

The male homosexual

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Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Der Kreis : eine Monatsschrift = Le Cercle : revue mensuelle**

Band (Jahr): **34 (1966)**

Heft 1

PDF erstellt am: **22.07.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-567535>

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against the hostility about them—they flout the rules, sometimes in a rather blatant manner. The patients 'were unable to cope with the hostility' and fell mentally ill. The suggestion is that the kinds of behaviour that make people indignant, and the pressures that make the lives of many homosexual a misery could all be avoided if people were more sensible. Needless to say Mr Schofield argues strongly and cogently in favour of a change in the law.

W. J. H. Sprött

From «The Listener» London, Nov. 18th 65

Homosexual

SIR. — So the Wolfenden proposals are surfacing for air again. As a homosexual I am resigned to being degenerate, depraved, vicious, corrupt, obscene, evil, bestial, sick, pathetic, and misunderstood. A monster, pariah, criminal, child seducer, effeminate, irresponsible, immature, inadequate and immoral. A fairy pervert, pansy, pouff or ponce. But I'm confused. Neither in public nor private am I received with the contempt and veiled hostility that I ought to incur. Remarkably few people edge away and my friends treat me as a rather ordinary person. I'm often asked to look after the children (male) of a married couple while they go out for the evening. I once asked an exceeding heterosexual colleague who knows me well whether I should be imprisoned and after a moment of blank amazement he conceded that if my cell mate turned out to be attractive it might be worth my while. Maybe I'm too damned lazy to make a convincing sinner. Or could it be that generally people consider there are more important and interesting aspects of living to discuss or worry about than my deviation?

Bewildered

From «The New Statesman», London, June 11th 65

The Male Homosexual

Sir.,—Your printed discussion on male homosexuality (The Listener, January 28) has an especial interest for one like myself, who—although not 'angled' that way—has lived much of his life in the world of the arts, where homosexuals abound. Thus, my main surprise is that throughout the discussion it seems to have been assumed that homosexuality as such should either be prevented or 'cured'. But why, for heaven's sake, should these be the desiderata?

The fact that this 'state' is against the law, if physically practised, is of course an absurd reason to advance for its eradication! by the same token, female homosexuality, which is not illegal, should be immune from censure.

There are no valid moral grounds for trying to eradicate homosexuality except the words of certain moralists, based historically, no doubt,

upon the necessity of encouraging the growth of the tribe. I am sure the point about perverting youth will be raised here by some; but that is irrelevant, for the simple reason that all youth should be protected from such strong emotional appeals and persuasion until it is old enough to make up its mind; this would apply equally to 'incitement' to drink, take drugs, over-eat, etc., etc., as well as to heterosexual and homosexual seduction of the young by the older.

The idea that homosexuality should be eradicated for psychological or health reasons is perhaps the worst nonsense of all. If one looks at every deviation from the norm—whatever that is—as demanding correction, we should soon become a race of intellectual morons. The only homosexuals whom psychiatrists should aim to 'cure' are these who find their state too difficult to bear, and who wish to be 'cured'; and the cases of that trouble would be speedily reduced if the state itself were made legal. There would be no greater number of unhappy homosexuals than of unhappy men and women in any other group, and that is what matters.

For, let us face it, homosexuals of both sexes probably include a higher percentage of talented people than most other social groups. It makes not a particle of difference whether they are practising or not; many homosexuals—like other sexually nervous people—are too shy to embark on physical relationships.

The relative isolation in which homosexuals live, including the fact that they do not generally encumber themselves with families—we shall always have enough, if not too many, good breeders anyway—allows for a greater concentration of their creative talent, and (let it also be stressed) of their moral talent; for some of the morally finest priests, doctors, judges, writers and artists I have known personally, have been homosexuals of one sex or the other. Indeed, I am sometimes more than a little sad that I was not made (or caused to be made) that way myself, in view of the pain and punishment so often meted out to us 'ordinary' characters by the opposite sex.

Yours, ect., London, W.S

Charles H. Gibbs-Smith

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Sir,—Whatever may be the aetiology of homosexuality, male or female, or the extent of its incidence, the discussion in «The Listener» is helpful in serving to underline the urgency and desirability of reform of the law, as advocated by the Wolfenden Report; for reform of the law is not only a prerequisite of the full understanding of the problem but also of a healthier climate of sexual morality. Indeed, there is reason to believe that little more would be heard of the subject—as in the case of female homosexuality—if the law did not discriminate between the sexes, save only where the case involved a male below the age of consent, or where public decency was involved; as is the case, for example, in Italy.

Moreover, it is idle to try to maintain that male homosexual acts in private are more damaging sociologically than fornication and adultery, especially where the unwanted child and young girls are concerned. The

fact is that all sexual acts outside the marriage contract, be they heterosexual or homosexual, are undesirable for the health of society; and reform of the law, together with the prohibition of the exploitation by all means of propaganda of sexual excitation, would precisely serve this purpose.

Yours, etc., Eartham

Ewen Fairfax-Lucy

From «The Listener», London 1965

Sonnet

Men close the door on evening when the fire
Defies the crouching dark, the autumn chill,
And the dead day becomes an old desire
That stirred the blood which night now bids be still.
With random talk or solitary book—
Stranger to care—each in his safe abode
Lifts at the chimney wind, a dreaming look . . .
The world goes by unheard upon the road.

Men close the door on evening, but the heart
Cannot be closed to love, however fain
A man might be to see this guest depart
Into the lonely, black November rain.
Oh come you in, to holy supper spread!
Here is my hand . . . my hunger . . . and my bed.

by JIM RAMP

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot
change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom
to know the difference.