the same way as sport, patriotic enthusiasm allows a converted expression of latent homosexual desire:

Bleuler refused to accept that alcohol destroys sublimations. To support this view, he cited the tendency to a 'patriotic' sublimation that is frequently encountered after the consumption of alcohol. But when a drunken man induces those around him to join in expressions of 'patriotic' enthusiasm, we would rather see this as an ill-disguised homoeroticism than as sublimation (Ferenczi).<sup>7</sup>

The Italian Alpine division must have felt something that really hit home when they demanded (and obtained) the confiscation of Fellini's *Salò, or 120 Days of Sodom* on the grounds that the film showed their troops in a scene deemed 'morbid and perverted'.

Looking more closely at drink, Ferenczi also maintained that 'the alcohol played here only the part of an agent destroying sublimation, through the effect of which the [patient's] true sexual constitution, namely the preference for a member of the same sex, became evident'.<sup>8</sup> It is well enough known how drunkenness releases homoerotic impulses in many who are heterosexual *par excellence*. Once a man gets drunk, he will fall prey without difficulty to gay seduction.

Marijuana, LSD, etc., in fact all 'mind-expanding' drugs, frequently bring straight people face to face with their homoerotic desire and/or the problem of its repression, especially if they find



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themselves in the company of homosexuals. They can then either abandon themselves to the formerly repressed impulse, to experience, or else resist this and end up in 'paranoia'.<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, just as Ferenczi recognised the ill-disguised presence of homosexual desire in expressions of patriotism, so we can similarly see the same thing behind all male bonding, the military and police variety above all, as well as other forms of friendship between people of the same sex. According to Freud:

After the stage of heterosexual object-choice has been reached, the homosexual tendencies are not, as might be expected, done away with or brought to a stop; they are merely deflected from their sexual aim and applied to fresh uses. They now combine with portions of the ego-instincts and, as attached components, help to constitute the social instincts, thus contributing an erotic factor to friendship and comradeship, to *esprit de corps* and to the love of mankind in general.<sup>10</sup>

The 'bosom friend' of childhood and adolescence is in fact the 'object' of the child's desire, in the broad sense, hence including an explicitly sexual desire. Mutual and group masturbation among schoolfriends expresses the erotic charge that ties them together, even if it is generally only the very young boy who can openly and without hypocrisy indulge in sexual relations with his peers. The others are already aware of the suppression of homoeroticism, and accept erotic play with their friends only as a palliative masturbatory outlet ('girls won't let us'), refusing to admit the deep homosexual desire that unites them.

Among adults, heterosexual male friends, colleagues, mates or comrades all fail to conceal from the gay eye the homosexual substratum of their relationships. Business partnerships, political rackets, gangs, bars and men's clubs are the unhealthy sites of latent homosexuality, for which they provide only a wretched gratification. Here, men exhibit the symbolic phallus, confirming their own fixation on the cock while speaking of 'women' or 'cunts', vigorously slapping one another on the back and giving out tacit requests to fuck one another. It is clear that among themselves men speak of *male* sexuality, and if they are heterosexual, then

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their homosexual desire is expressed only in language.

Male bonding is the grotesque expression of a paralysed and unspoken homosexuality, which can be grasped, in the negative, in the denial of women, whom they speak of phallogocritically, without any genuine consideration, reducing them to a hole, i.e. to something that does not exist. The suppression of homoeroticism is here always bound up with the oppression of women by men. The negated homosexual desire makes its resurgence via the negation of woman. In male language, woman is totally transformed, she becomes woman-for-man, a fetish exchanged between two men, the alienated go-between for men whose sole and constant preoccupation is the incessant assertion of a fetishistic, overweening, individualistic and male-bonding virility, a negative virility. Virility is simply the neurotic and cumbersome introjection by men of a homosexual desire for one another which is both very strong and tightly censored. Virility coarsens and hardens the male human being, transforming him into a rough caricature of the male. There is nothing more ridiculous, however fragile in substance, than this would-be virile heterosexual who boasts of his violent and 'absolute' potency and in this way only negates himself, forcibly repressing the human being – particularly the 'woman' and the queen – within himself, and making himself a vigilante for the phallic power system. There is nothing more feeble than this 'virile' male who under it all fears impotence and castration, since in reality he already is, as an absolute male, a mutilated human being.

To quote Ferenczi once again:

With male neurotics who feel themselves unkindly treated by the physician *homosexual obsessions* may appear, which often refer to the person of the latter. This is a proof, which might almost be called experimental, that friendship is essentially sublimated homosexuality, which in case of denial is apt to regress on to its primitive level.<sup>11</sup>

In all relations of friendship between male heterosexuals, the homosexuality that is latent and inhibited finds expression in the form of obsessive heterosexuality. The heterosexual is obsessed with the need to prove to his friend his exclusive attraction

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towards women, and to exorcise the homosexuality on which his friendship with the other man is based. Friendship, therefore, cannot be genuine: it is founded on a misconception and a silent (anti-)homosexual complicity (an alienated homosexuality). The liberation of homoeroticism, therefore, is not just the negation of homosexuality as it presently is, it will also overthrow the present forms of friendship between people of the same sex. If homosexuality comes into the open, then a certain type of 'friendship' cannot but give way to new erotic relations and open emotions.

### *3. Hetero-queens. The Cult of the Gay Superstar*

Hetero-queenery, too, must be seen as a phenomenon closely connected with the sublimation of homoeroticism. The hetero-queen is a heterosexual who, while unaware of the gay component of his own desire, and thus not having homosexual relations, has all the ways (if not the *savoir-faire*) of a queen.

We can see this, for example, in the radical chic of the left, the Stalinist-Maoist dress of *Men in Vogue* as pioneered by Luca Cafiero and others; the 'plum-coloured jacket with wide reverses' and the handbag – 'which, now that everybody carries one, is no longer necessarily a gay symbol'<sup>12</sup> – of the working-class militant of Lotta Continua; the jeans and leather of the Autonomists, a fetish taken over from the leather queens, which objectifies and sublimates their homosexual desire.

Even the very writings of the left often exhibit the radical chic variant of hetero-queenery. Take for example the glossy cover, 'elegance' and intellectual showing-off of the publications of certain Situationist theorists. All these expressions of hetero-queenery display to the eyes of conscious homosexuals the queen in so many men whom no one would suspect of being gay. The Situationist critique of the '*société du spectacle*', in the language of certain Situationists, becomes itself a spectacle, to the point that they act with this mask their own wish to be a queen.

Besides sport and sporting mania, patriotic enthusiasm, male bonding and friendship, hetero-queenery and radical chic, a certain quantity of unconscious homosexual desire is also channelled

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into the myths of singers and movie stars. This phenomenon is ever more common, to the point that in the USA and Britain, in particular, the latest idols of popular music rouse their massed teenage fans to delirium by a repertoire of sinuous movements, 'transexual' vocal modulations, ostentatiously effeminate clothing and sophisticated make-up – by the patent ambiguity, in a word, which they display, from the Rolling Stones through to Roxy Music, Lou Reed and David Bowie. This phenomenon has reached paradoxical lengths. The New York Dolls, for instance, a group of young men who come (or came) on stage in full drag, are completely heterosexual, and yet at least in its intent, their show is not just a parody of homosexuality and transvestism, but rather a celebration. Heterosexual, too, are the great majority of their audience, and yet the success of these singers is rightly attributed to their undisguised exhibition of a 'complex-free' homosexuality. Nor do their audience worship them as something ridiculous, but precisely because they appear provocatively gay.

This is a case of a repressive desublimation that is immediately resublimated. Capital liberalises desire while channelling it into a consumerist outlet. Far from being genuinely liberated, homosexuality thus plays a key role in the totalitarian capitalist spectacle. Nowadays, there is no commercial 'artistic' expression which does not take into account to a greater or lesser extent the homoerotic content of desire. But in the epoch of its technical reproducibility, the work of 'art' makes a high contribution to the marketing of homoeroticism.

As a general rule, an artist is seen as justified in being homosexual, since according to popular conception, artists are always outrageous, non-conformists and lunatics, who might as well be queer as well. In the eyes of 'normal' people, art, in the last analysis, redeems the anomaly of sexual depravation – 'even Michelangelo, Leonardo, Shakespeare, Rimbaud, Verlaine, Proust, Cocteau, etc. were like that'. Another reason why homosexuality is tolerated, as an exception, when accompanied by an 'artistic' expression, is that it can then be relegated to the sphere of imagination and fantasy, i.e. sublimated, and does not directly interfere with relations that are currently considered 'normal'. Homoeroticism is all very well in the cinema, in books, and in painting, but not in bed, and above all: 'Not in my bed, for the love of God and the Blessed

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Virgin Mary!’

It is in this form of tolerance that capital seeks to use us. But if homosexuality really were as free as the ideology of permissiveness claims, that the consequences would be such as to seriously (gay-ly) endanger the heterosexual institutions on which the capitalist state is unstably based. And this is why the ‘liberal’ state is liberal only up to a certain point.

The purpose of liberalisation, for the present system, is above all to prevent and block any genuine liberation. And the liberalisation of homosexuality, as I have already shown, is in the first place its translation into a saleable commodity, often via the medium of ‘artistic’ expression, in such gay ghetto industries as the cinema, publishing, clothing, i.e. the fashion industries.

But if homosexuality, like feminism, is currently a fashion, its commercialisation does not alter social custom substantially. Or rather, if there has been a change in custom, this has only taken place at a snail’s pace, whereas fashions come and go at a gallop. The streets of London are thronged with young heterosexual males who are dressed, made-up and coiffured in the manner of their gay rock-star idols. But they are still heterosexual, and remain so, apart from a few rare exceptions who only prove the rule.

Homosexuality has thus been made into a myth, on condition, paradoxically, that the homosexual essence is kept hidden. The heterosexual rock fan idolises his star, and pays for his success, because he believes that only a star can get fucked and still look the world in the face. Like a mirror surrounded by glitter, the rock idol reflects the fascinated light of the homoerotic libido that his audience project onto him. The cult of the gay superstar is the reverse side of the two-faced attitude that heterosexuals have towards homosexuality. Their more customary face is immediate disdain and disparagement for the queer who stands at the crossroads of life and dares to smile at them in the underground.

### *4. Jealousy, Masochism and Sadism*

I already indicated in the first chapter the recognition by

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psychoanalysis of a veiled homoerotic desire in some mechanisms specific to so-called 'normal' jealousy ('competitive' jealousy, as Freud also described it):

That is to say, a man will not only feel pain about the woman he loves and hatred of the man who is his rival, but also grief about the man, whom he loves unconsciously, and hatred of the woman as his rival; and the latter set of feelings will add to the intensity of his jealousy.<sup>13</sup>

It is particularly jealousy of the 'delusional' kind, which also contains elements of the two other types, 'competitive' and 'projected', that reveals most blatantly the homoerotic substratum that is common to all three:

It too has its origin in repressed impulses towards unfaithfulness; but the object in these cases is of the same sex as the subject. Delusional jealousy is what is left of a homosexuality that has run its course, and it rightly takes its position among the classical forms of paranoia. As an attempt at defence against an unduly strong homosexual impulse it may, in a man, be described in the formula: '*I do not love him, she loves him!*'<sup>14</sup>

And according to Ferenczi, 'jealousy of men signifie[s] only the projection of [one's] own erotic pleasure in the male sex'.<sup>15</sup> Jealousy, therefore, is envy, envy of the woman able to get off with the other man.

The achievement of homosexual awareness and the liberation of the gay desire break open the closed world of the traditional heterosexual couple, and above all dispel the murky fog of possible betrayals, infidelities and jealousies that weigh upon it, poisoning it day and night. Jealousy too, therefore, is based on a serious misunderstanding of the homosexual desire. It gnaws at the liver of the heterosexual male if his woman gets off with another man, because he is unaware that if he, too, were to make love with this other man, with other men in general, then he would have taken the most important step towards overcoming his tribulations and transforming jealousy into enjoyment. It

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may well be true that jealousy today often involves an indirect expression of masochistic tendencies, and thus in a certain respect is a pleasure in itself. But it is also true that masochism can be enjoyed in a more satisfactory, conscious, direct and communicative way.

Giuliano De Fusco has pointed out to me that a person aware of his masochism exerts himself to bring out the 'contradiction' in his partner, by which he means the inhibited sadism, or, in the wider sense, the sadistic and masochistic impulses of those who do not recognise their own sado-masochistic propensity. The true masochist is adept at inducing his partner to liberate his aggression and become aware of it. This involves an increase in emotion and enjoyment for both parties, and the masochist ultimately manages to see the person as he 'really' is, uninhibitedly. In a love relation, the genuine masochist sees himself the object of an amorous aggression, permitting him to directly and openly enjoy the pleasure of jealousy; 'betrayal' becomes an act of love, since it reveals aggression and hence enhances pleasure and passion.

But conscious sado-masochism is certainly not the same thing as the sado-masochism implicit in the 'normal' couple. As Giuliano De Fusco observes, this relationship reflects the alienated and alienating sado-masochism with which capitalist society is permeated, which is authoritarian and repressive, and which, by negating the human being, sadistically negates also his sadism, imposing on him a subhuman and humiliating condition, and debasing his masochism.

Just as a loving desire for people of the other sex is today reduced by the system to a stunted and phallographic heterosexuality, while desire for people of the same sex is severely repressed by a society that transforms this into an instrument of capitalist power, by forcing it to remain latent or desublimating it in an alienating manner, in the same way the sadistic and masochistic tendencies are divided and repressed, and exploited by capital, which distorts them so as to make them serve its own rule. The revolution will also involve, among other things, the positive liberation of sadism and masochism, and a free community in which masochistic and sadistic desires will find open expression and take on a new and transformed form, quite different from the 'sado-masochism' of today. With masochism and sadism, too, the revolutionary critique

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also attacks the prejudice that sees sadism and masochism as simply 'perversions', mere distortions of Eros, denying their intrinsic importance, their ability to bridge the gulf between Eros and Thanatos, between good and evil, and to overcome – in practical and emotional life – the dichotomy of opposites that is based on repression.

In the words of Georg Groddeck:

It is therefore not true that pain is an obstacle to pleasure. The truth is that on the contrary it is a condition of pleasure . . . To brand as perversions these two inescapable human desires which are implanted in every human being without exception, and which belong to his nature just as much as his skin and hair, was the colossal stupidity of a learned man. That it was repeated is intelligible. For thousands of years man has been educated in hypocrisy, and it has become second nature to him. Everyone is a sadist, everyone a masochist; everyone by reason of his nature must wish to give and to suffer pain; to that he is compelled by Eros.<sup>16</sup>

Already today – and none too soon! – liberation requires an awareness of sadistic and masochistic desires. The masochist cannot restrict himself to living out these tendencies hypocritically or with an inadequate consciousness, as the police apparatuses of the established left would like. The great history of love is filled with sadistic and masochistic fantasies, which should also find clear expression in our everyday life, in interpersonal relations and in our relations with animals, so that our reality does not remain essentially superficial, cut off from what lies beneath, but gets down to the bottom of things, and even beyond.

Among us homosexuals, the propensity to form exclusive couples is far less strong than among straight people. And the values of gay promiscuity are many, most of all because this opens the individual up to a multiplicity and variety of relations, and hence positively gratifies the tendency that everyone has to polymorphism and 'perversion'. It thereby facilitates the satisfactory course of any relationship between two people, because neither of them clings too desperately to the other, demanding that he should give up totalising relations with other people too. The



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revolutionary homosexual struggle demands the erotic and emotional recognition of every human being in the community and the world. Each of us is a prism, a sphere, is moveable, and beneath and beyond the contradictions that presently oppose and negate us, each of us fits potentially together with anyone else, in a 'geometry', both real and imaginary, of free inter-subjectivity – like a wonderful kaleidoscope to which new and precious stones are steadily added. Children and new arrivals of every kind, dead bodies, animals, plants, things, flowers, turds . . .

Finally, if heterosexual jealousy displays a sharp if disguised form of homosexuality, a psychological defence against the genuine surfacing of a homoerotic desire, we can also frequently establish how the libidinal choice of an 'object' of 'opposite' sex reveals the presence of elements that unconsciously satisfy in a palliative fashion the 'subject's' latent homosexual tendency.

According to Freud, 'everyone, even the most normal person, is capable of making a homosexual object-choice, and has done so at some time in his life, and either still adheres to it in his unconscious or else protects himself against it by vigorous counter-attitudes'.<sup>17</sup> It often happens that the homosexual choice is induced to opt for an 'object' of the other sex. In this case, the heterosexual 'object' partially satisfies the censored homoerotic component of desire. The converse is also true for us homosexuals.

Homosexuality, therefore, very often hides within heterosexuality. It is no accident that French feminists have maintained the homosexual character of all heterosexual relations that presently exist, so that Luce Irigaray can speak of 'so-called heterosexuality'.

### *5. Sublimation, Social Cohesion and Religion*

Freud emphasised only the peaceful sublimation of homoerotic desire. 'After the stage of heterosexual object-choice has been reached, the homosexual tendencies are not . . . done away with . . . they are merely deflected from their sexual aim and applied to fresh uses'.<sup>18</sup> He indicated an underlying homosexual content in those types of sublimation that are translated into dedication to the community and to public interests: 'In the light of psychoanalysis we are accustomed to regard social feeling as a sublimation of

homosexual attitudes towards objects'.<sup>19</sup>

Freud accordingly deemed the sublimation of homosexuality to be publicly useful. His conception derived, by generalisation, from establishing the existence of a good number of homosexuals who were distinguished by a special development of the social instincts and their devotion to public welfare. According to Freud, this dedication was explained by the fact that 'the behaviour towards men in general of a man who sees in other men potential love-objects must be different from that of a man who looks upon other men in the first instance as rivals in regard to women'.<sup>20</sup> Homosexual desire is transformed into a force of social cohesion. By accepting the sublimation of homoeroticism in social sentiments, the law of the jungle is restrained and transformed, given that heterosexual society is a system of rivalry, jealousy and competition.

But the sublimation of homoeroticism is based historically on its suppression. It is the bulwark of social cohesion for a system which directly or indirectly condemns the overt expression of homosexuality. If homosexuality is liberated, then it ceases to sustain this system, comes into conflict with it and contributes to its collapse. At the same time, a liberated homosexuality is an important condition for the creation of communism, i.e. the (re)conquest of human community. And the realisation of this true community is inconceivable without the liberation of homoeroticism, which is universal, and which alone can guarantee genuinely totalising relations between persons of the same sex. (Communism is the rediscovery of bodies and their fundamental communicative function, their polymorphous potential for love.)

Religion, as a universal obsessional neurosis of humanity, also results in large part from the sublimation of the homosexual desire. In the words of Wilhelm Reich: 'Clinical experience shows incontestably that religious sentiments result from inhibited sexuality, that the source of mystical excitation is to be sought in inhibited sexual excitation'.<sup>21</sup> Like the obsessional neurosis of children, wrote Freud, religion 'arose out of the Oedipus complex, out of the relation to the father'.<sup>22</sup> The dissolution of the complete Oedipus complex involves both an identification with the father and an identification with the mother. The first serves as a substitute for the libidinal cathexis towards the paternal object; the second as a substitute for the libidinal cathexis directed

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towards the mother:

The broad general outcome of the sexual phase dominated by the Oedipus complex may, therefore, be taken to be the forming of a precipitate in the ego, consisting of these two identifications in some way united with each other. This modification of the ego retains its special position; it confronts the other contents of the ego as an ego ideal or super-ego.<sup>23</sup>

And Freud goes on to argue:

It is easy to show that the ego ideal answers to everything that is expected of the higher nature of man. As a substitute for a longing for the father, it contains the germ from which all religions have evolved.<sup>24</sup>

Both love and fear of God are the neurotic result of a love for the parents that is censored by the incest taboo and the taboo against homosexuality, the result of a sensual love for those closest that is reduced to *agape*, *caritas*. The gap between Eros and *agape* is filled with the presence of God, whose laws condemn the love of the flesh. In reality, however, it is the condemnation of carnal love for the parents that helps lay the foundations for belief in God, by establishing within us, through identification with the parental sexual 'objects' which have had to be renounced, a severe censor, a Lord, an ego ideal, whose 'voice' repeats the commands and duties of the parents. 'The self-judgement which declares that the ego falls short of its ideal produces the religious sense of humility to which the believer appeals in his longing' (ibid).

But the forced renunciation of the parental 'objects' also means a severe repression of homosexuality. The boy's desire for the father, and the girl's for the mother, are neurotically transformed into the worship of God. Desire is so strongly present, and at the same time burdened by so imperious a taboo, that it ends up covering its object with the absolute veil of an illusion: divinity. God is transcendent, among other reasons, because the father will not go to bed with his son. The repression of Oedipal desire is so radical that it fills the whole of life with a terror of the

unknown, and this repressed content emerges only at the risk of being snarled back by the Cerberus of repression.

It may well be unnecessary to emphasise that these ideas on religion cannot claim to provide an exhaustive key to the vastness of the subject involved. It is enough to indicate the other angles from which the question has been approached in philosophy, by Kierkegaard, Feuerbach and Marx among others. Then we can refer to the interpretation of psychoanalytic anthropology that sees 'the primal scene' and its traumatic infantile introjection as the principal factor in establishing belief in gods and demons (Róheim), or again to the very different bearing of religious themes in so-called 'madness' (Schreber, to take only a particularly famous case), and so on.

And yet it is precisely the religious experience of 'schizophrenia', which has very little in common with institutionalised neurotic religion and with customary or 'adopted' faith, that displays the sublime and fundamental nexus existing between (homo)eroticism and that which lies behind the veil of Maya, across the bridge. While the patriarchal religion of transcendence is based among other things upon the sublimation of homosexual desire, the magical experience of the hidden and normally unconscious universe, the journey to that other place which is here, the 'know thyself', passes necessarily by way of manifest homosexuality.

#### *6. Anal Eroticism and Obscene Language. Money and Shit*

To those who want to give the proletariat the religion of a name, a (false) consciousness, a suit-and-tie and a halo, a credibility for the respectable, it is legitimate to counterpose a proletariat that is violent and wild, unconscious, autonomous, and the trinity: SHIT, DEVIL, REVOLUTION.<sup>25</sup>

It is necessary at this point to stress the relationship that exists between the rejection of homosexuality and the repression of the

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anal component of Eros. In his *Three Essays on Sexuality*, Freud showed the temporary concentration of infantile libido on the anal erogenous zone: the anal phase that lies between oral eroticism and a fixation on the genital zone that is generally definitive. The stabilisation of sexual impulses on the genitals almost always provokes a repression of anal desires, which may even be absolute – except, as a general rule, in ‘cases’ of overt male homosexuality, and a few others.

As Géza Róheim ironically put it, ‘when . . . excretory functions have become “not nice” we have reached a high stage of culture’.<sup>26</sup> But even Queen Elizabeth goes to the toilet. The present repression of anal pleasure, coprophilia and urophilia, is the result of a historically specific suppression. The anal desire displayed by every child reveals a potential for pleasure that is latent in every adult, and reflects (in the development of the individual) an atavistic erotic expression of the species, which has been progressively more negated over the millenia, and particularly in the last few centuries of capitalism.

The demand for the restoration of anal pleasure is one of the basic elements in the critique made by the gay movement of the hypostatising of the heterosexual-genital status quo by the dominant ideology. As the French gay liberationists expressed it:

We have to ask the bourgeoisie: What is your relationship with your arsehole, apart from having to use it to shit with? Is it part of your body, your speech, your senses, in the same way as your mouth or ears? And if you’ve decided that the only purpose of the anus is to defecate, then why do you use your mouth for other things besides eating?<sup>27</sup>

In his essay on anal eroticism, Freud shed light on the causal relationship between the unconscious fixation of repressed anal eroticism and certain expressions of character, such an obsessional and sometimes manic attachment to orderliness, parsimony and obstinacy. In concluding his analysis, he added:

If there is any basis in fact for the relation posited here between anal eroticism and this triad of character-traits, one may expect to find no very marked degree of ‘anal

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character' in people who have retained the anal zone's erotogenic character in adult life, as happens, for instance, with certain homosexuals. Unless I am much mistaken, the evidence of experience tallies well on the whole with this inference.<sup>28</sup>

In my own experience, it is indeed rare to meet gay men who enjoy being fucked and are at the same time obsessively orderly, stingy and stubborn. But that is not the point.

The point is, that if you get fucked, if you know what tremendous enjoyment is to be had from anal intercourse, then you necessarily become different from the 'normal' run of people with a frigid arse. You know yourself more deeply. How right De Sade was in writing:

Ah, did you but know how delicate is one's enjoyment when a heavy prick fills the behind, when, driven to the balls, it flutters there, palpitating, and, then, withdrawn to the foreskin, it hesitates, and returns, plunges in again, up to the hair! No, no, in the wide world there is no pleasure to rival this one: it is the delight of philosophers, that of heroes, it would be that of the gods were not the parts used in his [*sic*] divine conjugation the only gods we on earth should reverence!<sup>29</sup>

Of all the aspects of homosexuality, I would say that the one heterosexual men fear above all is anal intercourse. This is undoubtedly due not just to the repression of their anal desire, but also to their fear of castration – in essence, the fear of falling off the masculine pedestal into the 'female' role. The fear of castration, in every male, is the counterpart of his phallic conception of sexuality as erection. Any male heterosexual goes wild at the idea of 'not being able to get it up'. This is the very end of his virility, and he fears that above all else, as repression has made him identify with the virile model, making him into a wretched guardian of the heterosexual order. The man fears losing his virility because he fears more than anything losing his identity. And he knows very well that behind the boastful facade, this virile identity is fragile indeed, just as the equilibrium in which he

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balances between rigid phallicism and fear of castration is decidedly unstable.

The absolute male, as a mutilated being, is exclusively 'active'. And any heterosexual man, who prides himself on identifying absolutely with the male, considers the 'passive role' as shameful, abject and 'effeminate'. For people of this kind, to be fucked means to be ruined. But if we remove the negative connotation of being 'taken from behind', so typically and neurotically masculine, then being fucked can be seen as the great pleasure that it is, a meeting and fusion of bodies, a gay entertainment, delicious both in the arse itself and in the mind. As a general rule, the more fear a man has of being fucked, the more he himself fucks badly, with scant consideration for the other person, who is reduced to a mere hole, a receptacle for his blind phallic egoism. Someone who likes being fucked, on the other hand, will himself know how to fuck well. He knows how to give pleasure, as he knows how to receive it, and he unblocks the restricted fixation of stereotyped roles. To fuck then truly does become a relation of reciprocity, an intersubjective act.

The psychoanalytic conception of the sexual 'object' derives from the male heterosexual's sadly crippled view of sexual intercourse. And if Rank indicated the origin of neurosis in the condition of the foetus in the maternal womb, we would go even further, and see in heterosexual coitus itself, from which life proceeds, i.e. in the male supremacist and neurotic manner in which this is generally conducted, one of the primary causes of the universal neurosis that afflicts our species.

Heterosexual males also fear the excremental aura of anal intercourse. 'But Love has pitched its mansion in/The place of excrement' (Yeats).<sup>30</sup> We gays know this very well, and our condition is most close to the joyous redemption of shit – if we have not already attained this. Even as far as shit is concerned, too, the repressive disgust conceals a rich enjoyment.

Many of the pejorative expressions used by straight people to put down homosexuals refer to the anal erogenous zone. In his essay on the use of obscene language by militants of the (former) extra-parliamentary left, Mauro Bertocchi emphasises how, in the use of such vocabulary:

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The terms selected generally display a strong inhibition or obstacle, and certain recurrent identifications can be observed. The sexual organs, both male and female, are synonymous with stupidity, intellectual and political inadequacy [e.g. ‘cunt’ or ‘prick’ in the English equivalent], with bad actions, politically ‘incorrect’ practices, anger and bad temper [e.g. ‘cock-up’, ‘balls-up’ or to ‘fuck something up’]. Impotence and the passive sexual condition, e.g. passive homosexuality, on the other hand, are synonymous with bad luck, disability or being cheated, swindled or damaged by one’s own incapacity [e.g. ‘to be buggered’, or expressions such as ‘get stuffed’, ‘arsehole’, ‘up yours’, etc.] Active homosexuality, on the other hand, is the symbol of shrewd ability, in the same way as heterosexual activity [e.g. to ‘bugger’ someone, ‘fuck someone up’, etc.]<sup>31</sup>

Active homosexuality, then, is seen in the perspective of the ‘double male’. All the expressions that Bertocchi discusses derive from attitudes of aggression and disdain towards women and queens. But we know very well that verbal – and not only verbal – violence and disrespect represent the extraversion under a negative sign of a repressed and unconscious desire. (But unconscious up to what point?) Freud stressed that: ‘An invitation to a caress of the anal zone is still used today, as it was in ancient times, to express defiance or defiant scorn, and thus in reality signifies an act of tenderness that has been overtaken by repression’.<sup>32</sup>

The presence of anal and scatological desires, in other words, is discovered by analysis of the terms involved in their negation: shit!

Bertocchi sees it as important to establish the significance assumed by the use of such expressions in the very complex discourse constructed by so-called revolutionary groups:

What does a sentence like the following really mean: ‘Comrades, it’s no fucking good going ahead with these four shitty queers, we’ll only end up getting buggered’? The meaning is clearly contradictory and shows two different levels, one dominant and the other subordinate, one strictly political and ideological, the other sexually abusive, referring



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to male and female erogenous zones and degrading them into mere organs and orifices, and referring to basic functions (ejaculation, excretion) to give them connotations of disgust, satisfaction and aggression (ibid).

But what I see as still more interesting is that these expressions in the last analysis communicate, beneath the male supremacist and violent attitude, a latent desire that is homosexual, anal and scatological. Anyone who is subject to the suppression of homoeroticism, femininity, anality and coprophilia that is perpetrated by the dominant subculture, finds himself forced to express and thus communicate his own unconscious and forbidden desires, which are inherent to the sphere of Eros, by way of 'signifiers' which, in appearance and the meaning given them by consciousness, express their rejection, negation and condemnation. In this case, as in so many others, psychoanalysis furnishes revolutionary criticism with the instruments needed to fill the gap between phenomenal appearance and reality.

In our present case, the question is to indicate the homosexual, trans-sexual, anal and scatological desire that lies behind the pompous verbal surface of these anti-woman, anti-gay and anti-coprophile expressions. Once again, Bertocchi notes:

*Busone* [bugger], *frocio* [queer], *culattone* [bum-boy] are among the most common and widely used insults. On the other hand, the erotic fixation on the genitals, and above all on the phallus, gives rise to such frequent expressions as *che sborrata!* [fucking good], signifying political success, enthusiasm, self-assertion, in the conception that equates the male genital orgasm with total success.

Mauro Bertocchi also underlines the close affinity between the abusive sexual vocabulary used by the left, and the traditional anti-woman and anti-gay language of fascism.

We must finally turn to investigate the relations between the capitalist sublimation of anality in money ('*pecunia olet*', Ferenczi recalls)<sup>33</sup> and the repression of homosexuality.

Psychoanalysis has repeatedly recognised the connection

between money and shit. In Freud's words, 'the connections between the complexes of interest in money and of defaecation, which seem so dissimilar, appear to be the most extensive of all'.<sup>34</sup> The *Lumf* (turd) complex<sup>35</sup> scatologically determines people's attachment to money:

What the psychoanalytical paradox is asserting is that 'things' which are possessed and accumulated, property and the universal precipitate of property, money, are in their essential nature excremental (N.O. Brown).<sup>36</sup>

Many cults and myths of antiquity, and several superstitions today, explicitly place money in a very close relation with the products of excretion. The phylogenic origin of the symbol, in fact, is frequently intuited, and at times it can be discerned by ontogenic study. Ferenczi attributed to psychoanalysis 'the task of separately investigating the phylogenesis and ontogenesis of symbolism, and then establishing their mutual relation'.<sup>37</sup>

Psychoanalysis recognises that

children originally devote their interest without any inhibition to the process of defaecation, and that it affords them pleasure to hold back their stools. The excreta thus held back are really the first 'savings' of the growing being, and as such remain in a constant, unconscious inter-relationship with every bodily activity or mental striving that has anything to do with collecting, hoarding, and saving.<sup>38</sup>

But compulsory sexual morality represses this infantile scatological pleasure and traps children into the socially pre-established model whose economic structure is the anxious and coerced sublimation of Eros in general and coprophilia in particular. Educastration gives rise in us to a disgust for what had originally aroused great pleasure and interest. The enjoyment of turds is transformed into the turd complex, and the coprophilic tendency is directed towards substitute objects in the sphere of play and sublimation. In the society of forced labour, major economic gratification ('power') is given by money, but 'money is organic dead matter which has been made alive by inheriting the magic

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power which infantile narcissism attributes to the excremental product' (N.O. Brown).<sup>39</sup>

The 'schizophrenic' trip magically reveals how dogs, decidedly copro- and urophilic, are the richest animals (or how they are generally far richer than humans), and leads the initiate to try coprophagy. The ingestion of shit reveals the symbolic significance of many things, enabling us, for example, to clearly grasp the very deep influence exerted on us by advertising. Subliminal communications play on the various tendencies of Eros that are 'normally' sublimated, in order to persuade us to buy. The purchase of goods is then the illusion of re-obtaining erotic faculties which have been repressed, and which have become substrata of social oppression.

The psychoanalytic equation of money and shit enables us to maintain that in the present society, the capitalist or bureaucratic functionary has the same anal character as the general equivalent for commodities. Ferenczi maintains that

the capitalist interest . . . stands not only at the disposal of practical, egoistic aims – of the reality principle, therefore – but also that delight in gold and in the possession of money represents the symbolic replacement of, and the reaction-formation to, repressed anal eroticism, i.e. that it also satisfies the pleasure principle.

The capitalist instinct thus contains, according to our conception, an egoistic and an anal-erotic component.<sup>40</sup>

Capitalist ideology rejects and condemns manifest anal eroticism, or else it effectively ghettoises it, since the rule of capital is based, among other things, on the repression of anality and its sublimation (but this sublimation, and its sophisticated fruits, are 'enjoyed' in fact only by a very few – Onassis himself had to have a special plane fly daily to Paris to supply him with fresh bread, i.e. with something *real*.) It is the function of ideology to obscure the genuine 'nature' of capital, to deny the human, bodily foundations that sustain it. The entire system is underpinned by our alienated labour, our repressed libido, our estranged energy. If this is understood, then we arrive at a revolutionary consciousness and a revolutionary libido. As Luciano Parinetto writes: 'the proletarian

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revolution must also pass via the arsehole'.<sup>41</sup> The (re)conquest of anality contributes to subverting the system in its foundations.

What in homosexuality particularly horrifies *homo normalis*, the policeman of the hetero-capitalist system, is being fucked in the arse; and this can only mean that one of the most delicious bodily pleasures, anal intercourse, is itself a significant revolutionary force. The thing that we queens are so greatly put down for contains a large part of our subversive gay potential. I keep my treasure in my arse, but then my arse is open to everyone . . .

## crime and punishment

### 1. *Homosexuality in the Guise of Heterosexuality*

Georg Groddeck opens Letter 27 in *The Book of the It* by maintaining:

Yes, I hold the view that all people are homosexual, hold it so firmly that it is difficult for me to realise how anyone can think differently.<sup>1</sup>

Public opinion, however, holds dearly to the myth that sees homosexuality as a problem concerning only a limited number of people, i.e. gay men and lesbians. Yet this is not the case. To cite some statistics, the Kinsey report of 1948, despite being rather dated, revealed that some 46 per cent of the US male population had either had both homosexual and heterosexual relations, or had at least consciously responded to the erotic attraction of both sexes, while only 4 per cent had exclusively gay relations and 50 per cent exclusively heterosexual. On the basis of Kinsey's investigations, 'persons with homosexual histories are to be found in every age group, in every social level, in every conceivable occupation, in cities and in farms, and in the most remote areas of the country'.<sup>2</sup>

Some 50 per cent of men, therefore, have at one time or another had, at the very least, conscious homosexual desires. And yet how many openly admit this? Very few. The suppression of homoeroticism is such that many people who have occasionally had gay contacts, or even continually do so, maintain that they

are not homosexual, and may even, absurdly enough, deny outright the homosexual character of these relations.

Groddeck goes on to say:

We all spend at least fifteen or sixteen years, most of us spend our whole lives, with the conscious or at any rate half-conscious realisation of being homosexual, of having behaved as such more or less often, and of still behaving so. It happens with all people that at some time or other in their lives they make a superhuman effort to throttle this homosexuality, which in words is so despised. And the repression is not even successful, so, in order to carry through this lasting, daily self-deception, they support the public denunciation of homosexuality and thus relieve their inner conflict.

Denial of the blatant evidence of one's own homosexual relations and impulses forms part of this 'quasi-repression' of homosexuality. To quote Kinsey again:

The homosexuality of certain relationships between individuals of the same sex may be denied by some persons, because the situation does not fulfill other criteria that they think should be attached to the definition. Mutual masturbation between two males may be dismissed, even by certain clinicians, as not homosexual, because oral or anal relations or particular levels of psychic response are required, according to their conception of homosexuality. There are persons who insist that the active male in anal relations is essentially heterosexual in his behaviour, and that the passive male in the same relation is the only one who is homosexual. These, however, are misapplications of terms . . .<sup>3</sup>

Ideas of this kind, according to which the 'active' party in anal intercourse is still essentially heterosexual, show at the very least a 'confused' identification between the other sex (other than the male, given that the definition of *hetero*-sexuality necessarily involves a distinction between the sexes)<sup>4</sup> and a simple hole; in

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other words, the other sex is that which is used as a hole. By applying absurd heterosexual categories to homosexuality, therefore, this conception gives away its obtusely male-supremacist character, showing how heterosexuality itself is based on the negation of woman, and how male heterosexuality is made to coincide with the role of the person who fucks.

The other sex (woman) is a hole. It matters little whether this hole belongs to a female or a male body, since as a hole it is simply a nothing, merely a possible complement to the phallus, which in this patriarchal conception is everything. But this is solely the male refusal to recognise woman. Woman exists, and is woman, only beyond the role of a zero that the phallocratic system imposes on her.

Even in its 'interpretation' (or rather misinterpretation and mystification) of the sexual relation between men, the phallogentric world-view is absurd and the bearer of absurdities, precisely because it negates woman, and hence the human being, who is far from reducible to the mutilated monosexual role imposed by our repressive society and civilisation.

Yet the idea that only those men who take the 'passive' role in anal intercourse are really homosexual is extremely widespread, and brings to light the immediate association, in the phallogentric mind, between gay men and women. 'The "active" partner in anal intercourse is essentially heterosexual; so the "passive" partner belongs to the other sex. But the other sex is the female, and so only the "passive" partner in anal sex between two men is homosexual, and the homosexual man is a woman.'

In its patent absurdity, however, this male supremacist view reveals, when considered from the gay and critical standpoint, how homosexual men who get fucked are closer to trans-sexuality, and tend to overcome the polarity between the two sexes. If the rediscovery of trans-sexuality necessarily involves the liberation of anal eroticism, as well as homoeroticism, it is also true that only the present and long-standing repression of Eros leads us to think of the concepts of trans-sexuality, anality, homosexuality, bisexuality, etc. as separate. In actual fact, liberation means overcoming these presently divided categories, which only reflect conceptually the alienation of the human species from itself by the work of the capital-phallus. Liberation leads to the conquest

of a new manner of being and becoming, both one and many, whether from the individual standpoint (the aspects of sexuality no longer being repressively separated, or in a state of mutual exclusion), or from the universal standpoint, since liberation leads to recognising individuals in their community (one and many) and in the world, and thus to resolving the contradiction between self and others, self and non-self. The revolutionary liberation of Eros and life cannot take place without a collective explosion of the unconscious, which is in very large measure itself a collective one. And the explosion of the id expands and 'dissolves' the boundaries of the ego. In other words, the ego no longer arrogates to itself the monopoly of subjectivity. Life is seen as reciprocal and communal. In the darkness of our underlying being, there lies dormant a species that is trans-sexual, and the desire for trans-sexuality and community. Communist intersubjectivity will be trans-sexual – but I shall come back to this point later on.

For the time being, we must return to the male supremacist fixation that makes homosexuality out to be heterosexuality. Kinsey, once again, wrote:

Some males who are being regularly fellated by other males without, however, performing fellation themselves, may insist that they are exclusively heterosexual and that they have never been involved in a homosexual relation. Their consciences are cleared and they may avoid trouble with society and with the police by perpetrating the additional fiction that they are incapable of responding to a relation with a male unless they fantasy themselves in contact with a female. Even clinicians have allowed themselves to be diverted by such pretensions. The actual histories, however, show few if any cases of sexual relations between males which could be considered anything but homosexual.<sup>5</sup>

Among all those 'heterosexuals' who refuse to see their erotic contacts with other men as homosexual, the 'double males' stand first in line. And the ideology of the double male is very dear, as a general rule, to those young hustlers who act as prostitutes to gay men.



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### 2. *Hustlers*

As we have seen, besides all those who consider themselves and are generally considered homosexuals, and on whom the repressive consciousness of straight people inflicts a particular stereotype, there are many other homosexuals far more repressed as far as their sexuality goes, and particularly their homosexuality. These include the 'double males', and all those male heterosexuals who have often had, or still have, homosexual relations, even while constantly maintaining their heterosexuality. Many of them live on the margins of the homosexual 'world' proper, on which they become parasites and – often – executioners. These are the hustlers, or all those working-class youths who act as prostitutes to gay men, and whom the journalists of capital ( and its left wing in particular) class as sub-proletarian so as to avoid recognising in their actions and 'lifestyle' a specific expression of the proletariat in thrall to the system.

Hustlers are homosexual but do not consider themselves such, in so far as they generally also feel a form of attraction towards the female sex, or at least towards their objectification of it. Their homosexuality is sufficiently repressed that they tend generally to restrict themselves to the 'active' role (which is really passive *par excellence*), and to mystify even this, making out that their main interest is not pleasure, but rather the money they can extort from their 'effeminate' partner. These young men's rejection of their own homoeroticism runs very deep: capital and the ideology of heterosexual primacy have instilled in them a disparagement for homosexuality in general, and for queens in particular.

The system cheats them in two ways. Besides castrating them economically and socially right from birth, it gives them palliative gratifications that are bound up with phallic privilege, gratifications that lead them to behave in a way that is functional to the rule of capital. Enslaved in this way, their anger and hate are directed not against the system but rather against those who appear even lower than themselves: women and gays.

Male supremacist ideology shows itself the most serious obstacle to the communist revolution. It divides the proletariat, and makes working-class heterosexual men almost invariably into

guardians of the repressive sexual Norm which capital needs in order to perpetuate its domination over the species. These working-class heterosexuals have been corrupted, they accept payment in the system's wretched phallocratic coin in return for holding in check the trans-sexual revolutionary potential of women, children and homosexuals. The hustlers are no more corrupted than the worker enrolled in the Communist Party, who insults 'queers', mistreats his wife and beats his children.

But the rejection of their homoeroticism by these hustlers derives not only from their internalisation of the dominant ideology and from the violently and openly male supremacist 'culture' of the streets, it also derives from their need to forcibly deny the evidence of their continuous homosexual relations. The daily poverty and violence that they experience, the sum of the frustrations they undergo, their economic struggle for survival and the anxious need to deny their own homosexuality, all this spurs them to seek some kind of violent outlet; and there is no more immediate scapegoat, more susceptible to a bullying attack, than the homosexual himself, i.e. the *other* homosexual, the overt queen.

By attacking homosexuals, hustlers demonstrate that they are not only parasites on the gay world, but also its executioners, carrying out the sentences that the system has already pronounced by its marginalisation and condemnation of homosexuality, which is confined in more or less clandestine and insecure ghettos, or generally kept apart and separate from the rest of society.

Even in this case, of course, there are exceptions that prove the rule: not all hustlers are hateful, violent and phallocratic. There are even some who are sympathetic. And yet, as a homosexual, all I can say is that these are essentially somewhat less bad.

If things are to get better, we must hope that ever more hustlers will transform themselves into unrestrained drag queens, after being seduced by us gays in the liberation movement. Anyone who believes that homosexual relations are unproductive will be confounded, as a growing number of gays see the light in this way.

For the time being, however, we are still a long way from reaching a revolutionary understanding with the hustlers, and it

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is still through them that the system punishes homosexuality, even with death – no less ferociously than the Nazis, but far more subtly and with greater effect. Today, the system no longer needs to exterminate gays *en masse*, it is enough to strike at some, for the most part in an extremely indirect manner, keeping its own hands ‘clean’, but still managing to impose on all others a reign of terror.

The most ‘developed’ countries, as we have seen, decidedly refrain from any direct bloody repression of homosexuality, providing instead a ‘comfortable’ if expensive ghetto. If you want a safe hustler, you can get one for \$100 from the Model Escort Agency in Los Angeles. If homosexuals do not want to risk being beaten up or murdered, then they only need to pay. The King’s Sauna and Incognito Bar will open their doors. Democracy is an advance on Nazism, it makes greater profits from the commercialisation of homosexuality.

Capital, in fact, kills two birds with the same stone. On the one hand, anti-gay social violence is vented in the attacks of ‘criminals’ (who, as a general rule, are those ‘bisexuals’ whose homosexuality is most repressed). In this way the system offers many marginalised young kids the opportunity to let off steam by having a go at people whom the capitalist and phallocratic ideology relegates to a place even below their own, the ‘queers’ (not to speak of women, slaves of the slaves). Capital thus makes a timely manoeuvre to shift away from itself the anger and violence of the street, caused by the misery it has itself produced.

On the other hand, by inciting the hustlers, capital manages to terrorise the gay world proper. The system generally inhibits gays from defending themselves and making themselves respected (by fostering guilt and an inferiority complex), while it incites against them enemies who are genuinely formidable, i.e. criminalised proletarian youths for whom violence is part of everyday life. It is not hard to understand how, finding themselves defenceless in this way, gay people often seek protection from others, instead of from themselves. And where can they find it, if not in the system? This explains how in the USA, for example, one wing of the GLF wanted to increase the number of policemen patrolling cruising grounds, where homosexuals were regularly murdered.

The stereotype of the cowardly and reactionary homosexual, who looks for individual security within the system, in personal success and in *Men in Vogue* – a stereotype which very many gays still identify with today – has its roots in the sum of humiliations and acts of violence that are suffered, and in the constant anxious tension provoked by the risk of this violence. We gays know very well how, on the street and in cruising grounds, in cinemas, parks, toilets, etc., we constantly face not only the risk of arrest, but also of being beaten up, robbed, ridiculed, humiliated and even killed; while in the intellectual and artistic milieu, or even among people with a bourgeois education, this risk is generally absent, or at least attenuated. It is one thing to be oppressed and exploited by one's analyst, something else to be oppressed with a knife.

It is understandable, then, how many gay people fear revolution, seeing in it the revolt of their tormentors, and thus their own demise. Nor can we refute those who prefer things to remain as they are, rather than seeing in power those same proletarians who daily insult, attack and hypocritically reject gays. It matters little whether these proletarians call themselves fascist, 'communist' or extra-parliamentary; in substance, their violent anti-homosexual attacks are all the same.

The system, however, can come off well in its dealings with the 'deviant'. 'Behave yourself properly and live out your perversion in the little ghettos we can control and regulate, and then we'll protect you. If you go cruising in parks and public toilets, you're just looking for trouble. Better stay at home! Better still, come to the Super Cock International Privacy Club, where you'll find a restaurant, a strip-tease show, porno films, psychedelic toilets, and perhaps even a fire-escape.'

### *3. The Repressed Roots of Anti-Gay Violence*

When someone is too aggressive towards us, he doesn't realise that this is simply the desire that he has for us . . . <sup>6</sup>

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We have seen how, in the present society, sadism almost always takes an alienated form. This happens, for example, when sadistic tendencies are accompanied by the repression of another component of desire, so that one particular expression of Eros is over-valued. In the same way, we can recognise a form of alienated sadism, combined with an inverted homosexual impulse and an ostentatious display of heterosexuality, in the acts of aggression that straight people commit against us gays.

The witch-hunt against queers (and in former times, as we saw in the last chapter, the burning of faggots and witches did go closely together) is nothing more than an expression of alienated sadism, alienated through its connection with a negative extraversion of repressed homosexual desire and the need to shore up heterosexuality with force, both internally and against overt homosexuals. Freud, however, wrote that 'poets are right in liking to portray people who are in love without knowing it . . . or who think that they hate when in reality they love'.<sup>7</sup>

We homosexuals have to cope every day with more or less violent persecutors. We cannot be too careful, since those who might beat us up or murder us are lurking on all sides, in the city centre and the suburbs, in small provincial towns, in parks and even in the country. Are these aggressors just 'common criminals'? We certainly have no intention of taking over this bigoted, summary, bourgeois and reactionary definition. But in that case, all heterosexual males would be common criminals, as their customary anti-homosexual attitude makes them permanent accomplices in the violence perpetrated against us.

Our attackers are attracted to the gay scene and led into crime by the prevailing morality, the male supremacist and heterosexual ideology which the system upholds (and which upholds the system). It is capitalist morality that leads them to violence and aggression. If a government minister makes a speech attacking homosexuality as a social pest, while priests condemn 'sinful and unnatural' sexual practices from the pulpit, if it is customary to drag homosexuals from their insecure meeting-places and haul them up before harsh and blatantly unjust courts, if self-appointed moral vigilantes class homosexuality as a form of 'moral pollution', and leftists see it as a sign of bourgeois decadence,<sup>8</sup> then it is hardly surprising that so many unemployed kids, 'sub-proletarians'

in the left's vocabulary, should take gays as a scapegoat and act out their aggression on us. They need to have some scapegoat, and capital is always seeking to distract popular anger from itself. The homosexual survives alone and practically defenceless against all and through all – when he does survive . . .

But if homoeroticism is a 'vice' as far as society is concerned, a 'perversion' or a 'criminal deviation', the very oppression of homosexuality, the verbal and physical queer-bashing and the official persecution that has always been inflicted on us, all these offer to heterosexuals further indirect ways of expressing their own latent homoerotic impulses. This censored homosexuality is often externalised in the form of witless sadism, aggression that is either gratuitous, or 'justified' by stubborn and reactionary anti-gay prejudices.

The very existence of the homosexual, his 'deviant' and 'depraved' desire, his weakness that comes from marginalisation and exclusion, demand punishment in the eyes of the heterosexual paladin of the Norm. In actual fact, however, 'the punishment [is] a favour like the crime'.<sup>9</sup> For if overt expressions of homoeroticism are 'normally' considered a crime, and if heterosexuals feel legitimate enjoyment in punishing them, this pleasure is at bottom a negative satisfaction of the repressed wish to make love with a gay person. 'I cannot get off with him because I'm normal; so I beat him and rob him. His presence suggests to me a physical relationship that I can't accept, so I respond to it with physical violence'. Paradoxically, however, we homosexuals can recognise the secret lover in those who mistreat and chastise us.

This anti-gay violence, deriving from repressed homoeroticism and the associated sense of guilt, is also to be found among men who have occasionally had sexual relations with other men, and might even still do so (as we have already seen in the previous section). Stilitano, for example, the hardest of the hard, Genet's 'lover', insults queens;<sup>10</sup> and in prison the butch men, who might well live together with queens for long periods at a stretch, put down homosexuality at the same time as they practise it, and are ever ready to meet an unwelcome advance with a punch in the mouth.<sup>11</sup> The absurdity of their conception of sex and sex roles shows the deeply absurd essence of patriarchal 'normality'. In the

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hypermasculine atmosphere of prison, only passive homosexuality is considered shameful, whereas 'a male that fucks a male is a double male'.<sup>12</sup> The 'double male' requires an inverted and abject appendage, a 'surrogate cunt', and he bases his glory and prestige on the subjection of others.

Kate Millett shows the strong similarity between the relation of butches and queens in prison, and the opposition between the sexes involved in 'normal' heterosexuality.<sup>13</sup> In prison, where homosexual relations offer the only gratification for erotic desire apart from solitary masturbation, homosexuality itself generally takes the form of a mere reflection of the asymmetrical relationship of the heterosexual couple (which thus reveals its true face). Even in prison, the 'heterosexual' male remains privileged, behaving as a straight man, and basing his 'power' on the submission of the 'inferior' queen.

But it is not always so. In his amazing film *A Song of Love*, for example, Genet has himself given us a most poetic and delicate (as well as sexy) picture of love between men in prison. And I myself, in an English prison, got on well – sometimes very well – with other prisoners.

Yet Genet always has the heterosexual equation in mind. In the 'eternal couple of the criminal and the saint',<sup>14</sup> we are given the tragic-erotic representation of the eternal heterosexual couple of the totalitarian phallic male, who is always a criminal in his relations with women, and the woman who, given that she loves him, desires him and is subject to him, cannot but be a saint in her love-life. But woman as the slave of man is in a certain respect similar to the effeminate queen, Genet himself, whom the 'heterosexual' butch man fucks and at the same time puts down.

For Genet, the 'eternal couple of the criminal and the saint' is above all the duo of the 'assassin si beau qui fait pâlir le jour' and the homosexual who desires him and at the same time is negated by him, who is martyred in his passionate love because the criminal whom he loves is first and foremost his egoistic and violent oppressor, 'indifferent and bright as a slaughterhouse knife'.<sup>15</sup>

Genet's play *The Maids* was conceived and written to be performed by men dressed as women.<sup>16</sup> The femininity that the heterosexual man negates in his relationship with women is

represented very well by a fictitious femininity, reduced to a mere appearance. Now this negated femininity is above all the situation of woman, who properly exists as woman only beyond the negation criminally inflicted on her by the man. Secondly, this femininity is also the repressed 'feminine' component of the man himself, and 'Genet will make a relentless effort to discover a secret femininity in all the toughs who subdue him'.<sup>17</sup> There is present in Genet, then, an oppressed femininity, in his desire to really become a woman, and in the concrete impossibility of this.

In the heterosexual phallogocentric universe, femininity, for the man, is reduced to a mere aura of sanctity around the brute power of the phallus. As a general rule, for the heterosexual man (as Fornari typically writes in his narrow-minded apology for heterosexuality), 'if the male genital did not exist, then the female genital would appear a meaningless organ'.<sup>18</sup> It is only too clear that the phallus in the brain prevents the heterosexual man from seeing beyond his own foolishness. For him, society today is made up of cunts. If I did believe in the idea of a vanguard, I would say that the vanguard of the revolution would be made up of lesbians. In any case, the revolution will be lesbian.

The 'common criminals', then, only echo the anti-woman and anti-homosexual criminality that is common to all straight men. If someone murders a homosexual, he has simply acted 'out of the collective sense of right, in the very name of our society and its norms, whether he has done so out of horror of homosexuality, or to punish it, with a pronounced feeling of social justice'. As Paolo Volponi goes on to say:

The murder is a collective one, and the murderer represents and acts on behalf of a social feeling and passion, knowing himself not alone. He interprets the anti-gay tendency of all 'normal' people, and feels himself supported and protected by them.<sup>19</sup>

All heterosexuals are responsible for the violence directed against us gays.

The heterosexual male, moreover, is distinguished by his hypocrisy. Darling, the butch who fucks Divine, refuses even to define himself as homosexual, even though Divine, with whom



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he makes love, is a man. But if femininity is reduced to an appearance here, the queen serving the 'double male' as a mere surrogate for a woman, then so too is heterosexuality. The 'double male' feels himself heterosexual twice over, more than 'normal'. Not only is he ready to break anyone's teeth in if they dare to call him a queer. His conviction of remaining heterosexual, even in a sexual relationship with a man, does not even clash with the male supremacist ideology he embraces, which is in itself hypocritical and absurd. If the butch who fucks the queen sees himself as heterosexually 'normal', his bad faith is not substantially different from that of those doctors who, as we saw in Chapter 2, would define him without hesitation as only 'pseudo-homosexual'.

In the same way, the 'heterosexual' man, married with children, who makes love with a transvestite or drag queen, believes himself 100 per cent 'normal'. He is comforted by appearances, and in his eyes the transvestite looks like a woman. In actual fact, female prostitutes and male transvestites look remarkably similar in their street clothes. It is not difficult, then, for a transvestite to reproduce the fetish of the 'woman' that pleases the straight man.

What really excites the transvestite's client, however, is the man underneath the fetishistic representation of the 'woman'. Firstly, in his male supremacist view, femininity is simply a fetish, and so it excites him only fetishistically, i.e. as an object, a hole. And secondly, what he is directly interested in is not an interpersonal relationship, but simply his narcissistic relationship with himself, even if in an alienated mode, through phallic fantasies and gratifications that overspill the narcissistic pleasure itself and require the partner-object as a pretext. What essentially excites the transvestite's client is simply his own self, but himself as he really desires to be, and recaptures under the make-up and frills of the transvestite, fetishistic and thus attractive in a 'feminine' way. The homoerotic desire components of those 'heterosexuals' who have sex with transvestites is too severely censored for them to openly desire a gay relationship (I know this myself, as a part-time transvestite). They can only escape their homosexuality through the parody of a heterosexual relation. But in this parody, they act out the tragedy of the repression of Eros.

#### 4. *Victimisation and Masochism*

If, as I have shown, the heterosexual who attacks a gay man both discloses and exorcises his own homosexuality, then the aggressor, the torturer, stands in secret complicity with his victim. The concept of complicity here must be understood by bearing in mind the negative conversion of homoerotic desire into aggression on the part of the heterosexual. Moreover, for him to become unconsciously complicit with the homosexual, his own victim, it is necessary for him to view homosexuality as a crime and the victim as guilty. It is clear that this imposition of guilt does not involve any real guilt on the victim's part, he being a victim precisely because he is innocent, but it legitimates aggression on the part of the heterosexual. The idea of complicity thus refers to the unconscious attraction that the heterosexual has towards the homosexual, despite his conscious imposition to him of guilt. It refers to a homosexual act which does not take place, but which is unconsciously desired by the heterosexual, and which he subsequently translates into violence.

This view, then, is the reverse of that expressed by Liliana Cavani in *The Night Porter*, as according to her the victim is the torturer's willing accomplice. But might not the two theses be complementary?

Not necessarily. In the Nazi concentration camps, for example, the extermination of gay people with their pink triangles expressed a collective sadistic conversion of the SS's homoerotic impulses (an alienated sadism because bound up with the alienation of homosexuality), rather than a masochistic support by the homosexuals for their sadism.

All the same, it cannot be said that the homoerotic desires of the Nazi persecutors were always latent. If the SA were notoriously homosexual, many SS men, too, did not flinch from sexual relations with other men. In a social context in which the gay desire was severely oppressed, we can understand how male homosexuality could find expression only on condition that it assumed hypermasculine and paradoxically anti-homosexual forms. As Francesco Saba Sardi has written:

Under Nazi rule, in fact, it was a specific type of homosexual,

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weak and 'decadent', who was the object of persecution, certainly not the rough barrack-room bugger. The mincing queen of the boulevards and gay ghettos was taken away; he was not sufficiently war-like. The rough SA or blond SS man, however, so loved by their sergeant or *Sturmabführer*, were deemed more virile and militaristic, more worthy of trust and membership in their 'service', if they did not abandon themselves to frivolous affairs with women.<sup>20</sup>

Those who were slain were the homosexuals who did not fit the hypermasculine uniformity of Nazism, who by the very nature of things, by their physical appearance and mentality, were excluded from the phallic, fanatical and war-like display of the regime, which wanted absolute, 'double' males. Indeed, the extermination of homosexuals under the Third Reich offers the clearest picture, the very quintessence, of the everyday persecution inflicted on gays by capitalist society. If today it is a collective homoerotic desire, unconscious because repressed, that is externalised in the form of verbal and physical aggression against the openly gay, under Nazism it was frequently men who were themselves manifest homosexuals, but chained to the system and infested by its violent and martial ideology, who served as an instrument of deadly repression of homoeroticism. The system set homosexuality against homosexuality, which it still does today, though in a more subtle and hypocritical fashion.

And yet the image of the more or less impassive tough guy, the 'torturer', is still a widespread erotic fantasy among us gays. Genet is no exception. It is impossible to deny that manifest homosexuality is frequently bound up with forms of masochism. But how could it not be, in the context of a violently anti-homosexual Norm? How could you go after a heterosexual man, with his 'normal' sadism, without putting your own masochism to the fore? For it is clear that we queens do not just desire other queens, but feel erotic attraction for 'all' people of our own sex, whether homosexual or not.

Many of us, indeed, prefer straight men as sexual 'objects'. What attracts us in them is their maleness, and in general we find heterosexual men more male because heterosexuality, based as it is on the marked differentiation between the sexes, tends to

make the man male in an absolute sense, the opposite of the female. Supported and gratified by the Norm, the heterosexual often appears to us like Nietzsche's 'sensually healthy and beautiful beast of prey'. French queens call these heterosexual males whom they so adore '*bêtes*', and they are certainly beastly in both senses of the word.

Thus we frequently desire someone whom we cannot love, the very prototype of the 'normal' straight man who persecutes us. There is undoubtedly an inherent contradiction in the very strong sexual attraction we experience for men who particularly detest us, the personifications of phallogocentric power. As Daniele Morini of the Milan Homosexual Collectives wrote:

Paradoxically, I really discover my body only in contact with my imagination of the male. It is easy to see that the content of this imagination is alienated and that my partners are reactionary fantasies.<sup>21</sup>

The erotic fantasies that spring to our consciousness very often reflect those stereotyped figures embodying the heterosexual Norm that has modelled society and the species. Our prevalent desire for the *bête* is in a certain sense the internalisation of the figure and role of the oppressor. To exclusively or especially desire the straight man means supporting those who oppress us, and contributes to perpetuating the reactionary characteristics that historically distinguish him.

But the struggle for homosexual liberation leads to disinvesting and transforming precisely the most immediate 'objects' of homosexual desire; above all, it liberates desire and multiplies its streams, aiding us to overcome any such exclusive erotic fixation. On top of this, it provides the homosexual with a sense of dignity which gradually leads him to abandon alienating relations with straight men, and/or to assist these men to change in a new and positive direction, retrieving the humanity, and above all the female side, that is suffocated by their evil and phallogocentric attitude. The homosexual, by liberating himself, sets the heterosexual an example of gay strength and dignity, of a new way of being human, which is no longer based on interpersonal negation, but on mutual understanding, desire and satisfaction.

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The homosexual can lead the straight man into a relationship that is genuinely gay, and not a clumsy imitation of heterosexual fucking. The struggle of revolutionary homosexuals against straight men seeks to transform these 'objects' of desire into free and open human beings, no longer intransigently and exclusively heterosexual, no longer alien, but rather like ourselves; so that we can truly make love with them, *with one another*, and can find in gay, uninhibited and free intersubjective relations the collective strength required to subvert the system as a whole. This positive goal inspires the gay struggle against heterosexual men, who are themselves inevitably chained to the status quo.

The homosexual who, in his anger, neither goes nor sees beyond the objective of a drastic negation of the male, remains caught in a contradictory trap, even if his 'dictatorial' attitude has a certain historical justification. The contradiction stems from the fact that it is neither possible to negate the straight man definitively, while at the same time continuing to desire him, nor to abolish this sexual attraction voluntaristically. Proceeding in this way, we would risk suffocating ourselves and our imagination, for given that we do desire him sexually, this straight man is already within us. We can kill him, but in so doing we would kill ourselves. We would fall into the illusions of William Wilson who struck his double, or of Dorian Gray, who died by smashing his own portrait. We need rather to revive the human being who lies dormant beneath the masculine sclerosis of the heterosexual male, freeing him (and ourselves) from the phallic 'spell'. In this sense, the desire of the homosexual for the heterosexual is revolutionary. It spreads homosexuality, and unchains Eros.

We revolutionary homosexuals have decided to no longer play the role of victim, we have begun to reject, once and for all, being simply an exception that proves the rule. The task facing us is to abolish for ever a Norm which debases and oppresses us. The role of victim is no longer gratifying enough, nor indeed has it ever been. (Even if it would still be worth while writing a detailed martyrology of gay persecution.) We intend to enjoy freely, without interference, our own homosexuality and that of others, just as our own (and others') masochistic tendencies. This does not mean continuing to play the victim's role. For if the victim's counterpart is the sadistic libertine, the counterpart of the masochist

is not a sadist – a Mars in leather, haughty and resplendent as a god. The sadism of De Sade was not the masochism of Sacher-Masoch, even if there can be no sadism without collateral masochistic expressions, nor a masochism devoid of sadistic impulses. It is not by accident that we speak of sado-masochism as a unity. And yet the traditional sadistic libertine does not select a masochistic victim (what point would there be in hurting someone who enjoyed it?), nor the masochist a sadistic dominator. 'It is too readily assumed', writes Deleuze, 'that the symptoms have only to be transposed and the instincts reversed for Masoch to be turned into Sade, according to the principle of the unity of opposites'.<sup>22</sup>

On the terrain of liberation, however, a sexual encounter between prevalently sadistic and prevalently masochistic people really is possible. The liberation of sado-masochism and the liberation of homosexuality will overcome the traditional counterposed roles of sadism and masochism. Deleuze's investigation of these tendencies appears somewhat restricted, for in a certain sense he hypostatizes forms of masochism and sadism that have only a contingent and historical existence. This is what Larry Rosan of the American Eulenspiegel Society wrote in an editorial titled '*Gaudeamus Igitur*':

We know there are natural sadistic and masochistic elements in a very large proportion of people. And the majority of us are aware that the attraction of a naturally sadistic or masochistic personality is far greater, from the point of view of pleasure, than the mere exploitation of those patterns of domination and submission that are inveterate and sustained by our society, such as 'police against prisoners', 'rich against poor', and so on. There is a profound psychological difference between the 'true personality of a slave' and a 'potentially rebel prisoner' who is only the unwilling victim of circumstance. This is why Eulenspiegel stresses voluntary relations. As we see it, 'limitation to voluntary partners' is not an exception to our freedom, but rather a part of it. We want to be free from submitting to social authority, or to those persons who use us as unwilling victims! (And in fact we sado-masochists, in particular those of us who are sadistic

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dominators, are actually more vulnerable than others to sudden repression on the part of the state and the police, that corrupt and obscure abyss of primitive and conflictual sado-masochist desires, jealous and resentful of us for freely celebrating and enjoying the mystique of sado-masochism.)<sup>23</sup>

Those homosexuals who are effectively and predominantly masochistic are therefore forced to combat the negative role of victim that the system inflicts on them. It is no accident that masochists are to be found among the most radical protagonists of the gay movement, the most decisive opponents of homosexual victimisation and anti-gay social violence. Indeed, it is those homosexuals who adapt to the role of victim out of inertia and a sense of guilt that we recognise as the real victims, rather than the masochists who under it all are enjoying themselves. (Even if it should not be ruled out that long adaptation to suffering might bring out in many people masochistic impulses that were formerly repressed.)

The question of homosexual masochism is indeed an intricate one. It frequently presents itself in an alienated form, as a result of false guilt and the internalised condemnation, and is still confused with the evident mechanism of sadistic extraversion of latent homoerotic impulses on the part of heterosexuals. Clearly the homosexual question is less explored and less understood by the heterosexual Norm. We gays know a lot about the straight couple (we still often have a parent on our back, and also, whether we like it or not, in our head), while 'normal' people base their ideas on the repression of homosexuality. The act of legitimising the persecution of those who are 'deviant', or nowadays the act of tolerating them, dispenses 'normal' people from investigating the reasons that spur them either to persecution, or else to the new convenient solution of 'tolerance'. 'The social consensus around their own form of sexuality does not spur them to question it, and through it the whole of their private life' (Corrado Levi).

For us who are 'deviant', understanding the reasons for our oppression is indispensable if we are to find the correct direction in which to lead our struggle for liberation. Just as only the feminist standpoint can show the patriarchal essence of our

present civilisation, and only revolutionary criticism can shed light on the real 'nature' of the rule of capital, so can only the gay standpoint discern the real content of the Norm to which we are opposed, and recognise in the concrete human subjects who uphold this Norm the contradiction implicit in the Norm itself. Heterosexuals are what they are, and exclusively so, because they deny the homosexuality that is latent within them, sublimating it and/or converting it into aggression.



# a healthy mind in a perverse body

### 1. *'Non-Desire' and Negation*

'Can we maintain, then, that the day desire has extended to incorporate non-desire (or so-called non-desire), the revolution will have been accomplished?' That is the question posed by the anonymous author of 'Les Culs Energumènes' ('The Demonic Arse-Holes'), the concluding essay in the *Grande Encyclopédie des Homosexualités*.<sup>1</sup>

The existence of non-desire is largely a question of the existence of negated desire. On the one hand, this involves defining the obstacles that history has erected against a full expansion of desire and individuality (a far more complex undertaking). On the other hand, however, these obstacles should not be hypostatized; we are not trying to justify the present situation. This is what is done in the reformist perspective of homosexual integration, which sets up the obstacle of 'absolute' heterosexuality as a hypostatized opposition to the liberation of the gay desire. It sees society as forever marked by the parental couple, and seeks only to induce this to tolerate its 'perverse' offspring.

One of the main objectives of the revolutionary homosexual movement, however, is to reject this naturalistic hypostatization of the status quo. Desire is 'normal' in as much as it corresponds to a prevailing Norm. And if the ideology of the present system spreads belief in the absolute character of its laws, basing itself on equating the Norm with normality in an absolute sense, our task on the contrary is that of delineating the historical limits of the Norm and showing the relative character of this concept of

‘normality’.

Almost everyone who rejects the existence in themselves of a gay desire takes this rejection as fixed and final. ‘We don’t want to do that’, they say, ‘it’s useless to insist, because we just don’t want to’. And yet almost always, as the author of ‘Les Culs Energumènes’ observes, when someone expresses their ‘non-desire’ in this fashion, we should really hear a different sentiment behind their professed words: ‘Don’t insist! The patriarchal-capitalist society has inscribed this rejection in my body and in my mind’.

In the light of psychoanalysis, it is truer to say that negation represents ‘a way of taking cognisance of what is repressed’. ‘The content of a repressed image or idea can make its way into consciousness, on condition that it is *negated*’ (Freud).<sup>2</sup> To negate an ‘object’ of desire, in other words, is a particular way of affirming it. It is ‘a kind of intellectual acceptance of the repressed, while at the same time what is essential to the repression persists’.<sup>3</sup>

Negation is the primal act of repression; but it at the same time liberates the mind to think about the repressed under the general condition that it is denied and thus remains essentially repressed (Norman O. Brown).<sup>4</sup>

From our recognition of the universal character of the homosexual component of desire, we deduce the existence of a veiled affirmation of homoeroticism even when this is explicitly negated. ‘The unconscious knows only desire’, as Freud put it, while on the other hand, ‘the essence of repression lies simply in turning something away, and keeping it at a distance, from the conscious’.<sup>5</sup> As Norman O. Brown comments: ‘Stated in more general terms, the essence of repression lies in the refusal of the human being to recognise the realities of his human nature’.<sup>6</sup>

If any human being, even a homosexual, overtly rejects his own homosexuality, all he does is repress this and adjust to the repression. For heterosexuals, it is obvious and ‘natural’ to be exclusively what they are; they correspond to the model that the system has obliged them to identify with. Nor are they consciously aware of the weight of this repression of homosexuality. Their blatant, ‘normal’ erotic behaviour conceals (but at the same time

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discloses) repression far more effectively than that of those who do not disguise their anomalous and 'abnormal' sexual desire, which the dominant subculture rejects, considers pathological and/or perverse, or at best merely tolerates.

Starting from a heterosexual standpoint, it is necessary to suspend judgement completely on all sexuality, to avoid falling constantly back into the current prejudices. Before expressing value judgements, a far-reaching investigation is required; but for a heterosexual, to know homosexuality means to become homosexual. We must overturn the entire common conception of desire, if we are to see its hidden dimensions. At bottom, 'non-desire' is the 'other face of love'; alienation also involves the rejection of that side of ourselves which culture (in the Freudian sense) and prehistory (in the Marxist) have suppressed. Alienation and separation from ourselves, for how can we know ourselves in depth, and rediscover a full community of intersubjectivity beyond the anguish of an individuality hemmed in by reification, without revealing the repressed – or at least latent – content of our desire?

If we can say, in the words of Francesco Santini, that 'patriarchal-capitalist society has inserted this rejection in my mind and body',<sup>7</sup> then we can also say that 'capitalist society has inscribed this desire in me'.

It is very difficult to understand what human desire really is. On the one hand, because it is repressed; on the other hand, because this repression also takes the form of the conditioning of desire in a certain particular fashion. There are a monstrous number of desires and needs that are ceaselessly imposed by capital. 'All the physical and intellectual senses have been replaced by the simple estrangement of *all* these senses' (Marx).<sup>8</sup>

Today, the liberation of desire means, above all, liberation from a certain type of imposed desires. Exclusive heterosexual desire, for example, is a coerced desire, the result of 'educastration'. Just as, in the majority of cases, sexuality liberalised within the present system negates and represses the free expression of Eros, showing itself polarised by *objects* of desire in the literal sense, which restrict it, mutilate it, and channel it into the death-dealing orbit of the directives of capital, estranging it from the human being to turn it back towards the fetish, the stereotyped fantasy,

the commodity. The coerced sexuality of capital transforms women and men into commodities and fetishes, and yet underneath their masked appearance as zombie and robot, as *things*, living beings are hidden, and a censored desire is struggling.

Everyday relationships and conscious desires generally play themselves out between masks, appearances, characters and personifications of a determinate type of value: good in bed, intellectual, tough, 'feminist', construction worker, housewife, 'revolutionary', businessman, cook, prostitute, etc., each worth so and so much, more or less. But just as commodities are in reality human labour, so the fetishes that pass each other on the street are women and men, i.e. gods. The cities of capital are the stage of an absurd spectacle, and it is enough to realise this, to see that there is neither a human sense nor a human utility in this performance. All the more so in that the performance is a most poisonous tragi-comedy, and its falseness is continuously denounced to the eyes of the actors-spectators by the real and physical death of the characters, which a conspiracy of silence forbears us to speak of. But if there is death, then we must properly understand life. And this really does press beyond the performance.

The struggle to liberate desire, the 'underneath', is a struggle for the (re)conquest of life, a struggle to overcome the anxious, role-bound and ever threatened survival that we are forced into, to put an end to the neurotic and grotesque spectacle in which we are trapped, all more or less, by being negated, separated from one another and from ourselves. It is not a question of redeeming the noble savage (equally a bourgeois myth), but of releasing our aesthetic and communist potential, our desire for community and for pleasure that has grown latently over the millenia. 'The *cultivation* of the five senses is the work of all previous history' (Marx).<sup>9</sup>

Even the charm of death can be rediscovered and enjoyed, once life has been refound, and human beings live in harmony with their community, with the world, and with the other who is part of our own existence.

Today, our passions and senses come up against the wall of theatrical images introjected by force, the force of inertia, as a dead weight: advertising, propaganda, pornography, false ideals,

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the myths that have transformed our desire all too frequently into anti-desire, into the actual negation of desire. The system's 'sex' is the negation of sexuality, just as the art and music of capital are the negation of sight and hearing, and the use of obscene perfumes and deodorants, and the miasms of pollution, are the negation of the sense of smell. The food which we eat is the negation of taste, shit food, and synthetic shit at that, a fetish of shit. And the stinking metropolis is the negation of sight, of hearing, of smell, of taste, of touch, of everything; it is a confusion that deafens, irritates and stupefies us. We no longer know how to dance, run, sing, look at one another or caress: 'We have become insensitive, as if covered with wax' (Silvia Colombo).

In the same way, as a rule, the institutionalised heterosexuality of the system presents itself as a mere fear of homosexuality, and a double fear at that, a negation also of love for the other sex. While the ideology and fashion for 'homosexuality' that is spreading today among feminists, and among ever more heterosexual men in crisis, is too often reducible to the attempt to neutralise their homoerotic desire, to forestall it intellectually or downright voluntaristically, to blame themselves for being heterosexual, when true gay pleasure cannot flourish unless this false guilt is eliminated. And the feeling of guilt is largely bound up with the repression of homosexuality.<sup>10</sup>

## *2. Homosexuality and Paranoia*

According to Norman O. Brown, man is a neurotic animal:

Man the social animal is by the same token the neurotic animal. Or, as Freud puts it, man's superiority over the other animals is his capacity for neurosis, and his capacity for neurosis is merely the obverse of his capacity for cultural development. . . . For if society imposes repression, and repression causes the universal neurosis of mankind, it follows that there is an intrinsic connection between social organisation and neurosis.<sup>11</sup>

But Brown is simply applying to the entire course of prehistory

the psychoanalytic category of neurosis (which he more or less hypostatizes, shrouding the future overcoming of time and history in the mystical veil of the Nirvana principle). It is sufficient for us to consider the psychoneurosis that particularly characterises capitalist society and culture – even if, with respect to the ‘superstructural’ aspect of the history of philosophy, we cannot avoid noting, with Needham, the neurotic character of the split between ‘matter’ and ‘spirit’ that exists throughout almost the whole of Western thought, from Socrates through to today: ‘the Western neurosis of the separation between matter and spirit’. In fact, even when we speak of neurosis and its universality, we must bear in mind that ‘the most general abstractions arise only in the midst of the richest possible concrete development, where one thing appears as common to many, to all’ (Marx).<sup>12</sup>

Today, of course, society as a whole is neurotic and schizoid. Capitalist ideology, phallogocentric, heterosexual and Eurocentric, founds and constitutes the world-view of one-dimensional man, *homo normalis*, the fetishistic vision of the human being alienated from himself, from the world and from others by the work of capital. Just like the habitual neurotic condition of people considered ‘normal’, so the whole logic of capitalism is schizoid. Dissociated or rather riven between ego and non-ego, *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, desire and ‘non-desire’, sense and intellect, public and private, unconscious and conscious, mechanical materialism and teleological spiritualism, this capitalist logic governs the insane equilibrium of the ‘sane’ individual, more or less adapted to the schizoid social system. The individual who is healthy for Freud is schizoid for Ronald Laing.<sup>13</sup>

Psychiatry often uses the terms ‘schizoid’ and ‘schizophrenic’ as synonyms. But if so-called ‘normal’ life is in fact itself dissociated and schizoid, then the ‘schizophrenic’ alteration of the process of association is far from being the dissociation it is said to be. It is rather a superior and deeper ability to grasp significant relationships between things and/or events that we ‘normally’ define as connected only in a fortuitous way, or rather in a way that is obvious and banal. It is also a still more profound faculty to recognise the evident significance that is hidden in apparently casual relations. For this reason (despite the fact that there are undoubtedly certain borderline ‘cases’), I use the terms ‘schizoid’ and

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'schizophrenic' essentially in two opposite senses: the former as a synonym for 'normal', and to indicate the dissociated character of the commonly held vision of the world; the latter to denote the decidedly alternative and far less dissociated conception of the world which is customarily considered 'crazy'.

In the countries dominated by capital, a growing number of people end up sooner or later in mental hospitals or similar institutions. So-called 'schizophrenics' continue to occupy a larger number of hospital beds than people suffering from almost any other ailment, and this number is constantly on the rise, day by day, and year by year.<sup>14</sup> These 'schizophrenics' escape the one-dimensional rule of the divided self adapted to the customary intercourse of capitalist society; they experience a radically 'different' vision of the world and of life; they are an irreducible challenge to psychoanalysis, and its interpretations almost always appear sorry and restricted in comparison with the grandiose multi-dimensionality of their vision. And yet no other aspect of so called 'mental pathology' has occupied and interested 'scholars' as much as 'schizophrenia'.

The term 'schizophrenia' is used by modern psychiatry to denote the 'mental disorder' that classical psychiatry defined as *dementia paranoides* or *dementia praecox* (Morel, Kraepelin). But is there any relationship between 'paranoia' (or 'schizophrenia') and homosexuality?

According to Ferenczi (and also Freud and others), homosexuality results from certain factors constituting the 'pathogenesis' of *dementia paranoides* (paranoia): 'In the pathogenesis of paranoia, homosexuality plays not a chance part, but the most important one, and . . . paranoia is perhaps nothing else at all than disguised homosexuality'.<sup>15</sup> Those individuals who are considered 'healthy' and 'normal', and are far from any 'suspicion' of homosexuality, may, following the sudden surfacing of repressed gay impulses, transform their existence into a 'delusion' on the grandest scale. This is the famous case, for example, of Dr Daniel Paul Schreber, chief justice in Dresden, who suddenly 'went mad', the most thoroughly studied 'clinical case' in the whole of psychiatry.<sup>16</sup>

The 'paranoic', according to Ferenczi, projects his homosexual interests onto persons of the same sex, but with a negative sign:

His desires, which have been cast out from the ego, return to his consciousness as the perception of the persecutory tendency on the part of the objects that unconsciously please him. He can now indulge his own homosexuality in the form of hate, and at the same time hide [it] from himself.<sup>17</sup>

In the same way, Freud held that, with Schreber, 'what was characteristically paranoid about the illness was the fact that the patient, as a means of warding off a homosexual wishful phantasy, reacted precisely with delusions of persecution of this kind'.<sup>18</sup> Freud maintained, too, that the rejection of a homoerotic desire explains the 'persecution complex':

The statement 'I (a man) love him' is something that the sick person cannot admit, which he seeks to negate with the contradictory statement 'I don't love him, I hate him'. 'I hate him' is then transformed, by projection, into 'he hates me'. In this way, a homosexual desire is transformed into a delusion'.<sup>19</sup>

But if homosexuality, more or less latent, occupies a front-rank position in 'paranoid schizophrenia', it plays an equally important role in the lives of so-called 'normal' people (who are really, in our sense, 'schizoid'). Nor, on the other hand, can the scope of the 'schizophrenic' trip be reduced to a badly tolerated gay itch – however true it is that a homoerotic desire of a certain strength, and its inhibition, can lead the 'normal' individual into an 'anxiety state', a confusion that is propitious to the 'schizophrenic' explosion. Analogously, in the case of a self-defined gay person, a satisfying erotic relationship with a person of the opposite sex can contribute (at a certain point in life) to the onset of 'madness'.

In any case, it seems pointless to me to try and establish the precise degree to which homosexuality enters into the 'pathogenesis' of 'paranoia' or 'schizophrenia', if one wants to call it that, when – as against the doctors – we do not consider 'schizophrenia' a mental sickness, but rather see it as a false premise to trace its etiology back to categories that are restricted



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and schizoid (because based on the dissociation between ego and id).

For the time being, we shall confine ourselves to noting how the analysis of 'clinical cases' of 'paranoia' reveals, by extension, the presence in every individual of homosexual tendencies, which can be more or less repressed in the course of life, depending on the situation. It was precisely in the context of his celebrated analysis of the Schreber 'case' that Freud maintained: 'Generally speaking, every human being oscillates all through his life between heterosexual and homosexual feelings, and any frustration or disappointment in the one direction is apt to drive him over into the other'.<sup>21</sup>

And yet Freud, revealing his own limitations in the face of Schreber's grandeur, still felt himself constrained to ask whether it was 'not an act of irresponsible levity, an indiscretion and a calumny, to charge a man of such high ethical standing as the former Senatspräsident Schreber with homosexuality?' No, because 'the patient has himself informed the world at large of his phantasy of being transformed into a woman and he has allowed all personal considerations to be outweighed by interests of a higher nature'.<sup>22</sup>

It follows that Freud, despite being forced to admit the presence of both homo and hetero tendencies in every individual, deemed it basically slanderous to reveal homosexuality in the case of an individual of 'high ethical standing' (which presumably Freud also considered himself), unless this person made explicit reference to his own gay desires and fantasies. Freud's thinking here shows a decisively contradictory turn. If, on the one hand, anyone can be viewed as (also) homosexual, on the other hand Freud could not escape the basic equation in which homoeroticism corresponds to a vice, an aberrant fault of which anyone can therefore be *accused*. This contradiction, an irrational element in the context of Freud's lucid (if hasty) analysis of Schreber's 'delusion', is historically understandable, if not justifiable, in its conformity with the morality of his time. (And it is not as if Freud's time was so distant from our own.)

Even though restricted by interpreting the extraordinary range of 'schizophrenic delusion' in terms of a 'distortion of homosexuality' (Ferenczi), which makes them somewhat reduced and simplistic, the analyses of paranoia by Freud and Ferenczi are almost perfectly

fitted to understanding the anti-homosexual 'paranoia' of society and the anti-homoerotic actions of so-called 'normal' people. As Guy Hocquenghem has written, "'society" . . . suffers from an interpretative delusion which leads it to discover all around it the signs of a homosexual conspiracy that prevents it from functioning properly'.<sup>23</sup> The collective, censored, homoerotic desire is expressed under a negative sign towards us open homosexuals: the homosexual love that is socially latent is transformed into hate for us gays. It is clearly not we gay men and women who suffer from persecution mania, for it is we who are actually persecuted. It is the society, rather, that maniacally believes itself threatened by our presence, which it defines as a 'social pest'. Trying to defend themselves from 'contamination', and to check this 'vice', they attack us.

It is no paradox, then, that the 'paranoics', the 'schizophrenics', the so-called 'mad', are in reality far less paranoid than people considered 'normal'. And in a certain sense, the 'schizophrenic' conception of the world is superior, or at least less illusory, than the eknoic – but actually paranoid – world-view of *homo normalis*. As Norman O. Brown puts it: 'It is not schizophrenia but normality that is split-minded; in schizophrenia the false boundaries are disintegrating . . . Schizophrenics are suffering from the Truth.'<sup>24</sup>

On the other hand, to quote Wilhelm Reich:

The schizophrenic world mingles into one experience what is kept painstakingly separate in *homo normalis*. The 'well-adjusted' *homo normalis* is composed of exactly the same type of experiences as the schizophrenic. Depth psychiatry leaves no doubt about this. *Homo normalis* differs from the schizophrenic only in that these functions are differently arranged. He is a well-adjusted, 'socially minded' merchant or clerk during the day; he is orderly on the surface. He lives out his secondary, perverse drives when he leaves home and office to visit some faraway city, in occasional orgies of sadism or promiscuity. This is his 'middle layer' existence, clearly and sharply separated from the superficial veneer. He believes in the existence of a personal supernatural power and its opposite, the Devil and hell, in a third group of experiences which is again clearly and sharply delineated

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from the two others. These three basic groups do not mingle with one another. *Homo normalis* does not believe in God when he does some tricky business, a fact which is reprimanded as 'sinful' by the priests in Sunday sermons. *Homo normalis* does not believe in the Devil when he promotes some cause of science; he has no perversions when he is the supporter of his family; and he forgets his wife and children when he lets the Devil go free in a brothel.<sup>25</sup>

Any 'normal' person, therefore, is a latent 'schizophrenic' just as much as a latent homosexual. But the manifest 'schizophrenic' experience is in the highest degree something different from the 'normal' everyday life: it reveals what we are 'in reality', the universal history concentrated in us, and the trans-sexual and communist potential with which we are pregnant.

### *3. The 'Schizophrenic' Trip and Trans-sexuality*

Come then, my pretty Dr Faust,  
the mantle is spread for the flight.  
Forth into the Unknown . . .

GRODDECK<sup>26</sup>

We homosexuals know how little concern is shown for those who are 'deviant' in the society of absolute values (even if this lack of concern presents itself as exorcism, and hence in reality a very deep concern; otherwise repression could never be so harsh). Just as homosexuality is simply considered a 'vice' or 'perversion', and dealt with accordingly, so the 'schizophrenic', as a general rule, is nothing but an incorrigible 'psychopath', to be sentenced to the lunatic asylum, or else 'curable' by way of 'therapy', this being simply the violent negation of 'schizophrenic' freedom, the oppression of mind and body effected by the authoritarian imposition of electric shock, drugs and ultimately lobotomy, with a view to forcibly leading the 'patient' back into the confines of the established Norm. The 'schizophrenic' must submit to the arbitrary acts of neurotic, schizoid doctors, who understand little

or nothing of what they call 'madness'. Psychiatric textbooks more or less explicitly admit as much.

The labelling of homosexuality as an 'aberration', or more fashionably, a 'variation', involves a false consciousness in dealing with its real content, recognising the vital passion that inspires it and the aspiration of human desire that it expresses. In the same way, the label of 'psychopath' reduces the existential universe of the 'schizophrenic' to a 'clinical case' to be condemned to imprisonment and derision (or to a pity that is cousin to this). If the homosexual is not understood, because there is neither wish nor need to understand him, and yet he is still persecuted, then the 'schizophrenic' is a person 'who does not understand', and hence acts out his forced submission to a psychiatric (or anti-psychiatric)<sup>27</sup> reason, which understands everything to the extent that it can reduce it to the worn-out, banal and repressive categories of an ideological illusion taken for 'reality'.

As a rule, the 'mad' person is considered asocial. According to the psychiatrists, the 'irrationality' and 'paralogical thinking' of the schizophrenic 'jeopardises his relationship with the community and his adjustment to it'.<sup>28</sup> But this 'community' which psychiatrists speak of is the absolute negation of community. 'In the West, with the capitalist mode of production, a stage marked by the autonomy of exchange-value, the last residues of community were destroyed' (Jacques Camatte). The human community is replaced by a community of things governed by capital. As Camatte goes on to say:

In reality, the movement of production presents itself as the expropriation of man and his atomisation – the production of the individual – and at the same time as the autonomising of social relations and the products of human activity, which become an oppressive power over against him: autonomisation and reification. Man is therefore separated from his community, or more precisely, this is destroyed.<sup>29</sup>

Thus it is not the community, but the totalitarian negation of community, to which the so-called 'schizophrenic' experience is maladapted. And if the 'schizophrenic', thus defined, is asocial, then the homosexual too is asocial, a real social pest, since he

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refuses to form a family or even a straight couple according to the canons of the prevailing socio-sexual law. In reality, it is the anti-homosexual taboo that leads to the negation of true community, by condemning totalising relationships between people of the same sex; it is the system that is asocial and inhuman, in as much as the real domination of capital constitutes the maximum negation of the human community in the entire course of prehistory that separates us from the dissolution of primitive communism.

It follows that the asocial result, as it is seen in the prejudice of the dominant ideology, generally contains within it something that is profoundly human, frequently oriented towards the (re)conquest of true community. Perhaps the 'megalomaniac delusion' of a 'paranoic' grasps in solitary recognition the immense importance of the human subject and his life, and his 'persecution complex' shows a tragic awareness of the real persecution meted out to the human individual in capitalist society. Today, it is in the prisons and asylums that Christ is suffering.

But the moment of general resurrection is approaching, given the destruction that is heavy in the cancerous air of capital (the cloud of pollution at Seveso was only the first of its kind), and then the life that we are forced to repress can (re)surge free and communally in its full potential. It is time to brake the machine of the system and call a halt. It is time to (re)conquer the planet and ourselves, if we do not want the machine that man constructed, and which subsequently turned against him, to end up bringing about a complete catastrophe. Adjustment to the system means accepting the extermination that is perpetrated against us; it means making ourselves accomplices to it.

Time is pressing. We can no longer meekly put up with the enforced status quo, continuing to identify ourselves with a sexual Norm that is functional and consonant with it, but which divides us from one another by insisting on the condemnation of homosexuality, which divides male from female by counterposing men and women, and which divides us from ourselves because it is based on the repression of our polymorphous desire, so rich and trans-sexual. We need men, who are today so obtusely phallocratic, to accept that they too are pregnant with a life that is not to be aborted, a 'femininity' that must not be crushed by the deadly destiny of this male-dominated society. They too,

therefore, will come to establish new relations both with women and with other men (but this is to 'become' gay), and finally to understand and uncover in themselves the 'half' that they have always repressed, coming to express and communicate to others the new world of being and becoming – gay, conscious, open and anti-capitalist. There is no longer time to act as puppets of the system, wretched clowns who take themselves so seriously in order to repress the gay life within themselves, and to oppose the revolution and the affirmation of women that is the essence, flavour and content of the revolution itself.

The new world that we bear within us, and which some of us are beginning to realise, understand and express, finds its prophets, its forerunners and its poets in the 'mad' women and men of both present and past, who, far from being idiots, have in fact understood too much. As Reich put it:

When we wish to obtain the truth about social facts, we study Ibsen or Nietzsche, both of whom went 'crazy', and not the writings of some well-adjusted diplomat or the resolutions of the communist party congresses.<sup>30</sup>

The social collective, the world, history and the universe, act and interact in the 'schizophrenic' trip. Existence takes on a different light, new and very old meanings are gathered in the air, in the streets, among people, in animals and plants. Consciousness expands: the 'mad' person begins to experience consciously a large part of what is 'normally' unconscious.

How exceptional are the *Memoirs* of the 'paranoic' Schreber, compared with the analysis that Freud made of them! Schreber's 'delusion' expands into the great orbit of religion, history, transsexuality; it is made up of peoples and wars; it sweeps aside the customary conceptions of time and space, and fuses life with death, as Schreber actually sought to live out his own death. In the words of Gilles Deleuze: 'Schreber's *Memoirs*, whether paranoic or schizophrenic (it matters little), present a kind of racial, race-ist or historical delusion. Schreber's delusion is one of continents, cultures and races. It is a surprising delusion, with a political, historical and cultural content.'<sup>31</sup>

In actual fact, for those who know what is really meant by

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'schizophrenia', Schreber's *Memoirs* are not particularly surprising, for in any 'voyage into madness', the social collective, nations, and even the remote past and the cosmos are thrown into fundamental and transparent relief, which has little in common with the opaque ego-istic view of the world. Beyond the veil of Maya, many of the customary barriers between the self and others break down, both between the ego and that which is apparently 'outside', and between the ego and the 'internal' world of the unconscious. There is nothing surprising, therefore, about the Schreber 'case' as opposed to any other 'delusions'; the psychonazis themselves admit that 'schizophrenic symptoms' are generally extremely similar. Schreber's experience is only surprising in comparison with the Norm, with the myopic survival of *homo normalis*, in the same way as are the adventures of so many other 'mad' people, whether present or past, who are not and never will be famous.

Deleuze is quite right, moreover, in maintaining that, in his analysis of the Schreber case, 'Freud does not deal with anything rigorously, and reduces the judge's delusion simply to his relationship with his father'.<sup>32</sup> The 'schizophrenic trip', on the contrary, reveals how our entire ontogenesis must be understood in the light of a phylogenesis 'projected' from the darkness of the unconscious towards the 'outside', and rediscovered in other people and the environment. For in all of us, in fact, history is present – even if this is still prehistory, lying latent, because repression has forced us not to see, not to feel, and not to understand, not to recognise ourselves in others. The ego and the illusion of 'normal reality' are the result of the individualistic atomisation of the species, an atomisation that followed and replaced the gradually destroyed community. So-called 'delusion' is therefore a 'state of grace', since in the individual affected the desire for community reawakens and seeks to assert itself in surroundings which are hostile to it and in fact its negation.

In a text published in 1924, 'Neurosis and Psychosis', Freud observed that while in neurosis the ego, because of its submission to 'reality', represses a part of the id, in 'psychotic' 'schizophrenia' the ego, in the service of the id, withdraws from a part of 'reality'. The ego accepts part of the id. In this case, 'the ice of repression is cracked' (Jung). But the id is also a 'collective unconscious'.

What surfaces to consciousness, therefore, besides all personal reminiscences, is in part the contents of this collective unconscious. And this, being 'detached from anything personal . . . is entirely universal, and . . . its contents can be found everywhere'.<sup>33</sup> It is the latent community that surfaces, and with it a certain 'primordial effervescence'. We can understand, therefore, how 'there exists an invisible world that is unappreciated – the true world, without doubt – of which our own is simply a marginal fringe' (Jean Cocteau).

The perception of trans-sexuality, one's own and that of others, is of particular importance in the 'schizophrenic' trip. Just as hermaphroditism is a gateway into magic, so the 'schizophrenic' adventure is magical because, in this sudden and progressive change in experience, a central element proves to be the (re)discovery of that side of ourselves which Jung defined as 'anima' or 'animus'. The trans-sexual aspiration generally remains relegated to the subconscious, and only rarely rises to the level of consciousness (Freud, for example, showed the 'bisexual' nature of fantasies)<sup>34</sup>. Frequently, this happens only via the mechanism of negation. But the question of trans-sexuality is fundamental. In the words of Harry Benjamin:

For the simple man in the street, there are only two sexes. A person is either male or female, Adam or Eve. The more sophisticated realise that every Adam contains elements of Eve and every Eve harbours traces of Adam, physically as well as psychologically.<sup>35</sup>

Although homosexuality itself 'rests' on the deep-rooted conception of and belief in the differences between the sexes, we gays are still in a position giving better access to a conscious validation of trans-sexual fantasies, of the trans-sexual 'nature' of desire. There is of course more than a short distance between here and Casablanca.<sup>36</sup> But in the 'schizophrenic' trip, all the same – in particular when undertaken by conscious homosexuals – the trans-sexual fantasy is transformed into the overwhelming effective experience of trans-sexuality. If we can take up the words of Jesus according to the Gnostic St Thomas, then one day 'the two shall be one, and the outside shall resemble the inside, and there



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shall no longer be either male or female'. From being latent, trans-sexuality now becomes manifest.

Plato already taught that it was only by way of madness or mania that man could come to discern the truth of Love;<sup>37</sup> and in the *Symposium*, when Socrates speaks of Love, he quotes the wise woman Diotima of Mantinea.<sup>38</sup> Through this intervention, the language of philosophy was fused with the Eleusian mysteries; just as in the *Phaedrus*, the incantation Socrates speaks in praise of Love is completely full of mystical tones, the revelations of mythology and a poetry inspired by the divinity of the countryside and of nature.<sup>39</sup> In the same way, the 'schizophrenic' mystery rises to the highest peak of the truth of love.

I believe that if we are to try and overcome the limits of our rationalistic discourse on sexuality, we have to approach the erotic themes and contents of 'schizophrenia'; the erotic desire is a thousand times higher than the limitations of our intellectual conception of love, made up of 'romantic' themes (in the broad sense) and psychoanalytic categories, chained by the chastened and alienating functions of monosexuality and the repression of all other tendencies of desire. Such limitations risk leading us to foresee the stabilisation of an illusory peaceful coexistence between the sexes and between heterosexuality and homosexuality, falling back into the gloomy perspectives of latter-day bourgeois enlightenment. If the minority of open gays can unveil such hidden truth as to the 'nature' of the human being and our underlying desires, what profound truth on the human universe and the full significance of sexuality is disclosed by the experience of the 'mad'?

The classical conceptual categories, and the everyday language in which these are expressed, are ill adapted to describing the sensations and experiences of 'madness'. For not only does the 'schizophrenic' often know and feel himself hermaphrodite or in the process of becoming so, at times he also discerns hermaphroditism in the people around him. If he is in contact with heterosexual couples, for example, he may find himself suddenly picking up their intimate and astonishing 'fusion'; on the telephone, a woman speaking to him about her husband can to his ears gradually but distinctly change her voice into that of the husband. She 'is' her husband, since he exists within her. The 'mad' person perceives

how other people (un)veil their own trans-sexuality. He understands the extent to which their conscience is a bad conscience, is unfaithful, since in his presence they pretend not to know what they show themselves to be. And since, as a general rule, they behave repressively towards him, the 'schizophrenic' can also conclude that they mistreat him because they repress themselves, because there is a mysterious law that threatens them, and in the service of which they act.

Perhaps I have tended to generalise from an experience of my own, which, after a varied trajectory, brought me into clinics for the 'mentally ill' some two years ago. True, it is wrong to generalise; and yet I feel that I have lived situations that are true, in as much as they contain within them something universal. And this is why I have exceeded what are considered the 'normal' bounds of extrapolation and generalisation.

The serious problem for me, rather, is to maintain in retrospect the reality I lived so strongly at that time. Other people invariably oppose this as a pit full of vain hallucinations, though in actual fact everything presented itself to me as fully evident, clear and irresistible. If life in the 'society of the spectacle' is a stage production, then I have refused to perform. For I had a vision of the extraordinary scope of existence, the richness which this absurd social constriction prevents us from naturally enjoying.

Today, far too often, we are all forced in part to perform, forced into that 'normal' hypocrisy that enables us to go around 'freely'. If this book is worth little, that is due above all to the falseness that is difficult to avoid in writing, being necessarily reproduced in daily life. All the same, as a friend said to me, it is more important to go ahead than to do well; in my case, this means proceeding coherently with my 'madness', with that which, once revealed, it is impossible to deny, and which forces us to live for the best. Didn't Freud say that the superego represents the unconscious and becomes the spokesman of its demands in consciousness?<sup>40</sup>

The trans-sexual sentiment was one of the reasons, and also one of the results, of a gradual alteration in my perceptions of my body and mind, of the 'external' world and other people. At times I felt myself really a woman, at times spiritually pregnant, at other times the reincarnation of a woman. Besides, to use a

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certain jargon, my hidden fantasies, and with these the 'archetypes' of the collective unconscious, became 'projected' – or were rather encountered – 'outside'; the 'schizophrenic' experience enabled me to grasp many of the secrets hidden behind the recurring representations of the 'normal' past. Routine was shattered, and the repetition compulsion beaten. I could sense in any single act of the day the interaction between freedom of choice and 'conditioning', between myself, things and other people. The meaning of sexual attraction became brilliantly clear; it was the first sign and the most evident expression of intersubjectivity. Desire was sensual and candid, in turns humorous and serious, disgusting and consuming.

At the same time, the European metropolis seemed to me like a Mecca, its people entranced and terrified. Coincidences and surprises multiplied, and my hesitations when confronted with magical phenomena declined in the face of disconcerting evidence, sure encounters in which I realised fantasies that I had believed I had for ever to abandon to 'reality'. 'Reality' was replaced by truth.

'Madness' is materialist. To investigate the truths of the 'underneath', and, suspending prejudices without – yet – jettisoning them, to confront them with the succession of actual facts (Ferenczi saw materialism as the prototype of 'paranoic' philosophy).<sup>41</sup> In the process, sensitivity grows more refined. As Edgar Allen Poe put it: 'And now have I not told you that what you mistake for madness is but over acuteness of the senses?'<sup>42</sup>

The trans-sexual perception is a double one: it discovers that the majority of people are at least half buried. The city looks like the realm of the living dead. And yet other people's faces reflect the divine along with the ghosts and demons. In nature, in the sky, and in other people, the 'mad' person contemplates himself and the grandeur of life, without anyone else seeing within him. The unconscious views itself.

Freud's references to the unconscious are far too close to Kant's utterances on the noumen, the thing-in-itself that is assumed but cannot be experienced. But the 'thing-in-itself', the truth, can be experienced. It is only 'narrow-minded and ignorant people [who] take the profound as if it were uncouth, and relegate the marvellous to the realm of fiction'.<sup>43</sup>

If the non-ego can be taken to embrace both the id and the 'external' world, then 'mad' people demonstrate how awareness of the underneath bridges individuality and the barriers between ego and non-ego. Once the dual separation of both the 'external' world and the id from the ego is overcome, then it is clear that the ego is 'normally' nothing but an oppressive barrier (in as much as it is the product of oppression and based on repression) between our underneath and the cosmos. The id (the internal non-ego) and the 'external' world (the external non-ego) mutually illuminate one another, since they are always reciprocally determined. And if the 'schizophrenic delusion' is seen as solipsist (in the sense of the solipsistic or quasi-solipsistic doubt that is at times experienced), this is not a product of 'megalomania' or an accentuated individualism, but rather of the lack of a vital response on the part of others to the 'mad' person's need for communication and direct community. If other people insist on forcing him into their own dissociated and 'normal' individuality, then to the eyes of the 'schizophrenic' they may well all appear, from time to time, 'people made of shadows'.

But these other people are not all the same. Some people come to assume a very great importance for the 'mad' person (who certainly does not travel alone). And if the 'schizophrenic' can be attributed a 'state of grace', then I believe – from my own experience – that this 'grace' can be communicated to others, once the initiating impetus is given. Faust could not have been Faust without the devil.

#### 4. *Women and Queens*

And indeed, devils do exist.

I have already indicated the possibility that, at a given moment in the life of a gay man, a satisfying erotic relationship with a woman can contribute to launching the 'schizophrenic' trip. And the 'schizophrenic' experience, as we have seen, is (among other things) a trans-sexual perception, the discovery of hermaphroditism. This enables us to understand how the liberation of Eros, the (re)conquest of trans-sexuality, also involves overcoming the resistances that inhibit relationships between male homosexuals

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and women, as well as between us and other men. A free man is gay and loves women.

There is a widespread belief among many people that homosexual men are misogynist. Nothing could be more false: if we experience a heavy sexual attraction towards other men, this in no way implies that we hate women. On the contrary, we are in general far more disposed to develop relations of affection and friendship with women, feeling deeply akin to them in some respects, despite the fundamental difference that sees us as being, after all (according to many feminists, first of all), men just the same, and thus on the opposite side of the fence. The various levels of the revolutionary dialectic cut across one another, and the man-woman contradiction and the contradiction between heterosexuality and homosexuality are interwoven. If a gay male behaves in a way antithetical to the heterosexual Norm that is functional to the system, he is still willy-nilly, and more or less consciously, tied to the phallocentrism that governs this system. On the other hand, a woman, who as such is potentially on the side of the revolution, can still fully submit to the heterosexual Norm, hence confirming herself in the role of slave and perpetuating male privilege and the repression of homoeroticism; she can more or less openly disparage erotic relations between people of the same sex, and repress her own homosexuality. The revolutionary struggle of women, however, tears a growing number of gay men away from the male union, and finds in them, always 'males in crisis', gay allies; while the propagation of the gay desire by homosexual women and men distances women more and more from the Norm, and leads to many encounters, on the terrain of homosexuality, between women and women, and between women and queens. The presence of revolutionary lesbians is by far the chief link between the gay and feminist movements: revolutionary lesbians form the homosexual movement of women, and we can foresee that the women's movement will become more and more homosexual.<sup>44</sup>

Eros also finds liberation via the creation of new erotic relationships between women and gay men. This is in no way a question of reforming the Norm. Heterosexuality is essentially reactionary, because, being based on the contradiction between the sexes, it perpetuates the phallocentric male, the prototype of

the fascist male that the state, and the left within the system, always propagate. Revolutionary homosexuals reject heterosexuality as a Norm, as the base of the family, and the guarantee of male privilege and the oppression of women; they combat it, recognising it as the form of sexuality in the name of which the system has always attacked homosexuals and incited people to persecute them.

But erotic relations between women and gay men need not be 'normal' and hence heterosexual in the more or less traditional sense. Our relations with women can instead be (and in part already are) gay, very little heterosexual, and not at all straight. The revolution involves, among other things, new and appropriate encounters between persons of opposite sex, and the creation of gay friendships between women and men. Women and gays can make love in a new way which, despite the historical and biological differences between the sexes, and the inherent contradictions of power that are bound up with these, is in tendency and intention a new form of intersubjective pleasure and understanding; a woman and a gay man can make love in a way that is outside the usual pattern of the heterosexual couple. I believe that very many women really prefer gay men to straight, and that, among other things, their sexuality finds greater satisfaction and response in making love with a gay man than in the egoistic fucking proposed, and often imposed, by the heterosexual male. Above all else, we gays do not treat women as sexual 'objects'.

Among us homosexuals, however, many feel particularly inhibited in recognising and expressing our erotic desire for women. I think that this is very largely a product of our psychological subjection to a particular model of heterosexual masculinity that we were forced to internalise as a model, but which we could not identify with. We know that we do not fit this model, and at the same time we conceive heterosexuality as we see it on all sides, in every corner of the world, i.e. centred on male virility and the objectification of the woman. But this is heterosexuality as it was imposed on woman. And the liberation of women cannot but negate this, since inherent to it is the sexual, and not only sexual, subjection of the woman to the male.

Let us consider, for example, the 'problem' of the phallus. The male boasts of his 'potency', whereas we know that most probably

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we will not even get an immediate erection in making love with a woman. And yet this is a false problem; I am convinced that it does not matter to women. The erotic relationship is neither exclusively nor even primarily a genital one, and revolutionary women reject the authoritarian imposition of the phallus by the male, that boastful and alienating phallus that serves as a symbol and instrument of power in the heterosexual prison. Between men, however, playing with cocks, even in a phallic way, can be very gay, it is gay, exciting and pleasurable for both involved, or for all three or four, etc. Males should act out their phallic desire among themselves (nowadays even extended to fist-fucking), and stop involving women. Even if women do occasionally desire the phallic relationship, I believe they will still find the 'ideal' partner or partners among gays, who really do love the penis, and not only their own (which moreover they love right to the end, without any disgust at their own sperm, for example, unlike the majority of heterosexuals), but also those of others.

Once the 'problem' of erection is dispensed with, as a pseudo-problem, the queen will understand that it is fine to make love with a woman, and the woman will be happy to make love with someone who knows how to make love, i.e. with a gay man. I think that even the genital relationship between women and gay men is more richly shaded, in terms of reciprocal sensual attention in contact, rather than the habitual 'wham, bamn', all over with in a few minutes, of the heterosexual male.

Making love with a person of the other sex always yields the renewed discovery of a body and form of pleasure that is different from one's own. But in order to fully and reciprocally enjoy this diversity, it is necessary to understand one's own sex, not only in the autoerotic mode, but also in the alloerotic. Homosexuality is superior to sexual individualism, it is the discovery of one's own sex, the recognition by desire of (all) people of the same sex. Homosexuality is the *sine qua non* for being truly able to love the opposite sex, and hence to love bodies that are different from our own.

It is clear, however, that the phallic fixation of the heterosexual male is a function of his concentration on himself, on his own cock, a function of his repressed and suppressed homosexual desire. It derives from the transformation into (alienated)

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autoeroticism of the desire for one's own sex that was in its original tendency (and still latently is) directed towards (all) persons of the same sex. The identification with the phallus on the part of the heterosexual male results from a kind of 'introjection' of the homosexual 'objects' which he has had to renounce. It is this blind rejection of the homosexuality that is hidden and secret in himself, which the heterosexual imposes on the woman as virility, rigid virility.<sup>45</sup>

The desire for persons of the same sex, which is the first consequence of love of oneself, is forced to return – in the heterosexual male – to its earlier narcissistic dimension; males leap across to their heterosexual goal by repressing the middle term of homosexuality. A leap in the dark, hence their clumsiness. As Georg Groddeck has written:

Man loves himself first and foremost, with every sort of passionate emotion, and seeks to procure for himself every conceivable pleasure, and, since he himself must be either male or female, is subject from the beginning to passion for his own sex. It cannot be otherwise, and unprejudiced examination of anyone who will consent to it, gives proof. The question, therefore, is not whether homosexuality is exceptional, perverse – that does not come under discussion – what we have to ask is, why it is so difficult to consider this phenomenon of passion between people of the same sex, to judge it and discuss it, without prejudice, and then we have also to ask how it comes about that, in spite of his homosexual nature, man is also able to feel affection for the opposite sex.<sup>46</sup>

It is impossible to speak dispassionately of homosexuality, since it is a repressed passion. In the same way it is often true that what is more openly desired is not what is desired at a more fundamental level, so that perhaps it is heterosexual men, solely heterosexual on the surface, who really have the most powerful gay fantasies stirring in their unconscious. And to keep their homosexual desire latent, they continue to establish only superficial relationships with women, who, by involving them deeply, could only bring out the queen that is in them, the 'woman' within. I



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believe that the erotic desire for women is alive deep within me, being at bottom my own desire to be a woman; and now this is beginning to surface, beautifully, in my life.

We can put forward the hypothesis that heterosexuals, forced to repress their own very strong homosexuality, identify themselves with the 'objects' of this repressed desire; and that this is what leads them to be such masculine males or feminine females. We gay males, however, are effeminate, and in this we display our deep attraction for women. (The converse may be true for lesbians, but it is not a simple case of *mutatis mutandis*.) In other words, we can say that everyone invests himself with the connotations of his own repressed 'object' of desire. This strengthens the ego and accentuates individualism; the liberation of polymorphous, transsexual desire, of the unconscious, is the condition and essence (in a very material sense) of the community that is to be realised. It is the guarantee of genuine intersubjectivity, of a genuine 'us'.

Our position as homosexuals, however, our sexual ambiguity, the type of balance attained in us between subjectivised connotations and repressed connotations, is tendentially hermaphrodite, it is the expression of trans-sexuality; while with heterosexuals, the assumption on the part of the 'subject' of the connotations of the repressed homosexual 'object' leads to a double role-playing, to the male being simply more masculine, the typical normal role-playing which the feminist and homosexual struggle will end up by exploding, in the interest of freeing our repressed trans-sexuality. If the dialectic between the sexes and between the sexual tendencies is already a fact of social life, it simultaneously involves a large number of underlying levels that are not immediately apparent. The women's and gay movements are preparing the earthquake that will bring the collapse of the entire patriarchal structure.

The harsh persecution of homosexuality has led us gays to greatly constrict our identity as homosexuals. In order to defend and assert ourselves, we must before all else be able to resist, and *be* homosexuals. This is why the gay movement has particularly emphasised the theme of homosexual identity. Our first task has been to learn to recognise ourselves, to know and love ourselves for what we are, to extinguish the sense of guilt that has been forcibly imposed on us. Only then can we consciously confront

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life, society and the world. But once this identity is attained, and lived to the full, it is time for us to free the hidden tendencies of desire, and to explore our secret passion for women. This can only make us more gay, since that means becoming more conscious of what we desire and what consistently motivates us.

If the liberation of homosexuality will for many years<sup>47</sup> be a universal problem (which is why today the homosexual 'of strict observance' is still a revolutionary figure, even though the revolution will in due course make this restriction seem in a certain sense perverse), if through the realisation of communism homosexuality will be liberated and lived to the full, we gays, who are the conscious bearers of this seed of liberation, cannot but confront and seek to resolve the problems that relationships with our women comrades impose on us. Thus I believe that totalising gay relationships with women will enable us to discover the reciprocal desire between the sexes, a new reciprocity that is totally different from the asymmetry of traditional heterosexual relations, a revolutionary solidarity. And it is also (and perhaps above all) by deepening our friendships with women that we gay men can liberate our own anima, which unites us with women, and become more 'women' (in a completely different sense than Myra Breckenridge or Raquel Welch!). We can offer women the possibility of new and positive relationships with people of the male sex: women and queens together.

We can hope to see a 'sexual general strike' of women against heterosexual males, and the creation of new totalising relationships between women, the complete liberation of female homosexuality. 'Stop making love with men, let women make love with one another, and with us!' That is our gay proposal to women. And it is a doubly interesting proposition for us, since, if on the one hand we have an interest in deepening our gay relationship with women, on the other hand it is in our interest that all heterosexual males should be at our disposal. That should be very entertaining. This invitation to women is the first postulate of our gay science.

Relations between people of different sex only have a revolutionary sense today when they are gay, i.e. when they are between women and gay men, especially between gay women and gay men. And the heterosexual males? Their arrogant and deficient role is today clearly counter-revolutionary, formed in

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the image and likeness of capitalist power, and they can only act in a different way with women when they have managed to relate in a new way among themselves. For the time being, from the sexual point of view (and not this alone), they want to do with women what, because of the repression of their homosexuality, they cannot tolerate doing among themselves. They want to fuck women, but are terrified of being fucked; they like ejaculating against women, but feel horror at the very idea of another male coming over them. This is all part of the heterosexual equation and its absurdity. For the time being, from the standpoint of the revolution, heterosexual males still represent far too greatly capital, the enemy, domination and alienation.

Only the struggle of women can change this. Only our homosexual struggle, only gay pleasure, can make straight men into queens too. And a few men are beginning to understand this, at last. A heterosexual comrade wrote the following poem:<sup>48</sup>

A demonstration  
of the extra-parliamentary left  
is in crisis  
a group of homosexuals  
crazy with love for communism  
have managed to get close  
perhaps too close  
to the comrades  
these are now very red  
but this time with embarrassment  
their hands on their arses  
they aren't even able  
to consult mao  
to settle the dispute.

# towards a gay communism

### 1. *Transvestism. Homosexuality and 'Homosexualisation'*

*There is more to be learned from wearing a dress for a day, than there is from wearing a suit for life.<sup>1</sup>*

As we have seen, 'schizophrenia' sheds light on the trans-sexual substratum of the psyche, our bodily being-in-becoming (the mind is part of the body, and the body as a whole is far from completely monosexual). We have also established that it is via the liberation of homoeroticism, among other things, that trans-sexuality is concretely attained; and however much homosexuality is put down by the system today, we gays are among those persons most aware of the trans-sexual 'nature' that lies within us all. Fantasies of a trans-sexual character often spring to our consciousness, and many of us have had more or less trans-sexual experiences.

This does not mean that a good many people defined as 'transsexuals' today, do not start out from heterosexuality. (Likewise a large number of transvestites.) 'Heterosexuals' aware of their trans-sexuality, however, are at present far less numerous than gays who have undertaken the trans-sexual trip. This is because heterosexuals, as a general rule, have adapted to their mutilated role of man or woman as something 'normal', obvious and taken for granted, whereas we gays almost invariably experience it as a

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burden that we have to be exclusively men or women, and suffer from the resistance with which we, and our desire, are opposed by heterosexuals of the same sex as ourselves. The hermaphrodite fantasy, dream and ideal occupy a major place in the gay existential universe.

Society is especially harsh in its attacks upon transsexuals or those who might appear as such: the butch lesbian, the queen or 'effeminate' male homosexual bear a greater brunt of public execration and contempt, and are frequently criticised even by those reactionary homosexuals who are better adapted to the system, the 'straight gays' who have managed to pass as 'normal' or heterosexual. These reactionary homosexuals (homo-cops) make out that outrageous queens and transvestites ruin the gay scene and spoil the image of homosexuality. For our part, we outrageous queens see them as queens dressed up as straight men, unfortunate people who are forced to disguise themselves and act a role imposed by the system, and who find ideological arguments to justify their position as contented slaves. They wonder what it is the gay movement wants, what it is fighting for, because nowadays our society accepts diversity. True, even today we can't make love freely wherever we feel like it, on the buses or in the streets, but then not even straights are allowed to do that. So things aren't that bad. Some consolation!

Many feminists criticise us queens because we often tend in our dress and behaviour to copy the stereotyped 'feminine' fetish that women have to fight. But if a woman dressed like a starlet or cover girl is normal for the system today, a man dressed in a similar way is quite abnormal, as far as 'normal' people are concerned, and so our transvestism has a clear revolutionary character. There is no harm in us queens having our bit of fantasy: we demand the freedom to dress as we like, to choose a definite style one day and an ambiguous one the day after, to wear both feathers and ties, leopard-skin and rompers, the leather queen's chains, black leather and whip, the greasy rags of the street porter or a tulle maternity dress. We enjoy the bizarre, digging into (pre)history, the dustbins and uniforms of yesterday, today and tomorrow, the trumpery, costumes and symbols that best express the mood of the moment. As Antonio Donato puts it, we want to communicate by our clothing, too, the 'schizophrenia'

that underlies social life, hidden behind the censorious screen of the unrecognised transvestism of everyday. From our vantage point, in fact, it is 'normal' people who are the true transvestites. Just as the absolute heterosexuality that is so proudly flaunted masks the polymorphous but sadly inhibited disposition of their desire, so their standard outfits hide and debase the marvellous human being that lies suppressed within. Our transvestism is condemned because it shows up for all to see the funereal reality of the general transvestism, which has to remain silent, and is simply taken for granted.

Far from being particularly odd, the transvestite exposes how tragically ridiculous the great majority of people are in their monstrous uniforms of man and 'woman'. You need only take a ride on the underground. If the transvestite seems ridiculous to the 'normal' person who encounters him, far more ridiculous and sad, for the transvestite, is the nudity of the person who laughs, so properly dressed, in his face.

For a man, to dress as a 'woman' does not necessarily mean projecting the 'woman-object'; above all, because he is not a woman, and the male fetishism imposed by capital decrees that he should be dressed quite differently, reified in a quite different guise, dressed as a man or at least in unisex. Besides, a frock can be very comfortable, fresh and light when it's hot, and warm and cosy when it's cold. We can't just assume that women who normally go around dressed as men, swathed tightly in jeans, feel more comfortable than a queen dressed up as a witch, with full-bodied cloak and wide-brimmed hat.

But a man can also get pleasure from wearing a very uncomfortable 'feminine' garb. It can be exciting, and quite trippy, for a gay man to wear high heels, elaborate make-up, suspender belt and satin panties. Once again, those feminists who attack us gays, and in particular transvestites, for dressing as the 'woman-object', are putting down gay humour, the transsexual aesthetic, the craziness of crazy queens. Their new morality is in fact the very old anti-gay morality, simply given a new gloss by modern categories stuffed with an ideological feminism, ideological because it provides a cover for the anti-homosexual taboo, for the fear of homosexuality, for the intention to reform the Norm without eliminating it.

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Heterosexual feminists fail to hit the mark when they discuss homosexuality. And we queens, moreover, have no intention of being put down by women any more than by men. In the course of our lives, many of the educated educators we have encountered have been women, and there are certainly far more women still opposed to homosexuality today than there are gay men who are male supremacist and enslaved by the dominant ideology. Many women have abused us and still do so, they have ridiculed us and still do so, they have oppressed us and still do so. These women cannot but be opposed to us, and we cannot but 'oppose' them, if we intend, from the gay standpoint, to wage a struggle for universal liberation (a struggle, therefore, which involves them as well, fighting against their prejudices, with a view to dissolving all anti-gay resistances). I have already shown how the contradiction between men and women and the contradiction between heterosexuality and homosexuality are intertwined. And so if feminists cannot but oppose the persistence of male supremacy among us queens, we cannot but challenge fundamentally the heterosexual 'normality' with which the women's movement is still pervaded, despite the new fashion or ideology of 'homosexuality' that has become widespread in it.

Franco Berardi (Bifo), a heterosexual man, speaks of the 'homosexualisation' of the women's movement, a 'homosexualisation' (the term could hardly sound less gay) which he supports, as a heterosexual male in crisis (but not too much so). And yet Bifo's 'homosexualisation' has little in common with the struggle of us queens for the liberation of the gay desire. The concept of 'homosexualisation' is all too reminiscent, beneath the 'feminist' camouflage of Men's Liberation, of the male supremacist bisexuality of the hustlers. But Bifo will not understand, in fact he cannot understand. To do so, he would have to savour the fragrance of the urinals, and feel in his own person the full weight of oppression that weighs on the shoulders of us gays. For the moment, please, let *us* speak about homosexuality, we who have come out in the open; homosexual is something one uncovers, not something one becomes. I would like to get her in bed, that Bifo, and confront her 'homosexualisation' with my homosexuality. And that is a gay desire – an advance, not a concept.

There are also feminists for whom the 'new homosexuality' discovered by the women's movement is not the same thing as lesbianism, which – they hold – is still marked by a male model. Some of them say they came to accept homosexuality after realising the impossibility of going on with relationships with men, and that the homosexual choice is a necessary one for women as long as their struggle has not yet radically changed men and therefore their relations with them. Once again, homosexuality is presented as a substitute choice, a palliative, a surrogate sexual dimension in which the libido withdrawn from male 'objects' is politically channelled.

This is what the new 'homosexual' fashion among feminists amounts to, a fashion that is quickly recuperated by the system (the *Corriere della Sera* has articles about it on its feature page), and which, despite appearances, is simply a new form of the old anti-gay exorcism. (And on fashion, moreover, we have always been the experts, recognising the new styles at first sight.) The 'new homosexuality' of feminism is worth little more than the 'homosexualisation' of someone like Bifo. It boasts a 'homo' mask, but this actually serves to (un)veil the genuinely latent gay desire, and above all the conscious heterosexual desire that wears the mask. If this mystification is the 'new homosexuality' of women, or at least of certain feminists, then it is quite true that it has little in common with lesbianism. Lesbians are right if they refuse to identify with the general heterosexual atmosphere of the feminist movement, and continue to organise in autonomous ('homonomous') groups.

When there are women who criticise us gays if we dress as 'women', we should not ignore the pulpit from which this preaching comes. I have never been attacked by a lesbian for my make-up, my floral gowns or my silver heels. It is true, of course, that, if for centuries women have been forced by male power to dress up in an oppressive manner, the great creators of fashion, the couturiers, hair-stylists, etc. have almost always been gay men. But the homosexual fantasy has simply been exploited by the system – it still is<sup>2</sup> – in order to oppress women and adorn them in the way that men want to see them. For centuries, the system has exploited the work of homosexuals to subjugate women, just as it has made abundant use of women to oppress gays (any gay man need only



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recall his mother). For this reason, if it is very important for women today to reject certain ways of dress, i.e. being dressed and undressed by men, it is equally important that gays should recapture and reinvent for themselves the aesthetic that they were obliged for centuries to project onto women.

If Marlene Dietrich in her glitter is an emblem of the oppression of women, she is at the same time a gay symbol, she *is* gay, and her image, her voice, her sequins form part of a homosexual culture, a desire that we queens recognise in ourselves. It is true that for a woman today to present herself like a *Vogue* cover girl is in general anti-feminist and reactionary. But for a gay man to dress as he pleases, boldly expressing a fantasy which capital has relegated to the reified pages of *Vogue*, has a certain revolutionary cutting edge, even today. We are fed up with dressing as men. We ask our sisters in the women's movement, then, don't burn the clothes that you cast off. They might be useful to someone, and we have in fact always longed for them. In due course, moreover, we shall invite you all to our great coming-out ball.

There can be no doubt that queens, 'effeminate' homosexuals and transvestites are among those men closest to trans-sexuality (even if frequently, because of oppression, they live their trans-sexual desire in alienated forms, infected by false guilt). Queens and transvestites are those males who, even though male, understand better what it means to be a woman in this society, where the men most disparaged are not the brutes, phalocrats or violent individualists, but rather those who most resemble women.

It is precisely the harsh condemnation of 'effeminacy' that sometimes leads gay men to behave in a way that is functional to the system, to become their own jailors. They then balance their 'abnormal' adoration for the male, the tough guy, the hoodlum, with a 'normal' and neurotic anti-woman attitude, which is counter-revolutionary and male supremacist. But the homosexual struggle is abolishing this historical figure of the queen enslaved by the system (the 'queer men' whom Larry Mitchell distinguishes from 'faggots'), and creating new homosexuals, whom the liberation of homoeroticism and trans-sexual desire brings ever closer to women, new homosexuals who are the true comrades of women. To the point that they can see no other way of life except among other homosexuals and among women, given the increasingly

detestable character of heterosexual males. Whenever we gays see 'normal' males discussing one another, or rather tearing one another to pieces, whenever we see them attack one another in a profusion of thrusting insertions, then we truly do think they have understood nothing, if they are still unaware of the homoerotic desire that pushes them towards one another and yet confuses them because it is repressed. And if the gay struggle elevates the acidic and put-down queen (acidic even when she's not on acid), transforming her into a *folle*, a gay comrade who is ever more trans-sexual, it also negates the heterosexual man, since it tends towards the liberation of the queen that is in him too.

## *2. Anxiety and Repression. Gay 'Filthiness'*

The particular behaviour and fantasies of homosexuals have their counterpart in the blindness and ignorance with which the majority of people respond to the entire sexual question, and the homosexual question in particular. Most of them are still far too unaware of the limitations involved in the opposition between the sexes, even though this may well play a substantial part in their own suffering.

This lack of awareness is the product of the repression they have undergone, and it serves in turn to perpetuate this repression. A severe mental and social censorship conceals what has taken place: their original polymorphous, 'perverse' and undifferentiated erotic disposition was condemned and repressed in the course of infancy, so that the weight of condemnation gradually drags them down into the hell of the adult world, of which the hell of childhood is only the antechamber. Repressed, and thus constricted and deformed, the existence of this tendentially polymorphous disposition has been relegated to the harsh prison of the unconscious, tortured like the bound foot of an old Chinese woman. Restrained by the censorial walls of this prison, each individual has to internalise the sexual values and customs of the heterosexual male model that are imposed by patriarchal society (in our case, capitalist society in particular). In the words of Norman O. Brown:

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The pattern of normal adult sexuality (in Freud's terminology, genital organisation) is a tyranny of one component in infantile sexuality, a tyranny which suppresses some of the other components altogether and subordinates the rest to itself.<sup>3</sup>

The gay movement maintains that the tyranny of genital heterosexuality by no means completely suppresses the polymorphous tendencies of infantile sexuality, it simply subjugates them to the yoke of repression. The struggle for the liberation of Eros can release even the most hidden of desires (for example the coprophagous and necrophilic).

In any case, genital tyranny produces anxiety and suffering in us all. The harsher the repression, the stronger the anxiety induced, in our experience, by persons, events and situations which conjure up the wide scope of the repressed contents and tend to disrupt the repression itself. Thus the homosexual is mistreated by the heterosexual because he 'reawakens' in him the homoerotic desire that has been forced to lie dormant for so long. This 'reawakening' is rarely complete, generally taking the form of a disquietening stirring, the presentiment of an earthquake that would threaten the rigid structure of his ego, based as this is on the repression of homoeroticism. The heterosexual insults, provokes and threatens the homosexual because he feels himself challenged by his presence, which besieges his 'normal' equilibrium by suggesting that he might himself be both object and subject of the gay desire.

According to Groddeck, as I have already pointed out, homosexuality is not completely repressed. Rather than repression, it is a question of a daily self-deception, a 'quasi-repression', a bad faith that leads the heterosexual to present himself as exclusively such, even though he knows in fact that he does have gay desires.<sup>4</sup> It is symptomatic of this that so many men maintain they have never wanted sexual relations with other men; they fear this might please them too much, and that they might become gay themselves.

As a general rule, the heterosexual views the gay man as 'filthy'. This is due, above all, to the fact that the 'normal'

individual sees reflected in the gay person the homoerotic component of his own desire, negated and repressed in its anal eroticism, urophilia, coprophilia, etc. 'Normal' people consider 'filthy' any sexual acts bound up with those erotic tendencies which repression has induced them to renounce, giving rise in them – via the induced guilt of their repressed desire – to a particular authoritarian morality, which induces further guilt in its turn. 'Normal' people become maniacs of a certain type of order, of a certain type of cleanliness [*pulizia*] and of the police [*polizia*].

Homosexuals who go out cruising – and almost all gay men do so – know perfectly well that their pleasure very often involves them in breaking the law, disrupting order (even in those countries where homosexuality is not as such a criminal offence). We gays have almost invariably made love in the streets, in parks, in public toilets, in cinemas, museums, churches, in the Tuileries. We have been fucked behind barrack walls, we have sucked each other off kneeling in front of religious statues, we have held splendid orgies under railway bridges. 'Normal' people can only see it as 'filthy' that we like to eat sperm and be fucked in the arse. And yet those of us who are revolutionary see it as absurd that we are not allowed to cruise openly, wherever we like, that we can't take off our trousers or petticoats wherever we happen to be.

### *3. Fear of Castration and the Parable of War*

Elvio Fachinelli asks what lies 'at the root of the rejection of homosexuality (essentially of male homosexuality, given that female homosexuality today speaks a language that is very different and less significant, for reasons connected with the historic position of women)'.

It would be interesting to know why Fachinelli sees less significance in the 'language' of female homosexuality. Perhaps because he is a man and is thus concerned above all with his own rejection of male homosexuality. But we shall come back to this in a minute.

It is essentially, on the part of the heterosexual male, the

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fear of losing his masculinity in contact with the homosexual, i.e. something very deeply bound up with his personal identity. *Vis-à-vis* homosexuality, he feels almost as if his very position as a male were being challenged, and hence his individual self-definition. It is as if this proved unexpectedly precarious or insecure, far more so than it generally is. Hence the reactions of rejection and disparagement, hence the various well-known behaviour patterns of aggressive hypermasculinity, which are often surprisingly accompanied by a certain solicitude for the homosexual in as much as he acts like a woman . . . We can say, therefore, that the homosexual reawakens, as a male who seems to have suffered castration, the fear of castration that is latent in every man. And as simultaneously both male (which he ultimately is) and female, he is often experienced by the heterosexual as endowed with a paradoxical castrating and assimilating capacity.<sup>5</sup>

What Fachinelli says here is on the whole a valid interpretation, even if I would see it as risky to consider it an explanation of what 'lies at the root of the rejection of homosexuality'. Heterosexuals, as a general rule, tend to give over-hasty replies to the homosexual question (if rarely anything like as intelligent as this). We can add, however, that, if the homosexual usually reawakens the 'fear of castration' in the male heterosexual, this is also due to the fact that the heterosexual sees his own castration shown up by the gay man, i.e. the castration he has suffered with respect to his homoerotic desire. The heterosexual male fears losing his masculinity, and hence his heterosexual identity, because he knows this is all that remains to him of an Eros that has already been mutilated. And it is precisely because of this castration of his homosexual desire that he does not manage to understand homoeroticism as the totalising, satisfactory, full sexuality that it is, and so fears falling into a void were he to let himself be seduced into a gay experience. Since he knows his heterosexuality to be based on the loss of homosexuality (which does not necessarily mean he is consciously aware of this), the male is afraid of losing his heterosexual identity, should he abandon himself to his unknown homosexuality. In other words, he has internalised the

evident if mysterious law of the system: either heterosexuality or homosexuality.

According to the Milan *Fuori!* collective, the continuous violence inflicted on homosexuals, 'just like that exercised against women, is indissolubly bound up with the male's fear of losing his power over women. The man who goes to bed with another man is jeopardising his power, betraying the "solidarity" among males, and this is why he brings all their repression down on himself'.<sup>6</sup>

For many heterosexual men, the homosexual liberation struggle is a war waged against their Norm. Now in war, every army seeks ways of aiding desertion from the other side. And in these last few years, the number of heterosexual males who desert has steadily grown, experimenting with homosexuality and experiencing the emancipating influence of the gay movement.

In a conflict, however, someone who deserts is generally exposed to a greater risk (at least if the army from which he deserts is not completely and irreversibly in rout), the risk of dying a shameful and infamous death, being labelled a traitor and accused of cowardice. Hence any army that fights intelligently understands the importance of positively attracting deserters from the enemy to its own ranks, and carries out propaganda of disaffection directed at the enemy camp. Propaganda of this kind can prove a deadly weapon, able to destroy a whole army without firing a shot (think of the puppet army of South Vietnam, literally broken apart by desertion).

If, on the other hand, the deserter is uncertain of his fate, and expects to face the inextinguishable hatred of the other side, if he fears risking a cruel death, should he take refuge in the opposing army, or being degraded by deprecation for his cowardice (the fate that his own side would inflict), then he will refrain from putting his planned desertion into practice, however sadly, and remain with his old comrades, continuing to depend on them for his physical survival.

Clearly, any desertion is going to be met with a certain diffidence. It must be, at the very least, individual and unreserved. The deserter will be enrolled in a company of trusty veterans, and certainly not left together with other deserters. Above all, the desertion of an entire enemy unit that wants to maintain its

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integral character is a cause for suspicion: men's awareness groups, for example, or the gangs of 'neo-homosexual' comrades, if we are to apply the metaphor to the present confrontation between gays and the heterosexual Norm, the deserters being those straight men 'in crisis' who can no longer fit completely into the army of normality and its ideology. Men's awareness groups have no other purpose than to prolong their dithering between the sacred 'normality' of the system and a gay, total opposition to it. We look forward to their dissolution, and to the participation of their former members in the revolutionary homosexual movement, particularly in its pleasures, in our particular pleasures.

To return to the war, given that little boys are so fond of playing at toy soldiers (whereas we queens prefer to be played with by toy soldiers). In the case of a group desertion, it is an elementary security measure to break up the deserting unit and distribute it in small nuclei among one's front line formations, those most experienced in combat (to put David Cooper in with the Gazolines, for example, or Franco Berardi with Our Lady of the Flowers).<sup>7</sup> More must be expected of the deserter than of any other soldier, just as he needs to be ensured of the fullest support and solidarity of his new comrades.

To give a final example. Let us assume that straight men are fighting in an all too normal colonial army engaged in massacring a black (read 'gay') population, who are nevertheless reacting courageously with ever bolder guerilla actions. The hetero-colonialist males, despite the fact that their army still controls the main centres and road junctions in the region, and has formidable technical instruments of repression at its command, are unable to carry on. They are sickened by the reprisals which they have had to take part in, and by the atrocities in which they have been accomplices. The last village that they razed to the ground prevented them from sleeping. And so, after having carried out a commendable work of dissatisfaction in their platoon, they decide to desert *en masse*, bringing all the weapons that they can smuggle out – first among these a perfect knowledge of the mentality and methods of their former army. They venture out into the jungle that surrounds the occupied cities, in which the guerillas are forced to hide. They are both frightened and fascinated. What holds them back is their uncertainty that the guerillas will spare

them once they reach their camp. In other words, they have deserted from the colonialist army, but are still afraid of being fucked in the arse.

They take to the maquis and begin to fight the colonialist army, and yet they still maintain operational autonomy, undertaking guerilla actions and sabotage independently from the black guerillas. The latter then have various options. They know very well that the presence of an independent white unit could have a decisive demoralising effect on the colonial army, and they are also aware that acceptance of a united struggle might involve innumerable dangers for the coordination and effectiveness of their actions. On the other hand, however, there is the risk that the deserters, still unrepentant colonialists, might degenerate into simple acts of brigandage against both armies: these are the bisexuals.

It would be opportune for the guerillas to enter into negotiations with a view to coopting the deserters. They can certainly agree that these should maintain their autonomy for a certain period of time, as long as they have not sufficiently given proof of their gayness; i.e. to see to what point the bisexuals, absolute heterosexuals until yesterday, are genuine deserters, and form part of the liberation struggle against the Norm.

The solution to this problem lies in the victory of the revolution, in the creation of communism, in the ending of all war, and the definitive withdrawal of all armies. Today, the revolution is being prepared, among other things, by the conflict between the gay movement and the Norm, and by the encounter between homosexuals and deserters from the army of normality. The heterosexual males 'in crisis' must understand that we do not want war: we are forced to struggle because we have always been persecuted, because the policemen of the heterosexual law have repressed us, because we look forward to the universal liberation of the gay desire, which can only be realised when your heterosexual identity is broken down. We are not struggling against you, but only against your 'normality'. We have no intention of castrating you. We want on the contrary to free you from your castration complex. Your arse has not really been amputated, it has only been accused [*imputato*], along with your entire body.

To come over to our side means, literally, to be fucked in the



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arse, and to discover that this is one of the most beautiful of pleasures. It means to marry your pleasure to mine without castrating chains, without matrimony. It means enjoyment without the Norm, without laws. It is only your inhibitions that prevent you from seeing that only by coming over to our side can we achieve our revolution. And communism can only be ours, i.e. belonging to us all, those of us able to love. Why do you want to be left out?

It is capital that still so insistently opposes you to us. What you have to fear is not being fucked in the arse, but rather remaining what you at present still are, heterosexual males as the Norm wants you to be, even in crisis, as if it was not high time to oppose yourselves forever to crisis, to castration, to guilt. As if it was not time to gay-ly reject the discontent that the present society has imposed on us, and to stop the totalitarian machine of capital in its tracks by realising new and totalising relations. And given that we are bodies, this means erotic relations among us all.

You fear us on account of the taboo you have internalised, and which you still uphold. But this taboo is the mark of the system in you. And we don't want to be led into the catastrophe that is threatening, nor do we want the struggle for liberation, which has only one genuine enemy, capital, to be crippled by your resistances, dogmas and ditherings, by your susceptibility to images and your submission to the Father-system. Your terror of homosexuality is the capitalist terror, it is the paternal terror, the terror of the father that you have not overcome.

There have been wars in which the oppressors, sullied by atrocities, have degenerated to such a point that the only way for the oppressed to conquer has been to eliminate them to a man. In a case of this kind, it is impossible to expect many deserters. We find this in the Biblical wars: God commanded that none of the inhabitants of Jericho should survive the fall of the city. But we don't want to sound the trumpets of Jericho, rather the Internationale. What we propose is an erotic understanding. We don't want any more destruction, that is precisely why we still have to struggle. Revolutionary wars are never anything like the destruction of Jericho.

In 1917 the Bolsheviks and all other revolutionaries proclaimed war on war and preached defeatism in all armies. The Russian

revolutionary soldiers fraternised with the German ‘victors’, they danced together, embraced one another on the occupied Russian soil and shared their rations. Today, with gay clarity, we must wage the true war against capital and no one else. Eros to you and to us, captivating sisters and attractive brothers of the universal incest that is announced and impending!

#### 4. *The Sublimation of Eros in Labour*

*And meanwhile the proletariat, the great class embracing all the producers of civilised nations, the class which in freeing itself will free humanity from servile toil and will make of the human animal a free being – the proletariat, betraying its instincts, despising its historic mission, has let itself be perverted by the dogma of work. Rude and terrible has been its punishment. All its individual and social woes are born of its passion for work.*

LAFARGUE<sup>8</sup>

According to the metaphysical theory that sees the process of civilisation as the conversion of powerful libidinal forces, their deviation from the sexual aim into labour and culture, repressed Eros may be viewed as the motive force of history, and labour as the sublimation of Eros.

In Freud’s words:

The tendency on the part of civilisation to restrict sexual life is no less clear than its other tendency to expand the cultural unit . . . Here . . . civilisation is obeying the law of economic necessity, since a large amount of the psychical energy which it uses for its own purposes has to be withdrawn from sexuality . . . Fear of a revolt by the suppressed elements drives it to stricter precautionary measures.<sup>9</sup>

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Civilisation, therefore, is seen as having repressed those erotic tendencies that are subsequently defined as 'perverse', in order to sublimate this libidinal energy into the economic sphere (and into the social sphere, too: we have seen how Freud deemed the sublimation of homoeroticism a useful guarantee of social cohesion).<sup>10</sup> This is one of the most interesting hypotheses on the historical imposition of the anti-homosexual taboo, something that cannot be viewed in isolation, but must be considered in relation with other things, particularly the heterosexual Norm, marriage and the family, and the institutionalisation of woman's subjugation to man.

According to Marcuse:

Against a society which employs sexuality as means for a useful end, the perversions uphold sexuality as an end in itself; they thus place themselves outside the dominion of the performance principle and challenge its very foundation. They establish libidinal relationships which society must ostracise because they threaten to reverse the process of civilisation which turned the organism into an instrument of work.<sup>11</sup>

This is already somewhat out of date, and needs to be revised. Today it is clear that our society makes very good use of the 'perversions'; you need only go into a newsagent or to the cinema to be made well aware of this. 'Perversion' is sold both wholesale and retail, it is studied, classified, valued, marketed, accepted, discussed. It becomes a fashion, going in and out of style. It becomes culture, science, printed paper, money – if not, then who would publish this book? The unconscious is sold in slices over the counter.

If for millenia, therefore, societies have repressed the so-called 'perverse' components of Eros in order to sublimate them in labour, the present system liberalises these 'perversions' with a view to their further exploitation in the economic sphere, and to subordinating all erotic tendencies to the goals of production and consumption. This liberalisation, as I have already argued, is functional only to a commoditification in the deadly purposes of capital. Repressed 'perversion', then, no longer provides simply

the energy required for labour, but is also to be found, fetishised, in the alienating product of alienated labour, which capital puts on the market in reified form. Precisely in order to be liberalised and marketed, 'perversion' has to remain in essence repressed, and the libidinal energy that is specific to it must continue in large measure to be sublimated in labour and exploited. Repressive desublimation involves the perpetuation of the coerced sublimation of Eros in labour. It is clear that those erotic tendencies defined as 'perverse' cannot but remain repressed, as long as people continue to accept the truly obscene and perverted products that capital puts onto the market under the label of 'perverse' sexuality, and as long as there are still those who are content for their 'particular' impulses to be vented in a way that gives them a mediocre titillation from the squalid fetishes of sex marketed by the system. The struggle for the liberation of Eros is today, among other things, the rejection of a sexuality that is liberalised and packaged for sale by the permissive society; it is a rejection of sexual consumerism.

On the other hand, given that capital has reached its phase of real domination, i.e. that capitalist concentration and centralisation, inseparably bound up with the progress of the productive forces and the 'technological translation of science into industrial machinery' (H. J. Krahl), have reduced to a minimum the amount of necessary labour, the maximum portion of labour-time is surplus labour, so that there is what Marcuse calls 'a change in the character of the basic instruments of production'.<sup>12</sup> This process was already foreseen by Marx in *Grundrisse*:

In this transformation, it is neither the direct human labour he himself performs, nor the time during which he works, but rather the appropriation of his own general productive power, his understanding of nature and his mastery over it by virtue of his presence as a social body – it is, in a word, the development of the social individual which appears as the great foundation-stone of production and of wealth.<sup>13</sup>

This transformation creates the essential premises for making the total qualitative leap realised in the communist revolution. And Marx adds:

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As soon as labour in the direct form has ceased to be the great well-spring of wealth, labour-time ceases and must cease to be its measure, and hence exchange-value [must cease to be the measure] of use-value. The *surplus labour of the mass* has ceased to be the condition for the development of the general wealth, just as the *non-labour of the few*, for the development of the general powers of the human head. With that, production based on exchange-value breaks down, and the direct, material production process is stripped of the form of penury and antithesis. The free development of individualities, and hence not the reduction of necessary labour-time so as to posit surplus labour, but rather the general reduction of the necessary labour of society to a minimum, which then corresponds to the artistic, scientific etc. development of the individuals in the time set free, and with the means created, for all of them.<sup>14</sup>

In the face of this qualitative leap, standing as we do before the prospect of revolution and communism, sexual repression is obsolete and only serves as an obstacle. In fact it maintains the forced sublimation that permits economic exploitation, 'the theft of alien labour-time' (Marx), the theft of pleasure (time) from woman and man, the constriction of the human being to a labour that is no longer necessary in itself, but only indispensable to the rule of capital. Labour, today, serves to preserve the outmoded relations of production, and to ensure the stability of the social edifice that is built upon these.

'Capital', writes Virginia Finzi Ghisi, 'has made use up till now of the erotic nature of labour in order to force man into this, having preventively withdrawn from him any other sexual adventure (relations with the woman-wife-mother in the family circle are no adventure, but only an extended substitution) . . . Heterosexuality becomes the condition for capitalist production, as a modality of loss of the body, a habituation to seeing this elsewhere, and generalised.'<sup>15</sup>

The struggle for communism today must find expression, among other things, in the negation of the heterosexual Norm that is based on the repression of Eros and is essential for maintaining the rule of capital over the species. The 'perversions', and

homosexuality in particular, are a rebellion against the subjugation of sexuality by the established order, against the almost total enslavement of eroticism (repressed or repressively desublimated) to the 'performance principle', to production and reproduction (of labour-power).

The increase in the means of production has already virtually abolished poverty, which is perpetuated today only by capitalism. And if the sublimation of the 'perverse' tendencies of Eros into labour is thus no longer economically necessary, it is even less necessary to channel all libidinal energies into reproduction, given that our planet is already suffering from over-population. Clearly, repressive legislation on the number of children, abortion, and the wars and famines decreed by capital, will not resolve the problem of population increase. Such things can only serve to contain it within limits that are functional to the preservation and expansion of the capitalist mode of production. They serve to increase the war industry and to maintain the Third World in conditions of poverty and backwardness that are favourable to the establishment of capitalist economic and political control. The problem of over-population can be genuinely resolved by the spread of homosexuality, the (re)conquest of autoerotic pleasure, and the communist revolution. What will positively resolve the demographic tragedy is not the restriction of Eros, but its liberation.

The harnessing of Eros to procreation, in fact, has never been really necessary, since free sexuality, in conditions that are more or less favourable, naturally reproduces the species without needing to be subject to any type of constraint. On the other hand, if the struggle for the liberation of homosexuality is decisively opposed to the heterosexual Norm, one of its objectives is the realisation of new gay relations between women and men, relations that are totally different from the traditional couple, and are aimed, among other things, at a new form of gay procreation and paedophilic coexistence with children.

In a relatively distant future, the consequent trans-sexual freedom may well contribute to determining alterations in the biological and anatomical structure of the human being that will transform us, for example, into a gynandry reproducing by parthenogenesis, or else a new two-way type of procreation (or

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three-way, or ten-way?). Nor do we know what the situation is on the billions of other planets in the galaxy, many of which, at least, must be far more advanced than ourselves.

If we can thus understand how the repression and sublimation of Eros, and the heterosexual Norm, are absolutely no longer necessary for the goals of civilisation and the achievement of communism, being in fact indispensable only for the perpetuation of capitalism and its barbarism, then it is not hard to discover in the expression of homoerotic desire a fertile potential for revolutionary subversion. And it is to this potential that is linked the 'promise of happiness' that Marcuse recognises as a peculiar character of the 'perversions'.

### *5. The 'Protectors' of the Left*

The left – above all the Italian Communist Party, but also all the self-proclaimed revolutionary organisations – were slow to adopt even an attitude of 'protection' towards gays. For a long time they simply repressed homosexuality directly, negating it by exalting the tough, virile figure of the productive (and evidently reproductive) worker. They ridiculed homosexuals, defining them as an expression of the corruption and decadence of bourgeois society, thus making their own contribution to confirming gays in an attitude that is in some respects counter-revolutionary. They put forward an image of revolution that is grotesquely bigoted and repressive (based on sacrifice and on the infernal proletarian family) and a caricature of virility (based on productive-reproductive labour and on brute militarised violence), and they held up the model of those countries defined as socialist, who liquidate homosexuals in concentration camps or 're-education centres', such as Cuba or China. It is scarcely surprising, then, that gay people saw only the system itself as their 'salvation'.

When the homosexual liberation movement started in Italy, the left did their best to induce it to silence and discourage it. We can all cite an endless series of insults, provocations and even physical attacks from militants of the left. Those of us who belonged for a while to such groups know very well the sum of humiliations and frustrations involved in being a gay activist in

the heterosexual left.

The left thus did all it could to extinguish our movement. They stubbornly characterised it as 'petty-bourgeois' at the very time that we were starting to come out in a revolutionary way. As far back as 1971, Joe Fallisi could write that the left was concerned above all to 'modernise reformist politics and impose (in the heaven of the Spectacle) new ideological images of the "challenger", the "tough guy", the "extra-parliamentarist", the "new partisan".' And if the reformist politics of the left are phallogentric and heterosexual, their ideological counterpart was the 'tough guy with a big cock and muscles of steel', who sets even the fascist bullies to flight.<sup>16</sup> It is no accident that the extra-parliamentary groups of yesterday are today seated in Parliament.

Today, the real revolutionary movement includes above all else the movement of women and gays, in struggle against the system and the heterosexual phallogentrism that upholds it, chaining to it the (male) proletariat itself. The organisations of the left, on the other hand, essentially male and male supremacist, heterosexual and anti-homosexual, support the public and private capitalist Norm, and hence the system itself. The movement of revolutionary women has shaken the entire society, putting in crisis even those groups who call themselves revolutionary and yet have so far been ramparts of male supremacist bigotry. Even the movement of conscious homosexuals, revolutionary or at least open to a vision of themselves and the world that is different from the traditional one, can no longer be simply neglected by the left politicians. The parties of the left, great and small, now have to try and recuperate homosexuals too, though I think Stalin would still turn in his grave at the very idea.

The heterosexual left, in dealing with the homosexual question, is trying a similar recuperation, if on a lesser scale, to that which it has effected vis-à-vis feminism. Up till only recently, the thieving and 'fascist' government, for the extra-parliamentary left, was also obviously 'queer'. Today, however, it seems even a gay person can prove himself a 'good comrade', a 'valuable activist in the service of the proletariat', while it is also opportune that all 'good comrades' should begin to take account of the contradictions inherent in the sexual sphere. The contrast is blatant. On the one hand, the term 'queer' is used as an insult; on the other, the wolf



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dresses up as a lamb, preaching acceptance and understanding for homosexual comrades.

For almost all activists in these groups, the homosexual question is a problem of secondary importance, 'superstructural' and involving only a minority. 'We must tolerate homosexuals, so that they don't cause trouble by questioning our heterosexuality and pretending that we too would like to get fucked in the arse'. This last type of reaction enables us to grasp, behind the appearance of a new and more open attitude, the really closed mentality of the heterosexual 'comrades'. And, as a general rule, I would reply: Dear comrade, you are upset when someone questions the repression of your homosexual desire? And don't tell me: 'You can do what you like among yourselves, but don't interfere with me', when you are not free to desire me, to make love with me, to enjoy sensual communication between your body and mine; when you rule out the possibility of sexual relations with me. If you are not free, then how can I be free? Revolutionary freedom is not something individual, but a relation of reciprocity: my homosexuality is your homosexuality.

I believe that homosexuals are revolutionary today in as much as we have overcome politics. The revolution for which we are fighting is among other things the negation of all male supremacist political rackets (based among other things on sublimated homosexuality), since it is the negation and overcoming of capital and *its* politics, which find their way into all groups of the left, sustaining them and making them counter-revolutionary.

My asshole doesn't want to be political, it is not for sale to any racket of the left in exchange for a bit of putrid opportunist political 'protection'. While the assholes of the 'comrades' in the groups will be revolutionary only when they have managed to enjoy them with others, and when they have stopped covering their behinds with the ideology of tolerance for the queers. As long as they hide behind the shield of politics, the heterosexual 'comrades' will not know what is hidden within their own thighs.

As always, it is only rather belatedly, in the wake of the 'enlightened' bourgeoisie, that the left-wing groups have begun to play the game of capitalist tolerance. From declared hangmen, and a thousand times more repugnant than the hustlers and fascists, given all their (ideological) declarations of revolution,

the activists of these groups have transformed themselves into 'open' debaters with homosexuals. They fantasise about becoming well-meaning and tolerant protectors of the 'deviant', in this way gratifying their own virile image, already far too much on the decline, at a time when even the ultra-left have suddenly to improvise 'feminist' representatives for 'their' women. Moreover, the fantasy of protectors helps them to exorcise the problem of the repression of their own homoerotic desire. Under it all, the activists of the left always hope to become good policemen. They do not know that real policemen get in there more than they do, and that when this happens, they make love precisely with us gays. When will there be a free homosexual outlet for the activists of the ultra-left?

As good policemen for the system, the grouplets are doing their utmost to construct an 'alternative' ghetto for us 'deviants', and since they do not want to pollute their serious and militaristic organisations with anything gay, they prefer to concede us free access to the rubbish-heap of the counterculture. For the time being, however, the left is more stupid and clumsy than the system's traditional Mafia, and in no position to create for us homosexuals attractive ghettos comparable with those constructed by the capitalist 'perversion' industry. Anyone who says that we are 'paranoid' simply means that we are quick to grasp the insufferable atmosphere created by people who can scarcely even tolerate us, the hidden aggression of phallogocentric 'comrades', the negation of homosexuality that – in the typical form of male bonding – both unites and divides them at the same time, and certainly divides them from us.

But times are finally changing. The groups are now giving us a certain space of our own: a weekly broadcast on the 'free' radio, and two or three regular pages in the underground press. This is a space well guarded by the policemen of the left, whose function is that of reinforcing the lack of confidence that gay people have in themselves, and convincing them of the need to put themselves in tow to (and at the whim of) this or that powerful protector. All the more so, in that 'If it wasn't for the left, we would have fascism' – a new scarecrow to replace that of revolution, so that everyone, homosexuals included, will remain well lined up, separate and tidy on the democratic and anti-fascist parliamentary

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benches.

Those homosexuals who appeal to the left are only preparing a new prison for themselves, providing new energy to keep alive these organisations and the male supremacist, anti-woman and inhuman ideology that they propound.

We conscious homosexuals can find the strength to defend ourselves and to live in this homicidal and homocidal society only in ourselves. No kind of delegation is possible any more. Paternalism and appeal to the democratic pretensions of the left-wing groups can only construct a new ghetto. Only an intransigence that leads us to tell things the way they are, and to act together in a coherent way without renouncing any aspect of the communist world that we bear within us – only this can put in crisis, a gay crisis, the men of the political organisations, forcing them to abandon their role and thus to abandon these organisations. Only the strength and determination of the oppressed, and his power of fascination that leads his oppressor to recognise himself in him and to recognise in him his own desire, can direct the violence of gay people (up till now almost always turned against ourselves), and the violence of youths who are anti-homosexual but homosexual underneath (up till now turned against open gays), against the system that oppresses both the victim and the murderer, the system that is the real murderer, always unpunished and ever ready to defend itself against its victims. Only we homosexuals can discover and express this gay strength.

Finally, let us have done once and for all with the argument that the homosexual question is 'superstructural', and that priority should be given to the socio-economic (structural) level over the sexual struggle. Leaving aside the critique, no matter how important, of the mechanistic and non-dialectical sclerosis, among many so-called Marxists, of the concepts of 'structure' and 'superstructure', it is a grievous mistake to continue to treat the sexual question as superstructural, given that labour itself, and hence the entire economic structure of society, depends on the sublimation of Eros. Sexuality is hidden at the base of the economy, so that Eros is actually *substructural*.

Even before this conception of the psychoanalytic matrix of economics and the fundamental function of libido in the process

of civilisation, Marxism already maintained the structural character of the sexual function, though as yet from a certain historically limited standpoint, since, among other things, this was heterosexual and thus partially ideological. As Engels wrote:

According to the materialist conception, the determining factor in history is, in the final instance, the production and reproduction of immediate life. This, again, is of a twofold character: on the one side, the production of the means of existence, of food, clothing and shelter and the tools necessary for that production; on the other side, the production of human beings themselves, the propagation of the species. The social organisation under which the people of a particular historical epoch and a particular country live is determined by both kinds of production.<sup>17</sup>

Here we can see how the rigidly heterosexual social institutions of nineteenth-century Europe led Engels to see sexuality as a determining moment of history only in its procreative role. Engels referred in particular to the men of ancient Greece who 'fell into the abominable practice of sodomy and degraded alike their gods and themselves with the myth of Ganymede'.<sup>18</sup> Today, the materialist conception has recognised the structural importance of desire, which cannot be reduced to coincide with the procreative instinct alone. And on the other hand, our revolutionary critique must eliminate the present prejudices of Marxism itself, its masculine spirit that would 'ask a proletariat corrupted by capitalist ethics, to take a manly resolution . . .'<sup>19</sup>

As for our heterosexual 'comrades', only if they free themselves from their structural fixations, from the mental superstructure that leads them to act in the way that the system allows, will they be able to grasp why the liberation of homosexuality is indispensable to human emancipation as a whole. At the present time, it is above all the repression of their own gay desire and their acceptance of the anti-homosexual taboo so dear to the system that leads them to treat the homosexual question in a capitalist fashion, and essentially to negate it.

*6. Straights Faced with Transvestites. Some Points on the Family*

So-called 'normal' people are so adapted to the male heterosexual code that they are in no position to understand, as a general rule, the relativity, contingency and limitation of the concept of 'normality'. They refuse to understand, the better to confirm themselves in their own prejudices. There is no shortage of 'scientists' prepared to bend to the prevailing ideology. Thus if heterosexuals have always seen homosexuality as a vice, some psychologist will come along and maintain that homosexuals are 'immature and confused'. 'Perversions' have to be stigmatised, today by a 'scientific' veil made up of the most insolent lies: 'as if they exerted a seductive influence; as if at bottom a secret envy of those who enjoy them had to be strangled'.<sup>20</sup>

'Normal' people do not tolerate gays, and not just because, by our very presence, we display a dimension of pleasure that is covered by a taboo, but because we also confront anyone who meets us with the confusion of his monosexual existence, mutilated and beset by repression, induced to renunciation and adaptation to a 'reality' imposed by the system as the most normal of destinies.

We can observe, for example, the attitude of 'normal' people towards transvestites. Their general reaction is one of disgust, irritation, scandal. And laughter: we can well say that anyone who laughs at a transvestite is simply laughing at a distorted image of himself, like a reflection in a fairground mirror. In this absurd reflection he recognises, without admitting it, the absurdity of his own image, and responds to this absurdity with laughter. Transvestism, in fact, translates the tragedy contained in the polarity of the sexes onto the level of comedy.

It is not hard to grasp the common denominator that links, in a relationship of affinity, all the various attitudes people assume towards queens, and towards transvestites in particular. These reactions, whether of laughter or something far more dangerous, only express, in different degree and in differing qualitative forms, a desire extraverted under the negative sign of aggression and fear – or more precisely, anxiety. It is not really the queen or transvestite who is an object of fear for 'normal' people. We only represent the image that provides a medium between the orbit of

their conscious observations and an obscure object of radical fear in their unconscious. This anxiety is converted into laughter, often accompanied by forms of verbal and even physical abuse.

The person who laughs at a transvestite is reacting to the faint intuition of this absurdity that he already has – as has every human being – and which the man dressed as a woman, who suddenly appears before him, externalises in the ‘absurdity’ of his external appearance. The encounter with the transvestite reawakens anxiety because it shakes to their foundations the rigidly dichotomous categories of the sexual duality, categories instilled into all of us by the male heterosexual culture, particularly by way of the family, which right from the start offers the child the opposition of father and mother, the ‘sacred’ personifications of the sexes in their relationship of master and slave. We all form and establish our conceptions of ‘man’ and ‘woman’ on the models of our parents, the one as virility, privilege and power, the other as femininity and subjection. To these models, which bind us to them thanks to the hallowed web of family ties that determines our personality, we adapt our conception of anyone who, in the course of life, we encounter or even merely think of. We think only in terms of ‘man’ or ‘woman’, to the point that we cannot even imagine anything but ‘men’ or ‘women’. In ourselves, too, we can recognise only the ‘man’ or the ‘woman’, despite our underlying trans-sexual nature and despite our formation in the family, where our existential misery is determined by our relationship to mother or father. The child of the master-slave relationship between the sexes sees in him- or herself only one single sex. This singleness does not seem contradicted by the evident fact that we are born from a fusion of the sexes. And yet we need only look in the mirror (during a trip) to see clearly in our features both our mother and our father. Monosexuality springs from the repression of trans-sexuality, and trans-sexuality is already denied before birth. Conception itself, in fact, proceeds from the totalitarian negation of the female sex by the proclaimed uniqueness of the phallus as sexual organ in coitus and its ‘power’ in the parental couple.

But the phallus does not just coincide with the penis, even if it is superimposed on it. While the penis is what distinguishes the male anatomically, the phallus represents the patriarchal

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absolutising of the idea (of male power) which the penis embodies, an idea that characterises all history to date as his-story. In a world of symbols, the ideal symbology of power assumes a phallic form.

Concretely, this 'power' is based on the repression of Eros, which is a repression of the mind, the body and the penis itself, and above all the negation of femininity. In the present pre-history, it is first and foremost a function of the oppression of women.

From the negation of the female sex in the heterosexual relationship, individuals are born either male or female, the former sexual (as bearers of the penis, the bodily vehicle of the unique sexual organ in the patriarchal phallic conception), the latter 'female eunuchs'. Either, or. The tragedy is that 'normal' people cannot tolerate the transvestite showing up the grotesque aspects of this process, committing an act of sacrilege in confusing the sacred opposition between the sexes, given that he combines in himself both sexes, daring to impose a femininity which has been reduced to a mere appearance onto the reality of a male self. The transvestite sins very gravely, demanding vengeance from the guardians of the Phallus.

If the child of the heterosexual relation is a male, he finds himself forced to suffocate his own 'femininity' and trans-sexuality, since educastration obliges him to identify with the masculine model of the father. The son has to identify with a mutilated parent, who has already negated his own 'femininity' and who bases his privilege in the family and in society precisely on his mutilation. The father is unaware of this process, or does not want to be aware of it, but presents as a 'natural mutilation' both the natural difference of women and their mutilation as the work of male 'power', which he, as the guardian of the order, perpetuates. The father negates the mother sexually, a fate to which she was already condemned from birth (since from the patriarchal standpoint she is only a second-class human being, lacking a penis); even before birth, since the repression of femininity and of women has prevailed for millenia.<sup>21</sup> In his sexual relations with the mother, the father generally absolutises the passive role of the woman, her function as hole and receptacle for the phallus with which he is endowed, and which is presented, visibly active,

as the sole sexual organ, establishing a symbolic form in which female sexuality – in fact all sexuality – is alienated. The child sees this clearly in all aspects of the relationship between the parents.

If the child is a girl, then the daughter of the heterosexual couple is condemned to view herself in the stereotype of 'femininity', as the negation of woman, and by way of education she is forced to identify with the servile model of her mother. Educastration consists not only in the concealment of the clitoris, but also in the repression of homosexual desire and trans-sexuality, of woman's whole erotic existence. Female (trans-)sexuality has to be violently repressed so that the woman can appear 'feminine', can be subjected to the male and to the insults inflicted on her by his sexuality, the 'only true sexuality.' On the basis of the Norm, female sexuality cannot exist except as something subordinate. It must not exist in and for itself, but only outside itself, for someone else.

'All this removes any surprise from the fact that historically, femininity has always been perceived as castration, so that according to Freud, at a certain moment the child sees the mother as a mutilated creature, and from then on always lives in fear of castration'.<sup>22</sup> Or as Adorno puts it (and these are both only male views):

Whatever is in the context of bourgeois delusion called nature, is merely the scar of mutilation. If the psychoanalytic theory is correct that women experience their physical constitution as a consequence of castration, their neurosis gives them an inkling of the truth. The woman who feels herself a wound when she bleeds knows more about herself than the one who imagines herself a flower because that suits her husband. The lie consists not only in the claim that nature exists where it has been tolerated or adapted, but what passes for nature in civilisation is by its very substance furthest from all nature, its own self-chosen object. The femininity which appeals to instinct, is always exactly what every woman has to force herself by violence – masculine violence – to become: a she-man.<sup>23</sup>



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In the name of the phallus, the male is forced to deny the sensuality of his arse, and his erotic fullness in general. Ashamed of the arse for being a hole, and yet (in Sartre's phrase) 'the presence of an absence' as much as the vagina and the woman's arse, he comes to conceive it as 'the absence of a presence': i.e. he does not realise that he could enjoy his arse, and sees it as the greatest shame and dishonour to have its sexuality recognised and exercised on himself. The male sentiment of honour springs in fact from shame. The Arabs, among whom male homosexuality is almost universal, paradoxically view it as highly dishonourable for a man to be fucked. They abhor the 'passive role'.<sup>24</sup> This kind of discrimination, and the sexual fascism it involves, is very widespread also among the Italians, the Latin peoples in general, and very many others. 'Double males' are even to be found in Greenland.

Forced to murder his own 'femininity', so as to meet the imperative model of the father, the male child cannot love a woman for what she is, since he would then have to recognise the existence of female sexuality, finding in it a reflection of the 'femininity' within himself. He comes to love women above all as objectifications and holes, and hence does not really love them at all. He tends rather to subjugate them, in the same way that he has already subjugated the subterranean presence of 'femininity' in himself, on the altar of virility.

For him, heterosexual love is the negation of woman, the mutilation of the trans-sexual Eros. It is a tangle of projections and alienations. 'You are my anima, I am your animus. With you I sense only having overcome isolation. I see nothing of you but that which you do not see of me.' The system sanctions the negation of love, institutionalising it in the heterosexual Norm and hence in that 'normality' which is the law of the sole sexuality of the phallus. And it condemns homosexuality as a rebellion against the subjection of Eros to the order of production and reproduction, and against the institutions (in particular the family) that safeguard this order.

Far from murdering his father so as to espouse his mother, the son rather murders his own 'femininity' so as to identify with the father. He is subsequently forced to blind himself by repressing into the shades of the unconscious the vision of the tragedy he

was forced to perpetrate, so that the 'femininity' he condemned to death will not revive in the darkness of the established patriarchal destiny. For Freud, heterosexuality is the 'normal dissolution' of the Oedipus complex. Homosexuality, which is the inverted solution to the tragedy, the homosexuality which, as Ferenczi put it, is an 'inversion on a mass scale', is condemned and excluded because it involves the risk, for male 'power', that the real version of the tragedy will become clear, to be genuinely dissolved and overcome for ever more. 'Only a particular love', wrote Virginia Finzi Ghisi, 'can perhaps show up the particular nature of the universal relation *par excellence*, i.e. the natural sexual relationship, the love of man and woman that reflects in the little magic circle of the family or couple the identical structure both founded on it and founding it, the structure of the big family (the office, factory, community, the world market).' Homosexuality makes possible 'the decomposition of the roles that the generalised natural relationship has crystallised, and the recomposition of new roles, complex and bizarre, and rich in shading: "All men are women and all women are men"'.<sup>25</sup>

Homosexuality is a relation between persons of the same sex. Between women, it proclaims the autonomous existence of female sexuality, independent of the phallus. Between men, even though historically marked by phallocracy, homosexuality multiplies the sexual 'uniqueness' of the phallus, thus in a certain respect negating it, and discloses the availability of the arse for intercourse and erotic pleasure. Moreover:

In the homosexual relation between both men and women, power and its agency are put in question. Two social victors or two social vanquished find themselves equally forced to abandon and reassemble affection/power/absence of power, they cannot simply distribute them according to the social division of roles. This might seem very trivial, but it puts in crisis the foundations of the distributive order of the present society, its mode of politics, and the structure of political groups themselves.<sup>26</sup>

7. *The Ghetto. Coming Out at Work.*

The union of male bodies, though paradoxically the union of penises, undermines the authoritarian abstraction of the phallus. But male homosexuality can also present itself as doubly phallic, or – in the ideology of the ‘double male’ – as maximally repressed, an unreserved mimicry of the heterosexual model. In such a case, the sexual relation between men is an alienating lack of communication. Given that homosexuality is considered and socially treated as an ‘aberration’ – or rather, that passive homosexuality is deemed dishonourable and disreputable, as in the Islamic countries among others – the gay desire, made guilty in this way, can find a certain justification by fully adapting to the laws of male ‘power’, becoming an actual champion of this. Even lesbians can be forced into such behaviour.

It is necessary at this point to remember that the homosexual, just like the heterosexual, is subject to a fixation to norms and values, the heritage of Oedipal phallogocentric eduction, and to the compulsion to repeat. Eduction, as Corrado Levi shows, ‘tends to predispose and crystallise the libido of us all, by continuous acts of repression and examination, into images and models that subsequently underlie successive behaviours, in the coerced tendency to seek these and act them out’.<sup>27</sup> These images and models are all bound up with the values presently in force in the capitalist context. ‘The crystallising of desire onto acquired images tends to lead, and at times in an unambiguous way, to ruling out all other images that are different from these. Only certain images of man and woman are sought (whether heterosexual or homosexual), and we pursue physical types that we have associated with these images: young or old, blond or dark, with or without beard, bourgeois or proletarian, male or female, etc., tending to selectively rule out’ one of the two terms. The fixation of behaviour to family models, moreover, determines the type of relationship with the partner: ‘as a couple, a threesome, active, passive, paternal, maternal, filial, etc. Only through these filters and diaphragms can we then act, and see both ourselves and those persons we are involved with, who respond in their turn with analogous mechanisms’. Models, images and behaviour tend in general to be delineated in a perspective of male capitalist

values: domination, subordination, property, hierarchy, etc., 'and this is connected', Corrado Levi concludes, 'with both the contents of the models followed and the mechanism by which they are pursued'.

Yet if these filters and diaphragms, these mechanisms, are in part common to both heterosexuals and gays, it is also true that, on the basis of the flaw that our behaviour, as a transgression of the Norm, represents for the present society, we homosexuals are in a position to put them in question, by discovering in our own lives a deep gap between the rules transgressed and the norms still accepted, and by the contradiction this creates in the system of prevailing values. It may well be that the growth of our movement has not yet led us to a complete unfixing of the internalised models and the compulsion to repeat and pursue them. But it has at least led us to question them, developing in us the desire to experiment, and suggesting new and different behaviours alongside and as a gradual replacement for the repetitive and coerced ones. This has happened above all in the USA, where the gay movement is so far much stronger than in Europe, and has brought about a considerable change in the social and existential conditions of homosexuals (in some States in particular), despite the insufferable continuation of the rule of capital. In America above all, we can see the rebirth of sexual desire between gays, which in our part of the world is still to a large degree latent, the fantasy of the heterosexual male, the *bête*, the 'supreme object' of desire, being still very much alive in many of us.

But the situation in the ghetto is certainly far from rosy, in America and in Europe, Japan or Australia. Often, many of us still tend to oscillate between repression and exaggerated ostentation, putting (deliberately) in doubt the genuineness of our 'effeminacy'. This leads to a situation in which all spontaneity and sincerity is outlawed, and replaced by the pantomime of 'normality' or an 'abnormality' which is simply its mirror image. The exponents of such spectacles often end up making the ghetto appear monstrous to our own eyes, not to mention to those more or less scandalised by the far more monstrous heterosexual society that surrounds it.

One particular iron rule seems often to apply in the ghetto. Lack of spontaneity, of naturalness and affection, is often made

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into a sacrosanct norm, 'communication' taking place by way of a series of witty quips, spectacular entrances and exits, arrows directed with unheard-of precision (unheard-of for heterosexuals). The ghetto queen is a past mistress not only of decking out herself and her apartment, in creating a certain atmosphere, in managing her own mask better than anyone else (which from daily use becomes an identification), she is also mistress of fazing other queens. Many homosexuals today wear the uniform of their persecutors, just as in the Nazi concentration camps. Only it is no longer the pink triangle that is in vogue, but rather a casing that covers the body from head to foot, a mask that conceals the physiognomy, a carapace that constrains the body like a crustacean.

The system has ghettoised and colonised us so deeply that it frequently leads us to reproduce, in a grotesque and tragi-comic form, the same roles and the same spectacle as the society that excludes us. This is precisely why we gays can often see through the misery that surrounds 'our' ghetto, and at times with exceptional aesthetic sense and irony. And yet if the present society can come to terms with the ironic finesse that some of us display, and is entertained by the inverted homosexual reflection of its own image, at the same time it does not contain its disgust at the real ghetto (or what it sees of it), and attacks it racist fashion.

But the ghetto is not outside the society that has built it. It is an aspect of the system itself. Moreover, the awareness of marginalisation and the sense of guilt induced by social condemnation poison the ghetto, leading it to assume the same distorted sneer as the society that derides it. And if homosexuals are very often not attracted by one another, this is very largely due to the ghetto atmosphere, which is anti-homosexual, precisely because held together by a false guilt and a very real marginalisation.

Homosexuals have been so much led always to see themselves as sick that at times they actually believe themselves to be so. This is our real sickness, the illusion of sickness that can even make people really sick. In a similar manner, people shut up for long enough in mental hospitals can end up showing the stereotyped signs of 'madness', i.e. the traces of the persecution they have experienced, its 'therapy' internalised in the form of sickness. Doctors (psychiatrists and anti-psychiatrists alike) are the real plague-spreaders, and the real sickness is the 'treatment'.

Often, the illusion of being in some way sick affects the homosexual to such a point that he tries to disguise his own being, a distortion that he is forced to live as a deformation. If we homosexuals sometimes appear ridiculous, pathetic or grotesque, this is because we are not allowed the alternative of feeling ourselves to be human beings. 'Mad' people, blacks, and poor people all bear on their brow the mark of the oppression they have undergone.

But this mark can be transformed into a sign of new life. The face of a transvestite can burn with the gayness of liberated desire, an energy pointing towards the creation of communism. The war against capital has not been lost. Ever more homosexuals today, instead of struggling in silence against themselves, in individual anxiety and the seclusion of the ghetto, are beginning to cruise gay-ly with their eyes wide open, to fight for the revolution.<sup>28</sup>

It is no time now to conceal our homosexuality. We must live it always and everywhere, in the most open way possible – at work, too, if we are not to be accomplices of all who still oppress us. Anyone who is afraid of losing his job can come out with moderation, and if necessary, it is possible to maintain a certain reserve without making shabby compromises with the Norm. Things can still be clearly said without using so many words, and one can act in a way that is compatible with one's ideas and desire while avoiding, for the time being, coming out explicitly, if this is impossible without getting the sack. True, the situation is far more difficult for gays in small towns in the provinces. But we can hope that soon the positive effects of the liberation movement will make themselves felt even here.

Given that people are forced to work in factories and offices, it is good that homosexual collectives should be formed here too. Union gives the strength to come out openly, and gay groups in schools and colleges are also steadily on the rise, even in Italy.

I have a friend who works in a bank, where he gets through the good and bad times with wit and wisdom. He recently marched past his colleagues and bosses, mimicking a parade of spring and summer fashions for bank clerks. His colleagues were entertained, and when one of them stupidly asked what the meaning of it all

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was, he replied: 'I'm crazy', leaving it to the others to wonder whether he really was crazy, or simply gay.

In this and who knows how many other ways, the cause of liberation makes headway, without heroism, without even risking the sack. Every queen does what she can, according to the situation in which she finds herself. The important thing is to do one's best (i.e. to work out how one can obtain the best results), and to avoid being trapped by and resigning oneself to the Norm.

To spread homosexuality in one's place of work, today, means spurring people to reject a labour that no longer has any reason to exist, and which largely consists of sublimated homoerotic desire. It is sufficient to enter an office or a factory to immediately sense how the degrading atmosphere of the workplace is pervaded with repressed and sublimated homosexuality. 'Colleagues' at work, while rigorously respecting the anti-homosexual taboo as capital would have them, make sexual advances to each other eight hours a day in the most extraordinary manner, as well as exhibiting themselves as rivals towards women. In this way, however, they only play the game of capital, establishing a false solidarity between men, a negative solidarity that sets them against women and against one another in the purposeless (and hardly gratifying) perspective of rivalry, of competition to be tougher, more masculine, more brutish, less fucked over in the general fucking over, which – despite the label -- has no other purpose save enslavement to the capitalist machine, to alienated labour, and forced consent to the deadly repression of the human species, of the proletariat.

If the gay desire among 'colleagues' at work were liberated, they would then become genuine colleagues, able to recognise and satisfy the desire that has always bound them together; able to create, via their rediscovered mutual attraction, a new and genuine solidarity between both men and women; able to embody together, women and queers, the New Revolutionary Proletariat. Able to say 'enough' to labour and 'yes' to communism.

### *8. Subjection and the Revolutionary Subject*

I believe it follows from the arguments put forward in these pages

that only those who find themselves in opposition to the institutionalised Norm can play a fully critical role. In other words, only feminist self-consciousness and homosexual awareness<sup>29</sup> can give life to a vision of the world that is completely different from the male heterosexual one, and to a clear and revolutionary interpretation of important themes that have been obscured for centuries, if not actually proscribed, by patriarchal dogma and the absolutising of the Norm. Women represent the basic opposition potential to male 'power', which, as we have seen, is in every way functional to the perpetuation of capitalism. And if it is the male heterosexual code that prevents us achieving that qualitative leap leading to the liberation of trans-sexuality which desire fundamentally strives towards, we cannot avoid accepting the potential and now actual subversive force of homosexuality in the dialectic of sexual 'tendencies', just as we cannot deny the revolutionary position occupied by women in the dialectic of the sexes.

To those anti-psychiatrists who have worked to understand the repressed trans-sexual nature of desire, I would maintain that the liberation of a trans-sexuality that has up till now been unconscious cannot be obtained by a male and heterosexual redeployment of the classical psychoanalytic categories (substituting for Oedipus, for example, an Anti-Oedipus), but only by the revolution of women against male supremacy and the homosexual revolution against the heterosexual Norm. And only the standpoint of women and gays, above all of gay women, can indicate the very important nexus that exists between their subordination and the general social subordination, drawing the thread that unites class oppression, sexual oppression and the suppression of homosexuality.

In women as subjected to male 'power', in the proletariat subjected to capitalist exploitation, in the subjection of homosexuals to the Norm and in that of black people to white racism, we can recognise the concrete historical subjects in a position to overthrow the entire present social, sexual and racial dialectic, for the achievement of the 'realm of freedom'. True human subjectivity is not to be found in the personification of the thing *par excellence*, i.e. capital and the phallus, but rather in the subject position of women, homosexuals, children, blacks,



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'schizophrenics', old people, etc. to the power that exploits and oppresses them. This revolutionary or potentially revolutionary subjectivity arises from subjection.

There are here a series of serious contradictions, which have to be overcome so that the true Revolution can be achieved. Still today, in fact, the subversive potential of the majority is held in check by their adherence to one form of power or another. Too many proletarians, for example, and too many women as well, still keenly defend the heterosexual Norm, and hence male privilege and the domination of capital. And yet Elvio Fachinelli can already say: 'We are not far from the day when the peaceful and moderately efficient heterosexual will find himself fired upon by his homosexual comrade'.<sup>30</sup>

But Fachinelli knows better than I do that the gun is a phallic symbol. We queens have no intention of shooting anyone to bits, even if we are prepared to defend ourselves as best we can, and will be better prepared in the future. Our revolution is opposed to capital and its Norm, and its goal is universal liberation. Death and gratuitous violence we can willingly leave to capital, and to those still in thrall to its inhuman ideology. Fachinelli, as a good heterosexual, fears gays armed with guns because he fears homosexual relations. It is only to be hoped that this heterosexual fear will be transformed into gay desire and not into terror, forcing us really to take up the gun. I believe the movement for the liberation of homosexuality is irreversible, in the broader context of human emancipation as a whole. It is up to all of us to make this emancipation a reality. There is certainly no time to lose.

## notes

### *Notes to Introduction*

- 1 Guy Hocquenghem, *Homosexual Desire*, London, 1978. (First published in French in 1972.) The Introduction to the English edition by Jeffrey Weeks gives a very full explanation of the political and cultural context of the 'Anti-Oedipus' school. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's *Anti-Oedipe*, Paris, 1972, is itself to be published in English shortly.
- 2 For an introduction to Camatte's ideas in English, see *The Wandering of Humanity*, Detroit 1975, and *This World We Must Leave*, London, 1975.

### *Notes to Chapter One*

- 1 See Karl Marx, 'Results of the Immediate Process of Production', published as an appendix to *Capital* Volume 1, Pelican Marx Library, Harmondsworth, 1976, particularly pp. 1019-36, where Marx depicts two phases in the social development of capitalism: the formal subsumption of labour under capital (formal domination) and its subsequent real subsumption (real domination); also Jacques Camatte, *Il capitale totale*, Bari, 1976.
- 2 See John Lauritsen and David Thorstad, *The Early Homosexual Rights Movement (1864-1935)*, New York, 1974, pp. 9ff.
- 3 Here Mario makes an untranslatable pun on the words '*combattendo*' (struggling) and '*battendo*' (cruising). This nicely connects the two aspects of fighting against oppression and spreading gay pleasure. – Tr.
- 4 Sigmund Freud, 'The Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman', *Standard Edition*, Vol. 18, p. 158.
- 5 Plato, *Symposium*, Harmondsworth, 1966, p. 59.
- 6 S. Freud, 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality', *Standard Edition*, Vol. 7, p. 231.
- 7 *ibid.*
- 8 S. Freud, 'The Ego and The Id', *Standard Edition*, Vol. 19, p. 14
- 9 See Chapter Four.
- 10 The term 'homosexuality' (from the Greek *homos*, alike) was coined in 1869 by the Hungarian doctor Benkert; Lauritsen and Thorstad, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
- 11 Daniel Paul Schreber, *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*, London,

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- 1955, p. 74.
- 12 Gilbert Dreyfus, 'L'omosessualità vista da un medico', *Ulisse* xviii, 1953, p.642.
- 13 The most informative work on this subject is Harry Benjamin, *The Transsexual Phenomenon*, New York, 1966.
- 14 See Chapter Six.
- 15 G. Dreyfus, op. cit., p. 643.
- 16 S. Freud, 'Three Essays . . .', *Standard Edition*, Vol. 7, p.141.
- 17 ibid.
- 18 ibid., p.146 (note added in 1915).
- 19 Georg Groddeck, *The Book of the It*, London, 1979, p.202.
- 20 G. Dreyfus, op. cit., p.644.
- 21 S. Freud, 'The Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman', *Standard Edition*, Vol. 18, p.170.
- 22 Carl G. Jung, 'The Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious', *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, London, 1953, p.190.
- 23 ibid., pp.191 and 187.
- 24 S. Freud, 'The Ego and the Id', *Standard Edition*, Vol. 19, p.29.
- 25 ibid., p.30.
- 26 'Assenti e dappertutto', *L'Erba Voglio* 26, June-July 1976, p.7.
- 27 That male persons have desires of motherhood is shown and described by psychoanalysis. See, for example, Georg Groddeck, op. cit.
- 28 S. Freud, 'Three Essays . . .', *Standard Edition*, Vol. 7, p.223.
- 29 Myriam Cristallo, 'Ma l'amor di madre resta santo', *La politica del corpo*, Rome, 1976, p.194.
- 30 C.G. Jung, op. cit., p.204.
- 31 ibid., p.187.
- 32 The special issue of *Recherches* magazine, titled *Grande Encyclopédie des Homosexualités*, under the editorship of a collective including G. Deleuze, M. Foucault, Marie France, J. Genet, F. Guattari, G. Hocquenghem, J.-J. Lebel, J.-P. Sartre, etc., was published in Paris in March 1973, but confiscated by the police on the day of its appearance. See the article 'Paris-Fhar', *Fuori!* 10, June-July 1973.
- 33 Luciano Parinetto, 'L'utopia del diavolo: egualitarismo e transessualità', *Utopia*, December 1973.
- 34 We shall return to this important argument later on. See Chapter Seven, section 4.
- 35 S. Freud, 'Three Essays . . .', *Standard Edition*, Vol. 7, p.160.
- 36 S. Freud, 'Fragments of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria' (Dora), *Standard Edition*, Vol. 7, p.50.
- 37 S. Freud, 'Three Essays . . .', loc. cit., p. 165.
- 38 C.G. Jung, 'Psychology of the Unconscious', *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, London, 1953, p. 116.
- 39 See for example Erminio Gius, *Una messa a punto dell'omosessualità*, Turin, 1972. This is one of the most reactionary works on

homoeroticism published in Italy in recent years. The author is a priest (more or less), teaching in the psychology faculty at the university of Padua. Among other 'scientific' views that he quotes is that of Gino Olivari, for example, a quack who has spent years engaged on the most absurd experiments in 'therapy' for homosexuality.

40 S. Freud, 'The Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman', *Standard Edition*, Vol 18., pp.156-158.

41 *ibid.*, p.158.

42 S. Freud, 'Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood', *Standard Edition*, Vol. 11, p.99, note. In his 'Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy' (the case of 'little Hans'), Freud put forward the following hypothesis: 'In those who later become homosexuals we meet with the same predominance in infancy of the genital zone (and especially of the penis) as in normal persons. Indeed it is the high esteem felt by the homosexual for the male organ which decides his fate. In his childhood he chooses women as his sexual object, so long as he assumes that they too possess what in his eyes is an indispensable part of the body; when he becomes convinced that women have deceived him in this particular, they cease to be acceptable to him as a sexual object. He cannot forgo a penis in any one who is to attract him to sexual intercourse; and if circumstances are favourable he will fix his libido upon the "woman with a penis", a youth of feminine appearance. Homosexuals, then, are persons who, owing to the erotogenic importance of their own genitals, cannot do without a similar feature in their sexual object' (*Standard Edition*, Vol. 10, p. 109). Freud's error here lies in the extension of the above hypothesis to apply, quite falsely, to all 'cases' of homosexuality, though this does not mean that it is necessarily invalid in some. In many of his works, Freud tends to offer the most 'definitive' possible interpretation of the homosexual phenomenon, and yet these interpretations show a wide variation. And none can be considered The Truth simply because it was put forward by the father of psychoanalysis. They should be viewed rather as hypotheses, sometimes in fact as mere opinions. We can only use psychoanalysis as an instrument for shedding light on the homosexual question if we compare the different hypotheses and attempt a synthesis guided by the critical revolutionary spirit.

43 S. Freud, 'Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego', *Standard Edition*, Vol. 18, p.108.

44 See Chapter Six, Section 4.

45 'Où est passé mon chromosome?', FHAR, *Rapport contre la normalité*, Paris, 1971, p.66.

46 Daniele Morini, 'La Bella e la Bestia', *Il Vespasiano degli omosessuali*, published by the Milan Homosexual Collectives, June 1976, p.16.

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- 47 S. Freud, 'The Ego and the Id', *Standard Edition*, Vol. 19, pp.31 and 33.
- 48 See Chapter Four, section 4.
- 49 op. cit., p. 34.
- 50 Alcune Femministe Milanesi, 'Pratica dell'inconscio e movimento delle donne', *L'Erba Voglio* 18-19, Oct. 1974-Jan. 1975, pp.12-23.
- 51 Gilles Deleuze, in a contribution to the workshop held on 8-9 May 1973 in Milan by the collective of *Semeiotica e Psicanalisi; Psicanalisi e politica*, Milan, 1973, p.45.
- 52 Guy Hocquenghem, *Homosexual Desire*, London 1978, p.92.
- 53 G. Deleuze, op. cit., p.45.

## *Notes to Chapter Two*

- 1 See Chapter Six, section 4.
- 2 André Morali-Daninos, *Sociologie des relations sexuelles*; quoted in FHAR, *Rapport contre la Normalité*, Paris, 1971, p.70.
- 3 *Ernesto* is an autobiographical novel by the Italian poet Umberto Saba, published shortly after its author's death in 1957, and in 1979 made into a film. – Tr.
- 4 See Chapter Seven, section 1.
- 5 Francesco Saba Sardi, 'La società omosessuale', *Venus* 7, November 1972, p.37.
- 6 When I was a child, I searched in vain for someone who would seduce me.
- 7 René Schérer, *Emilio perversito*, Milan, 1976, p.74.
- 8 Georg Groddeck, *The Book of the It*, London, 1979, pp.93-94.
- 9 André Gide, *Corydon*, London 1952, p.47.
- 10 See Enrico Fulchignoni, 'L'omosessualità nelle donne', *Ulisse* xviii, 1953, p.709.
- 11 See Chapter Seven, section 4.
- 12 Sandor Ferenczi, 'More About Homosexuality', *Final Contributions to the Problems and Methods of Psycho-Analysis*, London, 1955, p.171.
- 13 S. Ferenczi, 'The Nosology of Male Homosexuality (Homo-Eroticism)', *First Contributions to Psycho-Analysis*, London 1952, pp.299 ff. and 313.
- 14 See below, p.73. Other writings of Ferenczi's can also be quoted to show that he remained convinced of the universal presence of gay desire; e.g. 'Transitory Symptom-Constructions during the Analysis', in *First Contributions*. . . , also 'Alcohol and the Neuroses' (1911) and 'Stimulations of the Anal Erotogenic Zone as Precipitating Factors in Paranoia' (1911). [There seem to be no English translations of these last two essays.]

- 16 Wilhelm Reich, *The Sexual Struggle of Youth*, London, 1972, p.50.
- 17 Quoted by Dennis Altman, *Homosexual: Oppression and Liberation*, New York, 1971, p.4.
- 18 Domenico Tallone, 'Gli stregoni del capitale'. *La politica del corpo*, Rome, 1976, p.66.
- 19 C.F. Ford and F.A. Beach, *Patterns of Sexual Behaviour*, London, 1970.
- 20 Euralio De Michelis, 'L'omosessualità vista da un moralista', *Ulisse* xviii, 1953, p.733.
- 21 See Chapter Three, section 1.
- 22 *The Poems of Catullus*, trans. Whigman, Harmondsworth, 1966, p.186.
- 23 Tullio Bazzi, 'L'omosessualità e la psicoterapia', *Ulisse* xviii, 1953, p.648.
- 24 Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardell B. Pomeroy and Clyde E. Martin, 'Homosexual Outlet', *The Homosexual Dialectic*, Englewood Cliffs (N.J.), 1972, p.15.
- 24 T. Bazzi, op. cit., p.649.
- 26 ibid.
- 27 A. Kinsey *et al*, op. cit., p.6.
- 28 See Chapter Five, section 2.
- 29 T. Bazzi, op. cit., p.654.
- 30 ibid.
- 31 Dennis Altman, op. cit., p.5.
- 32 G. Dreyfus, 'L'omosessualità vista da un medico', *Ulisse* xviii, 1953, p.654.
- 33 ibid.
- 34 S. Freud, 'The Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman', *Standard Edition*, Vol. 18, p.154.
- 35 Quoted by Dennis Altman, op. cit., p.5.
- 36 op. cit., p.151.
- 37 S. Freud, 'Letter to an American Mother', *American Journal of Psychiatry* 108, 1951, p.252.
- 38 Wilhelm Reich, op. cit., p.50.
- 39 Angelo Pezzana, 'Contro Reich', *La politica del corpo*, loc. cit., p.75.
- 40 See Don Jackson, 'Dachau for Queers', *The Gay Liberation Book* (ed. L. Richmond and G. Noguera), San Francisco, 1973, pp.42-49, on the unbelievable tortures inflicted on homosexuals in American clinics.

In the Soviet Union, where aversion therapy for homosexuals is equally widespread, the most fashionable form at present involves the injection of apomorphine. See for example the article 'Rapporto sui comportamenti sessuali in Urss: deviazionista!', *Espresso*, 30 May 1976, which is based largely on *Female Sexual Pathology* by

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A.M. Sviadosch, head of the sexual pathology laboratory in Leningrad: 'A 1 per cent solution of apomorphine hydrochloride is used. Five minutes after the injection, the drug produces a feeling of nausea, accompanied by heart palpitations and a certain lack of breath and vomiting. The patient is not informed as to the effects of the apomorphine, but believes they are due to a medicine given to him to combat his homosexual tendencies. All ideas and images bearing on the object of his homosexual attachment and acts are consequently rejected as unpleasant. At the start of the treatment, one or two-tenths of a milligram of apomorphine in a 1 per cent solution are injected. Three or four minutes after the injection, indifference towards the partner and homosexual acts sets in. He is then told to look at a photograph of his partner or else to imagine homosexual relations with him. The feeling of nausea and vomiting caused by the apomorphine is thus associated with the homosexual relationship, which acquires a negative connotation... The apomorphine therapy should be combined with suggestions and advice, firstly to convince the patient that he is indifferent towards his partner and homosexual acts, later that he feels disgusted by them. This method has been successfully used to eliminate homosexuality in active male subjects'.

I would happily strangle all these doctors, American and Soviet, with my own hands.

- 41 See for example Nell Kimball, *Her Life as an American Madam*, New York, 1971.

### *Notes to Chapter Three*

- 1 S. Freud, 'Three Essays on The Theory of Sexuality', *Standard Edition*, Vol. 7, p.139.
- 2 Robert J. Stoller, 'Faits et Hypothèses', *Nouvelle Revue de Psychiatrie* 7, 1973.
- 3 Géza Róheim, *Héros phalliques et symboles maternels dans la mythologie australienne*, Paris, 1970.
- 4 C.F. Ford and F.A. Beach, *Patterns of Sexual Behaviour*, London, 1970; Marise Querlin, *Women Without Men*, London, 1965; Margaret Mead, *Male and Female*, London 1977; Ruth Benedict, *Models of Culture*, London, 1961; Bronislaw Malinowski, *Sex and Repression in Savage Society*, London, 1960.
- 5 op. cit., p.139, note.
- 6 John Lauritsen, *Religious Roots of the Taboo on Homosexuality*, New York, 1974, p.6.
- 7 Pietro Agostino d'Avack, 'L'omosessualità nel diritto canonico', *Ulisse* xviii, 1953, p.682.

- 8 Luciano Parinetto notes: 'As the fact of prostatic orgasm can be demonstrated, it is impossible in fact to "lie with a man as with a woman", except if the imaginary aspect alone is taken into account. But God-father-law is not concerned with the truth, only with duty, and this prescribes role-playing' ('Analreligion e dintorni. Appunti', *L'Erba Voglio* 26, June-July 1976, p.20).
- 9 John Lauritsen, op. cit., p.6.
- 10 S. Freud, 'Totem and Taboo', *Standard Edition*, Vol. 13, p. 18.
- 11 Carlo Diano, 'L'Eros greco', *Ulisse* xviii, 1953, pp.698-708.
- 12 S. Freud, op. cit., p.25.
- 13 ibid., p.27.
- 14 ibid., p.32.
- 15 ibid., p.31.
- 16 ibid., p.32.
- 17 P. d'Avack, op. cit., p.682.
- 18 ibid., p.683.
- 19 Quoted by John Lauritsen, op. cit., p.10.
- 20 P. d'Avack, op. cit. p.682.
- 21 ibid., p.685.
- 22 Edward Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of Moral Ideas*, quoted by J. Lauritsen, op. cit., p.12.
- 23 Thomas S. Szasz, *The Manufacture of Madness*, New York, 1970, p.164.
- 24 P. d'Avack, op. cit., p.681.
- 25 ibid., p.697.
- 26 J. Lauritsen, op. cit., p.12.
- 27 Donatien Alphonse François de Sade, *Aline et Valcour*, Brussels, 1883, Vol. 2, pp.206-7.
- 28 M. Horkheimer and T. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, London, 1973, p.115.
- 29 Marc Daniel and André Baudry, *Gli omosessuali*, Florence, 1974. See also J. Lauritsen, op. cit.
- 30 This ministerial report is quoted by Salvatore Messina in 'L'omosessualità nel diritto penale', *Ulisse* xviii, 1953, p.675.
- 31 The World Health Organisation estimates that the number of 'true' homosexuals in Italy (in this psychonazi distinction between 'true' and 'pseudo' homosexuality) comes to some 2,475,000, i.e. about 4.5 per cent of the entire population, male and female. And on top of the 1,120,000 'true' male homosexuals, I would assume at least some 5 million bisexual males in Italy, i.e. men who have sexual relations with both women and other men.
- 32 Salvatore Messina, op. cit., p.473.
- 33 Alfredo Cohen, Introduction to *La politica del corpo*, Rome, 1976, p.18.
- 34 Braibanti was an anarchist framed by the Italian police. After a long



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- spell in prison, he was tried, among other offences, for the almost medieval crime of 'plagiarist', a kind of spiritual kidnapping. – Tr.
- 35 Guy Hocquenghem, *Homosexual Desire*, London, 1978, p.50.
- 36 Thorsten Graf and Mimi Steglitz, 'La repressione degli omosessuali nella società borghese', *Gay Gay*, p.118.
- 37 John Lauritsen and David Thorstad, *The Early Homosexual Rights Movement (1864-1935)*, New York, 1974, p.9.
- 38 Magnus Hirschfeld, *Die Homosexualität des Mannes und des Weibes*, Berlin, 1920. See also *Sexualpathologie. Ein Lehrbuch für Ärzte und Studierende*, Bonn, 1922.
- 39 Ivan Goll, *Sodoma e Berlino*, Milan, 1975.
- 40 Thorsten Graf and Mimi Steglitz, op. cit., p.92.
- 41 Kurt Hiller, one of the most prominent exponents of the homosexual equal rights movement, died in 1972 at the age of 87.
- 42 John Lauritsen and David Thorstad, op. cit., p.44.
- 43 ibid., pp.44-45.
- 44 'Lo sterminio degli omosessuali nel Terzo Reich', *Fuori!* 12, spring 1974.
- 45 John Lauritsen and David Thorstad, op. cit., pp.32 ff.
- 46 Philippe Jullian, *Oscar Wilde*, London, 1971, p.271.
- 47 Quoted by Guy Hocquenghem, op. cit., p.52.
- 48 See S. Jwaya, 'Nan sho k' ('Homosexuality in Japan'), *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen* 4, 1902.
- 49 Up until September 1975, there was an unwritten rule in the USA that the armed forces did not recruit homosexuals, and dismissed any soldiers who came out or gave themselves away. It was a real 'proclamation', then, when Leonard Matlovich, an air-force captain, wrote to his commanding officer on 6 March 1975 stating that he was homosexual and had no intention of leaving the force. The result of the ensuing scandal was that Matlovich was successful. As from September 1975, in principle, the Pentagon decreed the abolition of the regulation providing for automatic expulsion of gays. But the abolition of this rule only confirmed what had long been tacitly acknowledged, i.e. that there are a high percentage of gays in the American armed forces. In many barracks, homosexuality is an everyday fact. Despite this, however, Oliver Sipple, the ex-marine famous for his action on 22 September 1975, when he deflected the gun that Sarah Jane Moore was pointing at President Ford, brought legal action for damages against several newspapers and magazines for claiming he was homosexual.
- 50 See Enrico Airone, 'Spagna: fascismo!', *Fuori!* 1, June 1972. Even in Spain, however, homosexual liberation groups have more recently emerged.
- 51 In both 1955 and 1971, attempts were made by the socialist and liberal parties in Israel to legalise homosexuality. Both times, the

- initiative failed. Kurt Hiller wrote: 'That representatives of an ethnic minority that has been horribly persecuted should themselves persecute an equally harmless and guiltless biological (*sic!*) minority – what sentiment could arise in a thinking person other than boundless contempt!' (Quoted by John Lauritsen, *Religious Roots of the Taboo on Homosexuality*, loc. cit., p.15).
- 52 See Mario Rossi, 'Berlino: l'omosessualità scavalca il muro', *Fuori!* 11, winter 1973. A description of the extremely hard conditions in which gay people live in East Germany and the Soviet Union can be found in an article by Thomas Reeves, 'Red and Gay, Oppression East and West', *Fag Rag* 6, Boston, autumn 1973.
- 53 Quoted in John Lauritsen and David Thorstad, op. cit., p.64.
- 54 See Amadeo Bordiga, *Strutture economiche e sociali della Russia d'oggi*, Milan, 1966; and *Russia e rivoluzione nella teoria marxista*, Milan, 1975.
- 55 John Lauritsen and David Thorstad, op. cit., pp.64-65.
- 56 *ibid.*, p.65.
- 57 See the drastically anti-homosexual declaration from *Granma*, the official newspaper of the Cuban Communist Party, 9 May 1971, and the reply of the New York Gay Revolution Party, both printed in *Come Out*, spring-summer 1971.
- 58 Francesco Saba Sardi, 'La società omosessuale', *Venus* 7, November 1972, p.36.
- 59 One of the most famous international gay guides, published in Amsterdam, is the *Incognito Guide*. Its very title tells all, being the very motto of the ghetto into which one opens more or less hidden doors in almost all countries of the world. Where the ghetto is not organised by the ruling system, clandestine ghettos exist. The *Incognito Guide* lists the public toilets where you can meet other homosexuals in Moscow, for example, and the most frequented parks and bars in Madrid.
- 60 Guy Hocquenghem, op. cit., p.51. [Translation modified.]
- 61 *Avvenire*, 16 January 1976.
- 62 See Chapter Two, section 3.
- 63 *Avvenire*, loc. cit.
- 64 Father Arturo Dalla Vedova, a Jesuit, was arrested in Rome on 6 November 1975 for having written 'pig' and other derogatory expressions on posters put up in memory of Pasolini.
- 65 *Corriere della Sera*, 17 May 1975.
- 66 *ibid.*
- 67 Ornella Dragoni, 'Una testimonianza', *Fuori!* 12, spring 1974, p.22.
- 68 See Paola Elio, 'Omossessualità e religione', *ibid.*, pp.13-16.
- 69 Monsignor Henri L'Heureux's statement was reported on 6 January 1975 in the bulletin *David et Jonathan*, organ of the French Christian homophile movement.

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- 70 See Ronald M. Enroth and Gerald E. Jamison, *The Gay Church*, Grand Rapids, 1974; also Kay Tobin and Randy Wicker, *The Gay Crusaders*, New York, 1972.
- 71 See Charles Shively, 'Wallflower at the Revolution', *Fag Rag* 6, Boston, autumn 1973.
- 72 Philippe Jullian, op. cit., p.264.
- 73 Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, London 1968, p.69.
- 74 See Chapter Seven, section 4.
- 75 Corrado Levi, 'Il Lavoro di presa di coscienza. Problematiche e contributi dal lavoro di presa di coscienza del collettivo *Fuori!* di Milano, 1973', *Fuori!* 12, spring 1974.
- 76 'Dibattito', ibid.
- 77 Nicholas B. and Jean L., *Homosexualité et militantisme: quelques réflexions de base* (leaflet produced for the theoretical weekend held 13-14 September 1975). *Arcadie* is the name of the French integrationist homosexual movement.
- 78 Collettivo Redazionale di *Fuori!*, 'Gli omosessuali e l'utopia', *Almanacco Bompiani*, 1974. [The Leopard is a reference to the novel of that title by G. de Lampedusa and its hero, the aristocrat whoskilfully prepares to adjust to the rise of the Italian bourgeoisie. – Tr.]
- 79 Throughout this book, I use the terms 'political emancipation' and 'human emancipation' in the sense given them by Karl Marx in *The Jewish Question*. 'Political emancipation' means integration into the system, while 'human emancipation' means genuine liberation, revolution and communism.
- 80 S. Freud, 'Psycho-Analytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia', *Standard Edition*, Vol. 12.
- 81 In 1970, Huey Newton, Minister of Defense of the Black Panther Party, wrote: 'There is nothing to say that a homosexual cannot also be a revolutionary. And maybe I'm now injecting some of my prejudice by saying "even a homosexual can be a revolutionary". Quite the contrary; maybe a homosexual could be the most revolutionary'; 'A Letter from Huey', Len Richmond and Gary Noguera (eds), *The Gay Liberation Book*, San Francisco, 1973, p.142. See also Francesco Santini, 'Sgombrar la strada', *Comune futura* 2, Milan, November 1976.
- 82 Jacques Camatte, *Il capitale totale*, Bari, 1976, p.151.
- 83 H. Marcuse, op. cit., p.127.
- 84 By human 'nature' I don't mean something determinate, stable, unchanging, absolute or hidden. I have no exact idea of what precisely lies underneath and is natural, and would view human 'nature' rather in the materialistic sense as a becoming, i.e. in relation to the historical period and social context, thus together with the economic and sexual dialectic.
- 85 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Baudelaire*, London, 1949, pp.48-49.

86 Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death*, London, 1959, p.23.

*Notes to Chapter Four*

- 1 Sándor Ferenczi, 'The Nosology of Male Homosexuality (Homo-Eroticism)', *First Contributions to Psycho-Analysis*, London, 1952, p.317.
- 2 See Chapter Six, section 4.
- 3 Konrad Lorenz, *On Aggression*, London, 1967, p.242.
- 4 Marcel Proust, *Cities of the Plain*, Part I, London, 1949, p.30.
- 5 Philippe Jullian, *Oscar Wilde*, London, 1971, p.29.
- 6 *Man's World*, April 1957.
- 7 S. Ferenczi, 'Alcohol and the Neuroses' (1911), no English translation.
- 8 S. Ferenczi, 'On the Part Played by Homosexuality in the Pathogenesis of Paranoia', *First Contributions . . .*, p.162.
- 9 See Chapter Six, section 2.
- 10 S. Freud, 'Psycho-Analytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia' (the Schreber case), *Standard Edition*, Vol. 12, p.61.
- 11 S. Ferenczi, 'Transitory Symptom-Constructions during the Analysis', *First Contributions . . .*, p.209. (Ferenczi's emphasis.)
- 12 See my article 'Il radical chic e lo chic radicale', in *Fuori!* 7, January 1973.
- 13 S. Freud, 'Some Neurotic Mechanisms in Jealousy, Paranoia and Homosexuality', *Standard Edition*, Vol. 18, p.223.
- 14 *ibid.*, p.225.
- 15 S. Ferenczi, 'On the Part Played by Homosexuality. . .', *loc. cit.*, p.161.
- 16 Georg Groddeck, *The Book of the It*, London, 1979, p.62.
- 17 S. Freud, 'Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood'. *Standard Edition*, Vol. 11, p.99, note.
- 18 S. Freud, 'Psycho-Analytic Notes . . .' (the Schreber case, *Standard Edition*, Vol. 12, p.61.
- 19 S. Freud, 'Some Neurotic Mechanisms in Jealousy, Paranoia and Homosexuality', *Standard Edition*, Vol. 18, p.232.
- 20 *ibid.*
- 21 Wilhelm Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, London, 1975, p.210.
- 22 'The Future of an Illusion', *Standard Edition*, Vol. 21, p.43.
- 23 'The Ego and the Id', *Standard Edition*, Vol. 19, p.34.
- 24 *ibid.*, p.37.
- 25 Luciano Parinetto, 'Analreligione dintorni', *L'Erba Voglio* 26, June-July 1976, p.24.
- 26 Géza Róheim, *The Riddle of the Sphinx*, London, 1934, p.231.

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- 27 FHAR, *Rapport contre la normalité*, Paris, 1971, p.55.
- 28 S. Freud, 'Character and Anal Eroticism', *Standard Edition*, Vol. 9, p.175.
- 29 Donatien Alphonse François de Sade, *Justine and other writings*, New York, 1966, pp.277-78.
- 30 W.B. Yeats, 'Crazy Jane Talks With the Bishop', *Selected Poetry*, 1978, p.161.
- 31 Mauro Bertocchi, 'Compagnispogliatevi!', *Fuori!* 5, November 1972.
- 32 S. Freud, 'Character and Anal Eroticism', loc. cit., p.173.
- 33 S. Ferenczi, '*Pecunia Olet*', *Further Contributions to Psycho-Analysis*, London, 1926.
- 34 S. Freud, 'Character and Anal Eroticism', loc. cit., p.173.
- 35 S. Freud, 'Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy', *Standard Edition*, Vol. 10.
- 36 Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death*, London, 1959, p.292.
- 37 S. Ferenczi, 'The Ontogenesis of the Interest in Money', *First Contributions . . .*, p.319.
- 38 *ibid.*, p.321.
- 39 N.O. Brown, *op. cit.*, p.279.
- 40 S. Ferenczi, loc. cit., p.331.
- 41 Luciano Parinetto, 'L'utopia del diavolo: egualitarismo e transessualità', *Utopia*, December 1973.

## *Notes to Chapter Five*

- 1 Georg Grodeck, *The Book of the It*, London, 1979, p.199.
- 2 A. Kinsey, W. Pomeroy and C. Martin, 'Homosexual Outlet', in *The Homosexual Dialectic*, Englewood Cliffs (N.J.), 1972, p.9.
- 3 *ibid.*, p.6.
- 4 F. Fornari, *Genitalità e cultura*, Milan, 1950, p.11: 'The establishment of a heterosexual identity actually presupposes that each sexual partner has a sex that the other does not . . .'
- 5 A. Kinsey, W. Pomeroy and C. Martin, *op. cit.*, p.6.
- 6 From the song '*Noi siamo froci e checche*' ('We are queers and queens') in the stage show *La Traviata Norma, ovvero: vaffanculo . . . ebbene si!* ('The Mised Norm, or: It's Good to be a Bum-Boy'), performed in Milan, Florence and Rome in spring 1976 by the Milan Homosexual Collectives' troupe 'Nostra Signora dei Fiori' ('Our Lady of the Flowers').
- 7 S. Freud, 'The Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman', *Standard Edition*, Vol. 18, p.167.
- 8 More recently, the attitude of the majority of 'leftists' has changed, and many have jumped from one extreme to the other, some even seeing 'feminists and homosexuals as the movement's super-ego'.

## Notes to Chapter Six

- See Chapter Seven, section 5.
- 9 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Baudelaire*, London, 1949, p.81.
  - 10 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Saint Genet, Actor and Martyr*, New York, 1963, p.318.
  - 11 See Bianca Maria Elia, *Emarginazione e omosessualità negli istituti di rieducazione*, Milan, 1974, though on the whole this is a thoroughly bad book.
  - 12 Jean Genet, *Our Lady of the Flowers*, London, 1966, p.226.
  - 13 See Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics*, London, 1977, pp.336-61.
  - 14 Jean Genet, *The Maids*, New York, 1961, p.63.
  - 15 *Our Lady of the Flowers*, London, 1966, p.63.
  - 16 J.-P. Sartre, *Saint Genet*, loc. cit., p.611.
  - 17 *ibid.*, p.132.
  - 18 Franco Fornari, *Genitalità e cultura*, Milan, 1975, p.59.
  - 19 Paolo Volponi, 'Il dramma popolare della morte di Pasolini', *Corriere della Sera*, 21 March 1976.
  - 20 Francesco Saba Sardi, La società omosessuale, *Venus* 7, November 1972, p.40.
  - 21 'La Bella e la Bestia', in the Milan Homosexual Collectives' *Il Vespasiano degli omosessuali*, Milan, 1976.
  - 22 Gilles Deleuze, *Sacher-Masoch*, London, 1971, p.12.
  - 23 Larry Rosan, 'Gaudemus Igitur', *Pro.me.thee.us*, New York, spring 1975. [Retranslated from the Italian.]

## Notes to Chapter Six

- 1 'Les Culs Energumènes', in *Grande Encyclopédie des Homosexualités*, Paris, 1973, p.226. See Chapter One, note 32.
- 2 S. Freud, 'Negation', *Standard Edition*, Vol. 19, p.235. (Freud's emphasis.)
- 3 *ibid.*
- 4 Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death*, London, 1959, p.321.
- 5 S. Freud, 'Repression', *Standard Edition*, Vol. 14, p.147.
- 6 Norman O. Brown, *op. cit.*, p.4.
- 7 See Chapter Seven, note 9.
- 8 Karl Marx, 'Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts (1844)', *Early Writings*, Pelican Marx Library, Harmondsworth, 1975, p.352. (Marx's emphases.)
- 9 *ibid.*, p.353. (Marx's emphasis.)
- 10 See Chapter Seven, section 1.
- 11 Norman O. Brown, *op. cit.*, pp.9-10.
- 12 K. Marx, *Grundrisse*, Pelican Marx Library, Harmondsworth, 1973, p.104.
- 13 R.D. Laing, *The Divided Self*, Harmondsworth, 1965. Norman O.

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- Brown writes: 'The difference between "neurotic" and "healthy" is only that the "healthy" have a socially useful form of neurosis' (op. cit., p.6).
- 14 Silvano Arieti, *Interpretazione della schizofrenia*, Milan, 1971, p.3.
  - 15 Sandor Ferenczi, 'On the Part Played by Homosexuality in the Psychogenesis of Paranoia', *First Contributions to Psycho-Analysis*, London, 1952, p.157.
  - 16 Cf. Roberto Calasso's essay 'Nota sui lettori di Schreber', published as an appendix to the Italian edition of Schreber's *Memoirs*. [The English edition of this amazing book is published as *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*, London, 1955. – Tr.]
  - 17 S. Ferenczi, op. cit., p.167.
  - 18 S. Freud, 'Psycho-Analytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia', *Standard Edition*, Vol. 12, p.59.
  - 19 S. Arieti, op. cit., p.28.
  - 20 *ibid.*, p.131.
  - 21 S. Freud, op. cit., p.46.
  - 22 *ibid.*, p.43.
  - 23 Guy Hocquenghem, *Homosexual Desire*, London, 1978, p.41.
  - 24 Norman O. Brown, *Love's Body*, New York, 1966, p.159.
  - 25 Wilhelm Reich, *Character Analysis*, London, 1955, p.399.
  - 26 Georg Groddeck, *The Book of the It*, London, 1979, p.11.
  - 27 Psychiatrists involved in the 'anti-psychiatry' movement confront 'schizophrenia' with the same mental framework as that with which an eighteenth-century Enlightenment philosopher might have confronted the communist themes of human emancipation. A revolutionary critique of 'anti-psychiatry', and in particular the ideas of David Cooper, is contained in Giorgio Cesarano, *Manuale di sopravvivenza*, Bari, 1974.
  - 28 Theodor Lidz and Stephen Fleck, 'Schizofrenia, integrazione personale e funzione della famiglia', *Eziologia della schizofrenia* (ed. D. Jackson), Milan, 1964, p.414.
  - 29 Jacques Camatte, *Il capitale totale*, Bari, 1976, p.193.
  - 30 Wilhelm Reich, op. cit., p.400.
  - 31 Gilles Deleuze, 'Capitalismo e schizofrenia', *L'altra pazzia* (ed. L. Forti), Milan, 1975, p.66.
  - 32 Gilles Deleuze, *Psicanalisi e politica*, Milan, 1973, p.9.
  - 33 Carl G. Jung, 'Psychology of the Unconscious', *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, London, 1953, p.65.
  - 34 S. Freud, 'Hysterical Phantasies and their Relation to Bisexuality', *Standard Edition*, Vol. 9.
  - 35 Harry Benjamin, *The Transsexual Phenomenon*, New York, 1966, p.4.
  - 36 Casablanca is the site of a celebrated 'sex-change' clinic, the Du Parc clinic, directed by a French surgeon.

## Notes to Chapter Seven

- 37 Plato, *Phaedrus*, Harmondsworth, 1973, pp.46-47 (244).
- 38 Plato, *Symposium*, Harmondsworth, 1951, p.79 (201d).
- 39 Plato, *Phaedrus*, loc. cit.
- 40 S. Freud, 'The Ego and the Id', *Standard Edition*, Vol. 19, p.36.
- 41 S. Ferenczi, 'Philosophy and Psycho-Analysis', *Final Contributions to the Problems and Methods of Psycho-Analysis*, London, 1955, p.328.
- 42 Edgar Allen Poe, *The Tell-Tale Heart* (and other stories), London, 1948, p.25.
- 43 Ko Hung, *Pao Phu Tzu*, quoted by Joseph Needham. *Science and Civilisation in China*, Cambridge, 1969, Vol. 2, p.438.
- 44 See Chapter Seven, section 1.
- 45 On 4 November 1976, at the congress of Lotta Continua held in Rimini, a woman comrade made the following remark to the male militants: 'You refuse to ask yourselves where it is that your intolerance towards homosexuals comes from. It is the product of the fear that you have of traumatic penetration. You are terrified of the same thing that you do to us, and don't want it to happen to you. You don't know what it means to have your body expropriated, but you're still scared of it'. See Antonio Padellaro, 'La polemica delle femministe spacca in due Lotta Continua', *Corriere della Sera*, 5 November 1976.
- 46 G. Groddeck, loc cit., p.199.
- 47 Relatively few years, though, in the face of eternity.
- 48 Meo Cataldo, *Marciapiede*, Milan, 1976, p.17.

## Notes to Chapter Seven

- 1 Larry Mitchell, *The Faggots and Their Friends* (unpublished), New York, 1975.
- 2 See Chapter Two, section 1.
- 3 Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death*, London, 1959, p.27.
- 4 Georg Groddeck, *The Book of the It*, London, 1979, pp.198ff.
- 5 Elvio Fachinelli, 'Travesti', *L'Erba Voglio* 11, May-June 1973, p.38.
- 6 *Di omosessualità si muore*, a leaflet published by the Milan *Fuori!* collective on 25 October 1975, just one week before the death of Pasolini.
- 7 The Gazolines were the most outrageous group of queens and transvestites from the old Paris FHAR; Nostra Signora dei Fiori is a theatrical group within the Milan Homosexual Collectives.
- 8 Paul Lafargue, *The Right to be Lazy*, Chicago, 1975, p.38.
- 9 'Civilization and its Discontents', *Standard Edition* Vol. 21, p.104. According to the 'mature' Freud, notes Francesco Santini, 'it is not just sexuality that civilisation represses and sublimates in economic



## Homosexuality and Liberation

activity, but also the death instinct, which is thus also put in the service of the reality principle and externalised in the aggressive conquest of nature. Man conquers and destroys his environment, and in this way avoids destroying himself, prolonging his journey towards death'. See 'Note sull'avenire del nostro passato', *Comune Futura* 1, June 1975.

- 10 See Chapter Four, section 5.
- 11 Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, New York, 1962, p.46.
- 12 Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, London, 1968, p.38.
- 13 Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, Harmondsworth, 1973, p.705.
- 14 *ibid.*, pp.705-06. (Marx's emphases.)
- 15 Virginia Finzi Ghisi, 'Le strutture dell'Eros', an essay published as an appendix to the Italian edition of the French FHAR's *Rapport contre la normalité*.
- 16 Joe Fallisi, 'Lettera a Irene', *Comune Futura* 2, November 1976.
- 17 Frederick Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, London, 1972, pp.71-72.
- 18 *ibid.*, p.128.
- 19 Paul Lafargue, *op. cit.*, p.66.
- 20 Freud, 'A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis', quoted by H. Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, *loc. cit.*, p.45.
- 21 Matriarchal society began to break down in the period that Engels, following Morgan, refers to as 'barbarism' (8000-3000 B.C.), giving way to 'civilisation'. According to Engels: 'The overthrow of mother right was the *world-historical defeat of the female sex*' (*op. cit.*, p.120).
- 22 Francesco Santini, *op. cit.*, p.28.
- 23 Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, London, 1974, p.95.
- 24 See Piero Fassoni and Mario Mieli, 'Marcocco miraggio omosessuale', *Fuori!* 4, October 1972, also 'Les arabes et nous', in *Grande Encyclopédie des Homosexualités*, Paris, 1973, pp.10-27, and the following articles. Very little is known in Europe of the situation of homosexuality among the Arab peoples, and the Islamic nations in general. In fact, homosexuality forms part of the Islamic religious tradition. In a contradictory fashion, this accepts active homosexuality while condemning the passive role. For the *meddeb*, the teacher in the Koranic school, it is quite proper to have sexual relations with his young disciples. Yet this should not give the impression that homosexuality only takes the form of sexual attraction towards adolescents. If this were the case, then the limitation of adults to an active role would be simpler to explain. The ephebe, in the patriarchal view of things, unites the woman and the man, and this determines his fixation to the passive role. The Arabs, however, are happy to fuck adult men as well, and frequently do so. It is as if the moral blame that their religion ascribes to a man who is fucked

does not involve them, although they will often enough suggest the activity.

- 25 Virginia Finzi Ghisi, op. cit., p.172.
- 26 'I gruppi di fronte alla questione omosessuale', *Re Nudo* 5, November 1975.
- 27 Corrado Levi, 'Problematiche e contributi dal lavoro di presa di coscienza del collettivo *Fuori!* di Milano', 1973. These quotations are drawn from the printed version of this essay, published as an appendix to *Un tifo*, Milan, 1973.
- 28 See Chapter One, note 3.
- 29 This does not mean that I support uncritically all the feminist and gay groups that presently exist, still less put them blindly on a pedestal; see Chapter Three, section 5. It is necessary to point out the counter-revolutionary aspects of the *politics* of some groups, and to deplore the male supremacism of gay men and the anti-homosexual attitude still current among too many feminists. But a critical analysis of the situations in which feminist and gay groups are debating will precisely demonstrate the immense importance of the issues that they are confronting. Their great merit is to have been the first to raise certain fundamental questions that have been repressed from a very remote time, and they are consequently in the best position to resolve these in practice.
- 30 Elvio Fachinelli, op. cit., p.38.



The Italian gay movement, while certainly sharing much of its history with that of Britain and elsewhere, has had its own particular experiences and has developed its own original and important ideas, being far more influenced by both Marxism and psychoanalysis than its counterparts in English-speaking countries. This book, published in English for the first time, represents the most comprehensive presentation of the standpoint developed by this radical gay movement, forming an important contribution to a specifically gay critique of society.

Investigating the effects of institutionalised heterosexuality on society as a whole, Mario Mieli shows that these extend far beyond the specific problems of gay people. He argues that in the interlocking framework drawn by Marx and Freud, homosexuality stands right in the centre, in a crucial position, and that its liberation is an integral part of the liberation of Eros in general, involving the breakdown of the gender system of masculine and feminine, and leading to an unfettered communication between human beings convergent with the goals of a communist society. His argument provides a basis for a genuinely radical gay movement, a movement that struggles for gay liberation as an inseparable part of human liberation as a whole.

Mario Mieli shows how gay people like any other oppressed group have their own original and unique mode of struggle and he demonstrates this himself in his writing which is specially notable for its combination of serious theoretical argument with a gay sensibility and humour.

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