

38 — THE SEXUAL NEUROSES

III. Homoeroticism — Homosexuality

VI: SEXUAL FACTORS (Oliver 179)

[T]he child is bi-sexual until the fourth month.

Or to speak more accurately, it has the rudimentary organs of both sexes.

Then the development proceeds toward the final male or female type (O 184).

Hermaphrodites, as antiquity imagined them, do not exist. There may be malformation of the genital organs. But no matter how the external organs of the individual may look, the person in question is a man, because somewhere there are testicles; and because there are ovaries hidden away somewhere, the person is a woman (O 184).

But—and here is the important point—just as each sex has in it the rudimentary physical remains of the other, so in the mental sphere,—in the reactions of the integrated personality, there is no human personality that, in its characteristics, is purely and exclusively male or female (O 184-85).

38:0.1 In discussing homosexuality, we should recall that

the human embryo is bisexual until the fourth month,

and then, as anatomically observed, it begins definitely to turn toward maleness or femaleness

except in those rare cases where

the outward appearance of hermaphroditism persists.

We are compelled to recognize that

very few, if any, adolescents or adults are 100 per cent male or female, either physically or mentally.

Since each sex carries over in its adult development the rudimentary sex organs of the opposite one, is it strange that a certain percentage of the population show varying degrees of homosexual tendencies?

In times past, people used the word "homosexual" to denote women who were only sexually attracted to women, or men who were only attracted to men. Now "homosexual" is bad etymology; it is a half-breed word. One half, "homo," is Greek; sexual, is Latin. Nowadays, we use a thoroughbred word that is all Greek. We say "homoerotic" (O 185).

Some investigators have a theory of sex development that I must mention here. They believe that every individual passes normally through all three stages of sex development. The child, the pre-adolescent, who has no means of finding some sexual partner, is autoerotic (O 187).

During adolescence

the first wide social contacts are made, usually at school. This is the homoerotic period, the second stage, the period of intense emotional friendships of boys with boys or with older men, of girls with girls or with older women (O 187).

At the close of adolescence,

(I think it would be a good thing if we could secure the general adoption of the term homoerotic

as a substitute for the older homosexual.)

38:0.2 As a child grows up, it appears that it is at first exclusively autoerotic.

Then there is a period during preadolescence, and often extending over into adolescence,

in which a homoeroticism tendency prevails;

following this,

when social contacts broaden still more and when the sexes are no longer segregated at schools or colleges, then the ordinary individual passes out of the homoerotic stage and becomes **heteroerotic**, the girl-loving girl becoming a boy lover, and *vice versa*. [Etc.] (O 188)

in the vast majority of cases, the young man or young woman develops the normal attitude of **heteroeroticism**.

This undoubtedly occurs in the average case, but not universally.

1. Social Status

38:1.1 One point should be made clear:

This is a very ingenious theory. Unfortunately, I have not found that it is borne out by actual experience; for I have never come across a man or a woman, **congenitally** homoerotic, who could ever be made by any process into a heteroerotic personality (O 188).

The **congenital**, full-fledged homoerotic is never really cured.

Such a gloomy prognosis should not be made of many milder or partially homoerotic individuals,

[Now, **acquired** homosexuality is entirely different, and is quite readily curable... (William S. Sadler, M.D., *The Mind at Mischief*, p. 244).]

and in certain cases of **acquired** homoeroticism (if there is such a thing) there is certainly hope for rehabilitation.

VII: SEXUAL FACTORS (CONTINUED) (Oliver 223)

38:1.2 It is a pity that modern society takes such an unfortunate view of this abnormality. Why should these unfortunate men and women be so castigated by public opinion?

But of one thing we may be sure: homoeroticism is a *biological fact*. A woman is born with homoerotic desires. She is no more responsible for having them than she is responsible for having red hair instead of black. She was “born that way” (O 238).

[In the case of the inherited form a man seems to be born with a male body but with a female brain, as far as reactions to sex impulses are concerned; and so, in the opposite sex, we may have an individual with a woman’s body but with the brain reactions after the fashion of a male (William S. Sadler, M.D., *The Mind at Mischief*, p. 244).]

Alexander the Great, Michael Angelo and hundreds of other important names belong among the homoerotics on the male side,

while Rosa Bonheur, George Eliot, George Sand and hundreds of similar women, all with homoerotic traits, have been among the creative types—musicians, artists, writers (O 234).

Women are socially far freer in their homoerotic relationships than men. Society—the Law (except in Austria)—has always looked with a certain tolerance upon those friendships that are often called “Sapphic” ... (O 241).

And in the Code of Justinian, two crimes are punished by death by burning, not apparently because of their inherent wickedness, but because they are supposed to be especially hateful to God and to bring disasters, earthquakes, famines upon the land that harbors them—witchcraft and homoeroticism (O 236-37).

The full-fledged homoerotic is not responsible for being so born.

What can a man do if he happens to come into the world with a male body and, as far as sex is concerned, has a female attitude of mind and emotions?

Many notable individuals in history have been homoerotic, among them Alexander the Great and Michelangelo,

and among women could be mentioned George Eliot and George Sand.

Some day modern society must, and undoubtedly will, alter its attitude toward these sexually disinherited individuals.

Even now it seems, on the whole, to be much more tolerant of the female homoerotic than of the male.

38:1.3 The Code of Justinian provided the death penalty for both witchcraft and homoeroticism,

The **only** way to deal with homoeroticism is to **accept it**; to look upon it, if you please, as a kind of handicap, and by God's help, to use it constructively, to make it into an achievement (O 239).

Among men, most people understand by "Sodomy"—as the law and moral theology do, a "rectal coitus." This is quite inexact (O 239).

Actual penetration of the **rectum** is rare; **more** rare than in ordinary heteroerotic *marital intercourse*. Oral coitus, i.e., the use of the **mouth** and lips, is **no more common** in homoerotic male intercourse than in the promiscuous intercourse of men and women (O 239).

The great majority of male homoerotic acts is a **mutual masturbation**; or a placing of the penis between the thighs or legs, *coitus inter femora* (O 239).

but the **only** sane, scientific, and humane attitude is merely to **accept it**.

38:1.4 Another error of opinion that should be corrected is the general understanding as to what practices are embraced in the term **sodomy**.

It has been my observation that these so-called techniques of sex perversion, such as the use of the **rectum** and the **mouth** for sexual gratification,

are **no more generally practiced by homoerotics** than in the ordinary course of heteroerotic sex gratification.

Homoeroticism is very largely limited to some variation of the technic of **mutual masturbation**.

Of course there are exceptions in certain special cases, but in general that is the technic employed.

2. Female Homoerotics

I am sure that all of you have, at some time or other, met a happy homoerotic female pair. Very often, one of the partners is markedly feminine, while the other has evident masculine traits. In homoerotic slang, the female partner is called the “Margey,”

and the masculine partner, the “Collar and Tie” (O 240).

Not for a moment would I suggest that definite homoerotic acts take place between all the partners in such pairs. Far from it.

But the motive power that holds them together is a sexual one—a homoerotic one—even though the two women may live together as chastely as two nuns (O 240).

Let me warn you here against one danger—against giving one kind of advice to homoerotic women, a kind of advice which, if followed, usually leads to unhappiness and tragedy. When a homoerotic woman seeks you out in her difficulties, do *not* say to her, “My dear, all you need is to get married. Overcome your imagined repugnance to the male, and plunge boldly into matrimony. Then, all these peculiar desires of yours will find a natural outlet.”

38:2.1 Among female homoerotics a custom has grown up of calling the female partner to the companionship, “Margery”;

the masculine type, the “collar and tie”;

and it should be emphasized that

many of these homoerotic female couples lead lives of very close attachment but do not always go so far as to indulge in sex relations.

38:2.2 One thing is certain:

We should not advise these definite homoerotics, either men or women, to marry.

Let me relate a case in my own practice: A woman thirty-two years of age came to the office to consult me about her nervous system. On getting into the case, I found that she was homoerotic—homosexual; had been all her life. She was a stunning specimen of womanhood, somewhat athletic in her build, sang alto, had considerable hair on the upper lip—almost the proportions of a mustache. She had a keen mind, and held a chair in a select girls' school. She consulted me at this time because she wondered if she could be cured. She was inordinately jealous of her "Margery." Having come home unexpectedly one night not long before to find her homoerotic mate in bed with one of the students, she flew into a rage and, as she said, "almost committed double murder." This woman was just as outraged as any married man would be to come home unexpectedly and find his wife in bed with another man. This is all very real to these people—it constitutes their sex life. This woman was advised to make the best of her situation, and when she asked if it would help if she were to marry a man

It is far easier for the homoerotic woman to follow this advice than it is for the homoerotic man. In marital intercourse, the rôle of the woman is a passive one. If she hates the act, she can at least be quiet and endure it...

Therefore, wrong advice in these matters has sent many a homoerotic woman plunging blindly into matrimony (O 240-41).

(she thought she might endure sex relations with a male),

I strongly advised against such a course.

The case passed out of my observation for a few years, and then imagine my surprise on reading in a morning paper of the suicide of this woman by plunging out of a twelfth-story window of an apartment hotel. The newspaper carried the information that she had been married to a well-known professional man just three days previously. Inquiry disclosed that she consulted this man on a professional matter, and he became interested in her and pursued her assiduously; apparently thinking marriage might be an avenue of escape from her homoerotic life and all its accompaniment of fear and anxiety—fear of being discovered—she married him. It is evident that two or three nights of married life were sufficient to show her the wisdom of the advice I had previously given her. She saw no way out. She probably felt just as any man would if, after marrying a woman, he found he was supposed to live his life out and have sexual relations with a man—that he had been duped. It was too much for the poor woman; she had suffered greatly already; she decided to end it all.

38:2.3 These people really regard themselves as married and often become very domineering, the one with the other.

The “Collar and Tie” of a married “Margey”

is infinitely worse than the most dominating mother-in-law (O 241).

[For some obscure reason the effeminate homoerotic is known as a “fairy,” just as the boy or youth who has a masculine homoerotic partner is called a “punk” (O 253n).]

The “collar and tie” of a homosexually married “Margery,”

as someone has said,

often proves to be “worse than a mother-in-law,”

whereas the male “fairy” (male homoerotics are known as “fairies”)

[This masculine type always plays the dominating rôle in any sex relationship. But such a man tries to dominate his younger friend because he wants to raise him to his own level of manhood (O 249).]

So fathers and mothers, and school teachers too, need not be afraid of any “contamination” from homoerotic individuals (O 243-44).

I realize that these statements may be challenged. I can only say that in my rather long experience I have never come across a homoerotic woman whose homoerotism was artificially created by some homoerotic experience. Or any boy, who after some homoerotic friendship, became homoerotic on that account.

If one examines carefully the so-called cases of artificially induced homoerotism,

one will always find, I believe, in the patient’s early history, definite symptoms of homoerotism that were there, plain, for any one to see,

long before the actual homoerotic experience which is erroneously supposed to be the real cause of the patient’s present condition (O 244).

is equally domineering over his more passive partner.

3. Popular Misapprehensions

38:3.1 The time has come to relieve parents of their unjustified fears about the danger of their normal sons’ and daughters’ contacting with these homoerotics and thus being misled by unnatural sex relations.

I have yet to find a normal young man or woman who has been thus inducted into homoeroticism.

In all cases where boys and girls have apparently been initiated into a homosexual life in this way, careful investigation disclosed that

they were definitely homosexual in their tendencies

when they first met the one who was supposed have performed the rôle of homoerotic seducer.

Normal youths are not going to be made permanently homoerotic by any such casual contact with homosexual men and women,

In **prison**—where the men are all cut off from their normal intercourse with women—

there is plenty of temporary homoeroticism, simply as a means of escape, an artificial outlet for dammed-up sexual emotion (O 243).

If a boy, after an homoerotic friendship, **persists** during the rest of his life as a homoerotic, he has not been made into a homoerotic by his experience. He was **born a homoerotic** (O 244).

There are men who are only attracted to sex relations with children.

One is intensely sorry for such people. But the children must be protected as much as possible from **forcible sex experiences**. Therefore both homoerotic and heteroerotic must not invade the rights of minors; of those who are not legally able to consent to any sexual act (O 245).

which statement is borne out by the well-known tendency toward a certain degree of homoeroticism in the Army and Navy and under other conditions where men are compelled to be by themselves for long periods of time.

Under such circumstances,

as well as among the **prison** population,

auto-eroticism and homoeroticism are the generally practiced technics for obtaining sex relief.

I repeat, only those who are **born homoerotic** will **persist** in homosexual practices as the result of casual association with definitely homosexual individuals.

38:3.2 There is a peculiar type of homosexual man who is only attracted to those of his own sex or to very young **girls**, even little children;

the presence of such individuals in the community often accounts for

the **brutal assaults** on children,

but more frequently these men carry out their designs by luring the little girls to their apartments with candy and toys.

4. Society's Attitude

4.1 In most states in this country,

[contd] While speaking of legal restrictions, it may be well to point out that the reaction of the Law to homoeroticism is somewhat like that toward Divorce in the United States. It varies according to locality. The act that is a crime and punishable by five years' imprisonment in America,

is not punished at all in France, Italy, Belgium, Germany, and most European countries (O 245).

homosexuality is regarded as a crime punishable by five years' imprisonment.

It is not punished in France, Italy, Belgium or Germany.

38:4.2 Let it be made clear that homoerotics do not always show in their make-up the physical traits of the opposite sex—not by any means—and it therefore is impossible for the opposite sex to detect the fact that a chance companion may be homosexual in tendency.

At one end of the scale stands the homoerotic man who is so intensely and so completely masculine that he can find no place for women in his life at all... Physically, he is the best type of male animal, often an athlete—almost always what is called a “man's man.” ... Often, one has to smile behind one's hand

It would be all but laughable, if it were not so tragic,

when a woman is seen pursuing with her well-meant attentions a homoerotic male of unusual physical attractions. She will never get any reaction out of him. And yet she goes on trying all the harder (O 247-48).

Out of such men really great teachers, really powerful leaders of youth are made.

They are the men who gladly give their whole lives to youth, who remain as beloved masters in some great boarding-school, who spend their years as assistant deans of undergraduates, who squander all their free time on boys' clubs and other activities of a similar nature (O 249).

Sometimes they come to tragic ends. Sometimes, after years of continent service, their self-control slips.

And then some boy, who in reality would rather cut off his right hand than harm the man who has done so much for him, talks too freely, and unintentionally pulls down the roof over the head of his hero.

to observe a woman indulging her feminine wiles in the futile pursuit of a homoerotic male,

who may be a vigorous specimen of manhood, even an athlete, as is sometimes the case.

38:4.3 Many teachers in exclusive boys' schools are definitely homoerotic,

and I know that many of them are actuated by the highest motives;

that they give their lives to these boys in loving service

and with an emotional devotion that no ordinarily sexed male could possibly mobilize for such service.

As is to be expected,

every now and then these high-minded, self-sacrificing teachers slip.

They yield to the urge to make sex advances to some youth who, to them, is peculiarly attractive;

and then, oftentimes, the youth betrays this intimacy,

Then, there is a “scandal” (O 249).

and a scandal follows,

society seeming even more willing to forgive a man for rape than to condone a lapse of a homosexual nature.

38:4.4 Again the reader should be warned not to suspect that every man who is markedly effeminate or who sings tenor was necessarily born with homosexual tendencies.

Next to the masculine type comes the mildly effeminate homoerotic.... His mother may tell you that as a boy he always preferred to play with girls, to dress occasionally in girls' clothes, to play with dolls instead of with tin soldiers. Yet such symptoms do not always mean homoeroticism (O 250).

Such is not the case.

Neither are all women of masculine appearance and nonsoprano voices victims of homoeroticism.

There are, nevertheless, many homoerotics of [the effeminate] type ... who live their whole lives in constant terror lest their secret be discovered.

4.5 The *fear of these homosexual individuals of being discovered*, especially that of the male “fairy,”

And for all members of this class, the pastor as well as the social worker must have an abiding pity. For, among all types of homoerotic men, this effeminate type is the most despised, the most tormented, the most persecuted (O 252-53).

is sometimes pathetic.

Every few months they come to consult us, wondering what can be done. A prominent artist was in my office a few months ago, in abject terror, fearing that he had been observed coming out of the regular rendezvous where he periodically met his younger and equally homoerotic partner. Some fifteen years ago this man married an apparently thoroughly frigid female who was also an artist. He explained to her frankly his homosexual tendencies. They seem to be living together in a fairly normal manner, the wife fully understanding that he goes off once or twice a week to secure his sex relief in association with his "fairy" partner. She came to see me and told me she would do everything in her power to prevent the public from ever finding out that her husband was a homoerotic.

[The effeminate homosexual] may be arrested; he may be cruelly "beaten up" by some **blackmailer** (O 251).

In the large cities **blackmailing** "racketeers" regularly prey upon these homoerotic males.

5. Attitude of Parents and Teachers

38:5.1 The attitude of parents and teachers in becoming alarmed over the attention of a homoerotic to some young man should largely depend on what appears to be the discoverable motive of the homosexual man.

If you are disturbed by gossip about some man in your parish, or in your social group, about his influence on the older boys, examine a little his influence on the boy in whom he seems most interested. If he is **really interested** in this boy's welfare, if he is willing to sacrifice his own ease, to go without small luxuries in order to help the boy;

Is he **really interested** in the boy and trying to do him some good, to secure some vicarious or sublimated emotional satisfaction in a ministry of idealism,

if, in a word, the boy can say, "I am really better off for knowing him," then, I think you will do no harm if you permit that relationship and others like it to continue.

On the other hand, I should be inclined to **interfere** if the older man were merely **showering a boy with presents** that cost him nothing, merely paying him, in the form of gifts, the price that every **prostitute** or demi-virgin demands (O 254).

or is he "courting" the boy? Does he **give him costly presents**? Is he trying to make him a homoerotic "**prostitute**"?

If the latter, parents and teachers are fully justified in **intervening**, but if not, they should be patient, human, recognizing that

[footnote] I do not think that many men can attain to the objective judgment of a man of my acquaintance. This man had a son who was rather delicate, shy, backward, not athletic. He sent him to a well-known school. Here the boy came under the influence of one of the younger masters.... It was found that the young [master] had had sexual relations with two or three of the older boys. Knowing that my friend's son had been intimate with the young master, the headmaster sent for my friend and told him of the master's "scandalous behavior." My friend said, "I think, Sir, that you'll make a mistake if you lose that young man from your staff. I don't know what the fathers of the other boys, with whom he has behaved scandalously, would say, but I should like to say this. When my boy came this school, he was a good deal of a sissy, he couldn't swim, or play games. He was shy, and introspective. During the two years of Mr. X's influence over him, my boy has become a different person. He has learned to swim, to play games. He can hold up his own end among other boys. He has become more of a man.

such an individual may do this boy a great deal of good,

may compensate for some of the things that his own father has failed to do because he has been so busy making money.

Remember this: If the boy is thoroughly normal

You say that Mr. X has probably had with him what you call scandalous relations. Very well. You may think me strange, but I don't mind. Mr. X is a clean, good-looking, well-developed young fellow. My boy must meet sexual experiences in one way or another. And I had rather that he had his first sexual experiences in the arms of a decent fellow like Mr. X, than in the lap of some diseased chamber-maid or the skirts of a neighbor's sexually starved daughter. What my boy has gained, in manhood, from Mr. X has been, I consider, very cheaply bought" ... (O 254-55).

and this homoerotic goes so far as to attempt sex relations,

the lad will probably forsake him cold; and even if he should, because of affection for this man, yield a few times, he will not go on with such a procedure unless he is himself definitely homoerotic.

38:5.2 While he can hardly be classed as a homoerotic, we must not overlook, in our study of these forms of irregular sex indulgence, the existence of

Still lower down in the scale is the young, good-looking man, who hangs about older women, who travels around with them as "secretary" (O 256).

the male "prostitute" who parades as "secretary" to some rich woman who happens to be highly sexed and at the same time unmarried or widowed.

38:5.3 A teacher recently came to the office, worried to death lest his associates find out that he is homosexual and he lose his position in disgrace. He could neither sleep nor eat, worrying over this. He was greatly relieved to learn how a psychiatrist viewed his predicament and decided to go back, to be more careful, and to do less worrying about his unfortunate hereditary endowment. This man looked like a perfectly normal masculine type of humanity. He is wholly homoerotic, always has been, and always will be. He was definitely advised against marriage and told to avoid promiscuity in his male contacts, to limit his attentions to a single individual who seems to be as definitely homoerotic as himself and as fully satisfied with their relations as he is; we set before him the ideal of keeping his hands off all his male pupils. There was no necessity to admonish him about the female pupils; he will leave them entirely alone.