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**NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN**

**FACULTY OF DESIGN**

**DEPARTMENT OF FASHION AND TEXTILES**

**QUEER, BY DESIRE.**

**A NEW SPACE FOR THE NOTION OF BISEXUALITY**

**WITHIN THE FIELD OF 'SEXUAL POLITICS'.**

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## INTRODUCTION

This thesis is designed to clear a new space within the field of 'sexual politics' for the notion of what we would now term bisexuality.

I wish to show that bisexuality, as we understand it today, has existed throughout recent history, (by that I mean the nineteenth and twentieth century) as a phantom reality which has only really been defined by default; with the formulation of a distinct homosexual identity, with its date of birth being around 1880, as the invert of its heterosexual counterpart. With this development, the bisexual has continued to be perceived as the bastard offspring of these two characters, belonging to neither. In societies such as ours, obsessed with sexual identities, where as Dennis H. Wrong wrote in 1976, it expresses "our discontent with modern life and modern society,"<sup>1</sup> these identities with<sup>2</sup> have become fixed and rigid, a malaise which deny what I wish to show as the nature of human diversity and sexual possibilities; the reaction to which, falling under the generic of 'Queer'.

In these terms, 'Queer' represents a new sexual theory both in academic and grass-roots activities, anarchic in its response to the fixation with political correctness and constructions governing so many aspects of our sexual lives. To talk in terms of 'Queer' would be to admit that a particular phase of activity has passed into the history books, which is untrue since such a generic can only be attributed to a series of different, if related, thinkers and cultural producers. When 'Queer' can be named, pinpointed and defined then it has already discovered itself, but its embryonic state, when viewed within a historical continuum of thought, compounds its fugitive nature. This makes my task more difficult in that there is little semblance yet of a queer Academia, and by that I mean a coherent, identifiable school of thought. However it also offers the invitation to contribute to this new outlook and add different layers to what might eventually constitute an entirely unique process of analysis. With this in mind, my thesis cannot justly be seen in any way as an attempt to necessarily define 'Queer', but



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can only announce itself as another layer in what I would attribute to an assertion, within sexual politics and theory, of 'Queer'.

This space, as I have said, inhabited by what we now call bisexuality, will be traced through history. In chapter one, I will deal primarily with the formulation of a homogenous homosexual male identity. By that I mean the construction of such a sexual identity that was, and still is, seen to categorically embody every aspect of that being; a distinct type of human set aside from society and posited in the field of deviancy. Such a position, the 'unnatural' if you like, hints at it's polar opposite; the nebulous heterosexual identity. I begin with the 1870's and the work of sexologists, criminologists and anthropologists, such as Havelock Ellis and Krafft Ebing who contributed to what I would consider a crucial turning point in attitudes to homosexuality, where, as Randolph Trumbach, in his study of London sodomites in the eighteenth century said, "it was no longer the act that was stigmatized, but the state of mind".<sup>2</sup> This pre-empted a distinction in the minds of science, the legal system and society between sexual behaviour and a sexual identity, generating a universal theory that was supposedly to embrace a wide range of same-sex behaviours, positioning homosexuality conveniently into a distinct social and psychological category.

Chapter two will show how this tradition has continued through to the twentieth century, and this discourse becoming the basis of a series of political struggles and the touchstone of an activism centred on the notion of minority politics, compounding the notion of the homogenous homosexual identity; Through Magnus Hirschfeld in Nazi Germany, the Mattachine Society of 1950's America and the rise of the Gay Rights Movement during the 1970's in the United States and Western Europe. This is important in the sense that as homosexuality began to shed it's stigmatization (by the device of minority politics), it developed a homogeneity as a polar alternative to heterosexuality, suggesting only two types of sexual choice.

Part two of this thesis will propose an alternative to such identity politics, by beginning with theories of homosexuality developed by the Third Reich, a theory which was quite contrary to the developments I will have discussed in part one, in that

it operated not on identity but proposed a theory of sexual desire, where as Adolf Hitler himself said it can touch "the best and most manly of characters".<sup>3</sup> This shift from a homosexual identity, within the realm of deviance, to a notion of non identity-specific desire underwrites 'gay history' as we know it, but, more crucially, it subverts the construction of sexual identities, homo and heterosexual, and lays the groundwork for the establishment of a new concept akin to bisexuality; Queer.

#### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> DENNIS H. WRONG 'Identity - Problem and Catchword' in *Sceptical Sociology*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1976, p.81
- <sup>2</sup> RANDOLPH TRUMBACH 'London Sodomites: Homosexual Behaviour and Western Culture in the 18th Century'. *Journal of Social History*, Fall 1977 p.1.
- <sup>3</sup> ADOLF HITLER, quoted in HANS PETER BLEUEL 'Strength through Joy: Sex and Society in Nazi Germany', London, Seeker & Warburg 1973, p.221.

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## THE EMERGENCE OF A HOMOGENOUS HOMOSEXUAL IDENTITY

### PART 1 CHAPTER 1

To begin this chapter, an important note has to be made about the concept of homosexuality within history. As we understand it today, homosexuality has been constructed in such a way that it constitutes a distinct sexual identity, formed very much in relation to its heterosexual counterpart. The logical implication of this being that a homosexual is imbued with unique characteristics and experiences which sets it apart from a society at large: a homogenous homosexual identity. However, the Kinsey Institute published, in 1978, 'Homosexualities'<sup>4</sup>, a book which underlines that we can no longer speak of a single homosexual category as if it embraced the wide range of same-sex experiences in our society. This presents a problem when dealing with a history of homosexuality, since, aside from semiotics (and by that I mean a word which came to be employed as a result of a shift in understanding of the concept of homosexuality), the word homosexual had not come into existence until 1869, invented by the Hungarian Benkert von Kertbeny, so that any history of homosexuality cannot correctly begin with Ancient Greece, as they so often do, since until the late 19th Century the notion related only to behaviour and the act, particularly Sodomy.

There was no concept of a man who engaged in acts of sodomy, for example, as a distinct human type. In England until 1885 the only law against homosexual behaviours was that relating to buggery, and legally, there was little distinction between buggery among men, women and beasts, and the various permutations within. This is reinforced by Alan Bray's study of Molly Houses in Renaissance England,<sup>5</sup> which were places where sodomitical behaviour could be enjoyed discreetly, (of course,) his conclusion being that there is little evidence to show that the participants recognized each other in the distinct identities that contemporary gay men would recognize each other. Buggery had been a capital crime in England since the 1530's, when traditional ecclesiastical regulation has been assumed into law by the state, in its adoption of the powers of the medieval church. In the legality of buggery and in the term itself, it was



often used to encompass various forms of non-reproductive sex; a stigma to such having been fostered of the new state. There was therefore a crucial distinction between pre-19th Century concepts of buggery and modern constructions of homosexuality. Buggery had been seen as a sexual possibility with a potential across all society, sinful of course, needing to be execrated, and, later, judicially punished. However, the homosexual emerged as a particular type of person who was of course equally sinful and punishable. This person was believed to have a particular set of characteristics; as Jeffrey Weeks lists in 'Against Nature', 'an inability to whistle, a penchant for the colour green, adoration of the mother or father, age of sexual maturation, promiscuity etc'.<sup>6</sup>

'The nineteenth century homosexual became a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form, and a morphology with an indiscreet anatomy and possibly a mysterious physiology. Nothing that went into his total composition was unaffected by his sexuality. It was everywhere present in him: at the root of all his actions because it was their insidious and indefinitely active principle: written immodestly on his face and body because it was a secret which always gave itself away. We must not forget that the psychological, psychiatric, medical category of homosexuality was constituted from the moment it was characterized - Westphal's famous article of 1870 on 'contrary sexual sensations' can stand as its date of birth'.<sup>7</sup>

Michael Foucault; The History of Sexuality.

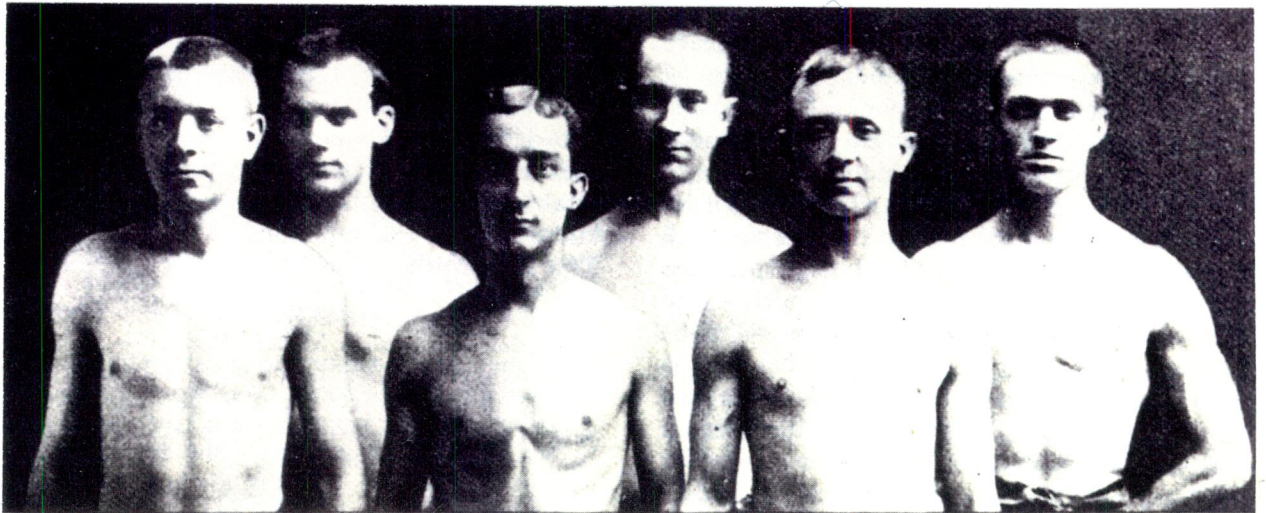
The backdrop to this emergent discourse are many but perhaps most significant was the impact of Darwinism. With the publication of 'Origin of the Species' Darwin had hinted at the relevance of his theory of natural selection to humans and social structure. In "The Descent of Man and selection in relation to sex", another dimension was added to his theories, namely, that sexual selection (the struggle for partners) operated independently of natural selection (the struggle for survival). The logical conclusion of this being that the biological success of the species depended on sexual selection and if such a biological success was to be achieved, propagating had to be regulated. This demand was readily accepted by the nations of Western Europe, who were in the throes of Imperialism and while the ever expanding empire gained new

territories, they also gained new subjects to the crown, primitive subjects, who needed to be regulated and controlled, but it also teased those desires to control the potentially rebellious and subversive proletariat within the mother nation. Science and medicine expanded their area of expertise in answer to this call, through anthropology, criminology and sexology and it was primarily through the investigations of sexologists such as Richard von Krafft Ebing, Carl Westphal and Havelock Ellis that the 'personage' to which Foucault refers, came about. 'The homosexual' was one of a new set of distinct deviant types, as well as perverse conditions affecting the human, which were added to the social drama.

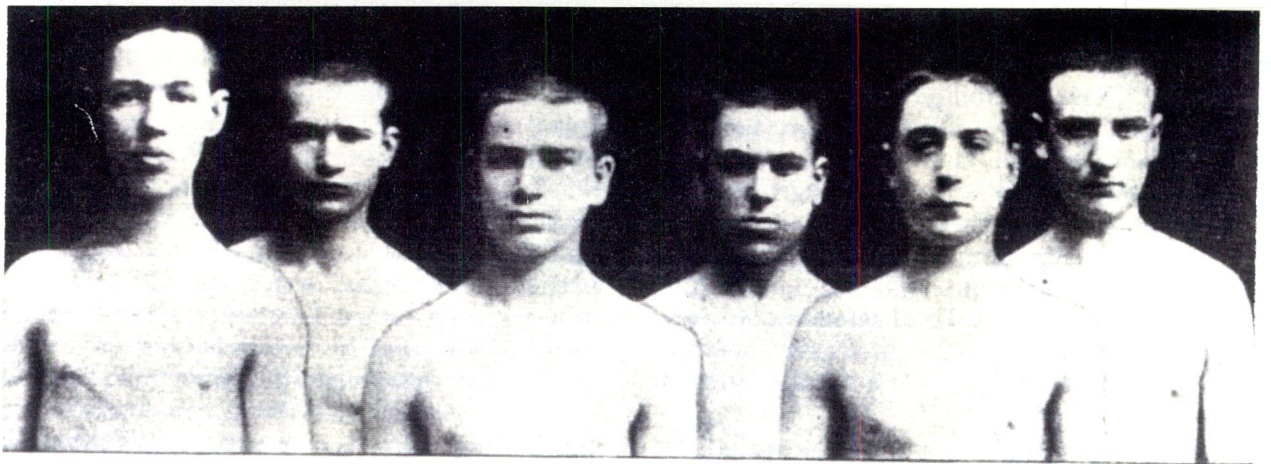
Krafft Ebing's 'Psychopathia Sexualis' which went through various ever expanding editions from 1886 to 1903 announced itself as a 'medico-forensic' study of the 'abnormal'. It identifies a plethora of perversities from acquired sexual inversion urolagnia, fetishism, kleptomania to exhibitionism, sado-masochism, frottage, nymphomania and the homosexual personage. As I have said there was a shift in the concept of homosexuality from ecclesiastical notions of sin to medical and judicial notions of illness and criminality. This is illustrated in the fact that most of the one thousand works on homosexuality published between 1898 and 1908 were directed at the legal profession. The most commonly quoted experts on homosexuality during the mid-nineteenth century were J.L Casper and Tardieu, being concerned with medico-legal aspects; as Arno Karlen has put it "chiefly concerned with whether the disgusting breed of perverts could be physically identified for courts, and whether they should be held legally responsible for their acts".<sup>8</sup> While Havelock Ellis' "Sexual Inversion" was attacked for being too populist in tone, being published out of the field of medical literature.

This obsessional taxonomic fervour to identify the homosexual is well illustrated in the work of physiognomy of this period, the science of the relationship between internal dispositions and their external physiological characteristics revealed in human anatomy, concentrated on the search for 'the distinguishing feature'. The English physiognomist Francis Galton was exemplary in this endeavour, as he began to





A GROUP OF THE MORE MANLY AND INTELLIGENT PRISONERS (ELMIRA).



A GROUP OF SEXUAL PERVERS (ELMIRA).

Figure 1 HAVELOCK ELLIS "The Criminal" taken from The Oxford Art Journal, Volume 7, Number 2, 1984.

PLEASE SEE ILLUSTRATION REFERENCES





superimpose images of convicted criminals of a particular deviant type, forming one composite image with the hope that this nebulous distinguishing feature would make itself visible. Galton's belief in the objectivity of the photographic process was dependent upon discursive transformations which resulted from a unique conjuncture of the natural and social sciences. At a fundamental level he relied on concepts established within the biological sciences, in general, but particularly within evolution, as established by Darwin, the mechanisms of which he applied as a metaphor or analogy for sociocultural phenomena, namely, deviants. Increasingly, however, these evolutionary theories were believed to compound the notion of the inevitable determination of social structures, and within these, the capacities and characteristics of individuals, by the existence of innate biological laws. All evidence of this stratification was to be found in the human body, as Galton believed. In his attempts to 'picture' this, the body became the focus for a range of scientific disciplines and the object of analysis for his documentary practices. This coupled with an extensive range of physiological 'data' and techniques of measuring, the human body could identify and define the typical features of race, class, social group, or, what I am most interested in; 'the homosexual body'.<sup>9</sup>

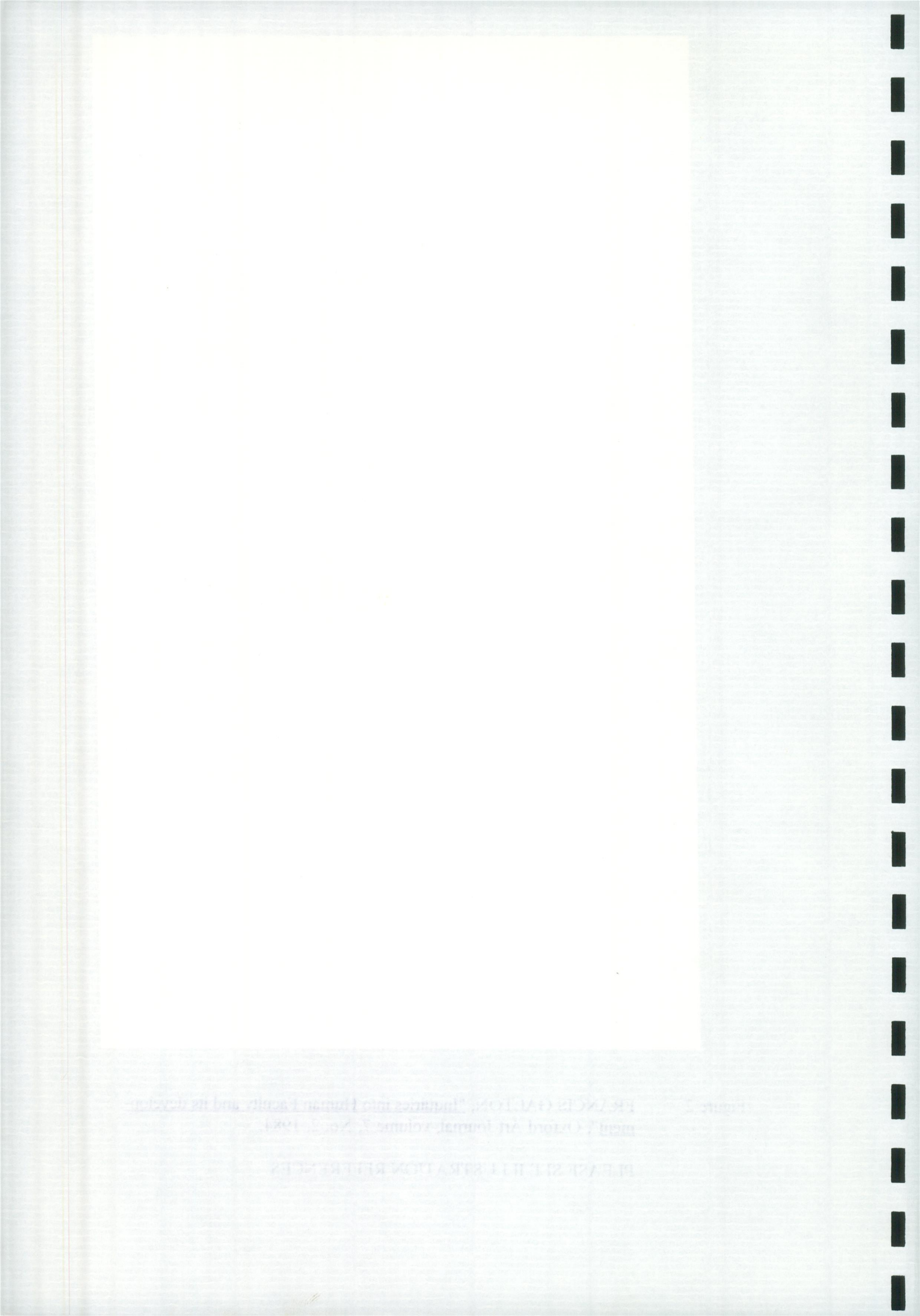
Galton's attempts to 'picture' the homosexual are part of an overall scheme to establish photofit deviants as a catalogue to serve society aiding protectionist measure, and to serve the judicial system, enabling them to physically identify "the disgusting breed of perverts"<sup>10</sup> as Tardieu saw it. However, as this character became visible, and this particular deviant is recognizable, it must be noted that this process constructed not only the deviant homosexual but, by inference, it makes some attempt to define the norm itself. And such a process of identifying the deviant and defining the norm was done in the name of a healthier social body, a discourse which was to be rationalized into the discourse of Eugenics by the end of the nineteenth century, where as Philip Abrams said, "Eugenics culminated in demands not for a new social order but for the reconstruction of the old order at a higher level of efficiency".<sup>11</sup> Eugenics as it formed in this period, attempted to draw the line between the socially useful elements in





Figure 2 FRANCIS GALTON, "Inquiries into Human Faculty and its development", Oxford Art Journal, volume 7, No. 2, 1984.

PLEASE SEE ILLUSTRATION REFERENCES





society and on the other side of this demarcation lay the 'residuum'.<sup>12</sup> The residuum operated as a pool of 'others', comprising those of mental, physical and moral weakness, a category into which the homosexual easily fell, since it had long been established in legal terms as non-reproductive (buggery) and deviant in social and moral terms as identified by sexologists, like Havelock Ellis, Krafft-Ebbing and Carl Westphal:

"The proportion of weakly and misshapen individuals is not to be estimated by those we meet in the streets; the worst cases are out of sight. We should parade before our minds eye the inmates of the lunatic, idiot and pauper asylums, the prisoners ... our human stock is far more weak through congenital imperfection than that of any other species of animals whether wild or domestic".<sup>13</sup>

This residuum did not necessarily constitute a threat which would provoke social and political disorder, though, it could never comfortably be ruled out within the expanding empires of Western Europe, but it represented from a Eugenics' point of view, a biological problem and, accordingly, Eugenics, as a science, offered a biological solution. I will show later in Part II how this early discourse of Eugenics diverged with very different applications within Europe. However what I wish to show in this chapter is that the homosexual became identified within the various sciences as a distinct psychological, social and physical type, in an unprecedented shift within a historical context. As Johnathan Katz said in "Gay American History" and as I noted at the beginning of this chapter: "the concept of homosexuality must be historicized"<sup>14</sup> and the late 19th century can for these reasons be seen as the only true starting point in an analysis of the homosexual as it exists today in its homogenous sexual identity, as distinct from, for example, the pedagogic homosexual relations of Ancient Greece. As Jeffrey Weeks adds:

"In different cultures (and at different historical moments or conjunctures within the same culture) very different meanings be given to the same sex activity both by society at large and by the individual participants. The physical acts might be similar but the social constructions of meanings around them are profoundly different".<sup>15</sup>

## Endnotes

- <sup>4</sup> A.P. BELL & M.S. WEINBERG, 'Homosexualities: A Study of Diversity among Men and Women', London, Mitchell Beazley, 1978.
- <sup>5</sup> ALAN BRAY, 'Homosexuality in Renaissance England', London, Gay Mens Press, 1982, p.81-114.
- <sup>6</sup> JEFFREY WEEKS, 'Against Nature, essays on history sexuality and identity', London, Rivers Oram Press, 1991, p.17.
- <sup>7</sup> MICHEL FOUCAULT, 'The History of Sexuality', Volume 1, New York, Vintage Press, 1980, p.43.
- <sup>8</sup> ARNO KARLEN, 'Sexuality and Homosexuality: the complete account of Male and and Female sexual behaviour and deviation with case histories', London, McDonald, 1971, p.185.
- <sup>9</sup> For a study of the concept of 'the homosexual body' see  
SIMON WATNEY, 'AIDS: Cultural analysis, Cultural Activism'.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid, p.185.
- <sup>11</sup> PHILIP ABRAMS, 'The Origin of British Sociology', University of Chicago Press, 1968, p.123.
- <sup>12</sup> The 'Residuum', a term used by GARETH STEDMAN-JONES in 'Outcast London', Clarendon Press, 1971.
- <sup>13</sup> FRANCIS GALTON, quoted by NANCY STEPAN, 'The Idea of Race in Science', MacMillan, 1982, chapter 5.
- <sup>14</sup> JOHNATHAN KATZ, 'Gay American History', Documentary, 1989.
- <sup>15</sup> JEFFREY WEEKS, 'Against Nature', op. cit. p.15.

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1. J. H. W. & J. H. W. (1970) *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 63, 1-10.

2. J. H. W. (1971) *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 64, 1-10.

3. J. H. W. (1972) *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 65, 1-10.

4. J. H. W. (1973) *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 66, 1-10.

5. J. H. W. (1974) *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 67, 1-10.

6. J. H. W. (1975) *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 68, 1-10.

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7. J. H. W. (1976) *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 69, 1-10.

8. J. H. W. (1977) *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 70, 1-10.

9. J. H. W. (1978) *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 71, 1-10.

10. J. H. W. (1979) *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 72, 1-10.

11. J. H. W. (1980) *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 73, 1-10.



## THE HOMOSEXUAL IDENTITY AS THE BASIS FOR A POLITICAL STRUGGLE WITHIN MINORITY POLITICS

### PART I CHAPTER II

The work of the late nineteenth century, designed to control and categorize deviant social behaviour by constructing a specific deviant identity, opens up a greater possibility negating the tradition of stigmatization: a reverse discourse. Michel Foucault uses this term to describe a political struggle based upon and made possible by the construction of the deviant.<sup>16</sup> Now that the homosexual was visible, albeit mythical and deviant, the potential for an activism which reclaimed this construction as 'natural' came into existence.

This was the case in the late nineteenth century Germany where Magnus Hirschfeld was leader of the liberal left wing within the homosexual rights movement. Hirschfeld was both a physician and sexologist, and his activist campaign was based on the science of his day, those outlined in chapter 1. However, Hirschfeld employed the reversal within this dominant discourse, but resisting the stigma of its position within deviance. The crux within criminal anthropology, sexology and the fledgling discourse of psychiatry was the role of nature in reaction to these new categories. This is evident in Casper and Tardieu's writings as they faced the dilemma of the accountability of the deviant homosexual for his actions, as Eugenics proposed that homosexuality was congenital. During a period of imperial expansion, the dilemma of nature was doubly charged since it could indicate the human condition unspoiled by civilization, as the pure and instinctive being. On the other hand, it could also represent the darkness and danger within that lack of societal structure. Since Eugenics, in some respects, grew from the fear of the disintegration of the established social order, such a threat both from the 'primitive, un-civilized' natures of the new colonies and the lumpen proletariat, being politically seditious since the industrial revolution, could be seen to rock the species potential to achieve the perfect human

society. This crux was exploited by Hirschfeld as he established the homosexual's identity as being entirely 'natural', since it was being true to it's 'nature'; such a 'truth' legitimized it's existence. As Guy Hocquenghem said in 'Le Désir Homosexuel'<sup>7</sup>, homosexual desire, or what could more neutrally be termed behaviours, seem to be, from historical evidence, a permanent and ineradicable aspect of human sexual possibilities. This being known, it compounds the legitimacy of an existence of the homosexual.

Of course Hirschfeld's work continued into the early twentieth century and in a country which was entering a very significant phase of history: the rise of the Third Reich and Nazism. This move was pre-empted within the homosexual rights movement, with the establishment of the Gemeinschaft der Eigenen (community of the special), forming the right wing outlook within the movement; Here the group employed a right-wing assertion to establish their position as a distinct identity, with special needs. This is important in that it is one of the first times within the homosexual rights movement that political activism made moves to establish minority status, and, at that, an aggressive minority assertion.

It was not until the 1950s that this device of minority status establishment surfaced again. The formation of the Mattachine society in America is perhaps the first instance of a homosexual rights movement similar to the model which exists today. Though the movement, in their semiotic assertions, toyed with the terms of 'homophile' and 'homosexual', they very much formed the basis for the 1970s gay rights movement. As an organization they are interesting in two respects. Firstly, they operated very much on the assumption of a homogenous homosexual identity; a brotherhood, if you like. The identification as homosexual became the primary method of self-liberation; "the heroic objective of liberating one of our largest minorities from ... social persecution",<sup>18</sup> whereby the Mattachine society designed to encourage those homosexuals which mythically existed (since they had been written about, almost exclusively, in the sexology and sociology texts, albeit as exotic alien deviants), to identify themselves and unite to claim their rights as individuals, and as



such to form a 'large minority' to combat their social persecution. This ethos of the society is very much indebted to Harry Hay's, (the founding member) political background, (in his earlier days devoting his career to marxism in 1940s American society). His leftist experience very much informed the ethos of the movement and generated anxiety within the group against those who subscribed to a more integrationist ethic.<sup>19</sup> The move to mobilize this minority to form a sort of constituency was subsumed by pleas for help from a believably sympathetic governing body. This was not entirely naive when viewed within a nation which was becoming increasingly aware of the power-base to be gained from minority politics. Especially since the Black Civil Rights Movement was gaining momentum and establishing itself as a persecuted minority with a powerful and proud assertion.

The tradition of the Mattachine society carried through in some respects into the 1970s, in that homosexuals did form a sort of constituency. This contradicted Magnus Hirschfeld's exclamation of 1927 that "it would be difficult to find another class of mankind which has proved so incapable of organizing to secure it's basic legal and human rights"<sup>20</sup>. But, of course, the semiotic assertion once again changed. The Black Civil Rights Movement had operated by reclaiming the pejorative language of the oppressor, fostering a pride and anger in the derogatory 'black'. Similarly, though more heterosexual-friendly, the term 'gay' became the self-image in the new activist struggles of the 1970s, operating from a constitutional identity, but re-forming its status; a shift from scientific notions of deviancy to social notions of distinctions. This is another example of what Foucault has referred to as 'reverse discourse', as this semiotic reclamation indicates a new impetus in a political activism within the homosexual rights movement. While I would credit this as being equally as significant, in such a history, as the developments of the late nineteenth century, it must be recognized as a struggle which was concerned ultimately with legitimizing a homosexual identity with a view to eradicating the social stigma, operating primarily out of social politics, as opposed to science.

By way of illustrating the tactics of this period I wish to refer to one example. In 1980 the gay and lesbian caucus of the Democratic Party had forged a place in American politics. Two thirds of this caucus were backing Senator Kennedy in the presidential nomination race, as opposed to supporting Jimmy Carter, who had balked at the full list of proposals set out by the caucus, fearing the wrath of the increasingly contentious fundamentalists in the former Georgia governor's political base down south. Carter had pledged, by way of a compromise, a general plank to oppose discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, preferring not to even mention the word 'gay'. Kennedy, in opposition, pledged enough delegates to take the issue to the senate floor, which would generate the kind of nationally televised attention that was needed if the issue was to be taken seriously in a social arena. With hopes pinned on 'Kennedy for president' it was known that an executive order from such a sympathetic head of state could abolish discrimination such as that which permitted dismissal from positions in federal agencies on grounds of sexual orientation. However, Kennedy was defeated at the convention, and gay and lesbian rights were in the hands of Jimmy Carter, who had little genuine concern for such a minority.<sup>21</sup>

What is important to note from the history outlined in this chapter is the device of a minority status to shed the social stigma that has, thus far in our recent history, been associated with homosexuality. The result being that many gay men today subscribe to a homosexual identity and to being part of a sexual minority. As I have said, minority politics offer a powerful resonance within liberal democracies, who have, in this century at least, recognized, albeit inactively, the needs of such a minorities (truth be told, we can all relate to some minority). And as I have said briefly, this particular minority developed as a direct alternative to its heterosexual (majority) counterpart. But this majority is mythical in that it is constructed and the lowest antithetical denominator, the logical conclusion of which is that a homosexual identity cannot truly exist. One contradiction is that not all men who engage in homosexual activity would necessarily identify themselves as homosexual, let alone subscribe to the homogeneity fostered within the device of minority politics. Kinsey



has showed that there is no necessary connection between such an identity and homosexual behaviour. According to Kinsey's statistics, 37 per cent of men had homosexual experiences to orgasm, but less than 4 per cent engaged in exclusively homosexual behaviour and even then did not necessarily express a homosexual identity. And within these statistics some men would identify their ethnic background above their sexual orientation.<sup>22</sup> This posed a problem in second-wave feminisms of the 1970s where the feminist movement became riddled with divisions along race, class, and national differences. Similarly this contradicts the notion of a homogenous homosexual identity, in theoretical and organizational aspects within the political movement. As these new notions of sexuality opened in the 1970s, libertines saw sexual attraction as the great leveller, overcoming racism and class distinction. Within gay theory and practice, the bathhouses (which operated on the principle of an orgiastic sexual free-for-all, with no meaning attached to it other than pleasure as it's end) were seen as the privileged site of this collapse of differentiation, where penis meets penis. While bathhouses were even heralded as bastions of brotherhood, the reality proved that these differences returned in the outside world.

The idea of homosexualities is a familiar one as proposed by Bell and Weinberg<sup>23</sup>, as a term in opposition to the idea of homosexuals as a 'fixed' minority within any population, which has formed the dominant discourse thus far.

"Homosexuals were once regulated and defined by experts now these experts need no longer do it, for the homosexual has assumed that role for himself".<sup>24</sup>

There is a paradox in the fact that while gay activists began by challenging the compulsion and naturalness of heterosexuality and the various roles and identities, the bulk of theory and practice to come from the gay rights movement has constructed a distinct homosexual role, with a dominant defining process of self-regulation. This has generated I believe a mirrored sexual conservatism, due mainly to the fact that so much of the work in this phase of a homosexual history is at stake. But this sexual distinction serves only to ghettoize same-sex experiences and fails to challenge the nature of 'compulsory heterosexuality'<sup>25</sup>. While I would concede that this



preoccupation with a constitutional homosexual identity is a necessary process in a scheme of mobilization, I would credit it as a redundant notion with little true relevance to human sexuality and sexual possibilities in contemporary life.

## Endnotes

- <sup>16</sup> 'Reverse discourse', a term used by MICHEL FOUCAULT, in The History of Sexuality, Volume 1, p.43.
- <sup>17</sup> GUY HOCQUENGHEM, Le Desir Homosexuel, London, Allison & Busby, 1978.
- <sup>18</sup> D'EMILIO, "Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities".
- <sup>19</sup> STEWART TIMMONS, "The Trouble with Harry Hay; Founder of the Modern Gay Movement". Boston, Allison, 1990.
- <sup>20</sup> MAGNUS HIRSCHFELD, "Die Homosexualitat", ed. LEO SCHIDROWITZ, Vienna, 1927, p. 309.
- <sup>21</sup> See RANDY SHILTS, And the band played on, politics, people and the AIDS epidemic, Penguin, 1988.
- <sup>22</sup> A.C. KINSEY, W.B. POMEROY & C.E. MARTIN, "Sexual behaviour in the human male", Philadelphia & London, W.B. Saunders, 1948.
- <sup>23</sup> BELL & WEINBERG, "Homosexualities", p.217. See also EDMUND WHITE "States of Desire", New York, 1980, who outlines the breadth of same-sex experience in 1970s America.
- <sup>24</sup> KENNETH PLUMMER, chapter 3 in Plummer (ed.), The Making of the Modern Homosexual, p.55.
- <sup>25</sup> ADRIENNE RICH, "Compulsory Heterosexuality", article in "Blood, Bread and Poetry", London, Virago Press, 1986.

## PART II

### A THEORY OF DESIRE

This part of the thesis proposes an alternative to a theory of sexual identity; a theory of sexual desire which ultimately relates not only to homosexuality but, as my conclusion will show has relatively radical implications in all sexual identities. To begin this section I must step back chronologically in my historical research to deal with an alternative direction which Eugenics took by the beginning of the twentieth century, which I have outlined toward the end of Chapter One. While Magnus Hirschfeld, whom I have credited as being the first, directed the homosexual rights movement along a process employing a notion of a homogenous homosexual identity, I wish to examine a contradictory application of the dominant discourse of Eugenics within Hirschfeld's time; those theories of deviance developed under Nazism. However, to understand properly the complexity and sophistication of this Nazi ethos, the form of racial eugenics developed under Third Reich science must first be understood.

At the end of Chapter One, I said that Eugenics established a line of demarcation within the social body, the 'unhealthy' side being termed the 'residuum'. This residuum constituted 'congenital imperfection' as Francis Galton defined it. Eugenics as a novel and influential science was involved firstly with investigating and identifying this 'residuum' and secondly aimed to provide a biological solution. Obviously reproductive regulation was crucial in this endeavour, and Nazi approaches to this policy relate very closely to Nazi theories of homosexuality, which is why I wish to begin by examining their procedures on women's reproductive rights.

Contrary to Nazism, the British Birth Control Movement's campaigns for women's reproductive rights operated on the theory that racial purity could only be achieved by giving women the right to choose motherhood. Under Nazi Eugenics, however, all control over motherhood became lodged in the legal and penal structures, where ethnic purity required not only the eradication of those other races to be found



'like a disease within the social body'<sup>26</sup>, but the duty of all pure Aryans to reproduce, and prolifically so. It is often incorrectly stated that abortion and contraception were illegal in the Nazi state, but this was only true if the child was purely Aryan in which case under the "law for protection of family, marriage and motherhood" the death penalty was imposed for carrying out or aiding such abortions. As of July 1933, the abortion of defective pregnancies was compulsory under the "law for the prevention of hereditarily diseased offspring" on grounds of racial impurity, controlling the propagation of "lives unworthy of life".<sup>27</sup> Paragraph 12 of this law allowed the use of force against those resistant to compulsory sterilization, denying reproductive rights to the criminal, disabled or mentally disturbed, eventually being extended to the long term unemployed and 'work shy'. In 1933 'habitual delinquents' were legally castratable (in the case of men).

Eugenic control of the population was two fold. On the one hand, it demanded genocide, on the other it generated enormous pressure on Aryan women to reproduce, but only in the advancement and propagating of a purely Aryan race. While there was a great sanctity of the family inscribed in the ethos of the Nazi state, it did in some way sanction birth outside of marriage. The Lebensborn Institute, for example, provided homes for unmarried mothers. However this philanthropy comes into the light as young SS officers attempted to fulfill the demands of SS Chief Heinrich Himmler, "that every good SS officer should father at least three children". "If both parents are true Aryans, illegitimate children should be accepted with as much joy as legitimate offspring".<sup>28</sup> While Himmler, when referring to homosexuals frequently used racial analogies; "We must exterminate these people, root and branch"<sup>29</sup> it was inspired by a compliance with the racial discourse already established within Eugenic politics. There is little real similarity between the extermination of the Jews and other races in the Final Solution and the eradication of homosexuals. The former, unless controlled, would propagate it's putative characteristics within the pure Aryan race. The problem, as Nazis saw it, was that the homosexual did not reproduce and hence "think how many children will not be born because of this"<sup>30</sup> and are not



available for the propagation of the Aryan race. So, in this respect, homosexuality was only under the concern of Nazi Eugenics by way of reproductive politics. This interpretation is illustrated in the establishment in October 1936 of 'the central agency for jointly combating Abortion and Homosexuality'.

But this is perhaps not the most valuable lesson to be learned from Nazi theories of homosexual deviance. While they did, of course, see homosexuality as being constitutionally deviant, they employed a very modern theory on homosexuality; a theory not based on identity, but, rather, based on one of sexual desire; "a non identity-specific desire".<sup>31</sup>

As I have said earlier, the pursuit of identifying the homosexual as a distinct being, with a particular psychology and even physiology, posited this personage within a metaphor of illness and disease. This tradition continues in the subsequent status of the homosexual, right up to the present day.<sup>32</sup> While this tradition places homosexuality and disease as being synonymous, the twist of Nazi discourse was that, as Hitler said, this deviance "can affect the most manly of characters",<sup>33</sup> compounding the construction of their theory of a non-identity-specific sexual desire. However, homosexuality was burdened with a historical anxiety within German culture, and, particularly within nazism, centring on the notions of masculinity, femininity<sup>34</sup> and friendship. To examine a Nazi theory of sexual desire it is first necessary to look at this anxiety and the paradoxes inherent in German culture as constructed under Nazism.

The Third Reich appropriated a cultural legacy handed down from eighteenth century literature, romantically exalting male friendship, nurturing open displays of affection between men, as well as written correspondence which read today as love letters. Of course, this was politicized into 'Mannerbund' (male bonding), the romance being euphemistically termed into comradeship, among men in the service of the state; the masculine fighting man. This was fostered by countless representations of male beauty, erected for the populace to identify with and to idealize, borrowing heavily from Hellenic Greek Art and Culture. While this emphasis provided the possibility of

identification, it also presented the opportunity of object-choice.<sup>35</sup> In such terminology, homoeroticism was rife, and although the language of comradeship distinguished itself from eroticism, purporting to be a cosmological love force, being desexualized and antithetic to sexual desire, it could easily mutate into homosexual desire. This generated huge anxiety within their scheme of fixed roles of gender and the relationships between the sexes. Homosexual desire represented, to Nazism, a radical threat to the polarization of the maternal reproductive feminine desire, and the active male desire.

As I have said, the recognition that the finest fighting men, even SS officers, are susceptible to such inclinations, compounded the paranoia within the Nazi hierarchy. Since the third Reich promoted all-male organizations, they were open to accusations of perversion (the Hitler Youth was, from its instigation, commonly referred to as 'the Homo Youth').

"I expect all SA leaders to preserve and strengthen the SA in the capacity as a pure and clean institution. In particular, I should like every mother to be able to allow her son to join the SA, the party or Hitler Youth without fear that he may become morally corrupted in their ranks. I therefore require all SA commanders to take the utmost pains to ensure that offences under paragraph 175 are met by immediate expulsion of the culprit from the SA and the Party"<sup>36</sup>,

Hitler quoted in "Strength through Joy".

The increased risk in the scheme of promoting comradeship explains the inconsistency in the Nazi persecution of homosexual men. In the SS, it was punishable by death, no trial, just immediate execution. In the army these offences under paragraph 175 were handled slightly more leniently. With regards to civilians, the processes of law were followed, leading to imprisonment. As Himmler gained power, he employed "schutzhaft" or "protective custody", which allowed police to re-arrest the offenders and deploy them to level three concentration camps - the death mills "After serving the sentence imposed by the court they will, upon my instructions, be taken to a concentration camp and shot while trying to escape".<sup>37</sup>



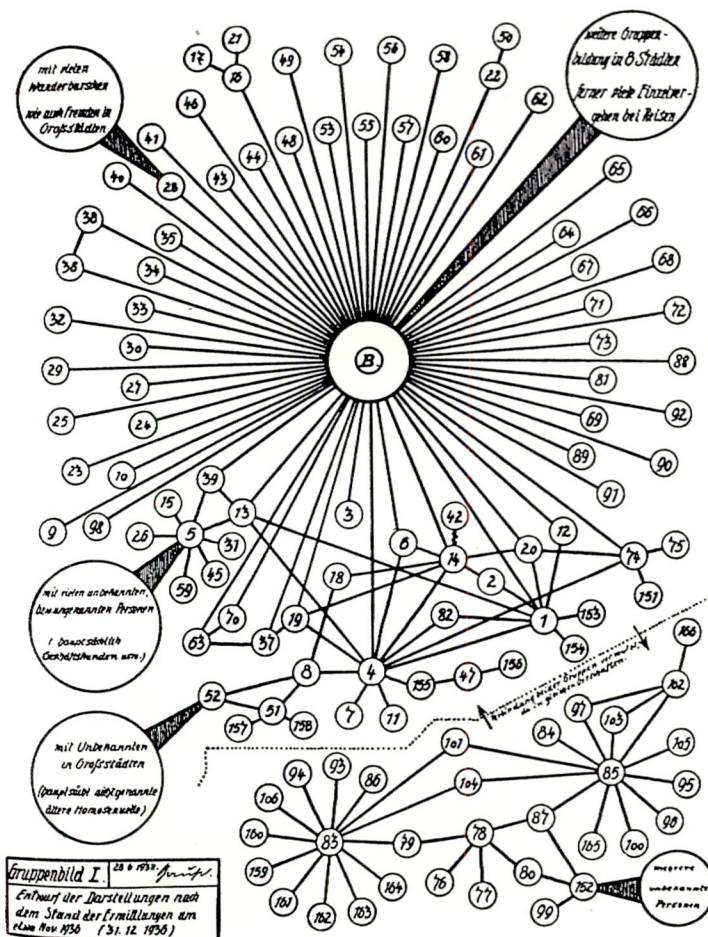
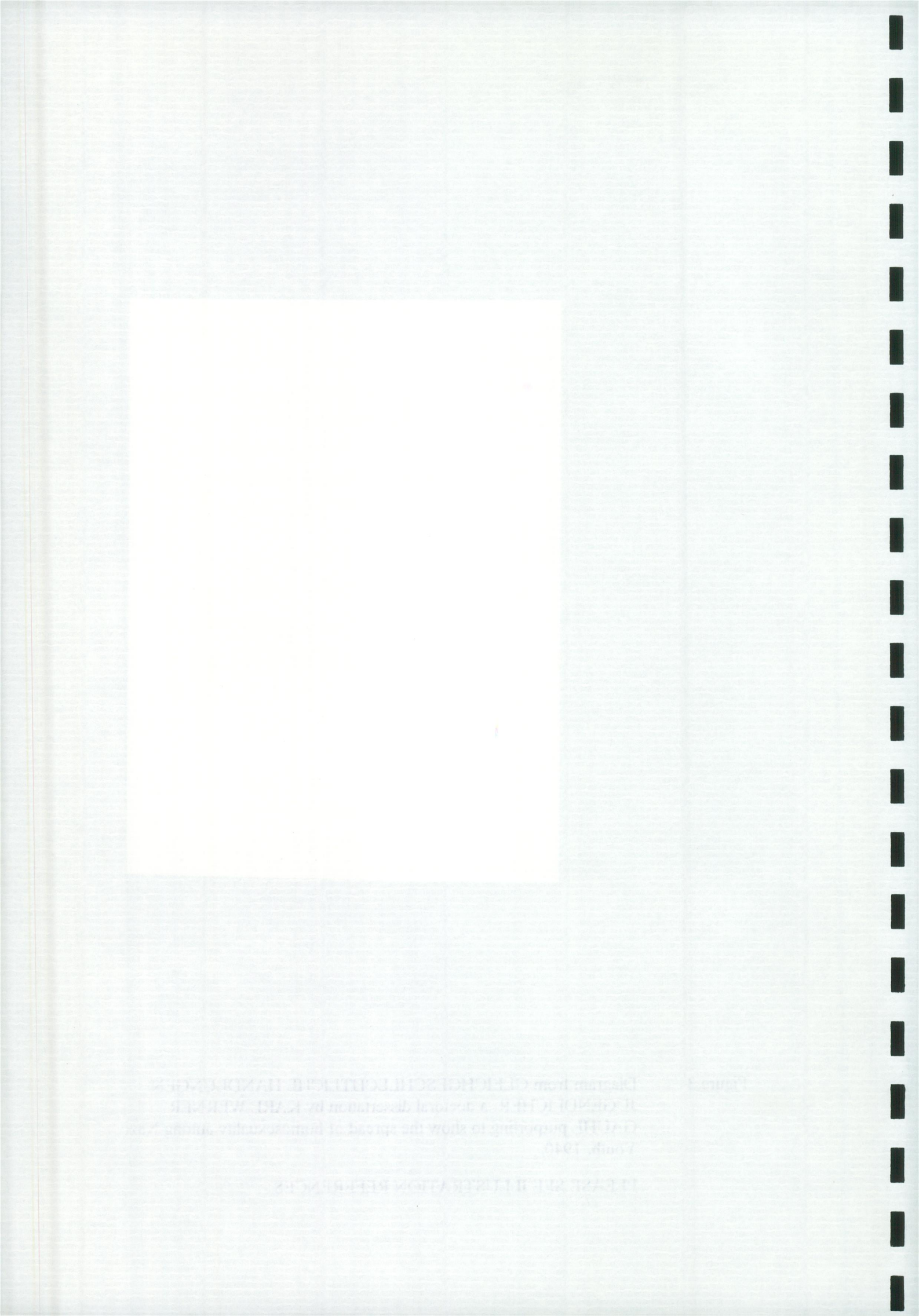


Figure 3

Diagram from GLEICHGESCHLECHTLICHE HANDLUNGEN JUGENDLICHER, a doctoral dissertation by KARL WERNER GAUHL purporting to show the spread of homosexuality among Nazi Youth, 1940.

PLEASE SEE ILLUSTRATION REFERENCES





The paranoia about the insidious threat of homosexuality provoked the 1935 amendment which similarly outlawed homosexual kisses, embraces, glances and even fantasies. One inconstancy in this paranoia was that Himmler issued a directive in 1937, (allegedly prompted by his wife) that no artists or performers were subject to these penalties without his consent, unless they were caught by police in actual sexual contact. Similarly, some Aryan first-time offenders were offered psychotherapy in an attempt to re-establish a healthier desire for the propagation of the Aryan race.

Since the 1970's statistics have been available on the Nazi system of dealing with the homosexual. While fifty thousand men were sentenced for homosexual offences by the court, it has been established from official records by Professor Rudiger Lautmann of Bremen University that between five and fifteen thousand men were actually sent to the concentration camps. This is contradictory to the view that "the unimaginably demonic Nazi's launched an entirely unique and unparalleled holocaust against gays in which the pink triangle was to have even more horrible connotations than the yellow star".<sup>38</sup> The fact that only a portion of those convicted, all of whom must have been known to the Gestapo, were actually sent to the death mills is incompatible with the practical role of an imagined mass extermination within the history of the homosexual. While I must make it clear that I in no way condone any such extermination or am underestimating the incredible loss of fifteen thousand innocent men, I am stating, (because of the distinctions I have made between homosexual extermination and racial genocide) that for gay men to utilize an 'imaginary'<sup>39</sup> genocide to provide an identity similar to that of the Jews, for example, to solidify their position as a minority status, is foolish. I hope that I have established that homosexuals were exterminated primarily because of their stigma and irrelevance in a scheme of racially pure propagation, as opposed to Jews who were eradicated on the basis of their racial identity. To see this period in any other way is to cloud history, as I see it, and I don't feel that this is a piece of history that we can afford to cloud.



What I do credit to Nazism, is a theory which my outline has expanded; that of a theory of sexual desire, in relation to homosexuality, a theory of non identity-specific desire, and one which can touch the "best and most manly of characters", as Hitler said. To adopt this theory while resisting all stigma, demands radical changes within what Kate Millet terms "sexual politics",<sup>40</sup> a radicalism that I will outline in my conclusion.

#### Endnotes

<sup>26</sup> HANS PETER BLEUEL, Strength through Joy: Sex and Society in Nazi Germany, London, Secker and Warburg, 1973, 221. Quoted in STUART MARSHALL, The Contemporary Political Use of Gay History: The Third Reich, in "How do I look" ed. Bad Object-Choices. Bay Press, Seattle, 1991, p.76.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.* 76

<sup>28</sup> Heinrich Himmler quoted in BLEUEL, "Strength through Joy", 221.

<sup>29</sup> Heinrich Himmler quoted in FELIX KERSTEN, "The Kersten Memoirs, 1940-1945", New York, MacMillan, 1957, p.57.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> "non identity-specific desire" is a term used by STUART MARSHALL in "The Contemporary Political Use of Gay History", (see reference 26), where he coins the phrase to describe a desire which potentially cuts across the sexual divisions within our identity structures.

<sup>32</sup> By continuing to the present day I mean that as AIDS came into existence, it was almost immediately termed a gay plague; a scientific epidemiology was subsumed by a moral etiology. The initial terms of the virus were GRC (gay-related cancer), GRID (gay-related Immuno-deficiency). What is often forgotten, and dangerously so, is that the localization of what we now

call the HIV Retrovirus within communities composed of gay men, IV drug users or Haitians is no more phenomenal or unique than any other epidemic, such as Legionnaires Disease. But as I have said the preoccupation with etiology once again made homosexuality and disease synonymous. For a more indepth exploration of this see SIMON WATNEY in "AIDS: Cultural Analysis, Cultural Activism".

- 33 RUDOLF DIELS, quoted in BLEUEL, "Strength Through Joy", p.221.
- 34 By "femininity" here I refer to a sense of motherhood, and not role-playing (which does cut across gender). Himmler is quoted as saying "it would be a catastrophe if we foolish males wanted to make women into logically thinking instruments, if we try to masculinize them, well, there we conjure up the danger of homosexuality", "if a man just looks at a girl in America he can be forced to marry her or pay damages ... therefore men protect themselves by turning to homosexuals. Women in the USA are like battleaxes - they hack away at the males" (STUART MARSHALL, "The contemporary political political use of gay history"). This belief firstly builds a rigid code of behaviour for women and secondly suggests that all men are susceptible to homosexuality, in the absence of the feminine.
- 35 'object-choice' is a term used in "How do I look? Queer film and video", ed. Bad Object-Choices, Bay Press, Seattle, 1991. I use it, in this context, to refer to the danger of instead of identifying with the beautiful warrior, men could desire such beauty, seeing it as an object to be chosen rather than a state of being to be achieved.
- 36 Op.Cit, BLEUEL, "Strength through Joy", p.219.
- 37 Op.Cit, Himmler quoted in BLEUEL, "Strength through Joy".
- 38 MANFRED HERZER, "Nazis, Psychiatrists and Gays", New York, 1985, p. 1-5.
- 39 the term 'Imaginary' was proposed by JACQUES LACAN where he sees it as a necessary fiction that is required not only for the construction of the subject as a distinct from an external world of objects, but also in order for any political rallying and action to take place.
- 40 KATE MILLET, "Sexual Politics".



## CONCLUSION

And now to the opening line of this thesis; a new space for the notion of what we now term bisexuality within the field of sexual politics.

I began by tracing (through medical notions within anthropology, sexology and physiology) the instigation of research to identify and 'picture' the homosexual man. The result of this being the formulation of a distinct type of human, becoming "a personage, a past, a case history and a childhood ... a type of life, a life form and a morphology ... and possibly a mysterious physiology. Nothing that went into his total composition was unaffected by his sexuality, it was everywhere present in him"<sup>41</sup>. This construction of a homogenous homosexual identity, is important in that it's supposed isolation presented the possibility of a political activism. However, this construction has survived until the present day and this political activism has served only to reduce the stigma within a social order that has, almost consistently, throughout known history, worked to maintain that stigma, to varying degrees. This constitutional identity also prompted (almost) every political struggle within this century to position itself as a cultural/sexual minority, and since a minority can never become a majority, it has formed itself in relation to it's heterosexual counterpart. This system has generated the visibility of only two categories of sexual orientation. I have argued that heterosexuality, because of it's majority status has never been defined and that there is only a semblance of a heterosexual identity by way of the construction of what it is not; a homosexual identity (the former being legitimate and the latter being illegitimate/deviant). The logical conclusion of this being that any struggle to de-stigmatize and legitimize a homosexual identity is quixotic.

What I propose within sexual politics is a theory not of identity but of sexual desire; a non identity-specific desire. There is as little commonality within a homosexual identity as there exists in it's counterpart except that of sexual desire.

"Societies which accept homosexual behaviour as normal almost certainly have a higher proportion of men who have experimented

with homosexual activity than societies which regard homosexuality as abnormal, but tolerated, and societies which grudgingly tolerate homosexuality probably have a higher incidence of homosexual activity than societies where it is viciously persecuted".<sup>42</sup>

A.D. Harvey "Prosecutions for Sodomy"

If A.D. Harvey's conclusion holds weight, and I suspect that it does, the logical inference of this is that the tradition of the Homosexual Rights Movement (minority politics) can only hope to reduce stigma by increasing the visibility of the gay man, and that gay man can only have a homogenous identity. But this process of stigma-reduction is limited within societies which, with a historical overview in mind, seem to have a natural disinclination to accept homosexuality as a legitimate and alternative practice. The Homosexual Rights Movement can no longer employ devices which assume a racial distinction. Homosexuals are not a race. There is no particular commonality. There is no 'distinguishing feature'. This is something that Nazi Eugenic discourses on homosexuality recognized.

I believe it is only by deconstructing both of these sexual identities (homo- and hetero-), and by substituting this system with a theory of sexual desire, that all levels of stigma can be reduced. Such a substitution would also call into question the alliance of gays and lesbians within the traditional homosexual rights movement, since the only commonality is persecution, and not similarity. And it is only a theory of desire which can challenge the existence of a compulsory heterosexual identity, and this I see as being the greatest value of same-sex experiences within our culture.

When a theory of (non identity-specific) sexual desire is coupled with A.D. Harvey's comment above, it would constitute a fluid sexuality which is to a greater extent, indifferent to gender. With the obsolescence of terms such as 'gay' and 'straight', what we have called 'bisexuality' would no longer be seen as the bastard offspring, but would be the dominant orientation (or lack thereof), whether in theory or practice, and, due to the radical nature of this new theory, its initial term could only be one as aggressive as the word 'Queer'.



## Endnotes

- <sup>41</sup> Op. Cit. FOUCAULT, "The History of Sexuality, volume 1".
- <sup>42</sup> A.D. HARVEY, "Prosecutions for Sodomy in England at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century". The Historical Journal, Vol. 21 No.47, 1978, p.944.

## ILLUSTRATIONS REFERENCES

- Figure 1      HAVELOCK ELLIS "The Criminal" taken from The Oxford Art  
P.4              Journal, Volume 7, Number 2, 1984.

This illustrates the reference points for this preoccupation with deviance, as Casper and Tardieu struggled to find a method of identifying the sexual inverts to service a punitive judicial system. Their conviction to the belief of a homogenous homosexuality even extended to physiology, the resulting science being physiognomy. Photography as a novel instrument was seen to be necessarily objective and that any subjectivity on Havelock Ellis' behalf was supposedly thwarted by the nature of the medium.

- Figure 2      FRANCIS GALTON, "Inquiries into Human Faculty and its develop-  
P.6              ment", Oxford Art Journal, volume 7, No. 2, 1984.

Galton brings this conviction further in that he merges the photographs of his subjects to try and visualize the deviant, in this case, men convicted of crimes of violence. However his work involved many different subject types; Jews and family portraits (where genetic links made themselves obvious in the composite image) Etonian schoolboys and sexual inverts, or homosexuals (the photographs of the homosexual no longer exist, to my knowledge).

- Figure 3      Diagram from GLEICHGESCHLECHTLICHE HANDLUNGEN  
P.19              JUGENDLICHER, a doctoral dissertation by KARL WERNER  
                 GAUHL purporting to show the spread of homosexuality among Nazi  
                 Youth, 1940.

While this is an extraordinary piece of what can only be described as pseudoscience, it shows the distinction of the Nazi Doctrine. This being that homosexuality was not seen to be limited to particular type of person (psychologically or physically), but as an agent that could spread among healthy individuals, even those as upstanding as the Nazi Youth. This necessarily employs a metaphor of disease and illness, due to the deviance of such a condition. It also relates to the etiology provoked by the HIV retrovirus. By Etiology, I mean the preoccupation with the origin of the disease, as opposed to directing energies to either alleviating the suffering or developing a vaccine to combat the virus. This etiological fixation has also arisen in one of the best selling works to deal with AIDS to date: RANDY SHILTS', "And the band played on" (see reference No.21). In this, what can only be described as a novel, he elaborated on the notion of "Patient Zero"; Gaetan Dugas, a French-Canadian air steward, who 'picked up' the disease in Africa and 'spread' it throughout North America:



"What remains a mystery for most people is where AIDS came from and how it spread so rapidly through America. In the most bizarre story of the epidemic Shilts also found the man whom the CDC (Centre for Drug Control) dubbed the "Patient Zero" of the epidemic. Patient Zero, a French-Canadian airline steward was one of the first North Americans diagnosed with AIDS. Because he travelled through the gay communities of major urban areas, he spread the AIDS virus throughout the continent. Indeed, studies later revealed 40 of the first 200 AIDS cases in America were documented either to have had sex with Patient Zero or have had sex with someone who did".

Publicity Release from Shilt's Publisher, U.S., St. Martins Press.

In its immediate effect, as a best seller, the concept of a Patient Zero, a gay and promiscuous patient zero, reinforces the epidemiologically incorrect belief that the origin of such a virus is its cause. A patient zero such as Gaetan Dugas satisfies every loathful and fearful instinct felt against homosexuality, but more significantly, against homosexual people. It is much easier to find a lamb for the slaughter if the lamb is easily visible.

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