

Re-evaluating the French Gay Liberation Moment 1968-1983

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Abstract

The thesis offers a reappraisal of the process of 'liberation' for homosexual men in France from the events of May 1968 until the onset of the AIDS crisis in 1983. I argue that what we have come to call gay liberation was in fact a complex and contentious process of transformation in the place of homosexual men in French society, a decade marked as much by continuity as it was by change.

Gay liberation has been previously understood as a political movement that brought the gay man onto the political stage in spectacular fashion, beginning in the US and sweeping across Western Europe. New political activism is said to have provoked the changes that led to legal equality, culminating in recent marriage legislation. This narrative has solidified into a liberation 'mythology', written mainly by activists themselves, replete with its founding events, language and metaphors. A re-evaluation of the 1970s as a historical moment reveals not the beginning of a triumphant march to equality led by activists, but a transformation in the place of homosexual men in society that contains its own fits and starts, successes and dead ends.

The thesis is divided into three parts: Ruptures, continuities and life stories. Part one focuses on aspects of change, the emergence of radical political groups and the burgeoning market catering to gay men. The second part moves to aspects of continuity: the repression of homosexual activity and the persistent stereotyping of homosexuality as the realm of a Parisian literary elite. To close the thesis, part three uses oral history to consider the life stories of men who experienced the period.

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List of acronyms

ACT UP – Aids Coalition to Unleash Power.

CAPR – *Comité d'Action Pédérastique Révolutionnaire* (Committee for Revolutionary Pederastic Action).

CHA – *Comités Homosexuels d'Arrondissement* (District Homosexual Committees).

CUARH – *Comité d'Urgence Anti-Repression Homosexuelle* (Emergency Committee against Homosexual Repression).

FHAR – *Front Homosexuel d'Action Révolutionnaire* (Homosexual Front for Revolutionary Action).

GLH – *Groupe(s) de Libération Homosexuelle* (Homosexual Liberation Group(s)).

GLH-14 Décembre – *Groupes de Libération Homosexuelle-14 Décembre* (Homosexual Liberation Group – 14th December).

GLH-PQ – *Groupe de Libération Homosexuelle-Politique et Quotidien* (Homosexual Liberation Group – Politics and Everyday Life).

GLH-GB – *Groupe de Libération Homosexuelle-Groupes de Base* (Homosexual Liberation Group – Basic Groups).

IHR – *Internationale Homosexuelle Révolutionnaire* (International Homosexual Revolutionaries).

LCR – *Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire* (Communist Revolutionary League).

MLF – *Mouvement de Libération des Femmes* (Women's Liberation Movement).

PCF – *Parti Communiste Français* (French Communist Party)

PS – *Parti Socialiste* (Socialist Party)

RTL – *Radio Télévision Luxembourg* (Luxembourg Radio and Television)

Introduction

'Le terme homosexuel me hérise. Celui d'homophile encore plus. Moi je suis "hémophile"! je crois qu'il y a des êtres paumés et des êtres pas paumés, des êtres qui veulent se libérer et d'autres qui ne veulent, ou ne peuvent pas.'¹
Jean-Daniel Cadinot, director, interview with *Nouvel Homo* magazine, June 1976.

'Aujourd'hui plus personne ne s'organise autour de cette vague notion de "liberté sexuelle" sauf les gais pour la leur seule.'²
Jean Le Bitoux, editor of *Gai Pied*, writing in his magazine, 1982

'Enfin ça y est; et maintenant, je me sens libéré. J'accepte d'être celui que je suis; et là je me trouve aussi bien que n'importe qui. Je n'ai pas choisi d'être homosexuel, tout simplement... Je pense même, en tant que chrétien, que Dieu m'a voulu ainsi.'³
Letter from 'Jean-Philippe' to *David et Jonathan*, the journal of a homosexual Christian association, 1982.

A director of gay pornographic films questioning the value of labels; a disillusioned liberation activist; and a joyful Christian letter-writer: all expressing different relationships to the notion of 'gay liberation', an idea which had come to permeate the thinking and actions of men who felt sexual attraction to other men in the 1970s. These different views, all expressed towards the end of a decade of liberation politics, show the mutability of the concept. Was liberation a purely sexual phenomenon? Did it mean coming to terms with a fixed homosexual identity? Or was it primarily a political intervention? Was liberation to be achieved on the streets, in the bars, or in the mind?

¹ Jean Daniel Cadinot, 'Jean Daniel Cadinot fait le point,' *Nouvel Homo*, June 1976, 47.

² Jean Le Bitoux, 'Le papier du mois,' *Gai Pied*, September 1982, 5.

³ 'Jean-Philippe,' letter, *David et Jonathan*, Summer 1982, 23.

As shall be seen, to many contemporaries, the 1970s was period of unprecedented transformation in the place of homosexual men in French society. And in this sense, France follows much of Western Europe and the United States. But as the extracts above show, the meaning of this change was unclear. A generation later, our vision of the decade is more likely to be presented primarily as a discrete moment of political radicalism and sexual abandon glimpsed between the closeted sixties and the tragedies of the HIV-AIDS crisis. This 'liberation moment' has been smothered by metaphors of 'coming out of the closet', increasing visibility, and the crystallisation of same-sex attraction into a fixed gay identity. It is read as a pivotal moment that marks the beginnings of a march towards legal and social equality, driven primarily by political activism that reaches its apogee in recent legislation for gay marriage.⁴

For many men in France, it was clear that the 1970s had brought change to their lives - indeed, that such a wide diversity of expression around homosexuality is readily available to us is evidence of that - but the extent and meaning of this change was unclear to them. When we look closely at the experience of homosexual men in France we see not a simple increase in visibility and social acceptance, but a complex mesh of change and continuity in how men relate to their own sexual identity and how wider society treated them. This thesis will recover the socio-cultural history of homosexual men in order to explore this transformation in the status of homosexuality in French society in the long 1970s. In doing so, I will offer an account of 'gay liberation' as an ambiguous

⁴ See for instance Frédéric Martel's illustrated work for a popular audience that takes up this metaphor as its title and guiding principle, *La longue marche des gays* (Paris: Gallimard, 2002).

and historically contingent process, rather than as a teleological narrative of increasing equality – an ambiguous ‘transformation’ as opposed to a triumphant ‘liberation’.

Political change in France in the 1970s

The national context in which these divergent notions of liberation were expressed was fraught with economic, social and moral change. A spirit of contestation in the wake of the student and workers’ protests of May 1968 was the preface to a decade of economic crisis and political turbulence, as thirty years of economic growth and prosperity came to a stuttering end. The political and cultural historian Jean-François Sirinelli has identified the twenty years between 1965 and 1985 as a decisive period in French postwar history: ‘1965-1985 est une phase historiquement ambivalente; elle est grosse d’avenir et de progrès mais aussi porteuse de contradictions telles que l’avenir annoncé s’en trouva perturbé et que le progrès promis prit d’autres formes que celles initialement prédites.’⁵ These years span the hope and disappointment of the late 1960s, which culminated in the revolutionary attempts of 1968, and the beginning of a new economic and political settlement in the mid-1980s. The sociologist Henri Mendras believed that the social changes wrought in the two decades after 1965 were far-reaching enough to represent a second French Revolution.⁶ Change was extensive, but it was also contested. The 1970s was a

⁵ Jean-François Sirinelli, *Les vingt décisives 1965-1985: le passé proche de notre avenir* (Paris: Fayard, 2007), 41.

⁶ Henri Mendras, *La seconde révolution française* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988).

time of competing political futures after the failure of revolution in 1968 and the disappearance of de Gaulle from the political scene a year later.

Political uncertainty was compounded by economic crisis. Just as France moved into a new post-Gaullist future, the nation was rocked by the first oil shock of 1973 and the second in 1979. After this second shock, the economist Jean Fourastié coined the phrase *les Trente Glorieuses* ('Glorious Thirty') to describe the unprecedented economic growth in the three decades after the Second World War. There was much cause for celebration in the advances made in these years, but by naming and defining them, Fourastié was consigning them to the past, declaring that France was now entering 'le fin des temps faciles.'⁷ Fourastié's work was a part of a slow coming to terms with a new society during these years.

Anxiety became a dominant emotional state in the nation. After the first oil shock, at the close of 1974, a survey entitled 'Les Français face à leur avenir' was conducted by the agency Sofres for the weekly centrist news magazine *L'Express*. The survey found that sixty-five per cent of those surveyed thought that 1975 would be a bad year for them and their family. Forty per cent believed there was a serious risk that rationing could be reintroduced.⁸ A week later, the magazine published a further survey showing that anxiety was swelling around prices and unemployment.⁹ The surveys show a growing realization that the growth and prosperity of the post-war years were transitory rather than

⁷ Jean Fourastié, *Les Trente Glorieuses ou la révolution invisible* (Paris: Fayard, 1979), 255.

⁸ Sofres-L'Express, 'Les Français face à leur avenir,' *L'Express*, December 2, 1974, 80.

⁹ Interopinion, 'Le baromètre de la France,' *L'Express*, December 9, 1974, 74.

permanent. And although at this point moral questions were further from people's minds – only sixteen per cent were fearful of 'la dégradation des valeurs morales' – questions of sexual morality would play an increasingly important role in the decade.¹⁰

After the sudden death of Georges Pompidou in April 1974, President Giscard d'Estaing used his electoral success to attempt a break with the social conservatism of his predecessors. Giscard announced a policy of *décrispation* (relaxation) with regards to social questions in order to create what he called his new 'société libérale avancée.'¹¹ Giscard's early presidency was dominated by a flood of reform designed to tackle the moral questions produced by the 1960s. Giscard would particularly point to his legalisation of abortion, legislation for no-fault divorce, the lowering the age of majority from twenty-one to eighteen and the abolition of censorship in the cinema.¹² However, this reformist zeal was not to last, and Giscard's government came under increasing pressure from a restive right wing and economic difficulties; the combination of which forced put pressure on Giscard's characteristic mixture of liberal reform and reactionary conservatism under increasing pressure by the end of his seven-year term.¹³

¹⁰ Interopinion, 'Le baromètre,' 74.

¹¹ Emile Chabal, 'French Political Culture in the 1970s: Liberalism, Identity Politics and the Modest State,' *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 42 (2016): 252.

¹² Overview and analysis of these reforms, with Giscard's own commentary, can be found in Serge Berstein and Jean-François Sirinelli, eds., *Les années Giscard: Les réformes de la société 1974-1981* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2007).

¹³ For an assessment of Giscard's political contradictions and the increasing crisis of his term see Mathias Bernard, *Valéry Giscard d'Estaing: Les ambitions déçues* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2014), 297-302.

As Giscard's advanced liberal society hit the harsh reality of the 1970s, so did the utopic political projects that had culminated in the events of May 1968. Briefly emboldened by the possibility of revolution in 1968, intellectual life on the left gradually fell into a state of confusion and uncertainty. Marxism began to lose its intellectual force as the late 1970s saw the emergence of an 'anti-totalitarian' critique of communism; and the appearance of the heavily mediatised *nouveaux philosophes* hastened a diversification in intellectual life and a repudiation of the events of 1968.¹⁴ Not everyone abandoned faith in *soixante-huitard* ideals. As François Mitterrand moved further and further from the socialism of his early term, the journalist and activist Guy Hocquenghem lamented the complicity former revolutionaries, who were now the 'néo-bourgeois des années 80, les maos-gauchos-contestos crachant sur leur passé ont profité de l'hypocrisie nationale que fut le pouvoir socialiste.'¹⁵

Yet, as the domination of the grand political narratives of Gaullism and communism broke down, other visions of France became possible. Sirinelli argues that the 'mental universe' of the French underwent a shift in this period towards an openness to diversity: 'parallèlement à l'aspiration à l'assimilation par la ressemblance, qui, d'une certaine façon, fondait le pacte républicain et avait cimenté la société française, on vit notamment apparaître en ces années post-1968 le thème de la revendication du droit à la différence.'¹⁶ This change, made possible by the economic prosperity of the preceding years and the political claims of the late 1960s, was essential in opening a window for the

¹⁴ Michael Scott Christofferson, *French Intellectuals Against the Left: The Antitotalitarian Moment of the 1970s* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004).

¹⁵ Guy Hocquenghem, *Lettre ouverte à ceux qui sont passés du col Mao au Rotary* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1986), 13.

¹⁶ Sirinelli, *Les vingt décisives*, 127-8.

transformation of homosexual experience. The 1970s was thus a decade of great change in France, but the shape and direction of this change was utterly unforeseeable in the immediate aftermath of May 1968.

Historicising the 1970s

Since the turn of the millennium, the 1970s have entered the historical frame. In his description of the decade, Sirinelli uses the image of a polder: a piece of low-lying land, dammed and drained to reveal submerged terrain.¹⁷ Just as the polder is made visible by its bordering dams, the 1970s are made distinct by the historical events that border the decade: May 1968 and the election of the Fifth Republic's first socialist president. Any history of the societal transformations that developed in the wake of May 1968 implicitly deals with the legacy of those mercurial events.¹⁸ Since the 1990s there has been a tendency to view the legacy of 1968, and the shifts in society in the 1970s more broadly, in binary terms of success and failure – were the ideals that drove the revolt fulfilled or betrayed?

In his study of the 1960s, Arthur Marwick emphasises the deep cultural transformations that the sixties had on France and the West more broadly, seeing in this development a 'cultural revolution' that 'established the enduring cultural values and social behaviour for the rest of the century'.¹⁹ On the other

¹⁷ Jean-François Sirinelli, *Comprendre le XXe siècle français* (Paris: Fayard, 2005), 39.

¹⁸ For an overview of the recent historiography of May 1968, see Julian Jackson, 'The Mystery of May 1968,' *French Historical Studies* 33, no.4 (2010): 625-653.

¹⁹ Although gay liberation politics might have proved a very useful example to prove the extent to which Marwick's 'cultural revolution' of the long sixties had begun to overturn taboos, in fact he has little positive to say about their 'special pleading'. Gay liberation politics' only redeeming feature being the entertaining street theatre that it produced, which comes rather too close to the stereotype of homosexual-as-entertainer to be taken seriously. Arthur

hand, a more pessimistic viewpoint on the trajectory of politics after 1968 is given by the sociologist Jean-Pierre Le Goff who views the irruption of diverse groups bound by their own collective identities and seeking their own liberation as a 'crumbling' of the revolutionary project of '68. This is the moment at which the gap between 'political leftism' (concentrating on the condition of the working class) and 'cultural leftism' (the new social movements) becomes finally too wide to ignore. In this account, these groups represent a squandering of radical heritage rather than its realisation. Le Goff reserves special venom for the women's movement, accusing the *Mouvement de Libération des Femmes* (MLF) of being 'le ferment destructeur du gauchisme organisé'.²⁰ Contemporary militants were, according to Le Goff, mistaken when they viewed this weakening of the foundations of leftism as proof of the richness and diversity of the movement.

Other 'pessimistic' accounts concentrate not on the wayward trajectory of leftist politics after 1968, but the aberrant ways in which the events are remembered. This work sees aberration in the memory and popular narrative of May, rather than in the errors of the Revolutionaries themselves. In her 2002 book on the narratives produced by May, Kristin Ross sees the 'cultural' heritage of May as being falsely mobilised as part of a ruse to smother the radical workerist nature of the events.²¹ Rather than considering the relationship of these movements to 'May', or how 1968 could be seen as having a radical 'afterlife' in these cultural

Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy and the United States, c.1958-c.1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 806, 727-732.

²⁰ Jean-Pierre Le Goff, *Mai 68: L'héritage impossible* (Paris: Editions La Découverte, 1998), 297.

²¹ Kristin Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 152-3.

movements, Ross decides that they have been co-opted into an 'official narrative' that surrounds May '68. In a similar vein, Chris Reynolds has attacked the 'convenient consensus' that May '68 represented not a serious crisis of the state but a '*bon-enfant* tantrum led principally by a spoilt generation of Parisian students intent on wreaking havoc during a period of... political and economic stability.'²² Framed in this way, the deep critiques of capitalist society produced by the events are easier to dismiss.

Albeit from different angles, all these pessimistic viewpoints on the consequences of 1968 tend to combine the range of new political and social movements that emerged in the early 1970s under the label of a 'cultural' '68. But rather than a simple grouping of related movements, this 'cultural' '68 is in fact very diverse, defying easy generalisation. The historian of contemporary France Michelle Zancarini-Fournel has identified a 'galaxy of social movements', from feminists to radical viticulturists, gay activists to regional separatists.²³ Some of these groups had shared roots, where others have no clear connection. This rhetorical tendency to group even the most disparate groups under the 'cultural' heritage of May reinforces the use (and abuse) of these new movements as symbols of either a bright future for the left or the beginning of the end for leftism. It is as though the left had never before been a composite political entity.

²² Chris Reynolds, *Memories of May '68: France's Convenient Consensus* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011), 5.

²³ Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, *Le moment 68: Une histoire contestée* (Paris: Seuil, 2008), 11-12.

Rather than an undifferentiated mass, the new political movements had their own political heritages and relationships to each other and to the broader left. The division between 'political leftism' and 'cultural leftism' was not a simple case of hoary-handed trade unionists ranged against youthful proponents of the counter-culture. There was much overlap between the 'political' and the 'cultural', to a point that such distinctions begin to break down. Both these currents of the left were subject to the same mutations that were occurring in wider intellectual thought. As described by Julian Bourg, this was a trajectory characterised by an initial dabbling in the radical consequences of a world without laws or limits, and which evolved to a consideration of a diverse range of ethical questions as the hope of Revolution faded, one of the strongest currents of which was thinking around sex and desire.²⁴

Gay activism in history

The notion of a triumphant eruption and eventual success of a new type of liberating politics originates at the birth of 'cultural leftism' itself. From the outset, these groups proclaimed themselves a new phenomenon, erasing the movements which preceded them. Announcing the arrival of the *Mouvement de Libération des Femmes* (MLF) in France, the leftist review *Partisans* proclaimed 1970 as the 'année zéro' of women's liberation.²⁵ The founding of the *Front Homosexuel d'Action Révolutionnaire* (FHAR) in 1971 was also taken to be the starting point of a homosexual political movement. Jaques Girard, an activist who published one of the first accounts of homosexual activism in the

²⁴ Julian Bourg, *From Revolution to Ethics: May 1968 and Contemporary French Thought* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), 105-174.

²⁵ MLF, 'Libération des femmes: année zéro,' *Partisans*, July-October 1970, 1.

1970s, saw the creation of the FHAR in 1971 as the founding moment of homosexual politics: 'La vague soudaine et brusque du FHAR, dans l'après-mai 68, a entraîné les homosexuels à sortir des profondeurs; c'est la naissance du mouvement homosexuel en France.'²⁶ Like the MLF's proclamation, Girard's account not only exaggerates the importance of the group, but also erases a longer history of organisation.²⁷ This interpretation of an unstoppable wave is repeated by Frédéric Martel fifteen years later in one of the first histories of the homosexual movement in the period, where he describes a 'militant explosion' occurring across the decade.²⁸ These narratives feed into the historiography of May '68 as a 'Big Bang' (that produced Zancarini-Fournel's 'galaxy' of movements) an optimistic trajectory that implies continuous expansion.

These initial assessments of the trajectory of liberation politics in the 1970s continue to dominate the historiography of the period. The history of gay liberation politics in France, as well as in Anglo-Saxon historiography, has been dominated by the writing of a generation of activists who had direct involvement in the events and debates of the period. This has produced an important, yet problematic, body of literature. Its main historiographical thrust is to place the youthful activism of its authors at the epicentre of change. The activist and journalist Jean Le Bitoux's memoir *Citoyen de second zone* is typical in its slip from personal action and experience to a broader historical processes:

²⁶ Jacques Girard, *Le mouvement homosexuel* (Paris: Editions Syros, 1981), 183.

²⁷ The history of the important homophile group Arcadie was recovered by Julian Jackson in *Living in Arcadia: Homosexuality, politics and morality in France from the Liberation to AIDS* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

²⁸ Frédéric Martel, *The Pink and the Black: Homosexuals in France since 1968* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 79.

'Nous nous sommes lancés à corps perdu dans des rencontres nationales, des lieux d'entraide, des moments de visibilité, des positions politiques et des festivals de films. La culture de l'esquive nourrie par la peur, l'injure, la honte, le lynchage ou le fichage semblait avoir fait son temps... j'étais persuadé que jamais plus des pans entiers d'obscurité ne viendraient entraver notre dynamique ascendante.'²⁹

Similarly, in the British context, the sociologist and activist Jeffrey Weeks saw the limitations of the movement of which he was a part, but still ascribed to it great transformational power: 'Although the promise was illusory and only a minority of gay people were directly affected even in the early days, the effect of the movement that the GLF triggered off was deep *and* liberating.'³⁰ This is an elision between their demands for change, and the change that actually took place. Minority activism certainly has a place in processes of change, as shall be shown, yet we must avoid the elision that these activist-historians make in the telling of their own history.

The centrality of activism in the history of gay male experience post-1968 has been emphasised by recent academic scholarship which attempts to explain the legal successes of the past ten years by working backwards into the 1970s. Histories that privilege a narrow conception of the political and take as their starting point the successes of activism have a tendency towards selective

²⁹ Jean Le Bitoux, Hervé Chevaux and Bruno Proth, *Citoyen de seconde zone: trente ans de lutte pour la reconnaissance de l'homosexualité en France 1971-2002* (Paris: Hachette, 2003), 406.

³⁰ Jeffrey Weeks, *Coming Out: Homosexual Politics in Britain, from the Nineteenth Century to the Present* (London: Quartet Books, 1977), 185. Emphasis his.

memory. These histories see a simple relationship between positive change and activist engagements, whilst simultaneously forgetting more difficult aspects (such as the inclusion of paedophilia in the claims of liberation movements), and foregoing any responsibility for what they see as the negative aspects of change. For instance, a recent work by the political scientist Massimo Prearo takes as its starting point Paris's gay community centre, the *Centre LGBT* in Beaubourg, and asks how the politics that underpin such a centre were produced.³¹ To do this he attempts to uncover the history of the discourse of the centre, through the publications of the gay and lesbian political groups which preceded it. Prearo's methodology, restricted entirely to the publications of activist groups, unwillingly produces a unidirectional history of homosexual political activism that is too focused on explaining the discursive productions of contemporary activist groups to consider the broader questions of sociability and life experience that underpinned past interventions. This is a model which implies that (often very marginal) political discourse is the sole engine of a very broad and complex change in sexual identity.

These histories are perhaps even more prevalent in Anglo-American historiography. The historian Lillian Faderman's *The Gay Revolution* traces the trajectories of the enormous number of groups that made up the gay and lesbian movement in the US, their interaction with the state and their struggle for legal change. This is an important history, but when Faderman claims that 'the arc of the moral universe has been bending toward justice' we are meant to believe that the force needed was solely exerted by activists, rather than being a part of

³¹ Massimo Prearo, *Le moment politique de l'homosexualité: mouvements, identités et communautés en France* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 2014), 41.

a broader socio-cultural phenomenon.³² In a similar project, Weeks attempts to explain the 'world we have won'; he is keen to avoid a 'Whig interpretation of sexual history', in which positive changes are inevitable and sexual liberation is unidirectional and unproblematic in its results.³³ However, despite broadening and complicating his notion of what kind of sexual liberation has taken place, Weeks still places a small group of activists at the centre of this change: '[Gay liberation] passed most of the lesbian and gay world, let alone the wider population, by during most of the 1970s. But what it did was to provide the cultural context for a mass coming out of homosexuality, and to provide a new and more positive context for the shaping of self in new collective worlds.'³⁴ No explanation is provided for how a marginal political movement overcame relative obscurity to enact such wide-ranging change.

This concentration on the 'properly' political - the official publications and pronouncements of formally organised groups - is perhaps unsurprising when we take into account the long struggle that gay liberation groups had in convincing the left that homosexuality was legitimate political territory; and the concomitant struggle to legitimise gay and lesbian history within the academy.³⁵ These struggles have produced a tendency to concentrate on ideology at the expense of the social aspects of groups, in order to convince the mainstream left and the academy of their 'seriousness'. Activists may have aimed for the

³² Lillian Faderman, *The Gay Revolution: The Story of the Struggle* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2015), 635.

³³ Jeffrey Weeks, *The World We Have Won* (London: Routledge, 2007), 4.

³⁴ Weeks, *The World*, 83.

³⁵ This struggle for legitimacy is described in Jeffrey Escoffier's *American Homo: Community and Perversity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) 99-185.

personal to become political in the 1970s, but the writing of history has led to the political taking precedence in the accounts of the period.

Of course, the interventions of activists cannot be ignored or excluded from history, replaced by another mono-causal explanation for a complex and contested process. Rather, activism should be put in proper context as a part of, rather than central to, the more contingent change that did take place. One way in which we can help to unchain the gay movements from the explanatory weight placed upon them would be to look beyond their political discourse to questions of sociability, and the experience of belonging to an activist group, to gain a fuller picture of their function and organisation.³⁶

The history of homosexuality in French Republican context

If the 1970s is now becoming an object of history, the history of sexuality is also slowly moving into the academic mainstream in France, albeit via roundabout means. The history of sexuality, and gay and lesbian history more precisely, has for a long time been a field dominated by historians publishing in English. This is despite the fact that, like Britain and the United States, France experienced an early flourishing of histories of homosexuality published mainly outside of the academy.³⁷ Pioneers such as Marie-Jo Bonnet, Claude Courouve, Pierre

³⁶ This approach has been taken recently by Celia Hughes in relation to British men involved in activism in the 1960s. Celia Hughes 'Young socialist men in 1960s Britain: Subjectivity and Sociability', *History Workshop Journal* 73 (February 2012): 170-192; the experience of participating in feminist movements can be found in Annie de Pisan and Anne Tristan, *Histoires du MLF* (Paris: Calmann-Levy, 1977).

³⁷ Robert Nye compares the trajectory of the history of sexuality in France with the American context in Robert Nye, 'Regard sur vingt ans de travaux: le *Journal of the History of Sexuality*,' *Clio* 31 (2010): 239-266. For a description of how the influence of French theorists such as Michel Foucault spread in the United States, see: Françoise Cusset, *French Theory:*

Hahn and Maurice Lever undertook historical research on sexual identity and homosexual cultures in France in the 1970s and 1980s.³⁸ This early history was concerned with furthering the aims of gay liberation by demonstrating the existence and the oppression of homosexuals in the past. These aims bolstered the demands of liberation groups by proving the legitimacy of homosexual identities which were historically rooted, and by confirming their analysis of a capitalist modernity hostile to sexual deviance.

However, this early work in France was not followed by an institutionalisation of gay and lesbian history on the same scale as Britain or the United States, and institutional resistance remains, especially to recent interventions of queer theory. Yet the relative lack of work in the history of sexuality in France must not be overstated. Nor must the differing configuration of the French academy be used to make crude points about 'backwardness'. Indeed, in recent years, the French academy has produced ground-breaking work on homosexuality in the early twentieth century.³⁹ Sociologists working on sexuality continue to produce research based on archival sources which contribute to the study of history, such as recent work on the history of paedophilia.⁴⁰ Legal scholars such as Daniel Borrillo and Marcela Iacub have done much to advance our

Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze & Cie et les mutations de la vie intellectuelle aux Etats-Unis (Paris: Editions la Découverte, 2003).

³⁸ See for instance: Marie-Jo Bonnet, *Un choix sans équivoque : Recherches historiques sur les relations amoureuses entre les femmes XVIe-VVe siècle* (Paris: Denoël, 1981); Claude Courouve, *Les assemblées de la manchette: Documents sur l'amour masculin au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: C. Courouve, 1987); Pierre Hahn, *Nos ancêtres les pervers: La vie des homosexuels sous le Second Empire* (Paris: O. Urban, 1979); Maurice Lever, *Les bûchers de Sodome: histoire des 'infâmes'* (Paris: Fayard, 1985).

³⁹ See for instance, Florence Tamagne, *A History of Homosexuality in Europe: Berlin, London, Paris, 1919-1939* (New York: Agora Press, 2004); Régis Revenin, *Homosexualité et prostitution masculines à Paris, 1870-1918* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005).

⁴⁰ Pierre Verdrager, *L'enfant interdit: comment la pédophilie est devenue scandaleuse* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2013).

understanding of the changing configurations of sex and gender in France's legal codes across the past two centuries.⁴¹ The field of sexuality within institutions is also thriving in France.⁴² Scholars from outside of France have also done much to advance our knowledge of sexuality within the *hexagone*.⁴³

Another rich field is that of gender history [*histoire du genre*], which often subsumes within it studies of sexuality, viewing sexuality through the optics of gender. Work in this area can tack closely to the history of sexuality, as it does in Anne-Claire Rebreyend's history of intimacy.⁴⁴ Articles by Florence Tamagne and Régis Révenin dealing directly with the intersections of homosexuality and virility in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are included in Alain Corbin's large edited volumes on the history of virility, a notable recent contribution to the field.⁴⁵ These alternate views on the history of homosexuality, through the lens of gender, law or state institutions, demonstrate the benefits of looking at the topic from different angles.

Despite the recent interest in the field in France, it remains true that the history of homosexuality, as a sub-field of the history of sexuality, is much less

⁴¹ Daniel Borrillo, *Le droit des sexualités* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2009); Marcela Iacub, *Par le trou de la serrure: Une histoire de la pudeur publique, (XIXe-XXIe siècle)* (Paris: Fayard, 2008).

⁴² Régis Revenin, *Une histoire de garçons et de filles: amour, genre et sexualité dans la France d'après-guerre* (Paris: Vendémiaire, 2015).

⁴³ Scott Gunther, *The Elastic Closet: A History of Homosexuality in France 1942-Present*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Jackson, *Living in Arcadia*; Jeffrey Merrick and Michael Sibal, eds., *Homosexuality in French History and Culture* (New York: Harrington Park Press, 2001).

⁴⁴ Anne-Claire Rebreyend, *Intimités amoureuses. France 1920-1975* (Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 2008).

⁴⁵ Régis Revenin, 'Homosexualité et virilité,' in Alain Corbin, Jean-Jacques Courtine and Georges Vigarello, eds., *Histoire de la virilité, tome 2: La triomphe de la virilité. Le XIXe siècle* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2011); Florence Tamagne, 'Mutations homosexuelles,' in Corbin, Courtine and Vigarello, eds., *Histoire de la virilité tome 3*.

prominent a topic in the French historiography than that of English-speaking nations. This relative weakness can be in part explained by debates over the place of a homosexual community in the Republic, which has overshadowed scholarship in the field since the mid-1990s. The problem of a 'homosexual community' would probably merit little national attention outside of the supposed community itself were it not for a turn towards a fundamentalist strain of republicanism in French political life in the 1990s. Emile Chabal has recently traced this resurgence of Republican discourse and has shown that the 'neo-republican revival' was a response to the collapse of both Communism and Gaullism as defining political master-narratives from the mid-1970s onwards: 'It was at this point that some public figures began to talk about republicanism again – not as a historical passion confined to the pages of history books, but as a living political ideal that could offer real solutions to intractable socio-economic and political problems.'⁴⁶ This new consensus in French politics rested on a counter-example, an 'Anglo-Saxon model' that promotes multiculturalism and *communautarisme*: 'a fearful descent into isolated and discrete communities...'⁴⁷ the Anglo-Saxon (and particularly Americanised) overtones of a 'gay' identity and community make homosexuals in France particularly susceptible to accusations of threatening the unity of the Republic when pursuing political objectives.

The first book on the history of homosexuality in France to gain widespread attention was the journalist Frédéric Martel's 1996 work *Le Rose et le noir: les*

⁴⁶ Emile Chabal, *A Divided Republic: Nation, State and Citizenship in Contemporary France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 17.

⁴⁷ Chabal, *A Divided Republic*, 101.

homosexuels en France depuis 1968, and its reception is illustrative of the debates over *communautarisme*. *Le Rose et le noir* is many ways a detailed and impressively wide-ranging work, unfortunately marred by numerous errors and exaggerations.⁴⁸ Yet although the critical reception of the book took issue with his scholarship, it was Martel's political tone and intervention that caused most controversy. In his epilogue, entitled 'a dubious communitarianism' Martel argues that modern democracies have given in to the 'communitarian temptation', damaging their integrity in the face of minority demands.⁴⁹ Homosexuals, rather than organising as a community, should be championing everyone's right to sexual autonomy and privacy, and in order to do this they must leave behind the lure of a homosexual 'community' and instead: 'propose that the issue of homosexuality no longer has any meaning or reason for being.'⁵⁰

Martel is open about his political aims, and he could hardly be accused of being the only one to use the history of homosexuality to make political points.⁵¹ Yet he was criticised strongly for his argument that the formation of a gay community in France was harmful to both the people that made up such a community, and the integrity of the French nation. In the queer journal *La Revue h*, the anonymous 'Veuve Cycliste' characterised Martel's viewpoint as hysterical: 'Différence? Quelle horreur! Visibilité? Obscénité!'⁵² In the same

⁴⁸ These inaccuracies are most glaring when they concern the personal and political responses to the AIDS crisis. Hélène Hazera critiques Martel for these errors in *Libération*, http://www.liberation.fr/tribune/1996/05/30/petites-prouesses-avec-des-morts-le-rose-et-le-noir_170270, accessed October 2016.

⁴⁹ Martel, *The Pink and the Black*, 347

⁵⁰ Martel, *The Pink and the Black*, 359.

⁵¹ In the prologue to the English edition Martel says that the book was the fruit of a 'militant and political period in [my] life.' Martel, *The Pink and the Black*, xv.

⁵² La Veuve Cycliste, 'Martel en tête, pas en mémoire,' *La Revue h* 1 (Spring 1996); 46.

journal, Philippe Colomb, a more thoughtful reviewer, sees Martel's position as fundamentally confused in how he defines a community, constructing 'un ennemi largement fantasmé'.⁵³ Martel hit back at his critics in the review *Esprit*, writing that he was fighting against the 'vent communautaire' that was blowing into France from the United States: 'je privilège l'individu avec son libre choix, sur le groupe et ses consignes : chaque homosexuel doit avoir la liberté de se construire soi-même.'⁵⁴ Backed into a corner by his critics, Martel insisted on the notion of a gay community so strong as to crush individual expression. This is clearly straw man.

Camille Robcis explains Martel's views on *communautarisme* as a part of a larger neo-republican political stream in France which took aim at rights-based identity politics: 'Soon, *communautarisme* came to be defined tautologically as what was not republican, what was not French, and that was symptomatic of human rights having become a *politique*.'⁵⁵ This logic was particularly pressing in a political context which had recently been marked by the affair over the clash between Muslim students' right to wear the veil in schools and the increasingly prominent issue of the place of difference in the Republic.⁵⁶ Of course, a group of people linked by religious identity and a group linked by a sexual identity are not the same thing. Yet that this conflation of difference was implicit in the debates over Martel's attacks on *communautarisme* and shows how far

⁵³ Philippe Colomb, 'Le rose du destin et le noir de la politique,' *La Revue h 3* (Winter 1996/1997); 40-44.

⁵⁴ Frédéric Martel, 'Un gay n'a pas à critiquer la communauté gay,' *Esprit*, November 1996, 212.

⁵⁵ Camille Robcis, 'Republicanism and the critique of human rights,' in Emile Chabal, ed., *France Since the 1970s: History, Politics and Memory in an Age of Uncertainty* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 232.

⁵⁶ For an analysis of the debates over the veil and *laïcité* see Joan Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

homosexuals had established for themselves a distinctive sexual identity, and how that identity was aligned with other forms of unsettling 'difference' in the Republic. It is difficult to see past the paradox of Martel's stance; he rails against the notion of a distinct gay and lesbian community, and even a distinct identity, yet argues that case in the epilogue of a work that itself reinforces community and identity by writing their history.

Despite its imperfections, Martel's work suggests many new avenues of research that had not yet been pursued, on homosexual nightlife, media production and literary culture for instance. Yet Martel's use of homosexuality as a political weapon in debates over the assimilation of minorities in the Fifth Republic, and the ferocious response to his book, seem to have discouraged the pursuit of these avenues in France.

In addition to the problems posed by a discrete gay and lesbian community in the French Republic, new political issues have flared in recent years over the study of queer and gender theory in France, polemics which have been enough to further discourage study. *La manif pour tous*, the main group opposing the 2013 marriage equality legislation, continue to mobilise against teaching of 'gender theory' in French schools, which is seen as a disruptive Anglo-Saxon import. In a recent press release the group claimed that: 'il est indispensable de repenser complètement l'éducation affective et sexuelle en interdisant purement et simplement les interventions d'associations militantes LGBT.'⁵⁷

⁵⁷ 'Stop à la diffusion du genre à l'école,' 3 October 2016, <http://www.lamanifpourtous.fr/actualites/cp-stop-a-la-diffusion-du-genre-a-lecole/>, last accessed November 2016.

The underlying logic for this antipathy to theories of gender is often explained not only as a defence of children from the corruptions of homosexuality, but also as a necessary defence of the Republic, a nation which reproduces itself through explicitly heterosexual lines of kinship.⁵⁸

In an example of the national sensitivity over such subjects, the news that Goldsmiths, University of London, plan to begin a master's programme in queer history was met with soul-searching in the press. An article in *Libération* questioned a number of academics working in France about the possibility of such a course being taught in the French academy, and the responses were doubtful. The anthropologist Jérôme Courduriès claimed that: 'Malheureusement, si c'est possible en Grande-Bretagne, je crains qu'en France, cela relève de la science-fiction.'⁵⁹ Yet, as with the fecundity of the history of sexuality in various guises in France, such media hand-wringing hides a more complex reality. The EHESS in Paris has been running a master's programme specialising in 'genre, politique et sexualité' for the past ten years, and since 2015 has been running a seminar series on 'homosexualités'.⁶⁰

The irony of these current debates is that much of the theoretical underpinnings of gender and queer theory comes from post-68 French thinkers such as Michel Foucault, Guy Hocquenghem and Monique Wittig. Yet despite their roots in

⁵⁸ Camille Robcis explores the ways in which policymakers have used ideas of difference between the sexes to reinforce kinship policy since the 1990s in *The Law of Kinship: Anthropology, Psychoanalysis and the Family in France* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press: 2013).

⁵⁹ Florian Bardou, 'En France, les "Queer Studies" au ban de la fac,' http://www.liberation.fr/debats/2016/10/12/en-france-les-queer-studies-au-ban-de-la-fac_1521522, last accessed November 2016.

⁶⁰ <http://gps.hypotheses.org/>, last accessed November 2016; <https://enseignements-2016.ehess.fr/2016/ue/1146/> last accessed November 2016.

French theory, seminal queer texts have only recently seen translation into French. The most notable example being Judith Butler's seminal work elaborating her theory of gender performativity, 1990's *Gender Trouble*, only received a full French translation in 2005.⁶¹ As queer theory matures, there has been increasing interest in examining its intellectual genealogy. In his work on the transatlantic exchanges involved in the development of queer theory, Bruno Perreau finds that in the mid-2000s, a number of publishing houses, including Fayard and Amsterdam, began to take an interest in the translation and publication of key theorists and the media began to take note of what they presented as a new intellectual phenomenon.⁶² Despite the difficulties in translating the term *queer* in a French context, activists also began to take notice of a phenomenon that for them offered a way out of an exhausted identity politics: 'Hostility to identity politics emerged in France at the very moment when French theory was being adopted for critical purposes in the United States.... This is also why the reception of queer theory in France is an attempt to revive this critical potential in France itself.'⁶³ The uses of queer theory in a contemporary context represent a rediscovery of French thinkers of the 1970s, but this rediscovery has taken place through the intermediary of American scholarship. The recovery of queer theory's French heritage also serves an intellectual purpose in France. By amplifying the recovered 'queer' voices of France's gay liberation moment, today's queer French scholars seek to fashion a useable political tool for today.

⁶¹ Judith Butler, trans. Cynthia Kraus, *Trouble dans le genre: pour un féminisme de la subversion* (Paris: Editions de la Découverte, 2005).

⁶² Bruno Perreau, 'The queer mind through the transatlantic looking-glass,' *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies* 18, no.1, (2014); 76

⁶³ Perreau, 'The queer mind,' 82.

What consequences does this fraught contemporary field have for the study of homosexuality in France in the 1970s? What is remarkable about the 1970s is not the dominance of the Republican model, as one might expect from the tenor of contemporary debates, but the sheer absence of it in the discourses of gay liberation politics. Liberation militants tended to share a utopian socialist thinking which looks beyond the structures of the Fifth Republic.⁶⁴ Liberation activists did not consider their political actions, or their sexual orientation, in terms of their relationship to the Republic, let alone consider their citizenship to be under threat. This is even more true of the greater number of men engaged in the growing commercial gay scene. If something of this framework is present in the 1970s, it is in the debates over the gay 'ghetto', in which many activists and thinkers feared that homosexuals were placing themselves when they associated primarily with other homosexuals, cutting themselves off from heterosexual society, and allowing themselves to be made easier victims of it.⁶⁵ Of course, their lack of consciousness on this point does not invalidate Martel's political critique, but 'communitarianism' is certainly not a framework through which we can understand their actions and positions in historical context.

As Chabal shows us, the 1970s is the gestation point for neo-republican discourse that would come to largely define the debates over PACS legislation in the mid-1990s, and then gay marriage legislation two decades later. It is because of the relative anachronism of 'communitarian' debates in the context of the 1970s that I have chosen to largely ignore them in favour of recovering homosexual experience in the decade. In this way, I hope to avoid the trap of

⁶⁴ As shall be shown in chapter one.

⁶⁵ The politics of the 'ghetto' are discussed in full chapter two.

reifying French cultural difference as stemming from the omnipresent discourse of 'Republican universalism' and ignoring the historical contingency of this discourse. Eric Fassin warns against the trap of 'culturalism' for those researching a culture foreign to their own. We must be careful to avoid the conclusion that: 'Nothing ever happens in France except the eternal return of Frenchness in its confrontation with history.'⁶⁶ A fixation on the cultural aspects of French Republicanism would obscure not only the historical contingency of this discourse, but also drown out cultural similarities and exchanges with other nations.

Queer history and homosexual experience

If queer theory has had a difficult reception in France, it now has enough of a hold to be impossible to ignore. How to remain sensitive to the powerful interventions of queer theory whilst writing a history of the 1970s? Queer theory has taught historians valuable lessons about the instability and mutability of categories of identity within individuals, and of the normative conceptions of the future tied to reproduction.⁶⁷ But if queer theory's concentration on the unstable nature of identity can enrich the study of history, this beneficial relationship has not always been clear. Steven Maynard has discussed the impasse between the discipline of history and queer theory,

⁶⁶ Eric Fassin, 'Fearful Symmetry: Culturalism and Cultural Comparison after Tocqueville,' *French Historical Studies* 19, no.2, (Autumn 1995); 454.

⁶⁷ See Lee Edleman's *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*, (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2004).

finding that: 'If social historians reject queer theory as jargon, queer theorists have little patience for History.'⁶⁸

The 1970s pose a particular problem for the historian seeking to apply the lessons of queer theory. This was a moment at which the notion of a fixed homosexual identity came to be invested with a greater personal meaning by a greater number of people than ever before. This identity was not new – indeed the recovery of its history was an important component of the decade – but it came to be injected with a new social and personal power in the decade. This was an attempt at fashioning a sexual, cultural and political identity out of the instability of sexuality. How to square an intellectual current which seeks to destabilise, with a historical moment in which an investment in a stable identity was one of the key features?

A decade after Maynard described the lack of communication between disciplines, historians have worked out innovative ways of incorporating the lessons of queer theory into their research, and these approaches may come some way to answering this issue. Matt Houlbrook argues that we should look beyond using queer as a 'catch-all term that sketches out a field coterminous with LGBT' but a way of thinking that shifts the emphasis 'from a mode of sexual selfhood – however unstable – to a set of critical practices; from something we consider our subjects to be, to something we do.'⁶⁹ This notion of a queer approach as a mode of thinking is particularly applicable to a history of

⁶⁸ Steven Maynard, "'Respect Your Elders, Know Your Past": History and the Queer Theorists,' *Radical History Review* 75 (Fall 1999); 59.

⁶⁹ Matt Houlbrook, 'Thinking Queer: The Social and Sexual in Interwar Britain,' in Brian Lewis, ed., *British Queer History: New Approaches and Perspectives* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 134.

the 1970s, a moment at which many men attempted to fashion a recognisable homosexual or gay identity. Our 'thinking queer' helps us to see more clearly, and with a critical eye, the tactics, successes and failures of such an exercise in self-fashioning.

Another inescapable theoretical issue is the use of evidence in the examination of identity construction, particularly after Joan Scott's intervention in her 1991 article 'The Evidence of Experience'.⁷⁰ After a long and fruitful history as a category of evidence, particularly for subordinate groups,⁷¹ Scott calls on historians to turn away from reconstituting 'reality' through experience, claiming that we should instead look at the discursive systems that shape difference. She argues that the uncritical use of experience as historical evidence masks the formation of difference in discourse: 'The evidence of experience...becomes evidence for the fact of difference, rather than a way of exploring how difference is established, how it operates, how and in what ways it constitutes subjects who see and act in the world.'⁷² 'Experience' when used uncritically thus creates fixed objects of study such as 'woman' and 'the homosexual'. Scott's work draws our attention to the creation and perpetuation of potentially imprisoning discursive identities, and the practice of the historian in potentially collaborating in the maintenance of these identities. Ruth Harris points out a fundamental issue with Scott's work, the erasure of corporeal experience: 'In ridding the philosophical arena of the 'subject', postmodernist theorists relegated the history of experience – of both individuals and groups –

⁷⁰ Joan Scott, 'The Evidence of Experience,' *Critical Inquiry* 17, no.4, (Summer 1991): 773-797.

⁷¹ Beginning with E.P. Thompson's seminal *The Making of the English Working Class*, (London: Victor Gollancz, 1963).

⁷² Scott, 'The Evidence of Experience,' 777

to an unknowable region. It was seen as almost philosophically naïve to attempt to recover or historically imagine that experience, or to discuss the intersection of the psychological and the physical.⁷³ Furthermore, it would be a mistake to ignore the agency of historical subjects in constructing their own discourses of identity – particularly in the 1970s, a moment at which self-fashioning discourses grow stronger. Rather than sideline experience, corporeal reality and the agency of historical actors in identity creation, I will emphasise the experiential elements of desire in history and how this is linked to the creation of a distinct minoritarian identity.

In the last two decades, historians of sexuality have attempted to accommodate both queer theory and the legacy of the linguistic turn. The grouping of scholars that Chris Waters has called the ‘new British queer history’ has admirably folded these theoretical advances into a new approach. To demonstrate this approach, Waters contrasts Houlbrook’s *Queer London* with the work of Jeffrey Weeks and finds that: ‘Whereas Weeks looked to the past in order to discover the origins and trace the history of a modern “homosexual consciousness”... Houlbrook discovers in that past men with affective ties to each other that could not in any sense be subsumed under categories of consciousness and identity that we would easily recognize today.’⁷⁴ This difference, Walters asserts, is due to the generational gap between Houlbrook and Weeks, and of Week’s formative experience in the Gay Liberation Front guiding his historical and political interventions. In other words, where Weeks’s political aims moved him

⁷³ Ruth Harris and Laura Lee Downs, ‘What future for gender history?’ in Robert Gildea and Anne Simonin, eds., *Writing Contemporary History* (London: Hodder Education, 2008), 71.

⁷⁴ Chris Waters, ‘Distance and Desire in the New British Queer History,’ *GLQ: A Journal of Gay and Lesbian Studies* 14, no.1, (2008); 140.

to view homosexual experience as a step in forming a distinct identity, Houlbrook concentrates on the vicissitudes of queer experience itself.

Yet the move in recent historiography towards the shifting and unstable nature of identity has not completely pushed a distinctive 'gay identity' out of the frame. David Halperin's work has recently shifted to look at the experience of affect, sensibility and 'induction' into gay culture.⁷⁵ His latest work *How to be Gay* poses the following questions: 'What if we could derive the characteristic themes and experiences of gay culture from the social conditions under which that culture arises and is reproduced? What if we went even further and considered the possibility that gay male tastes for certain cultural artefacts or social practices reflect...ways of being, ways of feeling and ways of relating to the larger social world that are fundamental to male homosexuality...?'⁷⁶ All of the works of the 'new British queer history' have focused on a time before the 'invention' of a fixed 'gay' identity, but Halperin's provocative intervention invites us to consider the creation of this identity and culture.

Innovative new queer histories of the 1970s are also beginning to be published in the US. Jim Downs's *Stand by Me* is an examination of the 1970s through the lens of queer community-building attempts such as the creation of gay churches, bookstores and the formulation of a usable gay history.⁷⁷ Timothy Stewart-Winter's *Queer Clout* takes a local approach to the history of the 1970s. By looking at the changes that took place in Chicago in the 1970s, he develops

⁷⁵ Waters, 'Distance and Desire,' 140.

⁷⁶ David Halperin, *How to be Gay* (Cambridge, Mass.: University of Harvard Press, 2012), 66.

⁷⁷ Jim Downs, *Stand by Me: The Forgotten History of Gay Liberation* (New York: Basic Books, 2016).

a history of queer organising that owes as much to the local political machinery and the template for organisation provided by the black community as it did on grand theories of 'liberation'.⁷⁸ The diverse strategies taken by new works shows the vibrant potential for historical reinterpretation in the period between the close of the 1960s and the onset of AIDS, once the category of 'liberation' is itself interrogated.

Problems of vocabulary

I have decided to focus on the ways in which homosexual men themselves attempted to construct and order their identities and experiences, and how they questioned and manipulated the existing category of 'the homosexual'. If anything is new about the 1970s, it is the turning of the tide of discourse on homosexuality to become more shaped and defined by homosexuals themselves.

Naming and designating same-sex attraction and shifting identities is key to any history of sexuality. In a deliberate move, I have opted to primarily use the terms 'homosexual' and 'homosexuality', despite the increasing criticism these terms received in the period as products of nineteenth-century sexology. I have chosen 'homosexual' over 'gay' or even 'queer' as *homosexuel* or *homo* is by far the most common self-descriptor used by same-sex attracted men in the period. The standard use of the term 'homosexual' also allows me to track the use of other terms and to recover their novelty and specificity. This is true of the politically-charged use of the insult *pédé*, and is especially true of the term 'gay'

⁷⁸ Timothy Stewart-Winter, *Queer Clout: Chicago and the Rise of Gay Politics* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

or *gai* which arrives in France in the period, and has connotations of American identity politics, alternative lifestyles and fashions. In this case, by the close of the decade, it becomes more appropriate to use the term 'gay men', whereas at the opening of the decade, this would be an anachronism in France.

Contemporaries were very much concerned with changing self-descriptors. Recounting the founding of the FHAR in 1971, Guy Hocquenghem describes how its members found it difficult to describe themselves: 'Quand on a fondé le FHAR, le mot homosexuel n'était pas tellement important, contrairement à ce qu'on croit maintenant. C'est moi qui l'ai le plus souvent utilisé, pour des raisons presque techniques, l'impossibilité d'employer le mot Gay... c'était un mot de code, personne ne pouvait savoir ce que ça voulait dire.'⁷⁹ While the illegibility of the word *homosexuel* made using it simultaneously brave and timid in 1971, the word became ubiquitous by the end of the decade. An Englishman 'Roger D.' sent a letter to *Gai Pied* magazine in the summer of 1979 to tell them of his interest in following the evolution of vocabulary around homosexual identity in France; he calculated that the word *homosexuel* (or *homo* for short) was by far the most popular term in the magazine, used in 63% of instances.⁸⁰ The reclaimed insult *pédé* was also common, with 14% of mentions. Gay (or *gai*) was also gaining ground, although at first used self-consciously to denote a fashionably American ease with sexuality, it was becoming more and more common. Roger D.'s letter is evidence of both the interest in changing fashions in naming homosexuality, and the way in which a

⁷⁹ Guy Hocquenghem, interview by Jean-Pierre Joecker, *Masques*, Summer 1981, 9-11.

⁸⁰ 'Roger D.', letter, *Gai Pied*, July-August 1979, 2.

diverse group of nouns co-existed at the same moment, used in different contexts. This was a moment of such a variety of terms that some began to self-consciously invent their own. The writer Renaud Camus invented the term *achrien*; he underlines the plasticity of vocabulary at this point in time, and through the use of his own pseudonym – Tony Duparc – the plasticity of identity: ‘je me permettrai d’utiliser, à l’occasion, pour signifier homosexuel, pédéraste, pédérastique, ou le cher “comme ça” etc. le mot *achrien* que Tony Duparc et moi avons naguère concocté parce que les précédents ne nous convenait pas entièrement, nous paraissant ridicules, inexacts ou ambigus.’⁸¹ Indeed, Camus believed that this sort of self-invention was ‘précisément la grande chance de l’homosexualité que de se trouver aujourd’hui dans un terrain où tout est à inventer.’⁸²

If the terms used to describe identity in the period were inexact and ambiguous, so were the terms used to describe the political and historic situation in which homosexuals found themselves. In this sense, another word which needs careful use and qualification is ‘liberation’. The term has been used to describe a phase of history for gay men. The notion of a gay ‘liberation’ began as a political gesture, an intervention designed to create its own narrative mythology, beginning at the riots at New York’s Stonewall in on the night of 28th June, 1969.⁸³ But the notion of a new ‘liberation moment’ in the history of homosexuality beginning at the turn of the 1970s is misleading. The word ‘liberation’ has such a rhetorical weight that it both self-aggrandises small

⁸¹ Renaud Camus, *Chroniques achriennes* (Paris: P.O.L, 1984), 9.

⁸² Annie Guirec, Jean-Pierre Joecker and Alain Sanzio, interview with Renaud Camus, *Masques*, Spring-Summer 1985, 158.

⁸³ Elizabeth Armstrong and Suzanna Cragge, ‘Movements and Memory: The Making of the Stonewall Myth,’ *American Sociological Review* 71, no.5, (October 2005): 724-751.

groups of activists and obscures their predecessors. Furthermore, this notion of a 'gay liberation' is often used as a bridge to other 'liberation' movements of the 1960s and 1970s, women's liberation and anti-racist movements in particular. Of course, these 'new social movements' share roots and similarities and fruitful research has been done to draw these out.⁸⁴ Yet this shorthand can elide some of the specificities of different minority experiences and their trajectories.

Historians of sexuality have sought to de-centre this liberation narrative. Work on the immediate post-war period in America and Europe has shown that 'homophile' men and women sought to change their lives through self-organisation at a time of significant moral pressure.⁸⁵ This activism crossed national boundaries.⁸⁶ In his work on the French homophile group Arcadie, the predecessor to the liberation groups of the 1970s founded in 1954, Julian Jackson argues that we need to 'liberate ourselves from gay liberation.'⁸⁷ He goes on to explain that: 'when writing the history of homosexual politics, one should be wary of identifying certain positions as intrinsically 'radical' or intrinsically 'reactionary'. Gay politics, like all politics, is contingent, and the

⁸⁴ I will emphasise the links between gay liberation and women's liberation in France in chapter one.

⁸⁵ On homophile movements in different national contexts see: Thierry Delessert and Michaël Voegtli, *Homosexualités masculines en Suisse: de l'invisibilité aux mobilisations* (Lausanne: Presses Polytechniques et Universitaires Romandes, 2012); John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1983); Jackson, *Living in Arcadia*; Martin Meeker, *Contacts Desired: Gay and Lesbian Communications and Community 1940s-1970s* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005).

⁸⁶ On the transnational elements of homophile groups see: David Churchill, 'Transnationalism and homophile political culture in the postwar decades,' *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 15, no.1, (2009): 31-65; Leila Rupp, 'The Persistence of Transnational Organization: The Case of the Homophile Movement,' *American Historical Review* 116, no.4, (2011): 1014-39.

⁸⁷ Jackson, *Living in Arcadia*, 13.

meaning of political positions should be contextualised.’⁸⁸ The histories of movements that precede the ‘liberation moment’ help us see beyond the political framing and vocabulary used by 1970s activists in order to distinguish themselves from their homophile forebears. We should therefore be wary of duplicating the schemas set by liberation activists. Dagmar Herzog warns us about relying on a teleology of sexual liberation: ‘It is not least precisely as a result of reliance on a framework which assumes increasing progress toward liberalization over the course of the twentieth century that we have been left with too little capacity for thinking effectively about the tangled texture of emotions that human beings have brought to sex over the last century.’⁸⁹

Furthermore, as a category of historical analysis, the notion of ‘liberation’ is problematic. If it is unclear what homosexuals were being freed *from*, it is even less clear what a phenomenon as diverse and contested as liberation politics was intended to achieve. Indeed, when we look closely at liberation politics itself, activists and theorists rarely concurred over what liberation meant, with some groups seeking a liberation in the dissolution of sexual identity, others seeking liberation in the valorisation of homosexuality, and others still seeking liberation through the Church and faith.⁹⁰ Following from the idea that we must properly contextualise political positions rather than echo contemporary framing, we must re-evaluate the usage of the term ‘liberation’ to describe the process of change that occurred in the 1970s. In its mirroring of historical political discourse, the word ‘liberation’ tends to reproduce contemporary

⁸⁸ Jackson, *Living in Arcadia*, 13.

⁸⁹ Dagmar Herzog, *Sexuality in Europe: A Twentieth-Century History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 5.

⁹⁰ These alternate conceptions will be explored in chapter one.

categories of political debate, rather than allow us to capture and contextualise the period. By repeating the vocabulary of activists, we make their interventions central to what was a much broader phenomenon.

In his sociological work on homosexuality in the 1980s, Michael Pollak used the term ‘modernisation’ to describe the process of change that was taking place with regards to homosexuality. This is nearer the mark, but it retains overtones of teleological progression. Eric Fassin has taken a subtler approach, describing a long process by which the homosexual question has undergone an ‘inversion’ in France; whereby in the past homosexuality was the problem to be solved, now the problematic behaviour rests with the homophobic individual.⁹¹ This describes well the messy process of absorption into mainstream society (often accompanied by backlash) that has characterised homosexual experience since the height of the HIV/AIDS crisis. The problems of ‘liberation’ as a historical category were of course not invisible to those that lived at the moment of its bursting into political discourse. Liberation’s most notable discontent was Michel Foucault, who in the first volume of his *Histoire de la sexualité* attacked the notion of a ‘Victorian’ sexual regime giving way to a newly liberated sexuality.⁹² His biographer, Didier Eribon argues that however important Foucault thought that movements affirming homosexual identity were, he believed that: ‘il faut “faire un pas de plus”... Rejetant le “biologisme” le “naturalisme” de la notion de la sexualité, Foucault entend leur opposer l’invention de nouveaux modes de vie qui échappent aux questions de

⁹¹ Eric Fassin, *L'inversion de la question homosexuelle* (Paris: Editions Amsterdam, 2005).

⁹² Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité*, tome 1: La volonté de savoir (Paris: Gallimard, 1976).

l'“identité” et du “désir””.⁹³ Following from Foucault's productive suspicion, we must not fall into the trap of repeating a discourse of 'liberation' from an oppression of sexuality. 'Transformation' is a better representation of the messy and incomplete process taking place in political discourse and in the lives of homosexuals in the long 1970s, with the more precise term 'gay liberation politics' being reserved as a descriptor for political groups and their ideology.⁹⁴

Problems of Sources

Unfortunately, a factor in the slow uptake of the history of sexuality in France has been a slow institutionalisation of archival material. Projects to create a dedicated LGBT archive in Paris have repeatedly hit controversy and funding difficulties.⁹⁵ With the project of a dedicated LGBT archive in deadlock, other solutions are being sought, such as the depositing of archives to existing institutions. In 2013, the Bibliothèque Nationale de France started this process by making available the archives of the homosexual cultural review *Masques* and its sister publishing house *Persona*. The Archives Nationales has also started actively collecting material from LGBT organisations, including the archives of the Catholic homosexual organisation David et Jonathan, the AIDS

⁹³ Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault et ses contemporains* (Paris: Fayard, 1994), 284.

⁹⁴ Of course, as will be repeatedly emphasised, the particular form of liberation politics and its melding of the personal and the political will mean that it is difficult, and indeed undesirable, to cleanly separate liberation activism from other aspects of the period. However, a degree of critical precision when it comes to describing historical processes and political phenomena will allow for a clearer understanding of the period.

⁹⁵ For an account of the archive project's troubled history see <http://www.archimag.com/archives-patrimoine/2015/12/15/pourquoi-creation-centre-archives-lgbt-paris-polemique-13-ans>, last accessed October 2016.

activist organisation Act Up Paris, and most recently the homophile organisation Arcadie.⁹⁶

However, this institutionalisation is a relatively new process. Much of my project rests upon the efforts of amateur collectors, whose archives have different levels of access. After a lifetime of collecting, Michel Chomarat has built up one of the most important freely consultable collections of LGBT history in France at the Bibliothèque Municipale de Lyon. Outside of institutional boundaries, I have been able to consult the archives of Christian de Leusse who runs the private organisation Mémoire des Sexualités in Marseille where he single-handedly collects and stores material. I was also able to consult the collections of Marc Devirnoy, a dedicated collector in Normandy; and some of the papers of the late Jean Le Bitoux, thanks to the generous help of Michael Sibalis, who has been entrusted with his collection as he works on Le Bitoux's biography. Collecting, archiving and heritage are activities that take on a deeply political purpose among communities that lack many formal or familial modes of transmitting memory between generations, and this thesis would not have been possible without the help of these collectors.

There are unfortunately collections that I was unable to access. Perhaps the most significant being the archives of *Gai Pied* magazine, which are split between gayvox.com, the company that bought the rights to the *Gai Pied* brand after its liquidation, who remain closed to the question of archival access; and a private archive, the *Académie gay et lesbienne*, Vitry sur Seine, an

⁹⁶ I was lucky enough to be one of the first to make use of the archives of David et Jonathan, with the kind permission of the organisation.

organisation that does not admit researchers.⁹⁷ There are also other lacunae that are irreparable. Unlike in the UK and US, there have been no large-scale projects to gather the testimonies of homosexual men in France.⁹⁸ Instead, I have collected a small number of testimonies myself, a process which has been personally rewarding, but cannot come close to the richness of dedicated archives of oral testimony. Material relating to commercial premises has also been difficult to come by. These are places that tend not to produce documentary material and what material they do produce (flyers, visiting cards, programmes etc) tends to be ephemeral and easily destroyed. Researching pornography also presented its own challenges, with many early films being lost or damaged, and the places in which the films were consumed having disappeared with little trace.

Despite these difficulties, once it has been located, material is abundant. To examine gay liberation groups, I use publications, internal documents and the papers of their more prominent members to examine their changing political orientations. During the period, many magazines appeared catering to a homosexual readership; I have used both the more well-known and high-quality press (such as *Gai Pied*, *Samourai* and *Masques*) and the more commercial and ephemeral press. The wealth of advertising in the press helps to piece together a picture of the market catering to gay men, alongside gay travel guides, catalogues, pornography and commercial ephemera such as

⁹⁷ www.gayvox.fr/actualites/actualites/archives-pied-orties,3,458.html, last accessed March 2017.

⁹⁸ I am thinking in particular of the Act Up! oral history project at the New York Public Library and the GLBT Historical Archives in San Francisco. In the UK comparable projects are the Hall-Carpenter oral history project at the British Library and the National Gay and Lesbian Survey at the University of Sussex.

posters and flyers. The oppression of homosexuality is considered through the use of judicial dossiers, and the records that I was able to gain access to in Paris's *Archives de la Préfecture de Police*. I have used newspapers, periodicals, literary works and television media to examine homosexual self-representation. This broad mix of sources allows me to examine the process of change in homosexuality's status from a broader angle than just the optics of political discourse on liberation. This methodological approach extends the realm of relevant sources beyond the properly 'political' – the texts and pronouncements of liberation activists – to see the relevance of other aspects of homosexual experience to the transformation of their place in society. In a sense, this methodology is indebted to a strand of liberation thinking and the desire to extend the domain of the political and to read the political resonance in the experience of personal life and in the representations of minorities.

My focus on the French national context has made a properly transnational history impossible within the scope of the thesis. I have only been able to follow the transnational flows of liberation politics, language and commercial products into France (mainly from the US). I have therefore been unable to trace the effect of those flowing out of France, such as the influence of French radicalism on other nations, of the translation and reception of the homosexual French writers who came to prominence in the 1970s, or the exportation of French gay pornography after its legalisation in 1975. A transnational history of the gay liberation moment across the West remains to be written, and would be a project far larger than a doctoral thesis.⁹⁹ France in many ways is a peripheral

⁹⁹ Some work has been done towards a transnational history of gay liberation politics, as opposed to a broader social and cultural history. See for instance Barry Adam, Jan Willem

nation in a process that is more readily identified with the United States. However, this peripheral nature offers vantage point from which we can contrast 'Anglo-Saxon' influence with its reception in a nation with a very different legal and moral outlook on homosexuality. This is one of the national specificities that will be drawn out in this thesis. Others that will be explored include the dominance of Marxist (and specifically Maoist, Spontaneist and Trotskyist) thinking within gay liberation politics; the lack of laws directly forbidding homosexual acts since the Penal Code of 1791; and the existence of a 'canon' of homosexual male writers since the early twentieth century and thus the relative visibility of homosexuality in a rarefied literary sphere.

As well as concentrating on a single national context, to maintain a viable scope to the thesis, I have also concentrated on male experience. Whilst on a political level, gay men and lesbians often share a history of organisation, this was confined to a few mixed-gender groups, whose gender diversity was often more of an aspiration than a reality. The political and social histories of gay men and lesbians diverged very quickly after a brief shared origin in the early 1970s. Researching lesbian experience also poses practical difficulties. The most important archive of lesbian press, political and community organisation, the *Archives Recherches Cultures Lesbiennes*, is accessible only to female researchers.¹⁰⁰ This is demonstrative of a separatist spirit that has its roots in the 1970s. An emphasis on the divergence between gay and lesbian experience in the period also avoids a temptation to too readily inscribe our current

Duyvendak and André Krouwel, eds., *The Global Emergence of Gay and Lesbian Politics: National Imprints of a Worldwide Movement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999).

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.coordinationlesbienne.org/spip.php?article275>, last accessed March 2017.

paradigm of LGBTQI coalition politics onto the 1970s. This was a moment at which this sort of inclusive coalition politics would have been unthinkable. Indeed, even today coalition politics is still less dominant in France than in the UK or the US, with many lesbian separatist groups and organisations still in operation.¹⁰¹

Thesis outline

The thesis is divided into three parts: Changes, continuities and life stories. Identifying and organising around change and continuity allows me to elaborate a picture of non-normative sexuality in a decade characterised by fitful novelty and enduring attitudes. I will argue that there are indeed areas of identifiable change in the situation and experience of homosexual men in France in the 1970s, notably in their political claims and the presence of a growing diversified 'gay market' in France. However, there are also elements of continuity that anchor this experience to a longer history of homosexuality in the twentieth century; particularly the policing of homosexuality and the presence of homosexual men in the public sphere. By identifying these main fields of change and continuity, I do not mean to simplify them: indeed, they all contain their own complicating counter-currents.

Part one focuses on aspects of rapid change, the emergence of radical political groups and the burgeoning market catering to gay men. The opening chapter provides a narrative of political change in homosexual activist groups from May

¹⁰¹ See for instance the popular separatist cinema festival Cineffable, an initiative that began in 1989: <https://www.cineffable.fr/fr/edito.htm>, last accessed December 2016.

1968 until the onset of the HIV-AIDS crisis. These groups found themselves caught between a legacy of revolutionary socialism inherited from May, and a new discourse of identity, which became increasingly prominent as the decade wore on. Previous examinations of the radical political groups that emerged after 1968 have tended to concentrate on the publications and personalities of small Paris-based groups. Extending the study to organisations beyond Paris, and to the social experience of belonging to such groups, it is clear that gay liberation politics was made up of a constellation of diverse political alignments ranging from radical Maoists to Catholics. However, although the 1970s witnessed a great investment in political organising around homosexuality, the importance of these groups must not be overstated. The chapter closes with a consideration of their weakness in effecting change. The lasting impact of gay liberation politics is found less in the kind of measurements we might make of rights-based political groups (legal change or material improvement for instance) and more in their power to transform individual lives through participation in groups formed around sexual identity.

The second chapter of part one goes on to contrast changing political organisation to the growth of a commercial culture around gay male identity. This growing market was characterised by an urban bar culture that consciously emulated the United States, new fashions, commercial publications and a boom in pornography. Gay liberation activists tended to dismiss or demonise commercial activity around sex or sexual identities, a tendency that is latent in later accounts of the period. However, this new commercial culture provided opportunities for political activity, self-fashioning and sexual identification that

were just as transformative and politically significant as participation in a gay liberation politics.

The second part of the thesis focuses on aspects of continuity: the repression of homosexual activity by the police and judiciary and the media visibility of gay men. The 1970s has previously been understood as a time of smooth decline in the interest and energy of the police in repressing homosexual activity. An examination of judicial dossiers involving gross indecency and homosexual acts with minors reveals that even in a period of 'liberation' the authorities used old tactics and legal frameworks to police the appearance of homosexuality in the public sphere and the border between adult and minor. These cases also show that gross indecency laws provided the police with a legal framework through which to prosecute new commercial spaces and monitor the political groups described in part one. The experience of men confronted with police repression and their tactics to deal with this will also be explored in this chapter.

A second aspect of continuity that will be considered in part two is the visibility of gay men in the French media. Gay male literary figures who advocated liberation politics came to represent 'experts' on homosexuality in the public sphere. These men replaced doctors, priests and psychiatrists as spokespeople, particularly when the 'issue' of homosexuality was discussed on television. Yet, although their visibility may at first appear to be a break with the past, they represented a mediated vision of homosexuality that was rooted in a persistent stereotype of homosexuality as a 'Parisian' and 'literary' vice. Emblematic figures of 'liberation' were in fact performing media roles that long

predated their emergence, and like the persistence of policing, represented a link to older notions of the figure of the 'homosexual'.

To close the thesis, part three will use oral history to consider the life stories of men who self-identify as gay and bisexual and who experienced the period. To rectify some of the artificiality of dividing such a large topic into areas of 'continuity' and 'change'; in the final chapter of the thesis I have concentrated on the life stories of a small number of interviewees. By closing with a close-up on lived experience, I have attempted to both draw out the main themes of the preceding chapters, but also to emphasise the ways in which life experiences reflect, often awkwardly or partially, broad historical trends. The use of oral history, and a concentration on the emotional imprint of the past reinforces the human drama of the history of sexuality, an element that is muffled by an over-concentration on abstract discourses and their construction. These interwoven life stories demonstrate the diversity of personal experience inherent in the study of sexuality.

Part One: Changes

Chapter One: Liberation Politics, from Revolutionary Aspirations to Modest Realities

Jouissez sans entraves, an iconic piece of May 1968 graffiti, would have held a bitter irony for the passing student who was attracted to their own sex.¹⁰² Even in the liberating atmosphere of May, the heterosexual (and heterosexist) coding of 1968's sexual liberty was all too apparent. As student activists recovered the interwar texts of Wilhelm Reich to inspire their sexual revolution, they tended to retain his suspicion that homosexuality represented a retardation of sexual development that could lead its sufferer toward fascism.¹⁰³ A pitying tolerance was the best that homosexuals could expect, even at the vanguard of sexual liberty.¹⁰⁴ But just over a decade later, a transformation had taken place in the politicisation of homosexuality in France. By the opening of the 1980s, the revolutionary socialism of the Sorbonnards had left the scene, but the politics of sexual identity were stepping onto the political stage. In April 1981, thousands would march through the streets of Paris on a 'Marche nationale pour les droits et libertés des homosexuels'.¹⁰⁵ A spectacle of homosexuality as a politicised identity independent of the radical left which was unthinkable a decade earlier.

¹⁰² Marc Rohan, *Paris '68: Graffiti, Posters, Newspapers and Poems of the Events of May '68* (London: Impact Books, 1988), 88.

¹⁰³ Wilhelm Reich, *Sex-Pol: Essays 1929-34* (New York: Random House), 297.

¹⁰⁴ Girard, *Le mouvement homosexuel*, 78.

¹⁰⁵ 'Notre préférence fera la différence', *Homophonies*, May 1981, 3. The organisers of the march claimed that there were 15,000 attendees, other gay press that there were 10,000, the real number is likely to be slightly fewer than this.

A politics of homosexual identity did not emerge fully-formed in 1968. After utopic socialist visions of liberation faded, the development of a politicised identity across the 1970s would be branching, with different groups borrowing from sources as diverse as homophile politics, second-wave feminism, Maoist politics and liberal Catholicism. In this sense, the trajectory of gay liberation politics in France tracks closely to what Emile Chabal has called the emergence of a 'postmodern' form of politics in France: 'a politics that is fluid, unstable, and marked by a growing desire to appeal to the narratives of specific groups within society.'¹⁰⁶ As a replacement for the narratives of Gaullist state grandeur or a Marxist revolution this was a more 'modest' horizon of political aspiration.¹⁰⁷ The trajectory of gay liberation politics, moving away from a faith in socialist revolution to bring sexual freedom and towards community-scale organising around identity, reflects this change. A small group of people invested enormous political and emotional energies into the organisation and articulation of liberation politics. But their voluble output must not obscure the fact that gay liberation politics was a marginal pursuit, even among homosexuals. These men and women began to realise that a concentration on the more modest politics of daily life would be more successful in terms of transforming individuals' conditions than a quixotic revolutionary struggle.

This chapter will examine the trajectory of liberation politics, narrating the change in political discourse around homosexuality in the decade driven by groups agitating for homosexual liberation. Their discourse underwent a transformation from revolutionary visions in the afterglow of May 1968 to the

¹⁰⁶ Chabal, 'French Political Culture in the 1970s,' 265.

¹⁰⁷ Chabal, 'French Political Culture in the 1970s,' 247.

more modest horizons of the early 1980s, by which time the defence of a homosexual identity had come to the fore. Homosexual groups developed diverse discourses and practical approaches to the question of the homosexual's place in society, ranging from the revolutionary visions of the *Front Homosexuel d'Action Révolutionnaire* (FHAR), to the nascent identity politics of the Parisian and provincial *Groupes de Libération Homosexuelle* (GLH); from the tentative politicisation of the Catholic group *David et Jonathan*, to the legal lobbying of the *Comité d'Urgence Anti-Répression Homosexuelle* (CUARH). The evolution of these groups will be read in terms of a turn away from the FHAR's agitation for socialist revolution using homosexual desire, towards a discourse defending a homosexual (and later, gay) identity.

The second component of the chapter is an analysis of the effectiveness of gay liberation politics in effecting change, both on a personal level for those involved in the groups, and on a legal level. An assessment of the effectiveness of this new gay politics must consider the social organisation of liberation groups. This approach will move the emphasis away from the ideological aspects of liberation politics towards its social practice. The new ideologies of gay liberation politics transformed the way many homosexual men came to see themselves and related to their homosexuality personally and politically, but this transformation was realised as much through social (and sexual) encounters with other men in gay liberation groups as it was through encounters with ideology. In this sense, ideologically moderate and historically overlooked groups such as *David et Jonathan*, and the provincial GLH come to the fore as spaces in which men could formulate and put into practice a

homosexual identity not only through political discourse but also through friendship, sex and sociability.

Sexuality in '68

Whilst there were glimmers of the sexual politics to come during the events of May, political action on behalf of homosexuals was far from the minds of the student rebels, and even further from the concerns of the mass of striking workers. This was an atmosphere saturated by machismo. According to Françoise Picq, a very small group of women in the Sorbonne, calling themselves 'Féminin, Masculin, Avenir' ('Feminine, Masculine, Future') dared to begin to question this atmosphere in which the image of the virile worker was venerated and male students took control; they pasted posters in the corridors of the Sorbonne that read:

Etudiant qui remet tout en question,
Les rapports de l'élève au maître,
As-tu pensé aussi à remettre en question,
Les rapports de l'homme à la femme?¹⁰⁸

The implication from the early second-wave feminists was clear, the male students who were 'questioning everything' had not even begun to consider their most intimate relations. Others in the Sorbonne also noticed this discrepancy and began to move their interests towards their own condition. In the tumult of the Sorbonne, a similarly microscopic group, the *Comité d'Action*

¹⁰⁸ Françoise Picq, *Libération des femmes, quarante ans de mouvement* (Brest, Editions-dialogues.fr, 2011), 14.

Pédérastique Révolutionnaire (CAPR) was set up by two students, Guy Chevalier and his friend Stéphane.¹⁰⁹ Chevalier, born in 1938, the son of a lorry driver and a domestic servant, was studying classical literature at the Sorbonne and preparing for the entrance exam to the teaching profession. At the same time, to help support both himself and his mother, he worked as a *pion*, a student who would monitor lycée dormitories for a small wage. He felt as though his position of relative economic precarity set him apart from many of his well-heeled classmates, a factor that, along with his sexuality, contributed to his political consciousness: ‘Je suis parti de la question de l’homosexualité vécue par quelqu’un du peuple, comme moi [...] Je pensais un peu vulgairement que l’homosexualité était un truc de la classe bourgeoise. Et en tant que pédé du peuple je me sentais doublement opprimé.’¹¹⁰

This linking of homosexual and class oppression led to conversations with Stéphane at the Café de l’Ecritoire on the Place de la Sorbonne, where they drafted a leaflet and came up with the name *Comité d’Action Pédérastique Révolutionnaire* (CAPR).¹¹¹ The name was in part inspired by Chevalier’s fascination with adolescents, although he maintains that it has nothing to do with advocating sex with the underage.¹¹² Although a rather old fashioned term, ‘pédéraste’ was a common insult and Chevalier’s use of the term points towards the FHAR’s reclamation of the word ‘pédé’ a few years later. Alongside this

¹⁰⁹ Chevalier spoke to Sibalis on condition of anonymity, hence Sibalis’s pseudonym ‘Guillaume Charpentier’. Chevalier has since retired and when I interviewed him expressed no desire to use a pseudonym. ‘Stéphane’, Chevalier’s CAPR collaborator, by contrast, remains anonymous.

¹¹⁰ Jean Le Bitoux, *Entretiens sur la question gay* (Béziers: H&O Editions, 2005), 83.

¹¹¹ Michael Sibalis, ‘Mai 68: le Comité d’Action Pédérastique Révolutionnaire occupe la Sorbonne,’ *Genre, sexualité & société* 10, (Autumn 2013): 17, accessed August 2016, DOI : 10.4000/gss.3009.

¹¹² Sibalis, ‘Mai 68,’ 18.

foreshadowing of the FHAR's vocabulary, the text of the CAPR's leaflet can point us towards some of the preoccupations of later, larger, gay liberation groups. Chevalier targeted the sense of shame and a desire to hide that was characteristic of homosexuals, despite the existence of a few glorified writers who could live openly: 'l'attitude de soumission, les yeux de chiens battus, le genre rase-les-murs de l'homosexuel type... Pour un glorieux Jean Genet, cent mille pédérastes honteux, condamnés au malheur'.¹¹³ The notion of the cowed homosexual would be a trope that the FHAR would return to in 1971 with their slogan 'arrétons de raser les les murs'.

To combat this internalized fear and oppression, the CAPR attempted to draw out 'pederasts' and lesbians, and induce them to speech and visibility:

Le C.A.P.R. lance un appel pour que vous, pédérastes, lesbiennes, etc... preniez conscience de votre droit à exprimer en toute liberté vos options ou vos particularités amoureuses et à promouvoir par votre exemple une véritable libération sexuelle dont les prétendues majorités sexuelles ont tout autant besoin que nous.¹¹⁴

Whilst clear about its minority position, the CAPR was interested in a sexual revolution for the masses. This broad revolutionary horizon, rather than the advocacy of particular rights for homosexuals, was another feature of the later liberation movement that the CAPR would foreshadow, and a clear rejection of France's older 'homophile' group, Arcadie. The CAPR targeted Arcadie directly,

¹¹³ Sibalís, 'Mai 68,' 18.

¹¹⁴ Sibalís, 'Mai 68,' 18.

and with some violence, accusing them of being ‘vieilles marquises réactionnaires.’¹¹⁵

Yet whether people were willing to listen to the CAPR’s message was another matter. Chevalier and Stéphane made eight copies of their leaflet, and put them up in the corridors of the Sorbonne, only for them to be torn down overnight. Guy Hocquenghem, a future prominent member of the FHAR, accused the Sorbonne’s Occupation Committee (of which he was a part) of having deliberately suppressed the CAPR, although he himself was unaware of the group: ‘Le comité d’occupation de la Sorbonne s’inquiétait de la présence d’homosexuels autour des W.C. Cela risquait de “déconsidérer” le mouvement...’¹¹⁶ Any claim to systematic repression of the group by the Occupation Committee is overstating the CAPR’s contemporary importance, but it does chime with the homophobic attitudes of contemporary far left politics. According to Chevalier, a chance meeting with the writer and then Maoist activist Philippe Sollers led to an angry exchange during which Sollers exclaimed: ‘tu n’as pas lu Freud, tu n’as pas lu Marx, tu n’as rien compris!’¹¹⁷ Alongside this hostile environment, the CAPR was faced with a lack of engagement. Attempts by Chevalier and Stéphane to increase the size of the group did not go far, stymied by the crushing shyness of the few participants that did appear.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Sibalis, ‘Mai 68,’ 22. No copies of the leaflet survive, the text is available to us because it was transcribed by the journalist and historian Pierre Hahn. Sibalis has discovered that Hahn did not note down the attack on Arcadie, however, as he was a member of the group at the time.

¹¹⁶ Sibalis, ‘Mai 68,’ 22.

¹¹⁷ Guy Chevalier, interview with the author, July 2014.

¹¹⁸ Guy Chevalier, interview with the author, July 2014.

Chevalier turned to spreading his message outside of the confines of student activism. He copied the leaflet pasted up in the Sorbonne and distributed it at public urinals at Mauberg-Mutualité, near his home, and the Jardin des Tuileries, Paris's best-known cruising spot. But enthusiasm for a politicised homosexuality among those lingering in the gardens was far from overwhelming. Chevalier remembers: 'la première fois que je suis allé distribuer un tract aux Tuileries... il y avait une folle qui a possé des hurlements et qui m'a dit... "je n'ai pas envie d'être récupéré, d'être normalisé!"'¹¹⁹ Outside of the Sorbonne bubble, the relevance of an amalgamation of revolutionary politics and homosexuality had yet to be demonstrated.

The CAPR may have been microscopic in scale, but its ambition to go beyond the politics of existing homophile groups was extraordinarily prescient. The group was operating even before New York's Stonewall riots of June the following year, but its preoccupations suggest that the ingredients for liberation movements were present outside of the United States before this event. For Chevalier, the CAPR was just the beginning of years of activism. He took part in the boycott of the examinations to enter the teaching profession in both 1968 and 1969, instead taking a job at the University of California, Los Angeles. A run of extraordinary luck and a taste for activism placed Chevalier at the centre of political action. Before starting this new job, he stopped for a stay in New York just in time to witness June's events at the Stonewall Inn. After making it over to the west coast, he was in San Francisco for the anti-Vietnam war demonstrations of October, and at the first meetings of the Los Angeles Gay

¹¹⁹ Guy Chevalier, July 2014.

Liberation Front (GLF) in December. This American political apprenticeship profoundly marked Chevalier: 'J'étais décoincé par les américains, on peut le dire.'¹²⁰ It was no coincidence that when he returned to France in 1970 he would be central to the foundation of the FHAR, a group which combined the provocations of the CAPR and the spectacular politics of the American Gay Liberation Fronts.

Revolutionary beginnings: The *Front Homosexuel d'Action Révolutionnaire* 1971-4

If the CAPR was the first murmur of gay liberation politics, the creation of the FHAR in March 1971 saw it find its voice. The FHAR is certainly the most well-known and best-documented gay liberation group in France, with history encumbered by a sizeable mythology. The existence of the CAPR shows that the FHAR was not cut from whole cloth in 1971. Furthermore, the FHAR had both intellectual and personal links to the homophile politics of the previous decades. Indeed, in his work on the politicisation of homosexuality, Massimo Prearo argues that Arcadie was a 'laboratoire intellectuel... et de production d'un savoir homosexuel autonome.'¹²¹ It is certainly true that there are many common links and interests between Arcadie and the groups that splintered from it, which are often hidden by personal animosity. The most important of these, according to Prearo, was an 'existentialist' approach to sexual identity. This approach was fundamental for shifting the epistemological field away from an understanding the question '*why am I homosexual*', towards the question of

¹²⁰ Guy Chevalier, July 2014.

¹²¹ Prearo, *Le moment politique*, 91.

*'how do I live my homosexuality?'*¹²² In his history of Arcadie, Julian Jackson calls this a project to create an 'ethics of homosexuality'¹²³. The FHAR shared this existentialist concern, adding to it the political concerns born in May 1968 to ask: *'what is the political significance of my homosexuality?'* Their answer was that homosexuality could contribute to a future socialist revolution. This answer rejected a liberal vision of integration into society, and was so divergent from Arcadie as to obscure their shared departure.

The legacy of homophile organisation was also entangled with inspiration from emergent second-wave feminism. The Mouvement de Libération des Femmes (MLF) had coalesced by 1970 and its founding members included women with a strong personal and theoretical interest in the place of lesbianism in the women's movement, including the writers Monique Wittig and Christine Delphy.¹²⁴ In this charged atmosphere, feminist activism also sprang from Arcadie. André Baudry gave permission for the female members of the club, which included some early members of the MLF, to organise their own meetings. The instigators of this action were the young militant and later founder of the radical lesbian group the Gouines Rouges, Anne-Marie Fauret, and the writer Françoise d'Eaubonne, who had written thoughtfully on homosexuality in her 1970 work *Eros minoritaire*.¹²⁵ D'Eaubonne used the opportunity of Arcadie's platform to push further questions of homosexuality that had begun to be discussed in the MLF. She later recounted that a grouping that began as a meeting of about 50 women attracted a growing number of eager

¹²² Prearo, *Le moment politique*, 98.

¹²³ Jackson, *Living in Arcadia*, 128.

¹²⁴ For the history of the second-wave feminist movement in France see Picq, *Libération des femmes*.

¹²⁵ Françoise d'Eaubonne, *Eros minoritaire* (Paris: André Balland, 1970).

young male members, including Guy Chevalier, the journalist and historian Pierre Hahn, and the interior designer André Piana.¹²⁶ Baudry quickly grew frustrated with the way in which the group went beyond Arcadie's political interventions, and meetings moved from Arcadie's club to Piana's home. There, the group continued to grow, adding Alain Fleig, a later key member of the FHAR and founder of one of its journals, *Le Fléau Social*.¹²⁷

It was this encounter between the feminists and young politicised men at Arcadie that sparked the idea of a mixed-gender group dedicated to homosexual politics. The new group turned to action using the template of spontaneous disruption that had already gained the MLF much attention, including their placing of a wreath to honour the wife of the unknown soldier.¹²⁸ The content of the embryonic FHAR's action was also inspired by feminist concerns. They disrupted an anti-abortion meeting run by the group *Laissez-les vivre* at the Mutualité in Paris, where the group smuggled in cured sausages to use as weapons and shouted 'Avortement libre et gratuit!'.¹²⁹

The group's second public intervention would complete their pivot toward the issue of homosexuality. Pierre Hahn had been invited as a panellist on a popular radio talk show hosted by Mérie Grégoire, a broadcaster whose programmes dealt with social and sexual issues. The theme on the 10th of March was homosexuality, and guests included the writer Armand Lanoux, André Baudry, a priest and a psychoanalyst. Pierre Hahn saw an opportunity for mischief,

¹²⁶ Françoise d'Eaubonne, 'Le FHAR, origines et illustrations,' *La Revue h 2* (Autumn 1996): 18-20.

¹²⁷ Jackson, *Living in Arcadia*, 184; d'Eaubonne, 'Le FHAR, origines et illustrations,' 20.

¹²⁸ Picq, *Libération des femmes*, 13.

¹²⁹ D'Eaubonne, 'Le FHAR, origines et illustrations,' 20.

calling round many of his associates from Arcadie's breakout group to solicit their attendance, including Fauret, Guy Chevalier and the journalist Laurent Dispot (Françoise d'Eaubonne was not in attendance as she missed Hahn's call).¹³⁰ The show consisted of mealy-mouthed discourses on the 'painful problem' of homosexuality, its causes and consequences, including the claim by Grégoire that: 'Imaginez que l'homosexualité devienne un modèle social et bien je ne sais pas, nous nous serions très vite pas reproduits... il y a tout de même une négation de la vie ou des lois de la vie dans l'homosexualité.'¹³¹ The audience began to get restless, with repeated interruptions of Grégoire and the guests. Finally, the stage was invaded: Hahn shouted 'liberté!' into the microphone, a woman pounded the priest's head against the table and Chevalier attempted to take the microphone 'pour faire un appel aux homosexuels de France'.¹³² The programme was swiftly brought off air.

In the euphoria after the disruption of the programme, the group agreed to adopt the name Front Homosexuel d'Action Révolutionnaire, whose acronym FHAR is a homonym of *phare* (beacon) suggesting something of the group's will to visibility.¹³³ Chevalier claims that the name of the group was his suggestion, after some debate over whether to use the word 'gay' in their name,

¹³⁰ D'Eaubonne, 'Le FHAR, origines et illustrations,' 20.

¹³¹ The transcript of the show is reproduced at <http://www.france.qrd.org/media/revue-h/001/probleme.html>, last accessed August 2016.

¹³² Michael Sibalís, 'Gay Liberation Comes to France: The Front Homosexuel d'Action Révolutionnaire (FHAR).' *French History and Civilization: Papers from the George Rudé Society* 1 (2005); 266; Guy Chevalier, interview with the author, July 2014.

¹³³ Jacques Girard claimed that the group was in fact registered with the police as an official 'association' under the name Front Humanitaire Anti-Raciste. If true, this would belie the group's initial confidence, although it would tie in with their concerns with the intersections between race and homosexuality. It has not been possible to confirm this name through the lists of associations registered with the police (whose archives are available online). The file on the group in the central archive of Paris's prefecture of police, who would have been aware of the group's official designation, does not mention the moniker 'Front Humanitaire Anti-Raciste.' Girard, *Le mouvement homosexuel*, 82.

which he refused out of a desire to not follow the American lead too closely.¹³⁴ The naming of the group has been contested, with Dispot and d'Eaubonne also claiming ownership of the acronym.¹³⁵ Michael Sibalís rightly sees this as a sign of the common nature of the term 'revolutionary front' in those post-68 days.¹³⁶ Debates over the naming of the group are also a symptom of the wider struggles over ownership of the group's history, which tells us something of its later importance as a referent for liberation politics.

Another fortuitous encounter came after the naming of the FHAR in the group's connection with Guy Hocquenghem, at that moment a member of the Maoist group Vive La Révolution (VLR) and working on their newspaper *Tout!*. According to Magnus McGrogan, the VLR established *Tout!* in order to go beyond the 'stereotypical black-and-white doctrinaire model paper still coveted by the bulk of *gauchisme*' and establish a newspaper that combined an openness to new movements on the left with the visual impact of the publications of the American underground.¹³⁷ *Tout!* had shown itself to be sympathetic to the cause of gay liberation from its first issue when it reprinted Huey Newton's declaration of the Black Panthers' support for the cause in the United States.¹³⁸ At Hocquenghem's suggestion, *Tout!* gave the majority of their twelfth issue over to the FHAR. The contribution to the issue of *Tout!* would ensure the group's visibility on a national scale, and would publicise the group's Thursday meetings at Paris's Ecole des Beaux-Arts widely, ensuring a large

¹³⁴ Guy Chevalier, July 2014.

¹³⁵ Michael Sibalís traces these claims in 'Gay Liberation Comes to France,' 268.

¹³⁶ Sibalís, 'Gay Liberation Comes to France,' 268.

¹³⁷ Magnus McGrogan, '*Tout!* in context 1968-1973' (PhD diss., University of Portsmouth, 2010), 87.

¹³⁸ Huey Newton, 'Déclaration de camarade H.P. Newton', *Tout!*, September 23, 1970.

attendance. The visibility of the issue was amplified by scandal as the mayor of Tours, Jean Royer took offence to the issue and made a complaint, resulting in a ban on the open sale of the issue and charges of *outrage aux bonnes mœurs* for its director of publication, Jean-Paul Sartre.¹³⁹ Sartre did not stand trial, and was cleared in July when the Constitutional Court upheld *Tout!*'s freedom of expression.¹⁴⁰

The FHAR and homosexual identity

Alongside a national distribution and brief notoriety, *Tout!* also offered the FHAR a platform to articulate an ideology. It is here we can see the elaboration of the group's two dominant concerns. The first of these was a vision of utopian socialist revolution achieved through the liberation of desire; the second was the defence of a marginal homosexual identity. It is the latter strand which would later come to prominence after the FHAR's collapse. These two discourses would often sit uncomfortably with one another, and contained contradictions which impacted both their intellectual coherence and the social function of the group. These are by no means the only two strands of the FHAR's thought. For instance, another analysis could emphasise race or gender as organising principles. But identity and revolution are key in that they express both the novelty of the FHAR and its contribution to the movements that would follow.

¹³⁹ Sartre did not necessarily share the FHAR's hope in homosexuality as a political force. In a 1972 discussion with young militants he expressed a position much closer to the reformist homophiles when he said *Tout!* must teach its readers that 'les homosexuels ont le droit de vivre et d'être respectés comme tout un chacun.' Philippe Gavi, Jean-Paul Sartre and Pierre Victor, *On a raison de se révolter* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), 117.

¹⁴⁰ McGrogan, *Tout!*, 105.

Tout!'s most memorable slogan was an invitation to visibility and collective solidarity based on sexual identity: 'Arrêtons de raser les murs!'¹⁴¹ This was an appeal to 'ceux qui sommes comme nous'. The accompanying text urged its readers to reveal their sexuality, first to themselves, then to each other: 'Vous n'osez pas le dire, vous n'osez peut-être pas *vous* le dire.'¹⁴² Once this desire was made visible, homosexuals could join in a collective to fight against oppression in all its forms: 'le fichage, la prison, la proscription, les insultes, les casse-gueules, les sourires narquois, les regards commiséreux.'¹⁴³

After establishing those included in 'ceux qui sommes comme nous' the FHAR turned adversarial, attacking heterosexual society with an address to 'ceux qui se croient normaux'.¹⁴⁴ This attack on normality was a cathartic release. The group lambasted heterosexual society: 'Vous êtes individuellement responsable de l'ignoble mutilation que vous nous avez fait subir en nous reprochant notre désir.'¹⁴⁵ Criticism of those who believed themselves to be normal also emphasised the slipperiness of the category of 'normality', and what the FHAR saw as the sublimated homosexual desire of leftist activists. The FHAR adopted a mocking tone when talking of those who seek political salvation in the arms of the 'prolétariat mâle et bourru, à grosse voix, baraqué et roulant les épaules.'¹⁴⁶

¹⁴¹ FHAR, 'Arrêtons de raser les murs,' *Tout!*, April 23, 1971, 7.

¹⁴² FHAR, 'Adresse à ceux qui sont comme nous,' *Tout!*, April 23, 1971, 7. Emphasis in original.

¹⁴³ FHAR, 'Adresse à ceux qui sont comme nous,' 7.

¹⁴⁴ FHAR, 'Adresse à ceux qui se croient normaux,' *Tout!*, April 23, 1971, 6.

¹⁴⁵ FHAR, 'Adresse à ceux qui se croient normaux,' 6.

¹⁴⁶ FHAR, 'Adresse à ceux qui se croient normaux,' 6.

The FHAR thus pitched themselves against bourgeois normality, and the hypocrisy of the left, using homosexual desire. But where did this identity come from? To the FHAR, homosexual desire was intuited, but a homosexual identity was socially constructed. An anonymous member of the FHAR wrote in *Tout!*: ‘il est vrai que l’on ne choisit pas de devenir homosexuel en tout cas je n’ai pas l’impression d’avoir choisi. Un beau jour au lycée les petits camarades m’ont traité de pédale – je ne savais pas ce que ça voulait dire, mais j’en étais vaguement fier parce que j’avais l’impression qu’ils m’enviaient.’¹⁴⁷ If this is an invocation of pride, it is a pride in a certain marginality, in the reclaiming of shame. This valorisation of betrayal calls to mind Didier Eribon’s thoughts on the construction of homosexual identity through the conduit of the insult.¹⁴⁸ Homosexual identity existed, but it was imposed by a hostile society.

The FHAR attempted to take ownership of this process of identity creation and attempt to reverse the discourse of insult. In *Tout!*, the group began to develop its own vocabulary, with their own dictionary of terms, re-appropriating terms of abuse: ‘Tante, pédé: nos frères. Gouines, Lesbiennes: nos soeurs.’¹⁴⁹ This was a manoeuvre with a long pedigree. Twenty years earlier, Sartre’s sympathetic reading of Jean Genet’s queer criminality had shed light on the political potential of stigma: ‘Puisqu’il ne peut échapper à la fatalité, il sera sa propre fatalité; puisqu’on lui rend la vie invivable il vivra cette impossibilité de vivre comme s’il l’avait créée tout exprès pour lui-même...’¹⁵⁰ The FHAR were seeking a collective enactment of Genet’s literary approach. Where the CAPR in their

¹⁴⁷ Un du FHAR, ‘Homosexuels,’ *Tout!*, April 23, 1971, 7.

¹⁴⁸ Didier Eribon, *Réflexions sur la question gay*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Flammarion, 2012), 25-28.

¹⁴⁹ FHAR, ‘Notre vocabulaire,’ *Tout!*, April 23, 1971, 6.

¹⁵⁰ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Saint Genet: Comédien et martyr* (Paris: Gallimard, 1952), 55.

leaflet had lamented Genet's glorious exceptionalism, the FHAR attempted to transform all homosexuals into subversive authors of their own identity.

In line with Frédéric Martel and other commentators in the 1990s, Yves Roussel was keen to interpret the FHAR through the lens of the debates over 'communautarianism' and the potentially damaging influence of identity politics on the Republic. Accordingly, to Roussel, the most important aspect of the group was its contestation of heterosexual society, which in turn necessitated: 'l'affirmation d'une fierté homosexuelle passant par la valorisation positive d'une identité spécifique.'¹⁵¹ While Roussel is correct in identifying homosexual identity as a key concern of the FHAR, the group was not simply a precursor to the 'project communautaire' of twenty years later, nor was their concentration on homosexuality a simple expression of pride. Indeed, from their first expression in *Tout!* the FHAR was more interested in a vision of homosexual identity and experience that emphasised visibility, but also marginality and shame, aspects of their experience that linked them to other marginal struggles.

It was from this platform of a reviled but reclaimed identity that the FHAR's solidarity with North African men must be understood. Homosexual identity was used as a bridge to other marginal struggles, if in a problematic way. The most eye-catching piece in *Tout!* is an article about a 15-year old's cruising experience, a white minor who meets a North African man for a sexual encounter. In provocative language, sexual attraction and revulsion are mixed

¹⁵¹ Yves Roussel, 'Le mouvement homosexuel français face aux stratégies identitaires,' *Les temps modernes* 582 (May-June 1995); 97.

as the scene turns violent: 'le type en question, il avait une sale gueule d'arabe, son parfum, c'était pas précisément la rose, mais il en avait sa claque des solitudes de moine...'¹⁵² Underneath the article is a text explaining that, because of internal debates within the group over the perceived racism of the piece, they have decided to include a petition to demonstrate their intention of solidarity. The petition reads: 'Nous sommes plus de 343 salopes. Nous nous sommes faits enculer par des Arabes. Nous en sommes fiers et nous recommencerons.'¹⁵³ It was a playful take on the 'Manifeste des 343', a petition printed in the *Nouvel Observateur* weeks earlier of women declaring that they had undergone an illegal abortion. Deliberately provocative, on the one hand the petition can be read as a statement of anti-colonial solidarity, turning the colonialist stereotype of the bourgeois French man seeking young boys for pleasure in North Africa on its head. Instead of reinforcing colonial power relations, the FHAR saw sex as a means of overturning them, and providing sexual reparations: 'signalons qu'en France ce sont nos amis arabes qui nous baisent et jamais l'inverse. Comment ne pas y voir une revanche consentie par nous sur l'occident colonisateur?'¹⁵⁴ Despite the anti-colonial intent, such a rhetorically violent text has rightly been criticized for repeating the racist stereotype of the dangerously virile Arab man that had haunted the French imagination since the Algerian war.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² FHAR, '15 berges,' *Tout!*, April 23, 1971, 7.

¹⁵³ FHAR, '15 berges,' 7.

¹⁵⁴ FHAR, '15 berges,' 7.

¹⁵⁵ For an examination of the troubling figure of the 'Arab man' in contemporary France see Todd Shepard, "Something notably erotic": Politics, 'Arab Men,' and Sexual Revolution in Post-Decolonization, 1962-1974,' *The Journal of Modern History* 84, no. 1 (2012): 80-115.

A more thorough exposition of the group's linkage of marginal identities can be found in the issue of Félix Guattari's review *Recherches* that the group co-edited in March 1973. Initially the FHAR member Georges Lapassade proposed that the issue be entitled 'Nos amants de Berberie' before the scope of the edition expanded.¹⁵⁶ Retaining this initial focus, the issue features a long round-table discussion 'Les arabes et nous' in which anonymous FHAR members explore their sexual and amorous relationships with North African men. The article demonstrates how the FHAR's interest in non-white men was underpinned by the idea of a shared marginal identity, though stymied by racial and sexualised othering. One of the discussants observes that the FHAR's politics of sexual attraction is in fact hypocritical: 'On se dit quelquefois qu'on n'aime pas les hétéros, parce qu'ils sont phalocrates, mais on aime bien les Arabes, et ils sont phalocrates, on aime consommer de la virilité.'¹⁵⁷ This virility becomes a role from which North African men cannot escape. One of the group reflects upon his refusal of anything more than sex, based on racial assumptions: 'C'est la mentalité de beaucoup de pédés. Qu'est-ce que c'est, les Arabes? Un coup de queue et c'est tout.'¹⁵⁸

Throughout the discussion of 'les arabes et nous' there is an implication that the homosexual is a white, French man. Maxime Cervulle has read a normalising element in the FHAR's texts, by which 'both homosexuality and sexual passivity become implicitly linked to whiteness, thereby conflating the sexually active position taken by Arab men with the privileges of

¹⁵⁶ Georges Lapassade, 'Ce que j'ai retenu du FHAR,' *Têtu*, March 2001, 93.

¹⁵⁷ FHAR, 'Les arabes et nous,' *Recherches: Trois milliards de pervers. La grande encyclopédie des homosexualités* 12 (March 1973); 10.

¹⁵⁸ FHAR, 'Les arabes et nous,' 16.

heterosexuality and the other regimes of the normal imagined by the activists.¹⁵⁹ To the FHAR, it was not an attempt to stand with homosexual North African men in solidarity, it was that both homosexuals and North African men – as distinct groups - were united in a marginality which put them outside of ‘bourgeois’ society. The discussion of North African sexuality begins: ‘Nous, les homosexuels qui avons pris la parole dans ce numéro de *Recherches*, nous sommes solidaires de leur lutte. Parce que nous avons avec eux des relations d’amour. Parce que leur libération sera aussi la nôtre.’¹⁶⁰ Despite the claims to solidarity, a language of ‘us’ and ‘them’, (mirroring the language used to describe the difference between homo- and heterosexuals in the FHAR’s discourse), shows a conception of homosexuality which does not extend beyond racial boundaries. With the same gesture, it casts the North African man as both ally and other. The FHAR mobilises race as a political tool less for intersectional solidarity, and more in the service of the construction of a (white, French, male) homosexual identity.

As with the FHAR’s issue of *Tout!* the issue of *Recherches* would bring police attention, although unlike Sartre, Guattari did not escape a trial. Before the judge, the witnesses emphasised the defence of homosexuality as an identity and homosexuals as a group. Guattari linked the homosexual struggle with other new movements which aimed to wrestle speech away from discourses of power: ‘On the situation in prisons, for example, one would solicit commentary from a judge, a policeman, a former prisoner [...] We wanted, therefore, to give

¹⁵⁹ Maxime Cervulle, ‘French Homonormativity and the Commodification of the Arab Body,’ *Radical History Review* 100 (Winter 2008); 175.

¹⁶⁰ ‘Vivent nos amants de Berbérie’, *Recherches: Trois milliards de pervers. La grande encyclopédie des homosexualités* 12 (March 1973); 2.

direct voice to homosexuals.’¹⁶¹ In an early intervention into the politics of sexuality, an issue he would tend to keep at arm’s length until the publication of the first volume of *Histoire de la sexualité* in 1976, Michel Foucault spoke in support of Guattari during the trial, claiming that the troubling question posed by *Recherches* was not whether it was pornographic but: ‘est-ce que oui ou non, comme pratique sexuelle, l’homosexualité recevra les mêmes droits d’expression et d’exercice que la sexualité dite normale?’¹⁶² Here Foucault distils the interventions of the FHAR into something recognisably similar to the politics of homosexual identity which would emerge later in the decade.

The FHAR and revolution

Foucault’s summary is a deceptive smoothing of the FHAR’s texts. In fact, throughout the FHAR’s texts, homosexual identity threatens to be undermined or overwhelmed by another key strand of the FHAR’s thought: the commitment to socialist revolution. A fixation on the genesis of ‘identity politics,’ such as in the commentary of Martel or Roussel has meant that this strand of thought within the FHAR has been overlooked, or deemed a quirk of historical context. The FHAR’s exploration of homosexuality and revolutionary socialism belies the simple conclusion that the existence of the FHAR represented, in Martel’s words, a ‘shift from one revolution to another, from the ‘class struggle’ to the ‘sex struggle...’¹⁶³ The FHAR’s engagement with the left and with revolutionary socialism was serious and sustained. A leaflet produced in April 1971 declared

¹⁶¹ Félix Guattari, ‘Three billion perverts on the stand’, in Gary Genosko, ed., *The Guattari reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 188.

¹⁶² Foucault’s witness statement is reproduced in the recent reedition of *Recherches: Recherches: Trois milliards de pervers* (Paris: Acratie, 2014), 15.

¹⁶³ Martel, *The Pink and the Black*, 16.

that ‘notre droit à l’homosexualité est révolutionnaire.’¹⁶⁴ For the FHAR, gay liberation had not superseded the *gauchiste* revolutionary project as their main political motivation, the two were intertwined. The leaflet placed the group in a revolutionary lineage, commemorating the ‘sexual liberty’ granted to all at the Paris Commune of 1871 and the Russian Revolution of 1917, closing with the cry: ‘Les homosexuels se libéreront! Nous détruirons la société capitalo-bourgeoise.’¹⁶⁵

The FHAR did not want homosexuals to be passive beneficiaries of revolution, they believed that they could drive it. To demonstrate their ideological commitment, and to cause mischief on the left, the group marched behind the MLF in the Mayday protest of 1971. The FHAR brought a festive aspect to the march, singing songs, some dressed in drag, chanting ‘nous sommes un fléau sociale!’ a slogan which reappropriated the label that they had been given by the infamous Mirguet Amendment of 1960.¹⁶⁶ The theatricality and irreverence of their presence had the desired effect. Jacques Duclos, who had been the French Communist Party’s presidential candidate two years before declared: ‘Allez-vous faire soigner, bande de pédérastes, le PCF est sain!’¹⁶⁷

But the PCF was easy to provoke, and aside from theatrical protest, the FHAR’s investment in revolutionary socialism was overwhelmingly theoretical. The issue of *Tout!* is again the clearest elaboration of their approach. By far the

¹⁶⁴ The leaflet is reprinted in *FHAR: Rapport contre la normalité* (Paris: Editions Champ Libre, 1971), 78.

¹⁶⁵ *FHAR: Rapport contre la normalité*, 78.

¹⁶⁶ Scenes from the march can be found in Carole Roussopoulos’s 1971 film *Le F.H.A.R. (Front Homosexuel d’Action Révolutionnaire)*. For the Mirguet amendment, see below chapter 3.

¹⁶⁷ Pierre Albertini, ‘Communisme,’ in *Dictionnaire de l’homophobie*, ed. Louis-Georges Tin (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2003), 106.

longest text in the issue is a collectively-written intervention entitled 'Pédés et la révolution'. The article is set up as a series of statements and replies intended to refute the notion that there is no relationship between homosexuality and revolutionary struggle. Responding to the notion that homosexuality was a marginal phenomenon with no real bearing on political change, the FHAR claimed that on the contrary, there were hundreds of thousands of oppressed homosexuals among the masses, and furthermore, homosexual impulses were a universal force.¹⁶⁸ The text is a statement of the FHAR's revolutionary vision for homosexuality and how these universal forces may be harnessed: 'l'utopie socialiste... consiste non seulement à lutter pour abolir le salariat et la propriété privée... elle consiste aussi à lutter dès maintenant pour rendre possible des rapports humains de *sujet à sujet*.'¹⁶⁹ For the FHAR, homosexuality offered a possible means of avoiding the objectification and power struggles of heterosexual relations, a short-cut to a socialist revolution catalysed by sexual desire.

One of the most important theorists of this revolution was Guy Hocquenghem. In his 1972 work *Le désir homosexuel*, published at the age of twenty-five, Hocquenghem sets out a theory of desire informed by his political activism in the FHAR and his engagement with the anti-psychiatric thinking of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's *L'Anti-Oedipe*, published the same year. *Le désir homosexuel* uses Deleuze and Guattari's vision of desire as not driven by lack and absence, but by the possibilities of connection (sexual or personal). This was a theory of desire untainted by power relations, a polymorphous flux that

¹⁶⁸ FHAR, 'Pédés et la révolution,' *Tout!*, 12, April 1971, 9.

¹⁶⁹ FHAR, 'Pédés et la révolution,' 9.

recognises neither object-choice or personhood, only pleasure, where individuals are a series of connecting 'assemblages'.¹⁷⁰ Theirs was not a politically neutral theory and they used the concept of desire as a vantage point from which to attack one of the foundations of Freudian thought, the Oedipus complex. As Bill Marshall puts it: 'The double-bind of Oedipus is that either you integrate or conform, or you become a neurotic.'¹⁷¹ They believed that breaking the chains of the Oedipus complex would free human sexuality and destroy the psychological foundations of capitalist society itself.

For Hocquenghem, homosexual desire played a special role in bringing Oedipus's reign to an end. As the act of cruising put this desire into action, Hocquenghem saw cruising as a political opportunity: 'au lieu de traduire cette dispersion de l'énergie amoureuse en termes d'incapacité à trouver un centre, on peut y voir le système en acte des branchements non exclusifs du désir polyvoque.'¹⁷² These connections created a 'machine de la drague' and an authentic expression of desire. Hocquenghem's cruising machine was realised in the FHAR's Beaux-Arts meetings, where the action in the empty halls and classrooms turned the events from a political meeting into in the words of D'Eaubonne, a 'baisodrome.'¹⁷³

However, Hocquenghem's work was also in tension with the FHAR's ideology, as it predicted the ultimate destruction of homosexual identity, rather than its

¹⁷⁰ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *L'Anti-Oedipe: capitalisme et schizophrénie* (Paris: Editions de minuit, 1972).

¹⁷¹ Bill Marshall, *Guy Hocquenghem: Theorising the Gay Nation* (London: Pluto Press, 1996), 28.

¹⁷² Guy Hocquenghem, *Le désir homosexuel* (1972; repr., Paris: Fayard, 2000), 151.

¹⁷³ Françoise d'Eaubonne, 'Le FHAR: Tensions et déclin,' *La Revue h 3* (winter 1996/1997); 25.

strengthening. Prefiguring Foucault's notion of homosexuality as a historical phenomenon produced by expert discourse in the nineteenth century, Hocquenghem saw homosexuality as: 'un découpage arbitraire dans un flux ininterrompu et polyvoque.'¹⁷⁴ But despite his theoretical prescience, Hocquenghem was hacking away at the ideological branch upon which he and the FHAR sat. He concludes: 'Les pratiques homosexuelles sont ici considérées comme une non-sexualité, quelque chose qui n'a pas encore trouvé sa forme, puisque la sexualité est exclusivement l'hétérosexualité.'¹⁷⁵ Hocquenghem's struggle is for homosexual desire, not for homosexual identity, despite himself reaffirming that very same identity in his appearances in the press.¹⁷⁶ To Hocquenghem, homosexual desire retains its resistive power only where it does not become a 'sexuality' or a fixed identity. But exposing this identity as arbitrary made effective political campaigning around it difficult.

There was thus a tension between a revolutionary ideology that would annihilate sexuality and the valorisation of a nascent homosexual identity. Unwilling to invest in the improvement of conditions for a sexual identity marred by bad faith, and unable to convince much of the left to accept the validity of a struggle that they themselves had undermined, revolutionary gay liberation activists faced an ideological dead end. By 1973, *Le Fléau Social*, one of the publications produced by the 'Group number 5' based in the 5th arrondissement and directed by Alain Fleig, had decided to break with the FHAR and to jettison the sexual struggle altogether. In an article in August 1973

¹⁷⁴ Hocquenghem, *Le désir homosexuel*, 24.

¹⁷⁵ Hocquenghem, *Le désir homosexuel*, 180.

¹⁷⁶ This was a contradiction seen not least in Hocquenghem's own public persona. In 1972 he was the first of the generation of young radicals to come out publically as homosexual in an article in the *Nouvel Observateur* (discussed below in chapter four).

'Pour en finir avec le cul' the group declared: 'Séparer le sexe du reste ça s'appelle castrer... C'est le cas de la prétendue "hétéro-sexualité" et de la prétendue "homo-sexualité", si la sexualité n'existe pas comment pourrait-il y avoir "homo" ou "hétéro" sexualité?'¹⁷⁷ For Fleig and the *Le Fléau social* group, sexuality was too divisive and contradictory to provide a path to revolution.

Reflecting the split between those emphasising homosexual identity, and those emphasising revolution, a competing vision was set out by a group around Guy Maës and Anne-Marie Fauret in the publication *L'Antinorm*. Unlike *Le Fléau Social*, *L'Antinorm* welcomed sexuality as a basis for struggle, although like Hocquenghem, they too insisted on the eventual disappearance of homosexual identity: 'C'est dans une société socialiste qu'apparaîtra l'inclusion réciproque de l'homosexualité et de l'hétérosexualité. Alors, il n'y aura plus ni homos, ni hétéros, ni bi-sexuels, mais une libre sexualité.'¹⁷⁸ Both journals retained a faith in a socialist utopia, but differed over the place of homosexuality in achieving the revolution.

Social difficulties in the FHAR

Intellectual distinctions between undifferentiated desire and a constructed homosexual identity would likely have been lost on most of those who wandered into a meeting of the FHAR. Yet the difficulties of the FHAR's intellectual position would influence the social dynamics of the group. With the exception of a few older and more high profile members such as Daniel Guérin and

¹⁷⁷ 'Pour en finir avec le cul,' *Le Fléau Social*, August 1973, 24.

¹⁷⁸ Anne-Marie Fauret and Guy Maës, 'Pourquoi venons-nous au FHAR?' *L'Antinorm*, December 1972, 3.

Françoise d'Eaubonne, the FHAR was dominated by middle-class students, with a contingent of young teachers and intellectuals.¹⁷⁹ These were thoughtful people working through the issues produced by their sexuality through the prism of leftist politics, an approach which embraced experiment and improvisation.

The basis of the FHAR as a social group was the Thursday evening meetings in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Carole Roussopoulos's film of the FHAR, taken with a hand-held camera in May and June 1971 gives a glimpse into the functioning of the group.¹⁸⁰ In the film, a sizeable group of young people, a mixture of men and women nearly all in their twenties, sit and smoke listening to their peers share ideas. Speeches are given by Anne-Marie Fauret and Guy Hocquenghem. Fauret delivers a relentless discourse notable for its already fully-developed jargon of homosexual revolution: 'La structure de base de la société et de la famille ne nous convient pas... Par conséquent la seule position politique possible est une position révolutionnaire.'¹⁸¹ Other discussion was more light hearted; talk of the May Day parade collapses into laughter when group congratulates itself for being able to shock even the anarchists by groping them. Roussopoulos's video transmits the energy, vitality and intellectual excitement of the early FHAR, a group that believes it has found the solution to the failure of 1968 in their own sexual experience. Attendance is large after the issue of

¹⁷⁹ An exception that proves the general rule was the participation of Marc Roy, whose regular emphasis on his working-class credentials in his writing for the FHAR are revealing of the way in which this background was a point of difference. In an article printed in *Gai Pied* in March 1981 he describes his itinerary as 'employé-militant le jour et pédé dans l'obscurité avec l'obligation du ghetto la nuit.' Marc Roy, 'FHAR: Le coup d'éclat,' *Gai Pied*, April 1981, 33-35.

¹⁸⁰ *Le F.H.A.R. (Front Homosexuel d'Action Révolutionnaire)*, directed by Carole Roussopoulos (1971; France).

¹⁸¹ *Le F.H.A.R.*, directed by Carole Roussopoulos.

Tout! and the May Day march, but the group manages to retain its coherence. Despite the bursts of laughter, members are listened to when they speak.

Soon after the scenes filmed by Roussopoulos, there was a change in the atmosphere of the meetings. Thursday evening at the Beaux-Arts quickly gained a reputation for cruising, attracting more and more men, many of whom were looking just for sex on their way to or from the bars of Saint-Germain-des-Prés. Hocquenghem described the corridors and classrooms above the meeting hall as: 'une gigantesque drague sur six étages dans un bâtiment universitaire, probablement le plus nombreux lieu de drague de Paris, sinon d'Europe...'¹⁸² As with Hocquenghem's theoretical interventions, some attempt was made to link this cruising chaos to wider meaning and political purpose. A December 1972 article by Guy Maës and Anne-Marie Fauret on their reasons for attending the FHAR celebrated nudity in meetings as a revolutionary act; stripping oneself of the role imposed by suits or workers' clothing signalled an 'égalisation des rapports'.¹⁸³ Others actively attempted to preserve the non-hierarchical nature of the group, Laurent Dispot remembered that he actively worked to keep the FHAR chaotic: 'J'ai aidé ceux qui ont empêché qu'il ne se transforme en structure, en bureaucratie. Il était à tout le monde, il ne devait être à personne.'¹⁸⁴ For Dispot, there was no group, only a gathering of people under a shared name: 'Le Fhar n'a pratiquement été qu'un mot de passe.'¹⁸⁵ A password which would allow brief entry into a world of sexual liberty.

¹⁸² Guy Hocquenghem, *L'Après-Mai des faunes* (Paris: Grasset, 1974), 196.

¹⁸³ Fauret and Maës, 'Pourquoi venons-nous au FHAR?', 3.

¹⁸⁴ Laurent Dispot, 'Aventuriers de la liberté,' *Gai Pied hebdo*, March 7, 1991, 59.

¹⁸⁵ Dispot, 'Aventuriers de la liberté,' 59.

Yet these positive interpretations of the FHAR's sexual anarchy could not mask the general feeling that the meetings were leading nowhere. In an appraisal of the group published in *Tout!* in the summer of 1971, a group of FHAR members describes the increase in members as 'une explosion brutale' which had increased the numbers at the meetings from around twenty to seven hundred.¹⁸⁶ This increase in numbers had created many unforeseen problems, the first of which was the issue of gender relations. The FHAR members noted that many of the newcomers were 'tout simplement misogynes,' aggravating the frustration of women who had seen the group drift from a place of discussion to a place for men to pick up.¹⁸⁷ The FHAR members wondered if they had too quickly declared unity considering their divergent aims and interests. The group concluded that when everyone returned after the summer break the FHAR would turn to practical issues: 'il est temps d'aller réellement à tous les homosexuels qui souffrent de leur condition et de leur montrer que nous sommes là pour qu'ils puissent devenir nous...'¹⁸⁸

The FHAR's evangelical project would not materialise, and their problems became aggravated as time went on. The emergence of the group within the FHAR calling themselves the *gazelines* increased the general disorder. Appearing in the summer of 1971 the *gazelines* were an informal friendship group whose core members included many who would later become well-known in fashionable Paris circles, such as the broadcaster Hélène Hazera, the singer and model Marie-France, the fashion journalist Maud Molyneux and the

¹⁸⁶ Quelques uns du FHAR, 'FHAR bilan,' *Tout!*, June 30, 1971, 9.

¹⁸⁷ Quelques uns du FHAR, 'FHAR bilan,' 9.

¹⁸⁸ Quelques uns du FHAR, 'FHAR bilan,' 9.

stars of Parisian nightlife Paquita Paquin, Alain Pacadis and Jenny Bel’Air. The group was united by a love of gender play and provocation. They turned up at meetings in drag, increasingly outlandish outfits picked from bins or Paris’s flea markets. Inspiration for the name came from a trip to London, during which they spent time in squats in Bethnal Green and on the Kings Road, and attended a GLF meeting where they saw a group making tea.¹⁸⁹ They were clearly attracted to the irreverence of the act, which juxtaposed nicely with the political speeches that bored them so easily. Paquin remembers: ‘Ce sera en écoutant les diatribes toutes faites des beaux causeurs aux AG du FHAR que me reviendra envie de me moquer.’¹⁹⁰ Jenny Bel’Air, a black trans woman, found herself excluded from the often complex political discourse of the FHAR: ‘C’était la première fois que j’entendais des mots intellos et, comme je n’aurais pas pu avoir gain de cause, je me la bouclais.’¹⁹¹ Instead, they turned to mockery; the group shouted and screamed during meetings at the Beaux-Arts, their favourite contribution was to shout ‘bite!’ at the first sign of any attempts to direct the proceedings.¹⁹² For the *gazolines*, the FHAR was the about disruptive fun, an apprenticeship in exhibitionism that would serve them well for future careers in the media, fashion and nightlife. In Jean-Yves Le Talec’s recent work on effeminacy in France, the *gazolines* are heroines, the apogee of the FHAR’s creative energy.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁹ Paquita Paquin, *Vingt ans sans dormir 1968-1983* (Paris: Denoël, 2005) 60; Hélène Hazera, ‘Souvenirs Gazogènes,’ *Gai Pied hebdo*, March 7, 1991, 57.

¹⁹⁰ Paquin, *Vingt ans sans dormir*, 37.

¹⁹¹ François Jonquet, *Jenny Bel’Air: une créature* (Paris: Pauvert, 2001), 209-210.

¹⁹² Paquin, *Vingt ans sans dormir*, 41.

¹⁹³ Jean-Yves Le Talec, *Folles de France: Repenser l’homosexualité masculine* (Paris: Editions la découverte, 2008), 201.

Yet many contemporaries thought that the group was a corrosive force and would blame them for the FHAR's dissolution. The group's involvement in the Paris nightclub scene drew hostility from the more ardent leftists; H el ene Hazera recalls that the strictest FHAR members did not wish to mix with the 'racaille marchande'.¹⁹⁴ But their own actions were even more provocative than their links to the bar and club scene. Daniel Gu erin, the well-known anarchist who had declared his allegiance to the group early on, was appalled by the *gazolines'* disruption of Pierre Overney's funeral.¹⁹⁵

Ironically for a group that revelled in the politics of gender-play, perhaps the *gazolines'* most damaging contribution was their widening of the gender divide. The women of the FHAR found the *gazolines'* use of drag difficult to swallow, the vaunting of a femininity from which they wished to escape. Indeed, for many women the emergence of the *gazolines* in the summer of 1971 was the moment of rupture with the FHAR. A separate group, the *Gouines Rouges*, started to meet in June, and started to attract more and more women.¹⁹⁶ The loss of lesbian interest in the FHAR was a part of a broader movement of women towards separatist feminist engagement. An article published in *Tout!* in June 1971 declared 'votre lib eration sexuelle n'est pas la n tre' and lamented a male-centric concentration on orgasm and a multiplication of sexual encounters, rather than on power relations.¹⁹⁷ Hocquenghem gave a brazen summary of the

¹⁹⁴ Jonquet interviews Haz era in *Jenny Bel'Air*, 47.

¹⁹⁵ Overney, a Maoist militant, had been shot by a security guard at a protest outside the Renault factory in Billancourt in February 1972. Daniel Gu erin, 'De Baudry   Overney,' *La Revue h 3* (winter 1996/1997); 36.

¹⁹⁶ The *Gouines Rouges*, whilst well known, have received little attention. Marie-Jo Bonnet, one of the founders, has posted a brief history of the group: <http://mariejobon.net/?p=102>, last accessed August 2016.

¹⁹⁷ MLF, 'Votre lib eration sexuelle n'est pas la n tre,' *Tout!*, June 30, 1971, 3.

dispute designed to further sour relations: 'les filles ont expliqué qu'elles en avaient marre de se faire siffler par les mecs dans la rue. A quoi les pédés ont répondu qu'ils ne demandaient que ça, eux: qu'on les siffle, qu'on leur mette la main au cul.'¹⁹⁸ This was not the end of the joint enterprise of women and men in gay liberation politics, but it was certainly the first failure in a practical implementation of a universalising vision of sexual liberation. This was the point where struggles for change largely diverged along gender lines (at least in Paris where numbers were large enough to support separate groups) until the emergence of the CUARH at the close of the decade.

Many men in the FHAR also began to see the limits of the group. Despite the force of their political rhetoric, members found it difficult to live up to the expectations of gay liberation activism. A candid round-table discussion of members of the FHAR was published in the leftist revue *Partisans* in the summer of 1972. Where in *Tout!* members of the FHAR had made it clear that the priority for members of the group should be to act as 'le porteur à l'extérieur de son homosexualité révolutionnaire,' the men discussing their sexuality in *Partisans* had life experiences which diverged sharply from this ideal.¹⁹⁹ When the interviewer, Pierre Hahn, asks 'L'un de vous a-t-il révélé à ses parents son homosexualité?' 'Gilles C.' (Gilles Châtelet, the mathematician) recounts that despite his 'attitude ostentatoire, provocatrice' while at the Ecole Normale Supérieure, he still took great care to prevent his mother finding out his sexuality, including having female friends telephone the house to preserve the

¹⁹⁸ Guy Hocquenghem, 'De la mixité au sein du FHAR,' *Actuel*, November 1972, 9.

¹⁹⁹ Quelques uns du FHAR, 'FHAR bilan,' 9.

illusion of heterosexuality.²⁰⁰ Another, 'Jean-Noël', did not see the point of telling his parents and reflected that: 'ce n'est pas si simple de parler aux parents. Le problème ne se place pas au niveau des préjugés politiques, par exemple: c'est beaucoup plus profond...'²⁰¹ Frédéric Martel is keen to point out what he implies is the hypocrisy in this position;²⁰² but it is important to try and understand these choices in a political context in which labelling oneself a homosexual was not always seen as a radical option.

Of course, even gay liberation activists juggle aspects of their identity in different personal contexts. But the *Partisans* round-table, with its impression of belonging in a supportive group, was not the FHAR's usual mode of operation, and the FHAR was not always a supportive place to discuss these issues. The group could exhibit a sometimes cruel and high-handed stance towards everyday problems. In December 1972 for instance, *L'Antinorm* published extracts from some pained letters they had received; one wrote 'Je suis dans une réelle misère affective et sexuelle'; another thought that the FHAR was 'ma dernière chance de trouver des gens qui me comprennent.'²⁰³ The response to these cries for help was less than encouraging for those who had solicited help: 'Nous ne sommes pas Ménie Grégoire... Pour faire la révolution politique et/ou sexuelle pour les autres, il faut commencer chez soi. Nous ne pouvons rien faire au FHAR...'²⁰⁴ While some found mutual support at the FHAR through friendship networks, for others the revolutionary politics of the group was cold comfort indeed. A decade later, Jacques Girard saw the

²⁰⁰ Pierre Hahn, 'Répression vécue, table ronde,' *Partisans*, July-October 1972, 140-1.

²⁰¹ Hahn, 'Répression vécue,' 142.

²⁰² Martel, *The Pink and the Black*, 94.

²⁰³ 'Hexagonons,' *L'Antinorm*, December 1972, 15.

²⁰⁴ 'Hexagonons,' 15.

FHAR's theory of *le come out* as the most important feature of the FHAR, but aside from injunctions to visibility the group had very little to say on the problems this could cause.²⁰⁵

However, there is a contrast between the FHAR's capricious publications and the private correspondence between the group and those that contacted it. While the outpourings of distress that *Antinorm* complained about are evident, others speak of their joy at finding the FHAR. A letter sent to the group in 1971 explains how the writer was driven almost to suicide 'pour anéantir ce monstre hideux que l'on me persuadait que j'étais;' but how he sees in the FHAR a collective solution to this individual distress: 'de la volonté de suicide je passe définitivement à celle de révolte.'²⁰⁶ This letter is particularly notable for the writer's quick adoption of the FHAR's oppositional language of the 'hétéro-flic'.²⁰⁷ Others though, were less enthused by the rhetoric of liberation. Bernard wrote to the group to challenge their militancy, and in particular the declaration that all must accept their homosexuality on some level: 'Cela semble plus simple que chacun se réalise sans vouloir s'imposer aux autres... On ne fera pas la révolution seulement par la sexualité.'²⁰⁸

As a dialogue with the group, these letters served an emotional function for their senders, a way to engage with the tumult of the FHAR from a distance, but correspondence also provided practical support. Pierre Hahn dealt with many of the letters, creating contacts between correspondents in local areas. For

²⁰⁵ Girard, *Le mouvement homosexuel*, 111.

²⁰⁶ Anonymised letter, May 1, 1971, from the papers of Jean Le Bitoux, with kind permission of Professor Michael Sibalis, (JLB).

²⁰⁷ Anonymised letter, May 1, 1971, (JLB).

²⁰⁸ Letter, Bernard to Jean-Louis, undated (1971 or 1972), (JLB).

instance, Hahn put people in touch in Toulouse, and gave advice on how to set up a FHAR group, after a correspondent asked him for tips on avoiding problems with the police.²⁰⁹ Here we can see Hahn creating an example of the sort of network of communication between homosexuals that Martin Meeker describes in the US context as being central to the process by which a community was formed. A similar process occurred in France whereby as time went on, and these ad-hoc connections developed, 'sexual communication networks grew stronger, more expansive, more permanent and more candid.'²¹⁰

While letters to the FHAR show the slow connecting of isolated men on a national level, back in Paris attempts were being made to turn the FHAR into a more supportive and structured environment. At the start of 1972, Daniel Guérin attempted to organise the group; building on the already small local groups that had appeared in Paris's neighbourhoods (such as Groupe 5 which produced the *Le Fléau Social*) Guérin hoped to encourage groups of around 10 to 15 to meet regularly to discuss their problems and common action.²¹¹ This was a structure similar to the 'working groups' that Gay Liberation Fronts in the UK and the US had successfully initiated.²¹² Yet it was clear to most that the FHAR as a group was moribund. The FHAR had failed to find a purpose as a political movement and its energies had been sapped by a lack of direction and internal struggle. By 1973, rather than any coherent political movement, small

²⁰⁹ Letter, M. Martin to Pierre Hahn, April 21, 1974, (JLB).

²¹⁰ Meeker, *Contacts Desired*, 29.

²¹¹ Daniel Guérin, 'A propos des groupes de quartier ou comment sortir du "piège à cons,"' F Delta 721/15/10, (DG).

²¹² Early on in London the Gay Liberation Front had developed groups around media, psychiatry, street theatre, demonstrations, education, schools and a women's group. See Aubrey Walter, ed., *Come Together: The Years of Gay Liberation (1970-1973)* (London: Gay Men's Press, 1980), 13.

social groups had taken over, be these around drag, drugs and hormones or Fourier, Freud and Reich. The FHAR clearly meant something different to Paquita Paquin or the man who wandered in to cruise than it did to Daniel Guérin or Anne-Marie Fauret. After the initial rush of energy and excitement around homosexuality as a political force, the group was unable to reconcile ideological differences or to move to action. When the police moved in to rid the Beaux-Arts of the FHAR in February 1974 they met no resistance.²¹³

Even as a brief experiment ending in exhaustion, the FHAR was a disruption of previous discourses of homosexuality, bringing homosexual activism into the open and engaging with the far left. The group was driven by a spirit of debate, powerfully combining intellectual, political and libidinous energies. The group was conducting a series of thought and life experiments on the fly, unconcerned with coherence. This left a rich legacy of liberation politics from which later groups could draw. Some strands of thinking would disappear nearly entirely: the debates over the role of homosexuality in socialism would be exhausted well before the end of the decade, for instance. Yet others would become more pronounced, such as the emphasis on a visible and politicised homosexual identity, which would be enthusiastically taken up by the GLH groups which followed.

The Groupes de Libération Homosexuelle

Leaving behind a body of texts and a small number of feverishly politicised individuals, the collapse of the FHAR did not leave the political stage empty for

²¹³ The police had been keeping a close eye on the FHAR as part of a broader police operation targeting revolutionary political groups after the events of May '68. See chapter three.

long. Soon, all over France men and women (although predominantly men) began to form their own groups to agitate for homosexual liberation. Martel has described the emergence of the GLH as part of a 'militant explosion'.²¹⁴ But considering the number of militants involved in each group was in the tens, rather than the hundreds, a 'militant sprouting' might be a more accurate description. The groups made a conscious effort to learn from their predecessor, creating more formalised structures and elaborating an ideology that emphasised a shared homosexual identity and mutual support and sociability. Although sharing a name, the GLH varied in their approach across France, influenced by the characters of the small group of people who animated them. Perhaps because they lacked the novelty of the FHAR, and their energies tended to be turned inwards with less of a desire to shock, the GLH had a much less spectacular impact on the left. Yet this decreased visibility, particularly for the groups outside of Paris, must not obscure the transformative impact that the groups had on the lives of many of those who participated.

The most prominent of these groups in the existing historical literature is the Parisian *GLH-Politique et Quotidien* (GLH-PQ) a group that spent much of its energy constructing an ideological framework for gay liberation. But the GLH-PQ's voluble output distorts its prominence, placing the many provincial groups firmly in the background. A Paris-centric view erases the ideological diversity present in the GLH. From the more moderate but long-lived GLH-Marseille to the FHAR-inspired radical *follitude* of Aix-en-Provence, to the tiny all-female GLH-Montpellier. Many of the most innovative initiatives of the period would

²¹⁴ Martel, *The Pink and the Black*, 79.

spring from provincial groups, such as opening gay community centres, the participation of openly gay candidates in elections and hosting a gay summer school in Marseille. Common to all the groups was an investment in the notion of a politicised homosexual identity, a thread picked up from the FHAR. The common goal across the GLH was the tangible improvement the lives of homosexuals and the way in which society treated them, through the means of political reflection and collective action. Perhaps most importantly for those who joined such groups was the immediate goal of forming a supportive network of friends, associates and lovers in their own towns and cities.

The birth of the GLH

The GLH emerged in Paris out of the exhausted remnants of the FHAR and, like the FHAR, a dissident group of Arcadie members, this time from Arcadie's Youth Commission. According to Jacques Girard, after a heated debate one evening over the issue of femininity, the more radical portion of the Youth Commission was expelled.²¹⁵ This group later reconvened and called themselves *Philandros*, a clear echo of the high-minded roots of the group from which they had split. As with the FHAR, the new grouping quickly distanced themselves from Arcadie but the genesis of the group shows that the distinction between the 'homophiles' and the 'liberationists' was not always clear and may have had as much to do with age as ideological differences. The arrival of members from the defunct FHAR reinvigorated *Philandros* and the name *Groupe de Libération Homosexuelle* was adopted. In his account of the GLH, Michael Sibalis points out the variations on the group's name, which was rendered as

²¹⁵ Girard, *Le mouvement homosexuel*, 117-8.

Groupe de Libération Homosexuel (Homosexual Group for Liberation) or *Groupe de Libération Homosexuelle* (Group for Homosexual Liberation).²¹⁶ This inconsistency exposes a divergence in approach also inherited from the FHAR; the issue over whether homosexual liberation should be part of a broad struggle for the socialist revolution that would bring with it sexual liberation, or a particular struggle based on the conditions and claims of homosexuals.

To work through these difficulties, and to avoid the terminal disorganisation of the FHAR, the GLH Paris set about producing a common basis for action and an organisational structure. An early statement of ideology from the group explained that it was ‘un mouvement de lutte qui, pour être efficace, doit mener un combat constant pendant plusieurs années, ne peut fonctionner comme une “auberge espagnole”...’²¹⁷ Indeed, they made the link between the FHAR’s disorganisation and its swift dissolution explicit: ‘En 1971, le FHAR fut notre premier cri de révolte, mais le manque d’organisation et de cohésion entraîna une désagrégation interne qui permit la répression policière.’²¹⁸ According to Sibalis, ideological strictness was linked to group discipline: ‘The leadership kept tight control, conducted orderly meetings (with about 30 members by early 1975) and drafted a ‘Programme manifesto for the Liberation of Homosexuals’ whose principles everyone had to accept on joining.’²¹⁹ This search for ideological purity was in sharp contrast to the FHAR’s diversity of thought.

²¹⁶ Michael Sibalis, ‘The Gay Liberation Movement in France’, in Gert Hekma, Alain Giami, eds., *Sexual Revolutions* (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2014), 192

²¹⁷ GLH-Paris, ‘Principe d’une charte d’adhésion,’ 1975, JLB.

²¹⁸ ‘Manifeste GLH PQ’, January 1976, (MS).

²¹⁹ Sibalis, ‘The Gay Liberation Movement in France’, 193.

Increasing ideological strictness led to strains in the GLH-Paris between the 'reformists' and the 'revolutionaries'. As the group grew, the new young members it gained from the FHAR were more radical and ideologically motivated than the *Philandros* members, many of whom began to complain that the original manifesto was being ignored and the meetings becoming too theoretical.²²⁰ As the *Philandros* element weakened or drifted away, the revolutionary socialist theoretics of the FHAR became more dominant. But where the energy and informality of the FHAR had managed for a time to hold together a diversity of thought, the more measured GLH found divergence intolerable.

The group split in two in December 1975 over the issue of an away-weekend to which the 'moderates' were not invited. These moderates became the *GLH-Groupes de Base* (GLH-Grassroots, GLH-GB). Predictably, this group was criticised by the radicals for being overly conservative, more concerned with the day-to-day problems of homosexual life than a more wide-ranging analysis. The remaining Paris GLH cell divided again at the away weekend. The second split was over the issue of the participation of men and women in the same group. A text submitted during the weekend declared that women were the group's worst enemies.²²¹ Unsurprisingly, this angered the small women's grouping, the *Pétroleuses*, and many men, causing not only a schism, but also the loss of many less committed members who were scared off by the ferocity of the ensuing debate. Those agreeing with the paper, headed by Alain Huet, a former FHAR

²²⁰ Sibalis, 'The Gay Liberation Movement in France', 193.

²²¹ This narrative of the weekend is based on the GLHmember Michel Heim's account, as collected by Jacques Girard in 1998. Papers of Jean Le Bitoux.

militant and editor of *L'Antinorm*, formed a new group named after the day of the split, the *GLH-14 Décembre* (GLH-14 December). Like the GLH-GB, this new group also denounced the over concern with ideology in the GLH. Their own manifesto mocked the po-faced tendencies of the original GLH's writing with childish glee: 'Nous refusons de laisser l'idéologie prendre le pas sur notre vécu...Vive le caca, vive le pipi, vive les tatas, à bas le capitalisme. Ça veut dire ce que ça veut dire.'²²² But underneath, like the GLH-GB, they had a serious point about the prioritisation of theory over practical action.

The remaining group became the GLH-PQ. Unable to sustain their initial momentum, which came from conflict rather than commitment, both splinter groups would prove unsuccessful. By March 1977, both the GLH-GB and the GLH-14 December were no longer meeting and the GLH-PQ, having always been by far the largest group, was the only remaining GLH organisation in Paris.²²³ These splits are evidence of the commitment to purity of ideology within the GLH which, when combined with a fever for stricter organisation, led to impasses and fragmentation. Other GLH groups outside of Paris would overcome this tendency through a concentration on personal bonds and the social function of the group, necessary preoccupations when lower numbers meant that splits were less feasible.

Ideological evolutions

²²² 'Manifeste GLH 14-Décembre', 1975, (MS).

²²³ The GLH-14 December announced that it was ceasing activities in January 1977. The GLH-GB followed them in March. *Agence Tasse*, January 20, 1977, 4; *Agence Tasse*, March 20, 1977, 3.

Initially, like the FHAR had done, the GLH explicitly aligned itself with the workers' movement. The group distanced itself from the 'bourgeois' homophiles: 'Nous homosexuels qui ne nous reconnaissons en aucune manière dans le club bourgeois Arcadie, voulons participer avec la classe ouvrière au combat anticapitaliste...'²²⁴ Many members of the GLH were also actively engaged in other radical left organisations, such as the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR). The GLH-PQ for instance had a particularly large membership of Trotskyists from the LCR, so many in fact, that it led to concerns about 'infiltration' of the group.²²⁵ However, as the decade wore on, the GLH's critique of the far left would turn from anger to disillusionment and then to disengagement. The GLH critiqued the hyper-masculine political environment of groups such as the LCR from within, and later from without.²²⁶ Drift from membership in leftist groups meant that by the end of the decade references to a coming revolution in the texts of the GLH became rare. As the explicitly Marxist foundations of the GLH's ideology began to slowly slip away, it was replaced in piecemeal fashion with the beginnings of a discourse around a shared homosexual identity, and shared oppression.

This discourse of identity developed as a future vision of revolution waned. Initially, following the FHAR, the more radical elements of the GLH-PQ railed against the artificial division between homosexual and heterosexual. They

²²⁴ 'Je ne sais jamais ça,' 10.

²²⁵ In a 1977 report to the LCR's Commission on Homosexuality, a report was given on LCR members' involvement in the GLH-PQ in which they denied 'skulduggery' but admitted that they had to consciously avoid 'steamrolling' proceedings: 'Bilan de la Commission Homosexualité Parisienne (CHP) et de notre intervention dans le GLH-PQ', March 8, 1977, NAF 28675, (MP).

²²⁶ An example of this contestation was the involvement of GLH-PQ members in the LCR's Commission on Homosexuality, which critiqued the LCR's stance on homosexuality before the majority of the commission's members resigned in 1979 to found the journal *Masques*.

argued that fixed sexual identities were a product of gender norms. Their manifesto declared: 'Nous rejetons la normalité qui s'appuie sur la division des sexes qui se traduit par la domination de l'homme et l'oppression des femmes, et par les distinctions entre homosexuel et hétérosexuel, entre normal et anormal...'²²⁷. Counter to a narrative of coming out or increasing homosexual visibility, Alain Huet praised anonymity for homosexual militants so as not to reinforce the homosexual/heterosexual binary: 'Pourquoi se dire homo alors que les hétéros, eux, n'ont pas besoin de se dire hétéro, et, par ce fait, renforcer les clivages qu'on veut faire sauter?'²²⁸ Others expressed their own personal conflict over sexual identity, for instance the (unnamed) American involved in the GLH Lyon: 'Est-ce que je suis homosexuel? Oui! Non!... Je suis SEXUEL un point c'est tout... Je crois que beaucoup de nous se torture, se sont torturés pour se classer...'²²⁹ Dressed as a radical refusal of limiting sexual identities, there was lingering ambivalence around proclaiming a homosexual identity for fear of potential negative consequences.

Yet, as the dissolution of sexual identity in a coming revolution appeared increasingly remote, the GLH came to rally around a politicised homosexual identity. Subtle critiques of the construction of sexual identity began to cede to punchier rhetoric about the discrimination and oppression that homosexuals faced. This is especially true of documents produced for the public, such as a leaflet distributed in Marseille at the May Day march in 1980: 'Le GLH demande l'abolition des articles répressifs du Code Pénal (art. 330 et 331) et

²²⁷ 'Manifeste GLH-PQ', January 1976, (MS).

²²⁸ Alain Huet, 'Sur l'anonymat,' *Agence Tasse*, May 5, 1977, 1.

²²⁹ 'Je ne sais jamais ça,' *Interlopes*, Spring 1978, 10.

des différents textes juridiques discriminatoires, l'arrêt du fichage des homosexuels et la destruction des fichiers.'²³⁰

Race also featured in this campaigning literature, but not in the provocative way in which the FHAR had invoked the issue. Indeed, where race features in GLH demands, it is rarely to express solidarity with racial minorities and more often to express the 'anti-homosexual racism' experienced by homosexuals as a distinct 'race'; rhetoric more likely to call to mind Proust's *race maudite* than revolutionary politics, and a clear move towards a politics of identity. The GLH in Aix-en-Provence claimed that the GLH saw negative attitudes against homosexuals as an expression of 'racism'.²³¹ Yet one is just as likely to find racist discourse as solidarity with anti-racist struggles in the texts of the GLH. For instance, in a 'gay travel guide' feature, the GLH Marseille's *Comme Ça* journal claimed that in Tunisia: 'on peut goûter à l'Arabe – mais attention de bonne lignée! Pas de celle que l'on trouve dans les banlieues parisiennes ou Marseillaise, n'est-ce pas?'²³² Campaigning began to include calls for the extension of anti-racist laws to cover discrimination against homosexuals in work and housing.

The notion that homosexuals were a persecuted race was evident in the GLH's interest in campaigning for the recognition of homosexual victims of Nazi Germany. One of the GLH Paris's very first actions was an attempt to place a wreath in the shape a pink triangle on the national deportation memorial day.²³³

²³⁰ GLH Marseille, 'Homosexuels défendez vos droits et libertés', leaflet, May 1980, (MS).

²³¹ 'Les moyens une politique,' *Aixzema*, January 1979, 4.

²³² 'Voyage,' *Comme Ça*, October 1979, 3.

²³³ GLH, letter to the editor, *Quinzaine Littéraire*, October 1, 1975, 31.

The police blocked them from placing the wreath, but it became a lifelong campaign for Jean Le Bitoux, a leading figure of the GLH-PQ, a preoccupation that long outlasted the GLH-PQ.²³⁴ The importance of the issue of homosexual victims of fascism reveals the way in which gay liberation activists were convinced of the precarity of their current situation. Parallels were often drawn with the situation of homosexuals in Berlin in the nineteen thirties, what they perceived as a situation of relative tolerance turned quickly to murderous oppression.²³⁵

Interest in Nazi crimes also fed into the GLH's critique of the 'ghetto' of commercial establishments and public cruising spots into which they believed gay men had been corralled, the better to control and exploit them. The subject was not new. Arcadie and then the FHAR had taken an interest in the spaces and places that homosexuals frequented.²³⁶ But the GLH's critique was driven by the growth in the number of commercial spaces catering specifically to gay men in the second half of the 1970s. Like their predecessors, the GLH usually made a distinction between this commercial ghetto (bars, clubs, saunas etc.) and the non-commercial ghetto of cruising grounds in parks, toilets, beaches etc. (also called the *ghetto sauvage*). Much energy was put into thinking about the reasons for the existence of these spaces and the experience of gay men in them, and the most common view was that they were a nefarious influence. In

²³⁴ This interest would lead to the publication of a French translation of Heinz Heger's autobiography of his time in the camps as a homosexual prisoner, *Men of the pink triangle*, under the direction of Jean-Pierre Joecker. Heinz Heger, *L'homme au triangle rose* (Paris: Editions Persona, 1981). Eventually a French survivor's testimony was unearthed, that of the Alsatian Pierre Seel. Jean Le Bitoux aided in recounting his story in *Moi, Pierre Seel, déporté homosexuel* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1994).

²³⁵ See for instance the depiction of Magnus Hirschfeld's institute in Guy Hocquenghem and Lionel Soukaz's 1979 film *Race d'Ép*.

²³⁶ On Arcadie's opinion of the commercial ghetto see Jackson, *Living in Arcadia*, 222-225.

a collective reflection on the issue, the GLH-PQ concluded that the two different types of ghetto had the same outcome, a lack of communication and solidarity between gay men:

‘Dans le ghetto non marchand, la menace toujours présente de répression par les flics ou par les bandes de loubards engendre un haut degré de culpabilisation... qui rend très difficile toute forme de communication autre qu’une consommation sexuelle hâtive et sans lendemain... Dans le ghetto commercialisé, les rapports sont marqués fondamentalement par leur caractère marchand, excluant ainsi toute communication entre les individus autre que celle qui passe par l’apparence.’²³⁷

Where the FHAR had seen political potential in cruising, the GLH-PQ only saw varied and subtle instruments of oppression.

The GLH across France

Critique of the ‘ghetto’ was particularly fierce in Paris, whose gay commercial scene was rapidly expanding in the decade. Life for homosexuals was different outside of the capital, and this difference was reflected in different approaches to liberation politics. The few accounts of the GLH groups available concentrate nearly entirely on the capital, with only brief mentions of the number of groups that emerged across France or short mentions of the later innovations from the provinces.²³⁸ The problem lies partly with source material - publications from the Parisian groups are more abundant and accessible - and partly a problem

²³⁷ ‘Réflexions’, GLH-PQ, August 1976, 25, (MS).

²³⁸ This bias is clear from the earliest histories of the movement, Jacques Girard chronicles the Parisian groups at length, but barely mentions any others, apart from their relation to or their alignment with the Parisians. Girard, *Le mouvement homosexuel*, 146.

with the often small and ephemeral nature of the groups outside major urban areas.

The provincial GLH should not be seen solely in relation to their Parisian cousins. A shared ideological core must not obscure the variation of the GLH across the nation. After the initial impulsion from Paris, after 1975 other groups began to form over France. Notable GLH groups were founded in Aix-en-Provence, Bordeaux, Dijon, Lille, Lyon, and Marseille. Smaller or more fleeting organisations were also founded in Alsace, Amiens, Boulogne-sur-Mer, Brest, Caen, Clermont-Ferrand, Grenoble, Le Havre, Montpellier, and Mulhouse Nantes, Orleans, Pau, Rennes, Rouen, Saintes-Cognac-Angoulême, Saint-Etienne, Strasbourg, Toulouse, and Tours. A contact sheet for the groups from 1977 lists a total of 23 groups, but some of these were little more than a personal contact, or were 'under construction' and their contact details were listed as another local group.²³⁹ Aside from the many *groupuscules*, GLH in the major French cities, particularly Lyon and Marseille, were not only relatively large in terms of numbers, but also active, ideologically divergent and innovative in their militancy.

Most GLH began from personal initiatives and informal connections. The GLH Lyon was created by Jean-Paul Montanari and Alain Neddham, both involved in Lyon's theatre scene, in 1976-77 out of weekly 'meetings of queers' in the restaurant Les Tables Rabattues in the working-class area of the Croix-Rousse.²⁴⁰ The nascent GLH Lyon produced its own journal, *Interlopes*, in the

²³⁹ 'Liste des GLH', January 1977, (MS).

²⁴⁰ Martel, *The Pink and the Black*, 91.

autumn of 1977. Only four issues of *Interlopes* were produced between 1977-79. The journal is most notable for its tone, which took on board the main theoretical questions of the GLH in Paris but presented them in a more playful manner. *Interlopes*' polyphonic style gives a real sense of a group of people thinking their way through what 'liberation' could mean to them. The results, while at times confusing and contradictory, are honest and engaging: 'viens, on va s'aimer, on va pas se consommer et se jeter ensuite, on va rigoler, jouer, jouir de nous en entier,'²⁴¹

Interlopes's concerns were also local. Lyon was well known for a particularly developed cruising scene in the city's *vespassiennes* (public toilets) and along the quays of the Rhône and the Saône. Antoine Idier notes that Lyon's riverside cruising sites are often remembered with nostalgia by locals as the most beautiful in the world.²⁴² This (now lost) world of cottages is ever-present in the works of the Lyon group, but without an accompanying layer of nostalgia it is not always so positively portrayed. The first issue of *Interlopes* opens with a downbeat reflection on the rhythms of cruising: 'Le reste du jour ou de la nuit je mesure les quais des fleuves et les rues de la ville jusqu'à l'épuisement des jambes et l'hésitation du regard. Pourquoi Lyon est-elle devenue cette ville si dure à vivre?'²⁴³ Reflection on the ghetto also had a self-reflexive tone, accusing the GLH itself of being nothing more than a reproduction of the ghetto they are all trying to escape: 'Libérer homosexualité, c'est permettre sa libre circulation

²⁴¹ 'J'accuse,' *Interlopes*, Spring 1978, 4, (MC).

²⁴² Antoine Idier, *Dissidance rose: Fragments de vies homosexuelles à Lyon dans les années 70* (Lyon: Editions Michel Chomarat, 2012), 23.

²⁴³ 'La drague,' *Interlopes*, Autumn 1977, 2, (MC).

comme composante à part entière de toute relation humaine'.²⁴⁴ This need to be together, followed by revulsion, calls to mind Didier Eribon's writings on the push-and-pull of gay association: 'la désidentification étant assurément l'une des caractéristiques les plus fréquentes et les plus puissantes de ce qui constitue le rapport des gays aux autres gays et donc leur rapport au collectif qu'ils forment ensemble.'²⁴⁵

These tensions of togetherness were often channelled into creative endeavour. One of *Interlopes*' main innovations in this sense was its format. The journal's final issue was released in the form of a large poster entitled *L'abécédaire de l'homosexualité*, one side reproducing the Nazi system of classifying 'undesirables', the other detailing a playful illustrated alphabet of queer topics: 'Culture PD: Culture aussi artificielle que le steack à base de dérivés de produits pétroliers... Désir: Ce qui pousse. Ca ne pousse pas toujours dans le sens que voudrait la tête.'²⁴⁶

In contrast to the playful GLH in Lyon, the GLH Marseille, one of the largest and the most long-lived of all the groups, tended to have a moderate stance, and a concentration keeping a broad variety of people together in a concentration on sociability. Founded at the end of 1976 by a meeting between leftist students and a group working at *La Criée*, a local counter-culture newspaper; from the start the group aimed to be welcoming. They even adopted a conciliatory tone towards Arcadie, considering the group to be their precursor: 'On critique

²⁴⁴ GLH-Lyon, 'Comment empêcher les chiens d'aboyer en voiture?', *Interlopes*, Spring 1978, 13.

²⁴⁵ Eribon, *Réflexions*, 200.

²⁴⁶ 'Abécédaire de l'homosexualité,' *Interlopes*, Spring 1979, 1, (MC)

Arcadie, à juste titre, pour la timidité... de son action: il n'en reste pas moins qu'Arcadie représente une activité non négligeable et une somme d'efforts obstinés.²⁴⁷ The GLH Marseille's approach to the homophiles was representative of a more relaxed attitude to ideology in general. Although it did stage debates and produce theory, the GLH Marseille was more concerned with creating a mutual support for their members in what they saw as a hostile and city. Accounts of their activities from 1977 reveal that they numbered around 20-30 at each Friday meeting; they aimed to create a convivial atmosphere, a mixture of politics and socialising: 'On y bouffe, on y fait une à deux heures de politique... Ensuite en cause par petits groupes, une quinzaine s'en va en boîte danser jusqu'à 4 heures du matin...'²⁴⁸

Politics was at its most important for the GLH Marseille where it intersected with the practicalities of daily life. A debate on 'homosexual repression' in 1979 was turned toward practical advice. Rather than flights of theory, the debate was supplemented with detailed figures about arrests and prosecutions of homosexuals in recent years, procured from a contact at *Le Monde* and written up into a report.²⁴⁹ This more practical approach lent itself well to campaigning on a local level. The group organised behind Jean Rossignol, a member of the GLH Marseille who they claimed was sacked from his job as a dean (*surveillant*) in a local school because of his militant activities. The group helped organise his legal defence and distributed leaflets about his case in the city.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁷ 'Un peu d'histoire,' *Le Bal des Tantes*, 1978, 3.

²⁴⁸ Letter from GLH Marseille to GLH Mulhouse, December 19, 1977, (MS).

²⁴⁹ GLH Marseille 'La répression des homosexuels existe. Elle est permanente et multiforme.', 22 March 1979, (MS).

²⁵⁰ GLH Marseille, 'Jean Rossignol: un cas d'interdiction professionnelle pour l'homosexualité?', 1979, (MS).

Like other GLH, Marseille produced a number of publications including *Le Bal des Tantes*, *Comme Ça* and a poetry review *La Plume Taillée*. Rather than being a platform for the group's debates, or theoretical texts, Marseille's publications took a resolutely pragmatic approach, with articles chronicling the experience of gay life in Marseille at the end of the decade. For instance, rather than rail against 'the ghetto', the group began a project to create a guide for the bars, clubs, saunas and cruising spots in Marseille and surrounding towns.²⁵¹ The GLH Marseille's characteristic mix of political pragmatism and interest in daily life and the social element of a political group meant that it would survive the challenge of the burgeoning gay commercial scene in the early 1980s, and the initial onset of HIV/AIDS. The group survived until 1987.

Geographical proximity was no indicator of political orientation; the GLH Aix-en-Provence was markedly different to its Marseille neighbour's practical and social approach. Aix-en-Provence had a particularly energetic gay liberation movement, it had birthed its own (small) FHAR and the city's GLH followed. The group had an interest in the provocative and the scatological, and they took this approach into the streets of Aix. In 1976 they produced a leaflet titled 'l'amour-la merde', which claimed: 'Prendre plaisir à la vie, c'est aussi prendre plaisir à chier.'²⁵² Over a thousand copies were reportedly distributed over the city.²⁵³

²⁵¹ 'Editorial,' 1.

²⁵² The leaflet is reproduced in *Bulletin des GLH de province*, September 1976, 23, (MS). 'love and shit'; 'Taking pleasure in life also means taking pleasure in shitting.'

²⁵³ Patrick Cardon, 'Aix en Provence,' *Bulletin des GLH de province*, September 1976, 21, (MS).

Aix-en-Provence was particularly concerned with gender representation, and conflict between the ‘machos’ and the ‘fairies’ in January 1978 led to a split and a change of name. The radicals named themselves *Mouvance Folle Lesbienne*, distancing themselves further from the GLH groups elsewhere. *Mouvance Folle Lesbienne* diverged from the GLH by rejecting ‘masculinity’ entirely, focusing on a radical effeminacy that had its roots in the FHAR’s *gazoline* faction. The *Mouvance Folle Lesbienne* produced what could be France’s first journal to advocate radical effeminacy, *Fin de Siècle* in 1980. Patrick Cardon, the leading figure of the group, emphasised the anti-masculine and ‘anti-phallic’ nature of the group, claiming that the *Folles-lesbiennes* were ‘des homosexuels qui n’aiment pas les hommes.’²⁵⁴ Because of their often aggressively different stance, Aix’s groups remained at one remove from the rest of the GLH, and the city became a byword for what more moderate members thought were the movement’s excesses. An anonymous account of a national meeting in 1977 accused Aix of being completely uncompromising in their ideas and going on the offensive when questioned ‘traitant les autres GLH de cons, d’hétéros, de refoulés’.²⁵⁵ Yet the innovation and contribution that Aix made with some of their own initiatives must not be ignored. The most important of these was the fielding of candidates at the municipal elections of March 1977 (discussed below).

The GLH as a national network

²⁵⁴ Patrick Cardon, ‘Histoires Aixoises,’ *Fin de siècle*, Spring 1980, 47, (MS). ‘homosexuals who don’t like men.’

²⁵⁵ ‘Impressions personnelles,’ *Agence Tasse*, March 20, 1977, 3, (MS).

Holding together even neighbouring towns in productive dialogue shows the difficulties in achieving national coordination within the GLH. Repeated attempts were made to overcome these challenges and to foster national dialogue and cooperation between groups. Many years later, Jean Le Bitoux would claim that this new wave of militancy after the FHAR ‘was more structured because the “loudmouths” who had dominated FHAR had vanished into thin air... I also supported from the start the plan to construct a national network by listening to and involving the provinces in this movement, something FHAR had neglected to do.’²⁵⁶ But this ‘plan’ to construct a network with fully integrated provincial operations was more idyll than reality. From the beginning, the splits emanating from Paris inhibited coordination.²⁵⁷ When provincial groups travelled to the capital, they sometimes regretted it. One disillusioned account of a GLH meeting in Paris criticises the Parisians for their purely sexual interest in their provincial cousins: ‘Le GLH PQ de Paris avait prévu l’hébergement. Le choix s’est alors fait sur des critères physiques, PQ se distribuait les jolis provinciaux, les moins jolis pouvaient bien aller dormir sous les ponts.’²⁵⁸

Lacking support from Paris, self-coordination was the favoured mode of operation between the provincial GLH, with one of the most common means being collaborative publication. In the spring of 1976 the GLH-Bordeaux began a project to create a newsheet and in May 1976 the first *Bulletin des GLH de Province* was produced. The project was primarily an exercise in gathering

²⁵⁶ Le Bitoux, ‘The construction of a political and media presence’, 251.

²⁵⁷ GLH Bordeaux, ‘Editorial,’ *Bulletin des GLH de province*, September 1976, 2, (MS).
 ‘à plusieurs reprises il nous a fallu répondre à ce genre de questions: “est-il vrai que tel GLH est une création de PQ... ou du 14-XII?”

²⁵⁸ ‘Impressions personnelles,’ *Agence Tasse*, March 20, 1977, 3.

news and information: “Que faites-vous, comment vous organisez-vous, quelles actions vous menez...” sont des questions que nous nous posons mutuellement et que posent les copains qui désirent démarrer un GLH dans leur ville. C’est ce besoin qui est à l’origine du bulletin province.’²⁵⁹ In these early days, the bulletin was mainly filled with reports on attempts to create groups, plans for action and reproductions of leaflets and texts.

A more ambitious venture in the same vein was led from Paris by Alain Huet, after his involvement in the GLH-14 Décembre. His GLH newspaper, *Agence Tasse* (named after the campy slang term for a urinal) was also produced in 1976 and like the *Bulletin*, was distributed through the GLH all over the country. It was crude in execution, and consisted of texts of varying quality sent in from GLH groups. Unlike the ideological strictness of other Parisian GLH ventures, *Agence Tasse* was unconcerned with imposing an ideological line, proclaiming themselves a part of the ‘revolutionary’ current in the GLH but stating that: ‘Nous ne voulons être ni des directeurs de conscience, ni des maîtres à penser, ni les promoteurs d’une nouvelle éthique.’²⁶⁰ As the GLH developed, *Agence Tasse* became less of a space for reports on the status of individual provincial groups and more a forum for ideas and ideological reflections. In its embrace of difference across the gay liberation movement in France, the modest ambitions of *Agence Tasse* was a step towards the looser association of a polyphonic movement that gay liberation would become in the early 1980s.

²⁵⁹ GLH Bordeaux, ‘Editorial,’ 2.

²⁶⁰ Jacques Prince, ‘Editorial,’ *Agence Tasse*, December 20, 1976, 1. (MS).

‘We don’t want to be spiritual advisors, thought leaders or the promoters of a new moral code.’

This national network was linked to international organising. The main link between France's GLH and their international sister organisations was through the International Gay Association (IGA). The association was formed in Coventry in 1978, and aimed to work for gay liberation throughout the world by coordinating 'political pressure on governments and international bodies and distributing information on gay and lesbian oppression and liberation.'²⁶¹ Delegates from the GLH Marseille, and the CUARH would join the organisation and attend meetings in Turin in 1981 and Barcelona in 1982. France's groups were active in promoting their causes within the international group, and notes from the Turin conference include a specific denunciation of France's unequal age of consent laws.²⁶² Support was reciprocal, with the GLH taking up the IGA's causes, with the GLH Marseille releasing a leaflet urging solidarity with Greek homosexuals facing the prospect of new anti-homosexual laws.²⁶³

The social functions of the GLH

The creation of a national, and international, network rested on the strength of social connections between GLH members. The social element of coordination points us towards the most important aspect of the various GLH and the main way in which they made an impression on the lives of gay men in France. Where these groups made a deep impact was on the lives of the people who came into contact with them and in the friendships, support, and collective purpose that they provided.

²⁶¹ Leaflet, 'International Gay Association: "Coming Out to the world"', 1979, (MS).

²⁶² 'IGA Report From the Third International Conference, April 17-20th 1981, Turin', (MS).

²⁶³ Leaflet, 'Victoire de la solidarité internationale avec les homosexuels Grecs', undated (c.1979), (MS).

To develop these social networks, initial contact with new members had to be made. One of the most common actions was the keeping of permanent hours in a fixed location. During these hours, members of the group could welcome newcomers, introduce them to the GLH, provide information and lend a sympathetic ear. These *permanences* ('office hours') most often took place in bookshops, or in the case of the GLH Marseille, space lent from the local alternative press. The use of bookshops as meeting places highlights their importance in the development of the gay liberation movement, not only for the distribution of the gay press but also in providing spaces for the development of groups.²⁶⁴ *Permanences* were one of the main ways in which the provincial GLH welcomed new members, and also provided a social induction to the group, a way for newcomers to meet members before attending a meeting, a step that could be nerve-wracking. But the effectiveness of these initiatives was mixed. Despite the GLH Rouen's high-hopes for creating an 'alternative homosexual community,' they had great difficulty in introducing themselves to newcomers during their *permanences*: 'Plutôt moroses, les permanences. Des gens venaient, puisqu'on s'était faits connaître par voie de tracts... mais on ne savait pas trop quoi leur dire, eux non plus.'²⁶⁵ Other groups had similar experiences; the GLH in Strasbourg noted that while about 200 people had been in touch through letters or visits, the group remained only ten to twenty people in size.²⁶⁶ If for the GLH expression in text came naturally, when it came to face-to-face encounters, spreading liberation politics proved difficult.

²⁶⁴ The journal *Masques*, discussed in chapter four below, would be distributed nearly entirely through a network of national and international alternative bookshops.

²⁶⁵ 'Tentative d'histoire du GLH de Rouen,' *Pourquoi Pas*, 1 (undated, 1978), 4, (MS).

²⁶⁶ 'Bulletin des GLH printemps 1977', Spring 1977, 27, (MS).

Connections were more easily made in social settings. Entertainment and events in the form of parties, shows and cinema festivals became the most important facets of life in the movement in the later 1970s. The importance of organised social events was another way in which the GLH moved closer to Arcadie's more structured sociability and away from the FHAR's raucous disorganisation. The social aspect of the group was particularly important outside of Paris where there were fewer opportunities for gay men and women to meet outside of a small number of bars and cruising areas. *Bals* became a way for the GLH groups to encourage cohesion within the group, an opportunity to open the group up to new members and to raise funds. Often more than just drink and dancing, the parties included shows and skits put on by members of the GLH, or professional performing groups. The GLH Rouen reported that a show they put on in May 1977 featuring the singing troupe *Les Mirabelles* drew a crowd of over 350 people, rejuvenating the previously moribund organisation.²⁶⁷ One account of attending a GLH party in Marseille in 1978, called 'Préparatifs du bal' expresses the joy, and anxiety, of these events: 'Ce soir je vais danser. Je devrais être content; pourtant je suis angoissé. C'est la première fois que je me travesti... Il ne faut pas que je craque, que ce soit un echec... Allez en scène.'²⁶⁸ Parties were also a way for the GLH, perennially in need of money, to raise funds outside of subscriptions. When putting on such events, the GLH generally aimed to make them as cheap and accessible as possible, to avoid the expense and exclusion they so often

²⁶⁷ Tentative d'historique du GLH de Rouen,' 4.

²⁶⁸ Jean-Luc, 'Préparatifs du bal,' *Le Bal des Tantes*, 1978, 1, (MS).

criticised in established gay commercial premises. This inclusivity, though, often meant that the costs of putting on the evenings outweighed takings.²⁶⁹

The financial risks involved show that social events, while popular, were not wholly unproblematic. There were repeated critiques from within the GLH that such events risked becoming little more than another version of the 'ghetto' of bars and clubs already available.²⁷⁰ When the same critiques were raised within the GLH Marseille, pragmatic voices brusquely dismissed the 'problem' of parties: 'hormis le problème du temps qui'il faut pour son organisation la fête ne pose aucun problème "politique" nécessitant des heures de discussion.'²⁷¹ For most members, nurturing a vibrant social life within the group was much more important than agonising over whether or not the GLH was recreating the commercial ghetto.

As accounts of the events they staged show, participation in the GLH was often nerve-wracking and exhilarating in equal measure. Jean Le Bitoux spoke of his discovery of the GLH as a reinvigoration of his social and political life:

'En Septembre 1975, je tombe dans *Libération* sur une petite annonce. Elle indique une reunion du tout jeune GLH... Je suis alors déprimé au fond de mon lit, *Libé* à la main, au crepuscule, encerclé par des mégots de cigarettes et des cadavres de de bouteilles de bière... Je suis ravi de venir à leur rendez-vous.'²⁷²

²⁶⁹ 'Etat financier GLH Marseille', 1979, (MS).

²⁷⁰ GLH Bordeaux, 'Nos premiers débats, nos premières conclusions,' *Bulletin des GLH*, Spring 1977, 21, (MS).

²⁷¹ GLH-Marseille, 'La Boulangerie a un an', June 1982, (MS).

²⁷² Le Bitoux, Chevaux, Proth, *Citoyen de seconde zone*, 135-6.

Christian de Leusse was introduced to the GLH in 1978 through an existing member, Jacques Fortin, who encouraged him to join.²⁷³ For de Leusse, participating in the GLH was a part of a long process of coming to terms with his sexuality and entering into a new social and emotional world: 'Pour moi, entrer en homosexualité c'est presque comme entrer en religion, c'est-à-dire que je me dis, si j'y vais, j'y vais complètement, et deuxièmement, j'y vais avec des autres... c'était un basculement social, un basculement moral.'²⁷⁴ The GLH provided a space for people to enter this new world together. Jean Michel-Rousseau (alias Mélanie Badaire), a member of numerous provincial GLH and later the CUARH, also experienced participation in the GLH as an introduction into a new 'gay life'. He first decided to get in touch with a homosexual group during his university years in Rennes in 1976, because he knew no other gay men. He met a member of Arcadie, who told him he would be better joining the GLH: 'on se réunissait une fois par semaine... c'était un lieu de convivialité, on mangeait ensemble, on se voyait chaque semaine pour discuter, même si la conversation m'échappait un peu à l'époque, j'avais hâte, le jeudi d'être avec les autres, discuter, sortir...'²⁷⁵

If Rousseau was at first daunted by the group's political discourse, others expressed a feeling of empowerment from linking their sexuality with political rhetoric. In a contemporary account, 'Florian' from the GLH Bordeaux, a young worker, spoke about the contrast between his working life and the GLH group he had been involved in: 'Je suis pris au piège, entre, d'une part le milieu où je

²⁷³ Christian de Leusse, interview with the author, November 2014.

²⁷⁴ Christian de Leusse, November 2014.

²⁷⁵ Jean-Michel Rousseau (alias Mélanie Badaire), interview with the author, July 2014.

travaille, qui est un moyen-âge sexuel...et le plaisir que j'ai pu prendre en découvrant, en décortiquant des mots comme phallocratisme, machisme, etc... enfin des mots dont je ne connaissais ni le sens ni la valeur, et dont je n'avais jamais entendu parler.'²⁷⁶ Of course, not every encounter with the group was a success story. Many attended the groups once, never to return, perhaps put off by the overly intellectual atmosphere, or the overwhelmingly male and middle-class makeup of the group: 'Combien d'homos sont venus n'ont rien dit et puis sont partis sans revenir. Beaucoup de copains n'étaient pas à l'aise surtout les nouveaux.'²⁷⁷ Participation in a GLH group was certainly an acquired taste, but the many personal experiences of self-discovery must be considered when assessing the impact of the groups. The networks of support, sociability and friendship that the GLH provided to many, mainly young men, would be invaluable and life-long.

Innovation from outside Paris

As a product of the personal investment in the success of the liberation movement, new initiatives and strategies were born from the GLH, developing new ways of enacting gay liberation politics. These initiatives were an investment in new ways of making change that moved beyond the usual rounds of meetings, manifestos and marches that the GLH had inherited from *gauchiste* groups. This was particularly true of the provincial GLH. In one of Girard's only mentions of the provincial groups, he concedes that in an atmosphere of general crisis on the far left at the end of the decade: 'Paris

²⁷⁶ Florian du GLH Bordeaux, 'Huit heures avec la honte', 'Stage 24-25 February 1979 "Comment vivre son homosexualité"', (MS).

²⁷⁷ 'GLH Clermont Ferrand, un an.', undated, 2, (MS).

withers, salvation will come from the provinces.'²⁷⁸ This energy was certainly felt in Marseille. Bound together with a close social bond, the group was able to innovate. Christian de Leusse remembers a remarkable group dynamic: 'quand on organisait quelque chose, chacun trouvait sa place pour faire quelque chose de collectif... c'est comme ça qu'on a eu le festival de cinéma, on a eu des conférences avec des personnalités diverse personalities [such as the author Dominique Fernandez]... et puis les bals... il y avait une energie très forte, comme une fusée qui décolle...' ²⁷⁹

One of the most influential initiatives was the GLH Aix-en-Provence's participation in the municipal elections of March 1977. Although thwarted at the last minute through lack of funds, the group decided to put forward candidate lists to make a mockery of the elections.²⁸⁰ The group was roundly criticised in Paris for approaching the elections in a manner that was incomprehensible to the public, using gay activist jargon such as the word 'phallocratism'.²⁸¹ Yet despite these criticisms, the other GLH could not help but show a grudging respect for Aix's audacity: 'Aix eut malgré tout le mérite...d'ouvrir les yeux sur la possibilité de nouvelles initiatives.'²⁸² Ironically, electoral tactics were used not in a quest for legitimacy or respectability, but to provide a platform for provocation. Similar electoral action was taken in Strasbourg where the GLH put forward a list alongside feminists and ecologists,

²⁷⁸ Girard, *Le mouvement homosexuel*, 145.

²⁷⁹ Christian de Leusse, November 2014.

²⁸⁰ Patrick Cardon 'Aix en Provence,' 21.

²⁸¹ 'Comment les aborder... les élections,' papers from the General Assembly of the GLH, October 1, 1977, (MS).

²⁸² 'Comment les aborder... les élections'.

calling themselves candidates for sexual minorities. The list gained 13% of the votes, but was little reported in the press or the gay liberation movement.²⁸³

Prompted by action in Aix, the same electoral stunt would be repeated in Paris the following year, albeit in less impenetrably theoretical terms. It was decided that Jean Le Bitoux would stand in the sixth arrondissement, supported by François Graille, and Alain Secouet stood in the eighteenth supported by Guy Hocquenghem. Unlike the coalition strategy pursued in Strasbourg, the vote count was never the point: 'On ne tripe pas sur le comptage des voix, on s'en fout belle et bien.'²⁸⁴ Which was a good thing, as Le Bitoux won only 30 votes, and Secouet 45.²⁸⁵ The real benefit of the elections was in giving the GLH an opportunity to address the public, and to hone their political stance. The election rhetoric was moderate, drawn from their discourse on the defence of their homosexual identity. In one of their posters the 'homosexual difference' candidates took a pleading tone with the electorate: 'Savez-vous au moins qu'il y a des lois qui nous condamnent? Nous ne disons pas que tout le monde doit être homosexuel...'²⁸⁶ *Le Monde* reported that the initiative expressed the desire to show 'homosexualité à visage qui ne rest pas l'apanage de quelques vedettes à la télévision.'²⁸⁷ Media coverage was earned through a petition calling to support the candidates in their effort to: 'poser le problème de la répression des homosexuel(le)s à travers le code pénal, les pratiques policières et psychiatriques des institutions en place,' signed by Simone de Beauvoir, Gilles

²⁸³ 'Comment les aborder... les élections'.

²⁸⁴ 'Comment les aborder... les élections'.

²⁸⁵ 'Différence Homosexuelle,' *Interlopes*, Spring 1978, 7, (MC).

²⁸⁶ The poster is reproduced in *Interlopes*, Spring 1978, 6, (MC).

²⁸⁷ 'Le groupe de libération des homosexuels présente deux candidats à Paris,' *Le Monde*, March 1, 1978, 8.

Deleuze and Jack Lang, among others.²⁸⁸ The organisational effort put into the election produced another innovation, local action committees in Paris's neighbourhoods (Comité Homosexuel d'Action, CHA). These groups were set up to fight the election on a local level, but they remained in place as meeting places and centres of organisation for other events, such as the annual marches in Paris that would evolve into the Gay Pride parades.

Another initiative from outside of Paris sprang not from a concern to engage with or to provoke the public, but to create homosexual community spaces as alternatives to the commercial ghetto. The creation of gay community centres became the major preoccupation of the provincial GLH by the close of the decade. Centres appeared in Marseille (the Boulangerie), Lyon (ARIS, *Accueil Rencontre Information Services*), and in Dijon (Diane et Hadrien). The Boulangerie opened 1981, promoting itself in a leaflet as: 'un lieu crée par les homos pour les homos... Pour boire un pot, discuter entre ami(e)s, rechercher une aide juridique ou sociale, se rencontrer, feuilleter des magazines ou le dernier roman homosexuel, écouter de la musique...Pour connaître les dernières nouvelles du milieu et du mouvement, pour rencontrer ceux et celles qui ne vont pas dans les boîtes ou saunas homosexuels...'²⁸⁹ The Boulangerie was conceived as a space for mutual support and political engagement as well as socialising. Visibility was important: having a location with street frontage was an improvement over the previous space the GLH had loaned, which had offered them a location reachable only to those who knew about the group.

²⁸⁸ 'Appel de soutien au droit aux candidatures homosexuelles lors des élections législatives de Mars 1978,' *Agence Tasse*, February 1978, 2, (MS).

²⁸⁹ Leaflet, 'Lesbiennes, homosexuels sortons du placard!', 1981, (MS).

Their street presence mirrored the increasingly open and visible commercial bar scene which in the early 1980s was rapidly evolving to favour premises with an open presence on the street.

Despite striving for openness, the names of gay community centres betrayed a residual timidity. Lyon's ARIS dropped the word 'homosexual' entirely from its acronym, the name 'Boulangerie' was completely unreadable as a gay location at first glance and 'Diane et Hadrien' hides behind classical references. Indeed, the GLH Marseille set up a subsidiary group to run the Boulangerie named CORPS, again eliminating the word 'homosexual' in order to make renting a location and dealing with official administration easier.²⁹⁰ Vague names were also intended to protect the centres from homophobic attack. When Diane et Hadrien opened in 1982, the group was met with indignation in the local press. Letters sent to the local paper *Le Bien public* in February 1982 expressed rage: 'Quelle honte! ... Quelle honte de voir les murs de notre ville couverts d'affiches en faveur d'homosexuels... Au lieu d'un local pour leur réunion, je pense qu'un local à l'hôpital des Chartreux serait plus adapté à leur cas.'²⁹¹

But homophobia from the local population (and recurrent trouble with landlords) was expected, and the organisers were stubborn. They needed to be, as these projects usually came with long periods of gestation and planning, coupled with great expense and personal effort to keep them open. Diane et Hadrien, for instance, had cost around 5000F to set up, a huge sum when one

²⁹⁰ Leaflet, 'Appel: Un lieu, un centre, une maison des homosexual(le)s à Marseille,' undated, (MS).

²⁹¹ 'Diane et Hadrien, Dossier Technique', April 1982, (MS).

considers that the usual (voluntary) subscription for the GLH was around 40 francs per month.²⁹² The centres had other problems too, but these tended to be the same that had dogged the liberation movement since its beginnings: 'la mixité est largement insuffisante, le nombre de femmes étant assez faible... finances unstable.... la cohabitation d'un public très disparate... est parfois délicate.'²⁹³ In order to help those planning on opening a centre, the short-lived association FLAG (*Fédération des Lieux Associatives Gaies*) was set up in Marseille in 1981. FLAG also helped in the creation and coordination of the 1984 sociological study *Rapport gai*, distributing the questionnaires in its affiliate locations around France.²⁹⁴ Creating and maintaining a community was difficult, but the multiple attempts to achieve such a feat, all over France, show a further confidence in the discourse of a shared homosexual identity, and a new method of providing mutual support.

The slow death of the GLH and birth of a multiple movement

Despite many successes and innovations, the effort required to sustain the GLH groups and their increasingly ambitious projects began to put strain on their small active memberships. Groups that moved towards the creation of social spaces tended to last longer than those wedded to political activism alone, but all groups lived and died on their ability to sustain the interest and enthusiasm of their members. Apart from the initial splits in the GLH Paris, impasses in groups were often social rather than ideological. In 1978, Le Bitoux wrote an caustic article for *Libération* detailing the reasons why he had decided to resign

²⁹² 'Diane et Hadrien, Dossier Technique', April 1982, (MS).

²⁹³ 'Diane et Hadrien, Dossier Technique', April 1982, (MS).

²⁹⁴ Jean Cavailles, Pierre Dutey, and Gérard Bach-Ignasse, *Rapport gai, enquêtes sur les modes de vie homosexuels* (Paris: Persona, 1984).

from the GLH PQ. He blamed his decision on the deterioration in the personal relations between the group's members, which had faded from 'fortes' and 'tendres' to a 'désert relationnel'.²⁹⁵ The GLH-PQ was failing to help its members live openly as gay men and women. When Le Bitoux himself was wondering how to come out to his family before they read his name in the newspapers, he found no place in the GLH to talk about it.²⁹⁶ The letter proved to be an obituary for the GLH-PQ and it stopped meeting soon after its appearance.

In the last issue of *Interlopes*, the GLH Lyon made public their debates over how the group was failing. One member 'Bébert' complained that the GLH's actions were not concrete enough: 'nos activités ne sont que verbales, verbeuses même, (rencontres nationales, Interlopes...) Notre groupe est autarcique, coupé de la réalité, que vivent d'autres homosexuels dans d'autres lieux.'²⁹⁷ Others thought that the GLH actually lacked discussion on certain topics: 'surtout je suis frappé qu'un groupe qui est centré sur la sexualité n'en ait jamais parlé clairement.'²⁹⁸ They were disappointed to discover that sexual politics were, in practice, not very sexy. After completing five issues of *Interlopes*, the GLH Lyon dissolved into competing factions.²⁹⁹ Like the GLH Lyon, without concrete action and innovation to sustain them, many provincial groups faded away or talked themselves to death.

²⁹⁵ Jean Le Bitoux, 'De la misère relationnelle en milieu mili-tante,' *Libération*, May 6, 1978, 11.

²⁹⁶ Jean Le Bitoux, 'De la misère relationnelle,' 11.

²⁹⁷ 'Fonctionnement du groupe,' *Interlopes*, Winter 1978, 6, (MC).

²⁹⁸ 'Fonctionnement du groupe,' 13.

²⁹⁹ ARIS exists to this day, now fused with Lyon's Forum Gai et Lesbien and engaged in running the city's LGBT community centre:

<http://www.centrelgbtilyon.org/annuaire/accueil-information-et-soutien/aris-lyon-lgbt.html>, last accessed August 2016.

Another initiative from outside Paris would see the replacement of the GLH with a new approach to liberation politics. Members of the GLH in Marseille organised the first *Université d'été* in the summer of 1979. The event's brochure promised workshops, conferences, debates, shows, parties and sunbathing: the GLH's Marseille's characteristic, and successful, mixture of politics and socialising.³⁰⁰ The organisers planned for 600 people to attend the week's events.³⁰¹ As well as reproducing the most successful social elements of the GLH in Marseille, the event was unusually productive in terms of political outputs. During the week's political workshops, the *Comité d'Urgence Anti-Répression Homosexuel* or the CUARH was created.³⁰² The organisation aimed to be an umbrella organisation for existing groups and a method of quick national response and support for those involved in issues related to their sexuality. As the Parisian GLH had ceased to meet and the remaining larger GLH became more focused on the social aspects of their existence with the opening of gay community centres, the CUARH stepped into the political vacuum. The CUARH's political and social remit was far less ambitious than the GLH, and it was shorn of the revolutionary socialist rhetoric of earlier groups, concentrating instead on combatting homosexual oppression and interacting with the state.

Perhaps one of the most surprising elements of the CUARH was its ecumenical approach to politics, aiming to represent a broad range of groups beyond what remained of the GLH. Although it had unsuccessfully attempted to include Arcadie, there had been a slow rapprochement between homophile politics and

³⁰⁰ Leaflet, 'Université d'été homosexuel du 22 au 29 juillet à Marseille', 1979. (MS).

³⁰¹ 'Le crous de Marseille n'aime pas les homosexuels,' *Libération*, August 25, 1979, 4.

³⁰² The group initially used the acronym COUARH, to aid pronunciation of an otherwise awkward name.

the more moderate elements of the GLH through the 1970s. It was not just the liberationist groups that moved closer to the older homophile group; Arcadie was thriving after having found renewed purpose, asking members to openly live their homosexuality. This was coupled with a more open and engaging approach, culminating in a 1979 congress attended by some 1,200 people, and including Michel Foucault in its programme.³⁰³ As the radical politics of the FHAR faded these terms had less and less utility, with the homophiles and liberationists blurring and overlapping, especially outside of Paris. The rapprochement between more 'conservative' elements in homosexual politics at the turn of the 1980s at the same time acknowledged the increased similarity of aims between groups since the radical days of the FHAR, and the diversity of interests in a movement that encompassed groups representing paedophiles to postmen.³⁰⁴

David et Jonathan: Catholicism and homosexuality

In terms of membership, the most important example of the growing diversity of homosexual associational life in France is the appearance of groups which approached homosexual identity from the perspective of their faith. The largest of these was the Christian group David et Jonathan, who were non-denominational in spirit but overwhelmingly Catholic in practice. The group was created in December 1971 after a successful round table event held by Arcadie on the theme 'Christianisme et homophilie'.³⁰⁵ Max Lionnet, a Catholic priest, and Gérard de la Mauvinière, a contributor to *Arcadie*, decided to set up

³⁰³ Jackson, *Living in Arcadia*, 227.

³⁰⁴ The groups Gais PTT was represented by the CUARH and was intended to function as a union for gay postal workers. The paedophile group GRED is discussed below.

³⁰⁵ Gérard de la Mauvinière, 'Editorial,' *David et Jonathan*, October 1973, 1.

a permanent grouping to discuss the question further. In early 1972 the group amicably split from Baudry's Arcadie to form their own group Christianisme et Homophilie (which would later become David et Jonathan after their successful newsletter of the same name).³⁰⁶ The group was a success, quickly attracting members in Paris and enthusiastic volunteers to set up groups in the provinces. By the 1980s, the group's newsletter *David et Jonathan* gained over a thousand subscribers, with the number of men involved in the group likely much higher.³⁰⁷ The membership of David et Jonathan easily eclipsed the combined GLH, even coming to rival the size of Arcadie at its largest.³⁰⁸

Despite its origins within Arcadie, David et Jonathan was as much the product of the 1960s as the liberation groups. In his work on homosexuality and Christianity, David Hillard stresses the change in attitude to sexuality in Catholicism that took place over the postwar years. Firstly, attitudes to marriage tended to shift emphasis away from procreation and towards mutual commitment and emotional intimacy. Secondly, the training of the clergy began to adopt a medicalised view of homosexuality as an illness that required professional intervention rather than a crime or a sin.³⁰⁹ These longer-term

³⁰⁶ There was no ill-feeling between the two groups, indeed they would continue to work closely together. The split came from a desire on Baudry's part to retain the secular nature of Arcadie. See Jackson, *Living in Arcadia*, 214.

³⁰⁷ Unlike Arcadie, for whom membership (including subscription to the magazine) was compulsory, David et Jonathan was an open group with no obligation to subscribe. This means that the number of men who attended meetings or social events without a formal membership or newsletter subscription was likely much higher than these figures. 'Quelques chiffres autour du bulletin trimestriel D et J,' Supplement to *David et Jonathan*, June-August 1980, 5.

³⁰⁸ The FLAG's *Rapport Gai* included a graph that showed that David et Jonathan was by far the largest group in operation in France at that time. The graph did not unfortunately use a numerical scale. Cavailles, Dutey, and Bach-Ignasse, eds., *Rapport gai*, 89.

³⁰⁹ David Hillard, 'Homosexuality,' in Hugh McLeod, ed., *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, ix. *World Christianities, c.1914-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 548.

changes were amplified by the Second Vatican Council of 1962-1965. The Council, convened in a spirit of reforming the church, was tasked with producing documents reiterating doctrine in language more relevant to the contemporary world. The church historian Hugh Mcleod stresses three transformative aspects of the Council's output: the declaration that the whole church would be 'the people of God', pointing towards a more decentralized and less hierarchical church; an emphasis on 'religious liberty' that moved away from the principle that the church was the sole teacher of truth; and an opening to closer relations with other Christian churches.³¹⁰ These changes were profound, not only in themselves, but in the spirit of organisational and moral liberalisation that informed the interpretation of the documents into the 1970s. An emphasis on personal fulfilment, coupled with greater agency for the laity, allowed previously marginalised groups to forge their own relationship to the church and to their faith, as part of 'the people of God'.

Furthermore, the Second Council inspired liberal and leftist Catholics to fuse their faith with social action and political commitment. Péter Apor et al., underline the connections between religious radicals and secular protest movements in the 1970s: 'religious radicals sought to change themselves, change their relationship with others, change their communities, and ultimately to change the world they lived in.'³¹¹ Christian activists sought to engage with faith on a personal level, to change church institutions and ultimately to engage with secular politics. The terms 'religious radicals' or

³¹⁰ Hugh Mcleod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 93.

³¹¹ Péter Apor, Rebecca Clifford and Nigel Towson, 'Faith,' in Robert Gildea, James Mark and Anette Warring, eds., *Europe's 1968: Voices of Revolt*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 225.

'activists' may fit strangely with the cautious pastoralism and well-spoken moderation of David et Jonathan, but in a sense, they were just as much a product of the radical legacies of Vatican II as Spain's anti-Franco worker-priests or Catholic feminist activists.

David et Jonathan was born into this context where sexual and personal fulfilment for homosexuals appeared compatible with Christian faith, and they were empowered to make the case for a liberalisation of attitudes. Their blend of Christian faith and homosexual identity gave the group three overlapping aims: to provide a place of welcome, pastoral care and charity; to square their homosexuality with their Christian faith; and to widen the acceptance of homosexuality within, and eventually outside, the church.³¹²

The most prominent and enduring of David et Jonathan's concerns was to support fellow homosexuals struggling with their faith and to provide a social structure for mutual support. As the group grew, the creation of a social network was key to the success of these groups. Beginning with gatherings in Marseille in 1973, the group spread to all major cities, the south of Belgium and many smaller towns such as Brest and Besançon by the mid-1980s.³¹³ In Grenoble (a group founded in 1976) the group reflected on the reasons for the success of the group, a mixture of spiritual fulfilment and the opportunity to socialise with other homosexuals: 'Pour les uns David et Jonathan est l'expression de leur foi vécue en homophile... Pour d'autres enfin (et pour tous

³¹² These aims are described in the official statutes of the group, which after the initial foundation of the group in 1972 were updated in November 1983. 'Statuts' (undated, 1983), NAF, 20150654/8, 23, (DJ).

³¹³ The records for these groups are in: NAF 20150654/8, 25 ; NAF 20150654/9, 26, (DJ).

sans doute !), c'est l'amitié, la sincérité des rapports humains qu'ils désirent trouver avant tout en nous rejoignant.'³¹⁴ To better provide the space to develop affective links, the Parisian group eventually purchased a former butcher's shop on the Rue de Picpus to more easily provide a permanent place of welcome. The property also had the advantage of a basement level in which social gatherings could easily be held.

Outside of the shared meals, parties and away-weekends familiar to associational life in gay liberation groups, spiritual activities were a key part of the David et Jonathan's calendar. Spiritual reflection took the same place in the group as political reflection did in leftist gay groups. An account of a meeting in Marseille in 1973 shows the emphasis on Christian faith as a starting point for the group: 'Après la prière en commun, la lecture et la méditation de l'Évangile ou de la Bible sont pour chaun l'occasion de s'exprimer librement, suivant son coeur ou sa raison.'³¹⁵ Faith also structured many of David et Jonathan's larger gatherings. Each year the group held their *Journées Annuelles de Réflexion*, gathering together the groups from all over France under a theme, such as 1977's 'unity in diversity'.³¹⁶ These gatherings not only included serious theological reflection but also spiritual events – the days were structured around a celebration of the Eucharist (organised separately for different confessions), prayers and an ecumenical service.³¹⁷

³¹⁴ 'Mouvement David et Jonathan de Grenoble: Bref bilan et propositions,' NAF, 20150654/8, 25, (DJ).

³¹⁵ David et Jonathan Marseille, 'Lettre de Marseille,' *David et Jonathan*, April 1974, 9.

³¹⁶ 'Compte-rendu des journées de réflexion du mouvement Christianisme et Homophilie: Unité dans la diversité,' supplement to *David et Jonathan*, April 1977.

³¹⁷ 'Compte-rendu de la commission théologique du 7 mai 1983,' NAF, 20150654/8, 23, (DJ).

These social activities around faith were buttressed by published reflections, and the groups aim to harmonise their sexuality, their faith and their relationship with the Catholic church. The group explicitly wished to avoid the model followed by American 'gay churches' such as the Californian Metropolitan Community Church, who set up alternative institutional structures rather than work within existing churches.³¹⁸ Issues such as chastity, sin, faith and biblical interpretations of homosexuality took up most space in their publication in its early years. And whilst some in the group wrestled with theological apologia for homosexuality, from the beginning the group rejected shame and secrecy. In the first issue of the group's journal, *Gérald de la Mauvinière* announced that they refused to be defined by sin, and that homosexuality was not a set of deviant acts, but a sexual nature given by God: 'Il existe pour nous des hommes et des femmes dont les pulsions du coeur et des sens sont différentes de celles de la majorité. Ces pulsions échappent à leur volonté ... elles viennent de leur nature même, elles viennent de Dieu le Créateur.'³¹⁹ Group members openly embraced a homosexual identity. David et Jonathan's co-founder Père Max Lionnet addressed a meeting of Arcadie's Nice chapter in 1975, and was presented as a 'homosexuel depuis toujours.'³²⁰ During the address Lionnet sees no incompatibility between Christianity and homosexuality, arguing that the group must demonstrate to the church that 'on peut être authentiquement chrétien tout en étant homophile à part entière.'³²¹

³¹⁸ The group believed that their avoidance of the 'gay church' model was their reason for success in forging links with American gay Catholic groups, who were very hostile to the Protestant 'gay churches'. 'Compte-rendu des journées de réflexion du mouvement Christianisme et Homophilie, Nantes, 22-23 Avril 1978,' supplement to *David et Jonathan*, July-August 1978.

³¹⁹ *Gérald de la Mauvinière*, 'Editorial,' *David et Jonathan*, October 1973, 2.

³²⁰ 'Compte-rendu de la reunion du vendredi 30 Mai 1975, Arcadie Nice-Côte d'Azur,' NAF, 20150654/9, 26, (DJ).

³²¹ 'Compte-rendu de la reunion du vendredi 30 Mai 1975, Arcadie Nice-Côte d'Azur.'

The group's early interventions were pitched to the church and a small group of fellow homosexuals, but their interventions show they were concerned with living an authentic life free of guilt.

The growing confidence of the group took a blow in the later 1970s as the Vatican became stricter on questions of sexual morality. The January 1976 promulgation of the Vatican doctrine '*Persona Humana: Document on certain questions of sexual ethics*' showed a hardening of attitudes from the Vatican regarding homosexuality. It stated that, although homosexuals should be treated with 'understanding': 'according to the objective moral order, homosexual relations are acts which lack an essential and indispensable finality. In Sacred Scripture they are condemned as a serious depravity and even presented as the sad consequence of rejecting God.'³²² And although the document shows a muddled distinction between 'acts' and 'identities' (referring variably to 'homosexuals' and 'homosexual acts') it concludes that such acts are 'intrinsically disordered'.

This document was a great setback for a group that had attempted to move away from the linkage between homosexuality and sin. Reflection on the document produced a mixture of denunciation and resignation. An opinion piece by the priest Max Lionnet in April 1976 decried the document as 'inopportun, inutile, néfaste même,' a document which was more judicial than gospel-based.³²³ However, the only response was accommodation, a position to which they were

³²²http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19751229_persona-humana_en.html, last accessed January 2017.

³²³ Max Lionnet, 'L'Emotion des Chrétiens homophiles,' *David et Jonathan*, April 1976, 4.

already well used: 'mais on ne peut pas faire comme s'il n'existait pas. Il faut donc essayer de le comprendre pour l'appliquer aux situations concrètes qui sont les nôtres.'³²⁴ If the headwinds from the Vatican were now blowing against them, the group could at least find shelter in the 'concrete situations' of their social network and pastoral engagements.

Attention from the Vatican led to greater visibility and the potential for ridicule. On the announcement of the official creation of the association David et Jonathan in the *Journal Officiel*, the national newspaper *Le Figaro* published an article by its regular columnist 'Monsieur Dimanche' dripping with sarcasm: 'Enfin, une bonne nouvelle... Paris revient à la religion chrétienne... Le jeune antiquaire, un peu équivoque, qui vient de s'installer dans notre ville, ne sera pas insensible à cet appel de l'amour des hommes...'³²⁵ To hostile outsiders, the group's amalgamation of Catholicism and homosexuality, two opposing poles of morality, was absurd. But hostility from the Church and the press also provided an opportunity. As a contribution to a meeting organised by the Mouvement Contre le Racisme et pour l'Amitié entre les Peuples (MRAP) on 'homosexuality and racism', David et Jonathan's J. Maire argued that although the 1976 documents and Jean-Paul II had condemned homosexuality: 'ils ont pour la première fois dans l'Eglise ouvert la porte aux homosexuels et reconnu l'existence d'une nature homosexuelle.'³²⁶ The recognition of the existence of a homosexual identity was the most important step towards its recognition.

³²⁴ Lionnet, 'L'Emotion,' 4.

³²⁵ Monsieur Dimanche, 'L'amour des hommes,' *Le Figaro*, October 29, 1977, 17.

³²⁶ 'Compte-rendu des interventions faites le 28 Novembre 1981 à la reunion organise par le MRAP sur homosexualités et racismes,' NAF, 20150654/10, 30, (DJ).

Rather than crushing the group, the 1976 document and their increasing visibility led them to strengthen their engagements with homosexual politics. In her history of the relationship between homosexuality and the Catholic church, H el ene Buisson-Fenet sees the publication of the *Persona Humana* as being a turning-point in the politicisation of David et Jonathan.³²⁷ David et Jonathan's provincial and central groups began to engage more deeply with the liberation groups in their locality. In Grenoble, an invitation was extended from the GLH for David et Jonathan to participate at a meeting. The Catholics accepted the invitation and the result was followed with interest by the group's national magazine. The David et Jonathan delegate found the 'violence revendicatrice et anti-syst emes du GLH' disconcerting. However, he did find comfort in the fact that the two groups were asking similar questions about the nature of love and sex: 'Ouverture, partage, reconnaissance mutuelle des diff erences; une exp erience fructueuse.'³²⁸ These first tentative steps towards political engagement were also advanced from Paris. In 1979, David et Jonathan sent delegates to Marseilles Universit e d'Et e, and had active involvement in the CUARH.

Visibility also demanded a more robust political language and David et Jonathan's reflections increasingly borrowed from the language of liberation. At the start of their existence, the groups had tended to follow Arcadie's language of *homophilie* over a language of *homosexualit e*, but as the decade progressed the latter became the dominant way of describing oneself and

³²⁷ Buisson-Fenet, *Un sexe probl ematique*, 112.

³²⁸ David et Jonathan Grenoble, 'Dialogue avec le GLH,' *David et Jonathan*, December 1978, 5.

others.³²⁹ In 1982 the group's annual meeting tackled the concept of liberation directly, asking its delegates 'libérés pour quoi faire'? In the group's journal a summary of their reflections expressed a mistrust of sexual promiscuity, but also of an over-investment in domesticity. Instead, the group decided that engagement with others, with one's own sexuality and with one's own faith was the best use of liberation: 'Libérés pour pouvoir bâtir des rapports relationnels épanouis avec son Ami – quand on a la chance d'en avoir trouvé un! - ses copains et ses relations en general... Libérés dans sa foi pour que la relation au Christ puisse se décanter, se purifier, s'approfondir toujours plus fort...'³³⁰ The group thus began to meld homosexual liberation, faith and their own interpersonal relationships. But they were aware that their activism was overwhelmingly driven by a sense of caution: 'notre militantisme a toujours été réaliste... notre action ne peut être que discrète, effacée, en un mot évangélique si elle veut aboutir à un changement des mentalités du Peuple Chrétien qui nous entoure.'³³¹

Even the group's cautious interventions were interlinked with the preoccupations of liberation politics. David et Jonathan's 'solidarity' commission became involved in the pastoral care of (mainly but not exclusively) homosexual prisoners. Prisons had been a key site of post-68 political intervention on the left after Michel Foucault's short-lived Groupe d'Information sur les Prisons (GIP), which aimed to break state silence on the

³²⁹ 'L'homosexuel n'est pas plus responsable de son homosexualité que l'hétérosexuel de son hétérosexualité,' 1980, NAF, 20150654/9, 26, (DJ).

³³⁰ Gérald de la Mauvinière, 'Libérés pour quoi faire?,' *David et Jonathan*, Supplement 'Journées annuelles de réflexion,' Summer 1982, 3.

³³¹ De la Mauvinière, 'Libérés pour quoi faire?,' 3.

prison regime.³³² Where the GIP came to the issue from the analysis of the intersection between carceral institutions and state power, David et Jonathan took a pastoral approach melded with their homosexual subjectivity. Letters to Père Jacques Cougnaud, the leader of the commission, show that David et Jonathan gave moral support to prisoners serving sentences and helped those about to be released find accommodation and work.³³³ Charitable intervention in prisons was of course not new, but linking it to the taboo topic of homosexuality in prisons certainly was. Indeed, a prisoners' magazine *Maillons infos* listed David et Jonathan as a source for support for homosexuals in an issue dedicated to 'taboos in prison'.³³⁴ The group was sensitive to the entanglement of charitable motivation, Christian faith and sexual desire in their engagement with prisoners. A text submitted to the solidarity commission on his experiences by 'Jean-Jacques' is remarkable in its self-reflexivity:

'La prison, pour un homosexuel, est qu'on le veuille ou non, chargée de fantasmes... Au fil des mois – sport et prière aidant – je pus en quelque sorte déconnecter – sans la rejeter – ma sexualité de ma relation avec les prisonniers, en ne projetant plus sur eux mes fantasmes, ce qui aurait totalement faussé la relation.'³³⁵

³³² For a history of the GIP see Daniel Defert, 'L'émergence d'un nouveau front: les prisons,' in Philippe Artières, Laurent Quérou and Michelle Zancarini-Fournel, eds., *Le groupe d'information sur les prisons: archives d'une lutte, 1970-1972* (Paris: Institut Mémoires de l'édition contemporaine, 2003).

³³³ Letters, NAF, 20150654/8, 24, (DJ).

³³⁴ 'Tabous en prison,' *Maillons infos*, April 1982, 1.

³³⁵ 'J'étais en prison et vous m'avez visité,' 1980, NAF, 20150654/8, 24, (DJ).

For Jean-Jacques, and certainly many others involved in the solidarity commission, desire provided both a motivation and a complicating factor for their engagement with prisoners.

Whilst David et Jonathan were, and remain, moderate in their political language and interventions,³³⁶ the intersection of faith and sexuality was also terrain for more radical organisation of the most marginal communities. On the fringes of organisational life was the Centre du Christ Libérateur (CCL), founded in 1976 by a Belgian protestant pastor, Joseph Doucé.³³⁷ Like David et Jonathan, it was a group guided by a spirit of Christian pastoralism, but unlike David et Jonathan's overwhelmingly male and middle-class makeup the CCL wished to represent those who were at the margins of the margin. The group's very name demonstrates Doucé's wish to bridge the gap between gay liberation and currents of liberation theology, mending social injustices against sexual minorities. This outlook meant that the centre, located on Paris's Rue Clairaut, became a place of refuge and solidarity for sex-workers, transsexuals and paedophiles, as well as homosexuals. The CCL's activities revolved around a sort of group psychotherapy that broached such subjects as masturbation, bisexuality and first sexual experiences.³³⁸ As well as providing mutual support, the CCL also served an important function as an incubator of other groups, such

³³⁶ The group did, however, give strong public support to gay marriage during the debates leading up to the reform in France in 2013. The group also engages fully in LGBT coalition politics in France. See: <http://www.davidetjonathan.com/action-militante/engagement-politique/>, last accessed January 2017.

³³⁷ Doucé came to wider public attention in 1990 when, after going missing, his body was found in the Rambouillet forest. His mysterious death is explored by the investigative reporter Bernard Violet in *Mort d'un pasteur: l'affaire Doucé* (Paris: Fayard, 1994).

³³⁸ Violet, *Mort d'un pasteur*, 53.

as the small Jewish homosexual group Beit Haverim, which is still in existence today.³³⁹

The political trajectory and pastoral concerns of David and Jonathan and the CCL show the blurring of lines between the 'radical' and the 'conservative' as the 1970s progressed. The fiercely anticlerical leftist liberation groups tended to see the Church as a part of the repressive apparatus of bourgeois society; yet in their rejection of shame and their increasingly confident embrace of homosexual identity, David et Jonathan were as much a part of the political reconfiguration of homosexuality in the 1970s as the FHAR or the GLH. And despite an increasingly hostile dogmatic position from the Vatican on questions of sexuality, at a local level the Church provided many nooks and crannies in which David et Jonathan could take hold. In these spaces, the group provided spiritual guidance, but also pastoral support and a social outlet, which aside from its spiritual underpinnings, provided in practical terms the same function as the dances and community centres of the GLH. Cross-pollination between the GLH and those seeking to reconcile faith and homosexuality produced diverse ways of approaching 'liberation' as a political and personal concept; what increasingly bound these groups together into the 1980s was a sense of the need for an articulated campaign for legal reform.

Towards legal change

By the close of the decade, Legal change and a shared homosexual identity provided the focal points around which groups with an increasingly diverse

³³⁹ See <http://www.beit-haverim.com/>, last accessed August 2015.

approach to sexual politics could coalesce. As the 1970s progressed these groups began to converge their energies on a number of identifiable demands. Whether these demands were successful in enacting legal reform is another matter.

Whilst the legal situation in France for homosexuals was better than in many nations, inequalities in the penal code persisted.³⁴⁰ Article 331-3 set the age of consent for homosexual acts (or 'actes contre nature' as they were described in the code) at the age of majority (21, then 18 from 1975) where for heterosexual acts the age was set at 15. Homosexuals were also targeted by article 330-2 which stipulated higher penalties for 'outrage public à la pudeur' caused by homosexual acts, a law that was broadly interpreted and used to punish manifestations of homosexuality in the public sphere. The CUARH had been developed in an atmosphere in which gay men saw themselves as increasingly under threat from legal repression after numerous incidents such as the raid and arrests at Paris's Le Manhattan bar in 1977 and the sacking of Marc Croissant by his party from the Ivry local authority after he complained in a letter to the communist newspaper *L'Humanité* about an article that they ran on homosexuality and paedophilia.³⁴¹

As a consequence of recent struggles over gay marriage, particularly fierce in France, historians have emphasised the importance of the gay liberation moment's turn towards lobbying for legal reform, and their role in effecting

³⁴⁰ More important than these legal discriminations in the legal code was the persistent climate of police repression. The legal and policing framework surrounding homosexuality in the period is discussed in chapter 3 below.

³⁴¹ The events and trial of the men arrested at Le Manhattan are discussed in full in chapter three.

change. In his meticulous recovery of the process of legal reform around homosexuality in the early 1980s, Antoine Idier takes the demands of political groups as the key explanatory factor in legal change: ‘Ainsi, le 4 août 1982, répondant à plusieurs années de militantisme gay, le “délict d’homosexualité” disparaît du code pénal et l’article 330 alinéa 2 se retrouve “au placard”.’³⁴² Yet there is no neat correlation between the demands of gay liberation groups and the actions of legislature at the turn of the 1980s. This is a disjoint that becomes more apparent when expanding the frame of analysis by just a few short years, beyond what is commonly known as the ‘dépenalisation’ of homosexuality which is associated with the start of Mitterrand’s first term.³⁴³

In 1975 the newly elected Giscard d’Estaing introduced one of his key pieces of liberal reform, the lowering of the age of civil majority from 21 to 18. This had a direct impact upon the age of consent for homosexual sex, which was fixed to the age of majority. Arguably, the consequences of the reform on homosexuals were entirely unintended by Giscard and his government, although it did not go unnoticed by the Assembly. Amidst some consternation from the right over the loss of patriarchal authority, the Justice Minister, Jean Lecanuet attempted to temper the reform by lowering the electoral majority to 18 whilst keeping the civil majority at 21. He warned against rushing the legislation in order to prevent ‘importantes répercussions’ including ‘homosexualité pratiqué avec un

³⁴² Antoine Idier, *Les alinéas au placard: L’abrogation du délict d’homosexualité (1977-1982)* (Paris: Editions Cartouche, 2013), 187.

³⁴³ It has become common to refer to Mitterrand’s reforms as the ‘dépenalisation’ of homosexuality in France, see for instance the coverage of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the legislation: http://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/monde/1-homosexualite-depenalisee-il-y-a-25-ans_465897.html, accessed August 2016. ‘Dépenalisation’ is not directly translatable by ‘decriminalisation’ (homosexuality was not a crime), and is more accurately described as ‘the removal of penalties’.

mineur, incitation de mineurs à la débauche, vente de stupéfiant à des mineurs, etc...'³⁴⁴ Lecanuet suggested separating the civil and electoral majorities for at least a few months to work out these legal difficulties.³⁴⁵ An age of consent for homosexual acts higher than that of the civil majority was legally possible, and was implemented elsewhere in the 1970s, in England and Wales for instance. But Lecanuet's suggestion was not taken up, and the Assembly went further than the government. Both the civil and electoral majorities were lowered to 18 with no exceptions for specific crimes. And although the age of consent was still uneven and discriminatory (it remained at 15 for heterosexuals, where it had been fixed since 1945) the reduction was still a material improvement for homosexuals. This was a change that would be a much slower and contentious process elsewhere. The age of consent for homosexual sex for England and Wales would not be lowered to 18 until nearly two decades later, in 1994.

But in France under Giscard the rising liberal tide raised all boats. And the president's small, and perhaps unconscious, steps toward legal equality for homosexuals shows that the general political trajectory was towards liberalisation. The abolition of the remaining discriminatory laws made progress long before gay liberation politics turned toward lobbying for legal change. As the CUARH took its first steps in the summer of 1979, the legislation that would repeal the law more severely punishing homosexual indecency (article 330-2) had already been proposed by senator Henri Caillavet the year before as a package of measures that also included the equalisation of the age of consent (article 331-3). After much wrangling between the National

³⁴⁴ *Journal Officiel*: Débats parlementaires Assemblée Nationale 35, June 26, 1974, 2914.

³⁴⁵ *Journal Officiel* 35, June 26, 1974, 2925.

Assembly and the Senate, article 331-3 was left aside to be repealed separately. Mitterrand's arrival in the Elysée palace in May 1981 brought the political change needed to finally repeal article 331-3 in August 1982.³⁴⁶

If the CUARH contributed to the passing of the legislation, it was only in applying the last pressure needed to push through legislation that had already been formulated and supported by others, not least Caillavet. The CUARH's campaigning force was limited, and their influence on the actual drafting of legislation was minimal at best. *Homophonies* magazine tracks the group's efforts at dialogue with the authorities: 'L'accueil fort différent d'un ministère à l'autre, ira de la compréhension chaleureuse à une lenteur administrative quelque peu paralysante.'³⁴⁷ Although the group did manage to arrange a meeting at the interior ministry with a representative of Gaston Defferre, it appears as though the meetings did not open a dialogue. Instead, the group was informed of measures about to be, or already, put in place.³⁴⁸

Gay liberation groups acted as spectators or commentators on this process of liberalisation rather than as architects. They had steeped for too long in the politics of revolution to effectively dialogue with the state, and it would take time to learn how to do this. One stage in this process was the formulation of clear demands. The position of gay liberation politics in terms of child sexuality and the age of consent is an example of the frictions present in the movement. Whilst the French state was moving towards a more liberal position on the age

³⁴⁶ Idier recounts the passage of the repeal in *Les alinéas*, 169-187.

³⁴⁷ Hervé Liffra, 'Sur le chemin des ministères,' *Homophonies*, July-August 1981, 4.

³⁴⁸ They are called after the meeting and informed of Defferre's letter to the police force instructing them to cease discriminatory policing of homosexuals, for instance. See below for a full discussion of Defferre's measures.

of consent, the CUARH was riven with internal debate on how best to approach the topic. Some elements of the CUARH were proponents of a more radical change in the age of consent. The same *Université d'été* in Marseille that saw the creation of the CUARH saw the creation of the the *Groupe de Recherche pour une Enfance Différente* (GRED). This group was a reincarnation of the earlier ephemeral groups, the 1977 *Front de Libération des Pédophiles* and the *Front d'Action de Recherche pour une Enfance Différente*. The sociologist Pierre Verdrager sees the GRED not as an aberration, but as an integral part of the sexual politics of the period, whose demands were not outside of the norm even in the 1980s: 'au cours des années 1970 et 1980 certains pensaient donc que l'abolition, ou tout au moins un abaissement significatif de l'âge de la majorité sexuelle constituait l'étape naturelle d'un processus de libération du corps.'³⁴⁹

The acknowledgement of the GRED under the umbrella of the CUARH had the effect of amplifying the demands of a marginal group. Inclusion in the CUARH provided the GRED with a national stage, with the CUARH's publication *Homophonies* projecting the GRED's otherwise tiny reach. The GRED marched alongside homosexuals at the national march organised by the CUARH in April 1981 carrying a banner that declared 'Mineurs, majeurs, même culbute!'³⁵⁰ In the summer of 1981, when the issue of the equalisation of the age of consent was in the consciousness of both the public and legislature, the CUARH provided the GRED a platform for its abolitionist demands. At the point at

³⁴⁹ Verdrager, *L'enfant interdit*, 47.

³⁵⁰ Gilbert, 'Groupe de Recherche pour une Enfance Différente,' *Homophonies*, July-August 1981, 25.

which the age of consent was to be equalised, *Homophonies* published an article by Gérard Bach-Ignasse and the GRED attempting to reignite the campaign to abolish the ‘fiction légale’ of the age of consent altogether: ‘Notre combat doit être de faire reconnaître toute sexualité librement consentie, en particulier les sexualités qui ont le plus de mal à s’exprimer dans cette société, l’homosexualité, la sexualité des femmes, la sexualité des enfants.’³⁵¹ Antoine Idier notes that the prominence of debates over paedophilia in *Homophonies* masks the fact that there were many in the group who were opposed to the abolition of the age of consent.³⁵² These conflicting positions led to months of paralysis and finally the consensus that, while the CUARH would campaign for equalisation of the age of consent, it would keep open the debate over the legitimacy of adult-minor relations. But such a conflicted position did not make for the kind of effective lobbying necessary to change the law.

The GRED’s attempts at abolition did not bear fruit. The main driver of the law, the senator Henri Caillavet, was strongly opposed to both the abolition, or the further lowering of the age of consent. When interviewed some years later about his reaction to the proposal, put forward to him by the CCL’s Joseph Doucé, he was uncompromising: ‘En clair, je n’accepte pas la pédophilie. Jusqu’à quinze ou seize ans, on est fragile. Faire en sorte que cela ne soit pas un délit? Ne comptez pas sur moi!’³⁵³ The disappearance of paedophilia from the cocktail of demands and stances that made up gay liberation politics would take more time, and was due to the diminishing importance of the age of consent as an

³⁵¹ Gérard Bach-Ignasse, GRED, ‘L’âge de la majorité sexuelle,’ *Homophonies*, July-August 1981, 25.

³⁵² Idier, *Les alinéas*, 96.

³⁵³ Henri Caillavet, interview with Bernard Violet in *Mort d’un pasteur*, 98.

issue after equalisation and the eclipse of the issue altogether after the arrival of the HIV-AIDS crisis. Indeed, Verdrager argues that the causes were linked until the demise of *Gai Pied hebdo* in 1992, a magazine that had always supported the liberation of adult-minor relations.³⁵⁴

Whilst the CUARH certainly made measurable strides in the development of an effective dialogue with the state, it is difficult to see a strong correlation between the mobilisation of their rather weak lobbying force and a legal change that was already well in progress. Legal change did not occur just because the gay liberation movement had decided to ask for it. Indeed, it was even unclear what precise demands they were making. If there was a correlation between the actions of groups such as the CUARH and legislative change, it was that the group's lists of demands contained reforms that were already well in gestation by the time they put articulated their demands to the state.

Conclusion

If the ability of gay liberation politics to effect legal change was still weak at the turn of the 1980s, the fact that political aims were now around legal change rather than radical revolution shows the transformation which had taken place in homosexual politics since 1968. This shift reveals the ways in which the initially nebulous and utopic aims of gay liberation in the days of the FHAR had failed in their own terms by the end of the decade, but had given birth to a diverse and active movement. On the national scale, one achievement stands out, the bringing into visibility of homosexuality – although, as we shall see

³⁵⁴ Violet, *Mort d'un pasteur*, 133.

across the following chapters, this was not a process driven by liberation politics alone.

Avoiding a triumphant narrative of liberation must not mean replacing it with an overly negative one. Gay liberation politics was at its most successful where groups acted to directly improve the lives of those that participated – be that flashes of self-knowledge provided by the screening of a film, mutual support in the face of discrimination at work or an arrest at a cruising spot, or somewhere fun to go on a Friday night. The parties, shows, cinema festivals, marches, away-weekends, summer schools, magazine projects, and countless other activities that gay liberation groups facilitated all over France may seem modest in scope compared to the grand revolutionary narratives of the FHAR, but they provided a network of support in which commitments to homosexual activism and lifelong friendships flourished. Viewed at one angle, this is certainly a narrowing of liberation's initially revolutionary horizons, but from within these narrow horizons real changes in the lives and experiences of men and women could be made.

This narrative of increasingly modest aims which runs opposite to a triumphant notion of 'liberation' forces us to look elsewhere to explain the changes that were underway regarding the place of homosexuality within French society. We may find a clue in a symbolic moment for the development of the politics of homosexuality. In April 1981, a national march was held in Paris in defense of homosexual rights, a 'triumphant' success and attracting 10,000 people,

according to the gay press.³⁵⁵ In its reporting of the April 1981 march for gay rights in Paris *Gai Pied's* Jacky Fougeray observed that such a political feat would not have been possible if gay liberation groups relied on their members alone: 'Aux participants "traditionnels", les 2 à 3000 des précédentes manifestations, sont donc venus s'ajouter des milliers de "moustachus", "cuirs", et autres "machos". "Le ghetto", me dira maladroitement un membre du CUARH. Ce sont eux, en effet, qui ont fait le succès incontestable de cette marche, lui donnant son allure composite et décontractée.'³⁵⁶ For Fougeray a new, mixed movement that reached beyond its usual core group of support was the future and the denunciation of the commercial ghetto had been a mistake. Indeed, it was a mistake to assume that all those moustached leathermen marching in April were apolitical dupes, or worse, collaborators with an oppressive bourgeois regime. Indeed, they were participating in the very networks of sociability and process of self-fashioning that had given the liberation movements their success. The rapidly expanding commercial expression of homosexuality had its own political content, and had developed independently rather than at the expense of gay liberation groups, which, despite their impassioned rhetoric and innovative strategies had always been the preserve of an enthused minority.

³⁵⁵ The real number of participants is likely to be smaller than 10,000, but there is no doubt that it was the largest protest for gay rights in France yet. Jacky Fougeray, 'Notre préférence,' *Gai Pied*, May 1981, 2.

³⁵⁶ Fougeray, 'Notre préférence,' 2.

Chapter Two: Gay Commercial Spaces and Consumer Culture

Away from the proliferation of photocopied minutes, tracts and bulletins that made up the ardent output of France's radical gay liberation groups, the 1970s witnessed an explosion in the number, variety and openness of French businesses catering to a gay male clientele. The increasing number and thickness of gay guides, aimed at travellers negotiating a new country and natives negotiating gay France, provide us with a crude measure of this explosion. Where the 1967 *Incognito* guide (promising euphemistically to be 'la clé qui vous ouvrira les premières portes...') could list 15 bars and 15 restaurants in Paris, the 1982 *Spartacus* gay guide listed no less than 62 bars and clubs and 92 restaurants in central Paris alone, not to mention numerous baths, bookshops, cinemas, introduction services and a travel agency, all 'gay friendly' or catering specifically to gay men.³⁵⁷

Of course, businesses all over France have long sheltered and facilitated same-sex desire in one form or another – from friendly taverns and accommodating restaurants to all-male brothels and bathhouses.³⁵⁸ But the 1970s saw a new phenomenon, not the toleration of more-or-less covert activity, but the widespread appearance of businesses who openly catered to a homosexual male clientele. This business model was shaped by the distinctive fashions and sexual

³⁵⁷ *Incognito Guide Europe Méditerranée: Hiver 1967-8* (Paris: Editions ASL, 1967), 2; John Stamford, ed., *Spartacus International Gay Guide 1982* (Amsterdam: Spartacus, 1982).

³⁵⁸ An overview of the number and variety of homosexual meeting places in Paris stretching back to the seventeenth century is provided by Michael Sibalís in 'Paris', in Higgs, David (ed.), *Queer sites: Gay urban histories since 1600* (London: Routledge, 1999). Sibalís looks at the Marais in particular in 'Urban Space and Homosexuality: The Example of the Marais, Paris' "Gay Ghetto", *Urban Studies*, 41, (August 2004): 1739-1758. Florence Tamagne puts Paris into context with other European cities in the interwar period in *A History of Homosexuality in Europe*.

styles of American gay commercial culture. In recent years ‘commercial culture’ has been used by social historians to demonstrate ‘the importance of individuals’ relationships to consumer goods as key to understanding their sense of self, community and even national identity.’³⁵⁹ For instance, the ‘clone’, the emblem of the new Americanised gay man, was nothing without the consumer products that mediated his identity - his Levis’ jeans, his leather jacket and the air of sexual savoir-faire transmitted through his representations in magazines and pornographic films. In the 1970s we can locate the emergence of an increased number and variety of gay commercial establishments in France, underpinned by this wider gay commercial culture.

Perhaps because of this longer history, economic considerations have taken a key role in the analysis of homosexual identity. In his well-known 1983 article ‘Capitalism and gay identity’ John D’Emilio linked the emergence of a gay identity to the development of capitalist society. He argues that the emergence of gay men and lesbians ‘is associated with the relations of capitalism; it has been the historical development of capitalism – more specifically, its free labour system – that has allowed large numbers of men and women in the late twentieth century to call themselves gay, to see themselves as part of a community of similar men and women, and to organize politically on the basis of that identity.’³⁶⁰ Although an admirable attempt at moving away from an ‘essentialist’ view insisting on homosexuality’s permanence, D’Emilio’s model of a ‘family-based economy’ being disintegrated by capitalism is simplistic. Yet

³⁵⁹ David K. Johnson, ‘Physique Pioneers: the Politics of 1960s Gay Consumer Culture,’ *Journal of Social History* 43, no.4, (Summer 2010); 868.

³⁶⁰ John D’Emilio, ‘Capitalism and gay identity,’ in Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell and Sharon Thompson, eds., *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983), 102.

D'Emilio's approach, thinking about the connections between a changing market economy and sexual identity is still necessary. One productive way of doing this when considering 1970s France – a society recently transformed by thirty years of economic growth - would be to turn to the relationship between non-normative sexuality and consumerism: how was homosexual identity transmitted and shaped through consumption?³⁶¹

The 1970s pose a particular problem for this analysis. Gay liberation groups displayed intense hostility to the 'ghetto' of commercial outlets that was growing around them. However, commerce and liberation politics were not separate phenomena but were deeply intertwined. It should not be forgotten for instance, that the Stonewall riots broke out in a commercial establishment,³⁶² and despite the hostility displayed towards the gay ghetto, many of these businesses shared their more moderate political aims of tolerance, visibility and community building. Questioning the often-exploitative relationship between sexuality and the market is of course important, but this approach can too often repeat the political rhetoric of the period. Frédéric Martel makes this mistake when he declares that: 'coming out of the closet also had its limitations: it meant entering the ghetto.'³⁶³ In a book that is otherwise alive to the importance of commercial culture, Martel implies that engagement in gay commercial culture creates a ghetto – a blunt rhetorical instrument borrowed from liberation militants.

³⁶¹ For a similar approach in the British context see for instance Justin Bengry's 'Courting the Pink Pound: *Men Only* and the Queer Consumer, 1935-39,' *History Workshop Journal* 68, (2009): 122-148.

³⁶² On the history of the Stonewall Inn before the riots see Martin Duberman, *Stonewall* (New York: Dutton, 1993), 181-190.

³⁶³ Martel, *The Pink and the Black*, 155.

Commercial spaces were increasingly important places of acculturation into a developing gay identity that was primarily French, but also influenced by the example of the United States. Didier Eribon makes a more sensitive assessment of the purpose of commercial culture in the formation of communities: 'les effets, que l'on peut juger alinéants, de la "commercialisation" ne doit pas faire oublier que la constitution d'un milieu gay, d'un "monde gay", fut au départ, et reste fondamentalement – génératrice de libertés.'³⁶⁴ The sociologist Michel Pollack has described the function of a market of sexual exchanges in the formation of homosexual subjects: 'On ne naît pas homosexuel, on apprend à l'être. La carrière homosexuelle commence par la reconnaissance de désirs sexuels spécifiques et par l'apprentissage des lieux et des façons de rencontrer des partenaires.'³⁶⁵ These exchanges could of course take place in cruising grounds, but as the liberation period progressed, more and more opportunities developed for finding friends, a partner, and even oneself in commercial spaces, and these spaces themselves became involved in a politics of visibility.

Certainly, many more men walked through the doors of the Bronx bar than attended a FHAR meeting, many more men bought homoerotic magazines than local GLH journals, and many more men watched pornographic films than attended gay liberation film festivals. But what did they learn about being 'gay' when out in a bar, watching a porn film, or reading a magazine? Rather than a corruption of liberation politics, commercial culture was central to the

³⁶⁴ Eribon, *Réflexions*, 212.

³⁶⁵ Michael Pollak, 'L'homosexualité masculine, ou le bonheur dans le ghetto?' *Communications* 35, no.35 (1982); 38-39.

enactment and experience of liberation in France, and was a part of the same process of investment in, and exploration of, new sexual identities. This chapter will examine the growth of new gay commercial spaces in France and the new 'types' that inhabited them, before looking at the wider commercial culture which underpinned these spaces. An examination of pornography and the new gay press will show that far from being purely antagonistic phenomena, the gay liberation politics and commercial culture had an entangled relationship. This was a decade in which the visibility of a gay bar could put into practice the injunction to come out, a pornographic film could reflect self-consciously on the pitfalls of liberation through commerce, or the letters page of a gay magazine could create a network of support.

Changing gay spaces

The most visible element of the new gay commercial culture that emerged in the 1970s was the increasing openness and variety of gay nightlife, and the subculture that it fostered. As in so many other aspects of French culture, Paris was the epicentre of the development of gay commercial life. The homosexual coordinates of the capital have always been shifting. The fashionable Palais Royale was a meeting place for homosexuals from the late eighteenth century; the Bains de Penthièvre in the eighth was a labyrinth of pleasure that stayed open from the *Belle Epoque* until the 1960s; the Magic-City ballroom on the Rue de L'Université in the seventh held famous drag balls during interwar strife.³⁶⁶ In the post-war period, the neighbourhoods of Montmartre and Saint-

³⁶⁶ For the subculture around the Palais Royale see Michael Sibalís, 'The Palais Royale and the Homosexual Sub-Culture of Nineteenth Century Paris,' in Merrick and Sibalís, eds.,

Germain-des-Prés became associated with a strong homosexual subculture because of their general ambiance of artistic and philosophical bohemianism.³⁶⁷ These areas encompassed a range of society, from the fashionable dining rooms upstairs at Le Fiacre in Saint-Germain-des-Prés, to the Boulevard de Clichy's 'rough trade'. What characterised these places (and continued to a certain extent up until rise of the Marais as Paris's first 'gay village') was a clandestine nature and link to criminal subcultures. The homosexual bars of Montmartre, for instance, were notorious for being involved in cocaine dealing, and even Le Fiacre boasted a shady clientele in its downstairs bar to complement the stars dining upstairs.³⁶⁸

The imprint of these earlier establishments lingered into the 1970s. In 1974 the *Incognito* guide to Paris still grouped its listings for the city under four distinct areas: 'Clichy-Montmartre-Pigalle-Blanche', Saint-Germain-des-Prés, 'Paris centre' (Hôtel de Ville, Notre Dame and the Îles), and 'Palais Royal' (which included the Rue Sainte-Anne).³⁶⁹ Bars, restaurants and saunas could be found in nearly every arrondissement, including notable gay landmarks such as the Continental sauna near the Opéra, the famous leather bar the Keller on the street of the same name in the eleventh, or the cabaret Chez Michou in the eighteenth. Despite the geographical diversity of Parisian gay life in the early 1970s, two areas came to dominate both commercial trends and the

Homosexuality in French History; for homosexuality and public baths see Lise Manin, 'Perverse promiscuités? Bains publics et cafés-concerts parisiens au second XIX^e siècle,' *Genre, Sexualité & Société* 10, (Autumn 2013): Accessed January 2017, doi: 10.4000/gss.2955; for accounts of interwar Paris see Gilles Barbedette and Michel Carassou *Paris gay 1925* (Paris: Presses de la Renaissance, 1981); and Tamagne, *A History of Homosexuality in Europe*.

³⁶⁷ Sibalis, 'Paris', 25-26.

³⁶⁸ Sibalis, 'Paris', 29.

³⁶⁹ *Incognito Guide 1974* (Paris: Editions ASL, 1974).

imagination: the Rue Sainte-Anne, an unassuming street close to the Opéra at its north end and the Palais Royale at its southern end, and later Les Halles and the Marais, just north of the Hôtel de Ville. The first bar to open on the Rue Sainte-Anne to cater to homosexuals was Fabrice Emaer's Le Pimm's at number three in 1964.³⁷⁰ There were already cafés with a strongly homosexual clientele near the Opéra, and cruising grounds in the Tuileries Gardens, which may have encouraged his choice of street. Emaer expanded to opened the celebrated Le Sept at number seven in 1968, which would incorporate a restaurant, a disco and later a bar. Other establishments, such as the Piano Bar, Le Bronx, Le Colony and the Tilt sauna, followed. The street soon became filled in the evenings. The journalist Jacky Fougeray recounted that: 'la nuit la rue était bouchée, mais le jour c'était l'invisibilité totale!... j'y allais quand même, mi attiré, mi en colère.'³⁷¹ The high prices and strict entry to bars partly explain Fougeray's hostility, and contributed to Paris's reputation as an expensive, and often snobby, place to socialise. Until the early 1980s, each edition of the *Spartacus Guide* repeated the warning that: 'We wondered how [barmen] could keep a straight face whilst asking such ludicrous prices. But that is Paris – tremendous fun, at a price'.³⁷²

Fabrice Emaer was the man who developed and animated this exclusive version of gay nightlife. The key to Emaer's success was his ability to blend the fashionable society with the homosexual elite. He developed the legacy of Le Fiacre, where in the 1950s, homosexual subculture had first been fused with the

³⁷⁰ Sibalis, 'Paris,' 30.

³⁷¹ Daniel Garcia, *Les années Palace* (Paris: Flammarion, 1999), 38.

³⁷² Stamford, John, ed., *Spartacus International Gay Guide 1976* (Amsterdam: Spartacus, 1976), 132.

elite of Paris's literary and creative set: 'Le Fiacre a marqué en quelque sorte le début de la connexion entre la mode, la culture et la marginalité sexuelle.'³⁷³ Christian Dior dined there regularly, as did the new generation of fashion stars, Yves Saint Laurent and Karl Lagerfeld, who would also be faithful clients at Emaer's nightspots. The clientele of Le Sept was described by nightlife chronicler Jacques-Louis Delpal as being made up of a crowd that was homosexual in 'tone' but also mixed in gender, and decidedly artistic in nature: 'Le Palais Royal et le Théâtre Français lui sont fidèles; des acteurs, des écrivains, des couturiers et des cinéastes forment le noyau de la clientèle.'³⁷⁴

The success of Emaer's cocktail of high society and homosexuality on the Rue Sainte-Anne allowed him to attempt a more ambitious venture, renovating the theatre Le Palace on the Rue du Faubourg Montmartre, which opened as a large nightclub in March 1978. Le Palace was an instant hit, and soon became filled with a mixture of gay men, the young and fashionable and high society, and was heralded as a new sort of club. Le Palace drew names like Paloma Picasso, Elton John and Guy and Marie-Hélène de Rothschild, who all appeared in glossy full-colour reports on the club in *Paris Match* (hardly a gay-friendly publication at the time).³⁷⁵ Le Palace's burst of glory was blazing; Roland Barthes eulogised the club, likening it to Proust's evening at the opera where high society forms an aquatic scene of marine deities reigned over by the Duchess de Guermantes: 'Le Palace is not a 'club' like others; it assembles in an original space pleasures that are ordinarily dispersed... the excitement of the Modern, the exploration of

³⁷³ Garcia, *Les années Palace*, 18.

³⁷⁴ Jacques-Louis Delpal, *Ultra guide Paris bleu tendre* (Paris: Editions du Mont-Cenis, 1974), 32.

³⁷⁵ Philippe Bouvard, 'Ma folle nuit au Palace,' *Paris Match*, May 5, 1978, 105.

new visual sensations... the joy of dancing, the charm of potential encounters.'³⁷⁶ To explain the draw of a space like Le Palace, filled with a mixture of the elite and the marginal, Sarah Thornton develops a concept of 'sub-cultural capital': a form of social currency that characterises nightlife's 'in' spots.³⁷⁷ Part of the success of the Palace rested on the sub-cultural capital that Emaer's homosexual clientele brought to his establishments, a frisson of alternative cool that other places could not offer

If for a moment Le Palace was a near-perfect nightclub, it was also the site of more earthly political interventions. The club had close links to gay political groups and publications. For instance, during a party to celebrate *Gai Pied* magazine's second birthday, the novelist Yves Navarre stood on stage and read what he claimed was a telegram from François Mitterrand in support of the gay community.³⁷⁸ The message turned out to be a fake, although Mitterrand's team do not seem to have been too hasty in scotching the rumour, in tacit support of the letter's sentiment.³⁷⁹ According to socialite and former *gazoline* Paquita Paquin, Emaer threw his own personal support behind Mitterrand, his support for a socialist presidency causing many of his upper-class clientele to hand back their membership cards in protest.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁶ Roland Barthes, *Incidents*, trans. Teresa Lavendar Fagan (London: Seagull books, 2010), 128-9

³⁷⁷ Sarah Thornton, *Club cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).

³⁷⁸ 'Mitterrand et la fête,' *Gai Pied*, May 1981, 1.

³⁷⁹ 'Mitterrand et la fête,' *Gai Pied*, May 1981, 1; Jacques Lang denies that the telegram was an official message from Mitterrand in an interview with Martel in *The Pink and the Black*, 123.

³⁸⁰ Paquin, *Vingt ans*, 184.

The fantasy world that Emaer created around Le Palace lends itself to hyperbole. Martel claims that because of its mix of homosexuals and heterosexual high society, the club was 'an integral part of homosexual integration.'³⁸¹ But fashions come and go and Le Palace quickly lost its lustre. As a response to falling attendance, in 1980 Emaer launched an appeal to his core clientele with men-only 'tea dances' on a Sunday. Emaer announced these non-mixed nights in an interview with *Gai Pied*, whilst at the same time defending his original policy of a mixed club: 'La juxtaposition hétéro-homo retient mon attention... nous gagnons à exposer avec naturel nos tendances.'³⁸² Le Palace's media image as an integrationist utopia took another blow when Emaer opened a boutique club, the Privilege, in the same building in 1980 as a refuge for his more notable (and moneyed) guests. As time passed it seemed that Emaer's two customer bases were becoming rather more separated than integrated. Even with these mixed fortunes, in its newsletter the club claimed to have had three million people pass through its doors by 1983 and to have been a pioneer of 'all liberations': 'Le Palace fait éclater un ghetto en imposant un concept subversif et le plus proche de la sensibilité Gay.'³⁸³ If Le Palace had achieved anything, it had made Emaer's gay sensibility fashionable, if for a moment, and for the amusement of a mostly elite clientele.

The phenomenon of the Palace was the high point of a long fusion between fashion, society and homosexual nightlife, but the Rue Sainte-Anne was also the incubator of another newer and more democratic sexual subculture. Change

³⁸¹ Martel, *The Pink and the Black*, 156.

³⁸² Audrey Coz, 'Fabrice Emaer du 7 au Palace,' *Gai Pied*, October 1980, 12.

³⁸³ Fabrice Emaer, 'Editorial,' *Théâtre le palace magazine*, March 1983, 1.

in the bar scene happened quickly and by the end of the 1970s a new type of bar was competing with Emaer's celebrity haunts. In 1982 the *Spartacus* editors could advise their readers that: 'it is better and cheaper to seek out the new bars, restaurants and other gay places in the new style: simple, sympathetic and which have practical and reasonable prices.'³⁸⁴ Some of these 'new style' bars were located on the Rue Sainte-Anne itself, and the street came to contain two competing conceptions of gay nightlife. In 1973, Gérald Nanty, the owner of Le Nuage in Saint-Germain-des-Prés, along with Alain-Philippe Malagnac (backed by his lover, the author Roger Peyreffitte) moved to the right bank to open Le Bronx at number eleven; a venture so successful that soon expanded to include a restaurant next door – Le Colony.³⁸⁵ In 1974 the guide *Paris Bleu-tendre* described what you would find at Le Bronx: 'on se retrouve au *Bronx*, bourré très tard, entre homosexuels aucunement honteux et garçons sachant quoi faire d'autres garçons. Un long bar, des banquettes et même des lits superposés... L'atmosphère est plutôt "sexualisés" mais il arrive que les conversations soient parisiennes. Du mi-Proust... mi-cuir, un endroit étonnant....'³⁸⁶ Whilst Le Bronx was still equipped with heavy doors, a doorbell, a judas and bouncers, anyone could enter long as they were dressed in the right style –often advertised as 'jeans leather' or 'cuir jean' – there was no need to be 'known to the house' or to be on a guest list.³⁸⁷ These new 'American style' bars were much more democratic than older bars, and importantly featured lower prices. Perhaps their biggest draw was the sexual pleasures that could be sought in their new backrooms (usually darkened rooms, separate from the main bar in which

³⁸⁴ Stamford, ed., *Spartacus International Gay Guide* 1982, 166.

³⁸⁵ Delpal, *Ultra Guide*, 26.

³⁸⁶ Delpal, *Ultra Guide*, 26.

³⁸⁷ 'Keller's' (advertisement), *Gai Pied*, September 1982, 45.

patrons could have sex with one or many partners). Similar bars to Le Bronx began to appear over Paris, with American-sounding names like Le Daytona and Le Manhattan. The increasing diversity of the Rue Sainte-Anne is evidence of the variety of gay nightlife in the capital, and the various sub-cultures it spawned. Militants may have wished to tar the commercial scene with charges of being a one-note 'ghetto' reserved solely for a moneyed clientele, but the reality was changing in the late 1970s.

The provinces were not immune from these trends. Urban centres away from Paris also began to develop more varied gay scenes. In Lyon for instance, the number of bars listed in the *Spartacus* guide nearly doubled from fourteen in 1973 to twenty-seven in 1982.³⁸⁸ The bar Le Cercle became a Lyonnais gay institution adapting to the trends of the 1970s. To avoid being shut down it changed its name many times, at first sticking to old-fashioned names inspired by homosexual literary figures, Le Cercle Lautréamont or Le Cercle Gide for instance. But in a sign of the times Le Cercle rebranded in an American-style in 1977 and held weekly parties with American themes such as '42nd Street', 'Soho party', 'Last Exit to Brooklyn', and 'Rosemary's Baby'.³⁸⁹ However, despite Le Cercle being quick to move with the times in some respects, it remained a 'private' club. Le Cercle was an official '1901' association.³⁹⁰

³⁸⁸ Stamford, ed., *Spartacus International Gay Guide* 1973, 89; Stamford, ed., *Spartacus International Gay Guide* 1982, 187-189.

³⁸⁹ Flyers, MS 06 22, (MC).

³⁹⁰ Idier, *Dissidanse Rose*, 57-91.

The rise of Les Halles and the Marais

Paris's fitful evolution underwent a further development with the bars and clubs that opened in Les Halles and the Marais. Although it dominates today, the Marais as a 'gay village' is a very recent phenomenon, beginning to appear in guides in the late 1970s. Its growth as a 'gay' neighbourhood was spurred by the gentrification of next-door Beaubourg (the Pompidou arts centre opened there in 1977), low rental prices and its charming streets.³⁹¹ The first gay bar to open in the Marais was the wildly successful Le Village on the Rue du Plâtre in 1978, whose owners opened Le Duplex shortly after (1980, the only surviving bar from this era). Other bars swiftly followed like Le Central (1980), and Le Piano Zinc (1981) before the number and type of establishments began to explode in the early 1980s.³⁹²

The major innovation in these bars was their visibility and openness. The Village was more of an American-style café than a bar like those on the Rue Sainte-Anne. It opened onto the street, rather than being in a basement; had clear glass windows, rather than a blacked-out façade; boasted even more reasonable prices than bars like Le Bronx; and was open during the day rather than from 10 or 11 at night.³⁹³ This was a new prototype for bars, and the politics of liberation can be read in their design, privileging openness and clearly readable as a space for gay men.

³⁹¹ For an impressionistic meditation on the layered history of the area see David Caron, *My Father and I: The Marais and the Queerness of Community* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2009).

³⁹² Sibalis, 'Urban Space and Homosexuality,' 1746.

³⁹³ Sibalis, 'Urban Space and Homosexuality,' 1745.

A logic of sexual openness developed in the Marais, and it was complemented by a diverse range of businesses which blended community and commerce. A gay-owned coffee shop opened alongside clothing stores, creating, according to the journalist Gilles Jailler, a 'créneau gay' where even the local supermarket had become a gay spot because of the overwhelming orientation of its customers and staff.³⁹⁴ These establishments brought homosexuality out from the night time economy into the daylight. The bookshop Les Mots à la Bouche relocated to the Marais from the eighteenth in 1983 (and is the only surviving establishment along with the Duplex from the early eighties). The shop was a space for browsing and buying, but also for community events, and the incubation of projects such as the magazine *Masques*. Jean-Pierre Meyer-Genton, the owner of Les Mots à la Bouche, described his politics of community formation in an interview in *Masques* in 1985: 'Il ne me semble pas malhonnête de vivre, bien si possible, en exerçant une activité commerciale gaie... Mon activité m'a renforcé dans l'idée que les gais ont besoin d'être confortés dans le sentiment qu'être gai est une manière de vivre qui peut apporter autant sinon plus de joie qu'une autre.'³⁹⁵ Rather than spaces devoid of politics, the new gay spaces of the Marais actively fostered a sense of community among gay men.

The night-time economy was also booming in Les Halles and the Marais with more and more young people going out in new bars in the area such as the Broad and the Trap. In an evolution of the Tom of Finland comics cut out and stuck on the walls of bars like the Keller, the Broad and the Trap showed

³⁹⁴ Gilles Jallier, 'Marais, Halles – le créneau gay,' *Samourai*, June 1983, 37.

³⁹⁵ Jean-Marie Combettes, interview with Jean-Pierre Meyer-Genton, 'Une librairie gaie à Paris: Les Mots à la Bouche,' *Masques*, Spring-Summer 1985, 97.

American and French pornography on screens in their bars, further normalising and distributing gay pornography.³⁹⁶ In a news report on ‘gay bizness’ [sic] in 1982 a news crew interviewed a group of young people in the Central; when asked if they go out often, one replies ‘assez fréquemment, une fois par nuit’³⁹⁷

As the centre of gravity of Paris’s commercial gay scene began to shift towards Les Halles and the Marais, the Rue Sainte-Anne began to be defined less by the fading chic of the private restaurants still operating there, and more by a flourishing of male prostitution. Prostitution, while a constant feature of the area, had become more visible, and came to define the Rue Sainte-Anne. The 1982 *Spartacus* guide advised its readers in 1982 that the street ‘has become business boys from end-to-end.’³⁹⁸ The contrast between the ‘modern’ gay man of the Marais - with his own clothing and book shops, drinking on terraces and dancing to fashionable music – and the older stereotypes of ‘tricks’ and ‘johns’ on the Rue Sainte-Anne offered physical proof of the transformation that had taken place in the decade. New gay commerce was about freely engaging in sexual encounters. Commercial spaces openly facilitated these acts, and prostitution appeared a stubborn hangover from a time when sex was a favour to be extracted rather than a pleasure to be given.³⁹⁹

As Emaer was the star of Sainte-Anne, the entrepreneur David Girard came to symbolise the new gay market of Les Halles and the Marais. Born in the

³⁹⁶ Bertrand Philbert, ‘Pornographie, l’ange ou la bête?’, *Samourai*, February 1983, 28.

³⁹⁷ *Moi Je*, Antenne 2, first broadcast January 8, 1986.

³⁹⁸ Stamford, ed., *Spartacus International Gay Guide* 1982, 199.

³⁹⁹ For a contemporary report on homosexual prostitution see the *Libération* journalist Jean-Luc Hennig’s *Les garçons de passe* (Paris: Editions Libres Hallier, 1978).

northern Paris suburb of Saint-Ouen, the son of Tunisian Jewish immigrants, Girard moved into central Paris in his early twenties. After briefly working on a market stall he began much more lucrative sex work on the Rue Sainte-Anne.⁴⁰⁰ He explained his choice of profession not as a product of coercion but as a product purely of his own desire: ‘depuis des mois, j’étais travaillé par cette idée, par ce Désir qui me tenaillait, m’obsédait: l’envie de tapiner.’⁴⁰¹ He claimed to have turned over thousands of clients before he opened a small premises offering ‘beauty therapy’ on the Rue de Lévis, David Relax, where he essentially continued his previous business in a private space.⁴⁰² David Relax was a success, perhaps because all manner of men could discreetly access Girard’s services, rather than having to go to the Rue Sainte-Anne.

Girard prided himself on his professionalism and the cleanliness of David Relax. This ambition to create a clean, comfortable and modern place for sex led Girard to found the King Sauna on the rue Bridaine. Soon Girard was to open another sauna, the King Night, which catered to a nocturnal clientele. There followed a restaurant, a club, the Haute Tension in Les Halles, and eventually another club in the old Luxour theatre at Barbès.⁴⁰³

Girard’s ventures exemplified the rapid expansion, increasing complexity and confidence of gay businesses in the early 1980s. The King was advertised in *Samourai* magazine with a two-page spread boasting the capital’s most ‘dynamic’ sauna using the kind of glossy full-page photography one might see

⁴⁰⁰ David Girard, *Cher David: Les nuits du citizen gay* (Paris: Editions Ramsay, 1986), 22-39.

⁴⁰¹ Girard, *Cher David*, 51.

⁴⁰² Girard, *Cher David*, 82.

⁴⁰³ Girard, *Cher David*, 135-141.

in a contemporary fashion advertisement.⁴⁰⁴ Girard launched his own, free magazine *5 sur 5* in 1983 to advertise his network of businesses and others, claiming that it would support: ‘Cette vie gay de plus en plus présente et diversifiée à Paris et aussi dans certaines grandes villes de province.’⁴⁰⁵ The magazine even appeared to announce the increasing sophistication and demanding nature of gay consumers: ‘Ne soyez donc pas étonnés de trouver dans *5 sur 5* des critiques sur les produits et les services que vous utilisez et cela afin de vous informer le plus honnêtement possible sur les prestations que vous êtes en mesure d’attendre.’⁴⁰⁶

Girard excelled at self-promotion, becoming something of a minor celebrity in the 1980s. He appeared on the programme *Moi Je* for instance, discussing his business empire naked in one of his sauna’s Jacuzzis. The King Sauna was also featured as the setting for a pornographic film *David Relax* in 1981, although Girard did not make an appearance in the film itself.⁴⁰⁷ The subtitle of his 1986 autobiography, *Les nuits de citizen gay* encapsulates his outlook. Although he rarely refers directly to the US and does not ever mention having travelled there, he describes his citizenship in English, in terms of his sexuality, an explicit alignment with an American-inspired minoritarian identity. And this was an identity that was borne of, and informed by, the market. He locates his discovery of this identity in his first night in a Parisian gay club: ‘J’avais fait mon entrée dans la communauté gay de Paris.’⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁴ ‘King Sauna,’ advertisement, *Samourai*, November 1982, 90-91.

⁴⁰⁵ David Girard, ‘Pourquoi 5 sur 5?’, *5 sur 5*, September 1983, 3.

⁴⁰⁶ Girard, ‘Pourquoi 5 sur 5?’, 3.

⁴⁰⁷ Christophe Bier, ed., *Dictionnaire des films français pornographiques et érotiques 16 et 35mm* (Paris: Serious Publishing, 2011), 245.

⁴⁰⁸ Girard, *Cher David*, 54.

Girard's outspoken media presence did not go unchallenged. *Citizen Gay* was featured in a bruising exchange on Bernard Pivot's high-profile literary talk-show *Apostrophes* in April 1986. Pivot said that he thought the book was: 'un témoignage incroyable... quand j'ai lu ça je trouvais ça étonnant... à cause de votre sincérité... de votre cynisme, et puis je dirais presque de votre arrogance à un certain moment parce qu'on a l'impression que la morale pour vous ça n'existe pas'.⁴⁰⁹ Pivot sneered that Girard and his sex-orientated businesses were: 'une représentation assez parfaite de la libre entreprise'.⁴¹⁰ Girard, on the back foot, took this as a compliment, before finally losing his temper at accusations of exploitation. He claimed that that he had been mistreated by gay liberation activists, and took aim at their equation of gay businesses with capitalist exploitation: 'mais ça c'est des jaloux, c'est des jaloux qui supporte pas ça, les militants déjà qui sont tous contre moi...Donc tous ce qui ont un restaurant, tous ce qui ont un bar, tous ce qui ont un sauna, exploitent?'⁴¹¹

Girard appears nervous from the start and visibly rattled by his exchanges with Pivot, who seems to have invited him onto the programme to disparage him. Despite the hostile environment, Girard remains unapologetic. He sticks to the rebuttal of militant attacks that he had published in *Cher David*, claiming that rather than being exploitative, his businesses had directly helped many more men come to terms with their sexuality than political militants had. He attacks the hypocrisy of militants who had spent years fighting for 'la liberté sexuelle,

⁴⁰⁹ *Apostrophes*, Antenne 2, first broadcast April 4, 1986.

⁴¹⁰ *Apostrophes*, April 4, 1986.

⁴¹¹ *Apostrophes*, April 4, 1986.

la sensualité libératrice, la redécouverte de son corps,' only to wish to deny such pleasure when it was found in a commercial establishment.⁴¹² Furthermore, he pointed out that publications and events were often financed through commercial advertising, a statement which would become increasingly true into the 1980s.⁴¹³ Girard's relationship to gay liberation activists was difficult, but this exchange shows that he still had a keen idea of the broad political consequences of his engagement in the gay market that he helped to develop.

Girard, like Emaer, was a colourful outlier, but where Emaer was fêted in the press for his embodiment of a Parisian elegance, playing on a longer association between homosexuality and the *demi-monde*, Girard was associated with a petty and sordid sort of commerce – that was craven towards the authorities.⁴¹⁴ Despite the fashionable nostalgia that the Palace still inspires, it was Girard who represented the new generation of gay urban young Frenchmen. He had the most influence on the atmosphere created by a this generation described by Jacky Fougeray in an article in *Samouraï* magazine: 'L'individualisme règne. Tous sont conscients d'appartenir à une communauté, mais c'est davantage un constat objectif, incontournable en quelque sorte, qu'un choix revendiqué dans leur esprit.'⁴¹⁵ Not all bar-owners embodied this individualism. Some, such as Maurice McGrath, owner of Le Central and formerly in the British navy, attempted to create a union for gay bar owners: 'Je n'aime pas le mot militantisme; il évoque un combat politique, une certaine forme de prosélytisme. Cependant les militants gays et moi avons probablement un but

⁴¹² Girard, *Cher David*, 166.

⁴¹³ Girard, *Cher David*, 167.

⁴¹⁴ See for instance a denunciation of Girard's attitude towards the police in Francis Lacombe, 'Cynisme à la une,' *Gai Pied hebdo*, March 2, 1985, 9.

⁴¹⁵ Jacky Fougeray, 'La troisième génération,' *Samouraï*, December 1982, 67.

identitque à long terme: insérer les gays dans la société.’⁴¹⁶ McGrath was certainly a businessman, but he also saw his activity as deeply political. He realised that a strong gay community was good for business, and seeking legitimacy through representation in the market was an innovative political strategy in the early 1980s. McGrath intuited that bars were not outside of politics, they helped to foster a gay community, and their increasing influence on the city and the marketplace were marks of liberation carried out by other means.

The ‘clone’ comes to France

The styles and sexual cultures of the people who animated the emerging gay spaces of the Rue Sainte-Anne and the Marais are equally important in understanding the shift in commercial culture that took place. Who might one find propping up the bar in Le Manhattan bar on the Rue des Anglais on a Friday night in 1979? Almost certainly a man sporting some combination of denim, leather, boots and body hair: a ‘clone’. The men in Le Manhattan bar would not have looked out of place in Manhattan itself; the clone was an international phenomenon. In the American context, Martin Levine has described the clone as a: ‘doped-up, sexed-out Marlboro man... the first post-Stonewall form of homosexual life. Clones came to symbolise the liberated gay man.’⁴¹⁷ Dennis Altman dates their international appearance to the turn of the 1980s, although they became visible in Paris a few years before: ‘No longer characterized by an effeminate style, the new homosexual displayed his

⁴¹⁶ Alain Le Douce, interview with Maurice McGrath, ‘Un patron gay,’ *Samourai*, May 1983, 41.

⁴¹⁷ Martin Levine, ‘The life and death of gay clones,’ in Gilbert Herdt, ed., *Gay Culture in America: Essays from the field* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 69-70.

sexuality by a theatrically masculine appearance: denim, leather and the ubiquitous key rings dangling from his belt.⁴¹⁸ Patrick Higgins rightly points out that the adoption of the clone lifestyle was partly pragmatic, in a new landscape of sexual opportunity: ‘The clone look had the great advantage that it allowed the older dancers to make the transition in to their thirties, and even early forties, with dignity,’⁴¹⁹ This was a new sartorial and sexual lifestyle, a fusion of new commercial gay culture and the sexual ethics of gay liberation politics.

This new masculine style did not step onto Christopher Street or the Rue Sainte-Anne fully formed. One of our most enduring images of the clone is transmitted to us through the drawings of the artist Tom of Finland. Born Touko Laaksonen, Finland adopted his moniker when he earned wide international distribution in the late 1960s through publication in the American homoerotic magazine *Physique Pictorial* and in his own *Kake* comics.⁴²⁰ Tom of Finland’s pencil drawings depicted hyper-masculine men with exaggerated musculatures, typically clad in leather or in uniform, engaging in vigorous sex. Finland’s creations became emblematic of an era. The literary scholar Guy Snaith charts an increasing masculinization of gay men’s bodies due to the influence of Finland’s work, while noting the problematic aspects of the cartoons, including their implicit violence, exemplified in their depiction of men in Nazi uniform.⁴²¹ Finland’s art is an eroticised ideal of America as viewed by a European.

⁴¹⁸ Dennis Altman, *The Homosexualization of America, The Americanization of the Homosexual* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1982), 1.

⁴¹⁹ Patrick Higgins, ed., *A Queer Reader* (London: Fourth Estate, 1993), 221.

⁴²⁰ Valentine Hooven, *Tom of Finland: His Life and Times* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1993), 87-94.

⁴²¹ Guy Snaith, ‘Corps dessinés, corps créés, signés “Tom of Finland,”’ *Itinéraires* 1 (2009): 108-128.

Although he was a regular visitor to the US, engaging in the New York and San Francisco leather scene, he always remained based in his native Finland.⁴²² Finland's depictions of power revolve around American stereotypes of military and industrial might – the marine, the cop, and the construction worker – emblems of power which were perhaps not unusual in the middle of the Cold War. Finland used this imagery as an erotically stimulating visual shorthand for overwhelming power, but a power softened by sexual pleasure.

Just as Tom of Finland's art drew on the local and the global - he had been first turned on to leather by watching the local bikers in his hometown of Kaarina - to take root in the French gay imagination the clone had to have local material onto which to graft itself. One of these references was the ubiquity of leather as a signifier of rebellion in post-war Europe and America. As Mick Farren explains, across the West in the leather jacket had become 'invested with psychological, social, sexual and even magical significance', becoming a 'virtual uniform of the bad kids' and spreading its way across different national sub-cultures.⁴²³ In Paris, youths gathered at Bastille on the weekends dressed in leather and showing off their motorbikes. A report in Liberation's Saturday supplement *Sandwich* followed a group of these so-called *motards*. They were a group of working-class young men obsessed by American biker culture; the journalist is fascinated by their rough masculinity: 'Ils sont sapés de leurs tenues de travail: jean dégueu, "santiags" et blouson. "Nous on frime, mais on l'annonce clairement, on éclate la frime. J'adore voir la gueule de prolos moyens

⁴²² Hooven Tom of Finland.

⁴²³ Mick Farren, *The Black Leather Jacket* (London: Plexus, 1985), 96.

dans leurs bagnoles aux feux-rouges.”⁴²⁴ It was this macho confidence that homosexuals were tapping into.

Motorbike subculture also had explicit links to (hetero)sexual liberation. Motorbike magazines such as *Culbuteur* contained a mix of free-love and free-riding. Guy Hocquenghem wrote occasionally for the magazine exploring the relationship between eroticism and the motorbike: ‘La moto c’est sexuel parce que rien n’est plus sexuel qu’une machine: pas comme substitut, pas “à la place de”, en tant que tel.’⁴²⁵ Motorbike culture was about showing off, about rebellion, and the leather jacket became a synecdoche for this culture. Even in political groups leather and masculinity were a potent mix; the *service d’ordre* of many far-left political parties were also filled with young men in jeans and leather looking for a fight. Attracted to the freedom that a motorbike could bring and the number of outdoor cruising areas along motorways, gay bikers associations began to appear over France in the early 1970s, before the ‘clone’ craze took off, including the Association Sportive Motocycliste de France (ASMF) in Marseille, which still exists to this day.⁴²⁶ Clone style did not come cheap; a 1986 television report interviewed a leather store customer François Joseph (whose profession was given as *noctambule*, ‘night hawk’) who claimed to have spent over eight thousand francs on his head-to-toe leather outfit.⁴²⁷ The ‘clone’ also found its way into artistic expression. Werner Fassbinder’s 1982 film adaptation of Jean Genet’s *Querelle de Brest* blended Genet’s

⁴²⁴ Jean-Pierre Delacroix, ‘Avec...,’ *Sandwich*, January 5, 1980, 31-32.

⁴²⁵ The article is reprinted in Hocquenghem, *L’Après-Mai*, 181.

⁴²⁶ See <https://www.asmf-gay.fr/histoire-communaute-cuir>, last accessed January 2017.

⁴²⁷ *Moi Je*, Antenne 2, first broadcast January 8, 1986.

homoeroticism with contemporary clone imagery.⁴²⁸ *Querelle*, the young men on motorbikes in the Bastille, these were all images of brute masculinity that French men were trying on when they slipped on their leather jackets and headed out.

Yet the relationship between French gay men and American fashions was not a simple case of emulation. If for gay men America held a magnetic attraction, this could paradoxically live alongside crude anti-Americanism. Philippe Roger argues that a taste for American counterculture is anti-Americanism carried on by other means. The French identification with American counterculture is 'inseparably linked to the fact that it appeared dissenting or subversive within American culture.'⁴²⁹ One does not have to look far to find nightmarish visions of the US, in both political rhetoric and particularly in pornography. Innumerable articles on the gay scenes of New York and San Francisco appeared in the gay press, alternatively praising these cities as utopias, before damning them as 'ghettos'. It took an Australian, Dennis Altman, to spot *Gai Pied's* own interest in pushing a mythical image of the US: 'Ainsi donc tout irait pour le mieux aux Etats-Unis: voilà le message de la plupart des articles du "Gai Pied"... Le mythe des Etats-Unis, celui du pays libéré où les pédés... auraient trouvé une acceptation sociale générale, voilà des idées qui se vendent bien ici, en France.'⁴³⁰

⁴²⁸ *Querelle de Brest*, directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder (1982; France: Artificial Eye, 2004), DVD.

⁴²⁹ Phillippe Roger, *The American Enemy: The History of French Anti-Americanism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 443.

⁴³⁰ Dennis Altman, 'Le guêpier américain,' *Gai Pied*, July-August 1979, 8.

Driven by this press fascination, English words began to seep into the language that men used to describe their sexuality. In a tongue-in-cheek response to a newly published list of French words to replace English neologisms (such as *baladeur* for 'Walkman') *Samourai* magazine examined the English terms that had invaded French gay vocabulary: 'si nous aimons ces mots anglo-américains, c'est parce qu'ils sont porteurs d'érotisme... l'incontestable charme de l'anglais tient, en ce qui concerne la culture gay, au fait que c'est à New York ou San Francisco.... que cette culture a été inventée, et non pas à Bordeaux ou à Paris.'⁴³¹ A similar fascination with English is shown in a series published in *New Boys* magazine in 1979 on eroticism and the English language by François Pasqualini, a translator, who explained the sexual undertones of words like 'stag' and the spread of the word 'gay.'⁴³²

Some French commentators went straight to the source of this phenomenon. In a series of articles in *Sandwich*, Guy Hocquenghem sensitively explored New York's gay 'ghetto', going out of the way of the usual bars and backrooms that usually fascinated, to visit churches and political groups.⁴³³ However, in a 1979 article 'Gay sanglant USA' his work on the US took a much darker tone as he linked the clone scene to brutal violence and the phenomenon of homosexual serial killers such as John Wayne Gacy: 'les Gay [sic] courent les yeux fermés à un plaisir extrême, dont ils ne veulent pas, surtout pas qu'on leur rappelle qu'il peut aussi devenir l'extrême souffrance.'⁴³⁴ For many readers Hocquenghem's

⁴³¹ Rule Britannia, 'Lets mots anglais,' *Samourai*, April 1983, 8.

⁴³² François Pasqualini, 'Erotisme et langue anglaise,' *New Boys*, 1 (undated) 1979, 12-13.

⁴³³ These essays are collected in Guy Hocquenghem, *Le gay voyage* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1980).

⁴³⁴ Guy Hocquenghem, 'Gay sanglant USA,' *Sandwich*, December 8, 1979, 14.

article would have been one of their first exposures to the term 'gay' in a national newspaper, and it was not a pleasant one.

Other homosexual commentators were troubled by the clone not because of his extreme lifestyle, but for the perceived moderation of his politics. After visiting New York and San Francisco, Jean-Pierre Joecker, the editor of *Masques*, saw the clone's path of liberation through commerce as a force for normalisation: 'Les exigences de la campagne de relations publiques lancée par les nouveaux réformistes gais auprès de l'opinion américaine les ont contraints à créer une image idéale du néo-gai bon citoyen, consommateur régulier, producteur consciencieux, électeur modéré, à laquelle la majorité des gais ont fini par croire eux-mêmes.'⁴³⁵ The clone's swagger thus hid a mere capitulation to the moderating force of the market. Dominique Fernandez may have lauded the influence of American politics in his 1978 novel *L'Étoile Rose*, but he was deeply suspicious of the kind of man that came with it: 'néo-homo débarqué, déodorisé... muni de la moustache et de l'attaché-case réglementaires; inoffensif passager du Club Méditerranée, embarqué dans le même charter que les autres.'⁴³⁶ Though he was visually provocative, there was a persistent fear that the clone was incompatible with liberation politics.

Yet in terms of sexual ethics, the clone's embodiment of liberation was less ambivalent. The FHAR's texts predict the 'clone' lifestyle of numerous, mainly anonymous sexual partners and 'hard' sexual acts (including practices such as

⁴³⁵ Jean-Pierre Joecker, 'San Francisco, le nouvel El Dorado gai?', *Masques*, Autumn 1980, 104.

⁴³⁶ Dominique Fernandez, *L'Étoile rose* (Paris: Grasset, 1978), 164.

sadomasochism and fisting) often conducted in specialised bars and in their backrooms. The special edition of *Recherches* edited by the FHAR proclaimed to its readers: 'La drague: arrachons-lui son manteaux moral oedipien...'⁴³⁷ The FHAR's attacks on the couple, the valorisation of desire and the injunction to experiment with new lifestyles provided an ethical framework for behaviour on this new commercial scene. In 1980, *Masques* explicitly made the link between Hocquenghem's theory of cruising – in which democratisation would be achieved through a great 'machine de la drague' – and Paris's new backrooms: Plus de partenaires, plus d'âge, plus de représentation : tous ces hommes ne sont plus que des corps... la machine continue indéfiniment à produire de l'orgasme.'⁴³⁸ Whether this was a positive development or not was left up to the reader, but the link was unmistakable.

Of course, for most gay liberation militants, the commercial 'ghetto' had taken the positive aspects of cruising and exploited them for profit. But many remained enthusiastic about the potential of this new lifestyle. Michel Foucault's experience of the gay community in San Francisco had convinced him of the positive possibilities of friendship and community creation that could arise in atmospheres of intense sexual experience. In an interview with *Gai Pied* magazine he explored this idea: 'Peut-être vaudrait-il mieux se demander "Quelles relations peuvent être, à travers l'homosexualité, établies, inventées, multipliées, modulées?" Le problème n'est pas de découvrir en soi la vérité de son sexe, mais c'est plutôt d'user désormais de la sexualité pour arriver

⁴³⁷ FHAR, *Recherches: Trois milliards de pervers*, March 1973, 106.

⁴³⁸ Urbain Raphaël, 'Back-room,' *Masques*, Autumn 1980, 93.

à des multiplicités de relations'⁴³⁹ To Foucault, people who had thrown themselves into gay communities in San Francisco had embarked on a life trajectory that had, in the words of David Halperin, 'catapulted them into a new, exciting, unpredictable and dangerous mode of existence... which turned out to be self-transforming beyond anything that they could have anticipated.'⁴⁴⁰ The author Renaud Camus captures this spirit of sexual freedom and self-fashioning. If a French clone 'manifesto' exists it is certainly Renaud Camus's work *Tricks*; a collection of 45 micro-narratives in which Camus chronicles sexual encounters in bars, clubs, beaches, darkrooms and cinemas in France and the US.⁴⁴¹ The novel is a disorientating whirl of encounters. Places and nationalities dissolve, even the men featured break down into a stateless collection of thick forearms, beer-soaked moustaches and tight Levis.

Despite suspicion from many quarters, this freedom to try out a hyper-masculine, sexualised, and explicitly 'gay' identity was essentially playful. In 1982 *Gai Pied* had one of their baby-faced reporters 'drag up' as a clone, wear a fake moustache and spend a weekend on Paris's bar scene. He found the experience exhilarating: 'Un week end de pleine lune, mes habits enfilés, je me décide à accomplir le grand saut, l'acte qui changera ma nature profonde: je colle ma moustache... Le résultat est saisissant, je ne me reconnais pas.'⁴⁴² *Gai Pied* realised that playing at being a clone was so popular because it was an

⁴³⁹ Michel Foucault, 'De l'amitié comme mode de vie', *Gai Pied hebdo*, June 30, 1984, 32.

⁴⁴⁰ David Halperin, *Saint Foucault: Towards a Gay Hagiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 118-9.

⁴⁴¹ Renaud Camus, *Tricks* (Paris: Persona, 1982).

⁴⁴² Roland Surzur, 'Miroir cuir,' *Gai Pied*, November 1982, 28.

exhilarating experience to try on a new identity, an identity that could be experienced collectively.

As well as gaining resistance from gay liberation activists, the 'clone' also caught the attention of the far-right press. It was all too easy for the gay scene's international nature to be used to suggest that the men who frequented it were alien, and un-French in their appearance and in their sexual appetites. The far-right tabloid *Minute* used the image of the foreign leather queen to shock their readership and vilify homosexuals. In a two-page spread appearing in 1978 the paper describes Paris as the 'capitale européenne de 'homosexualité et n'a plus à envier San Francisco et New York.'⁴⁴³ The article goes on to provide a meticulously detailed guide to Paris' gay bars, highlighting their international and racially mixed character for extra shock-value: 'Le "Sacramouche" reçoit tous les étrangers qui s'y retrouvent en clans: Vietnamiens, Sud-Américains, Grecs, Antillais, etc... Ce mélange de races attire irrésistiblement les vieux messieurs fortunés et solitaires en quête d'une âme "frère"...'⁴⁴⁴

Just as important as the new gay spaces that opened up in Paris and other urban French areas were the lifestyles encouraged by these places. New lifestyles such as the clone were essentially mediated by consumption. Men could buy into a new, explicitly 'gay' identity, trying on hyper-masculine and hypersexual behaviour. But how were these ways of dressing, acting and having sex transmitted? The broader commercial culture that underpinned these fashions

⁴⁴³ 'Ces drôles de boîtes où on danse moustache contre moustache,' *Minute*, November 29, 1978, 24.

⁴⁴⁴ 'Ces drôles de boîtes,' 25.

must be considered, particularly the new phenomenon of hardcore pornographic film, and the commercial homosexual press.

Legalising pornography

Alongside the development of new commercial spaces, and new fashions to fill them, the 1970s was also the first time that hardcore pornography was legally produced and distributed in France.⁴⁴⁵ The legislative changes that made the legal production and distribution of all pornographic films in France possible began after Giscard d'Estaing's election in May 1974. Giscard quickly turned his attention to censorship and would celebrate the 'la censure politique au cinema abandonnée' as one of his major reforms.⁴⁴⁶ This was indeed a leap in liberalisation, but a calculated one. Erotic cinema had been gaining in popularity in the last years of Georges Pompidou's presidency; films like 1974's erotic blockbuster *Emmanuelle* made a large impact on both the cinema-going public and the takings of theatres, becoming one of the highest grossing films of the year in France.⁴⁴⁷ Given this strong appetite for sex on screen, and given the relative ease of reform in this area, Giscard made the easing of state censorship a priority. The new centrist Minister of Culture, Michel Guy, was thus allowed to override the decisions of the film ratings board at the National Center for Cinema (CNC), whose Control Commission made recommendations

⁴⁴⁵ I follow Linda Williams in her definition of 'hardcore' pornography as material (specifically film) that depicts explicit and unstimulated sex acts with the main aim of provoking arousal in their audience, a genre with an 'almost visceral appeal to the body.' 'Erotic' film is more ambiguous; although sexual in nature, it will not (normally) include explicit depictions of sex. See Linda Williams, *Hard Core: Power, Pleasures and the "Frenzy of the Visible"* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 5.

⁴⁴⁶ Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, *Démocratie française* (Paris: Fayard, 1976), 16.

⁴⁴⁷ Edward Ousselin, 'Entre deux régimes de censure: Le cinema pornographique en France, 1974-1975,' *Cincinnati Romance Review* 32 (Fall 2011); 154; *Emmanuelle*, directed by Just Jaeckin (1974; France: Studio Canal, 2008), DVD.

for banning films on the grounds of explicit violence or sexual content. Guy made his reasoning for overriding the Commission's decisions clear in a statement to the press in which he claimed that he had no right to forbid adult viewers the possibility to see the films they desire.⁴⁴⁸

For a brief period between Giscard's election in May 1974 until the end of 1975, censorship was thus effectively lifted on pornographic films. The filmmaker François Jouffa claims that the impact of the new regime was felt nearly immediately; while his erotic film *La Bonzesse* (*The Broad*) had been banned outright in February 1974, the ban was reconsidered almost immediately after the May election, and it was granted release on condition that profanities be removed from the soundtrack.⁴⁴⁹ This relaxation, along with market appetite, stimulated the national industry while also leading to a sharp increase in the amount of pornography imported into France from America. The 1972 hit *Deep Throat* arrived in French theatres in 1975 for instance.⁴⁵⁰ Pornography quickly became an important part of the film business. In September 1975, Pierre Viot, the director of the CNC, announced that in the first half of 1975, pornographic cinema brought in twenty-five per cent of the industry's revenues--twice the amount earned in the comparable period in 1974.⁴⁵¹ Listings for pornographic films began to appear in the mainstream press. The national daily *France-Soir* began including listings for films like *Exhibition*, 'le premier hard core [sic] français.' The advertisement clarified the English term 'hardcore' to its readers:

⁴⁴⁸ Jean-Luc Douin, *Dictionnaire de la censure au cinéma* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1998), 353.

⁴⁴⁹ François Jouffa and Tony Crawley, *Entre deux censures: Le cinéma érotique de 1973 à 1976* (Paris: Ramsay, 1986), 14; *La Bonzesse*, directed by François Jouffa (1974; France).

⁴⁵⁰ Ousselin, 'Entre deux régimes de censure,' 154; *Deep Throat*, directed by Gerard Damiano (1975; USA: Momentum, 2005) DVD.

⁴⁵¹ Jouffa and Crawley, *Entre deux censures*, 169.

“Hard core: représentation à l’écran d’actes sexuels non simulés”.⁴⁵² Predictably, this growth in the visibility of pornography drew condemnation from the right, particularly the former Minister of Justice Jean Foyer, who saw pornography as evidence of modern moral corruption and wished to raise taxes on it even higher.⁴⁵³ The communist newspaper *L’Humanité Dimanche* reached the same conclusion by claiming that pornography was ‘la réponse mercantile, sénile et souvent hideuse de notre société en plein crise.’⁴⁵⁴

Under pressure from social conservatives on both the left and right, and facing the consequences of the 1973 oil crisis, the government sought a fiscal solution to the proliferation of pornography. A new film classification was introduced with the finance bill of December 1975 - *classement X* - an adult-only rating similar in name and function to those already in force in Britain and the United States.⁴⁵⁵ Since all films had to pass before the CNC’s ratings board to obtain permission for distribution, pornographic films were no longer explicitly banned, as they had been before 1975, but they were still controlled under a new ratings system. The key element underpinning this new legal regime was the high taxation on the revenues of X-rated films. An X-rating forced distributors to pay a punitive tax of an extra twenty per cent of ticket revenue, which was levied on top of the standard flat tax of 300,000 francs for each full-length film and 150,000 francs for short films. X-rated films would not be eligible for state support. Furthermore, X-rated films could only be shown in licensed premises,

⁴⁵² ‘Exhibition’ (advertisement), *France-Soir*, October 7, 1975, 18; *Exhibition*, directed by Jean-François Davy (1975; France: Lamoutarderi, 2008) DVD.

⁴⁵³ Mathieu Trachman, *Le travail pornographique* (Paris: Editions de la découverte, 2013), 26.

⁴⁵⁴ Jouffa and Crawley, *Entre deux censures*, 169.

⁴⁵⁵ For a history of the 1976 law see Bier, *Censure-moi*.

spurring the growth of adult cinemas, which were mainly granted licenses when situated in red-light districts or on seedier streets, mainly near major rail stations.⁴⁵⁶ The government could now claim that censorship was more relaxed than before, as a film that would previously have been refused a distribution license (effectively a ban) was now given the X-rating, although this confined the film to punitive taxation and a specialized and controlled circuit of distribution.

Gay pornography comes to France

Despite the changing legal situation, entrepreneurs were keen to take advantage of a potential new market. One of these businessmen was the filmmaker Norbert Terry. Born in Algeria in 1924, Terry achieved moderate success in the film industry, assisting in the making of Jacques Tati's *Playtime* in 1967, before going on to make low-budget heterosexual porn films, including the oil crisis-themed *Couche-moi dans le sable et fais jaillir ton pétrole* (released in the US as *Check My Oil, Baby!*).⁴⁵⁷ A gay man, Terry was keenly aware of the market potential of films showing explicit homosexual sex. Following this instinct, he worked with another director, Jacques Scandelari to import *Good Hot Stuff* from the United States. Being the first to market paid off, and Terry claimed in an interview with the gay magazine *Gai Pied* that on its release in 1975 the film earned a million francs in a hundred days.⁴⁵⁸ Cinemagoers watching *Good Hot Stuff* may have been surprised to find a documentary chronicling the history of the American studio Hand in Hand,

⁴⁵⁶ Trachman, *Le travail pornographique*, 39.

⁴⁵⁷ *Couche moi dans le sable et fais jaillir ton pétrole*, directed by Norbert Terry (1974; France).

⁴⁵⁸ Philippe Bernier, 'Norbert Terry,' *Gai Pied*, October 1979, 12.

showcasing its work in various “best-of” scenes. But in a changing legal climate, importing a ‘documentary’ could have been a tactic to evade censorship in case explicit homosexual sex pushed the regime too far. Despite the quality of the film, for those such as the writer and activist René-Paul Leraton, watching gay pornography was a revelation, just the image of naked men on screen ‘allowed me to realize that this sexuality, my sexuality, had a rightful place in the wide world of sex, since it was represented.’⁴⁵⁹

Terry’s initial success convinced him that there was a market for gay pornography in France. As well as trading in imports, Terry collaborated with Scandelari to produce gay pornography with the production companies *Les films de la Troïka* and *Les films du vertbois*. The first of these, *Hommes entre eux* (*Men Together*), was released in July 1976 and featured a plot where legionnaires on leave romped in a château.⁴⁶⁰ Other studios also appeared including Anne Marie Tensi’s *AMT Productions*. Her studio is mainly known for the voluminous production of repetitive, poor quality shorts.⁴⁶¹

A businessman first and foremost, Terry realized that money could be made in controlling the distribution of films with explicit homosexual content and in providing a space to watch them that was explicitly for gay men. Terry bought the cinema *La Marotte* in Paris’s second arrondissement and *Le Dragon* on the left bank and converted them into cinemas that exclusively showed gay pornography (and some non-pornographic films depicting gay relationships

⁴⁵⁹ René-Paul Leraton, *Gay porn, le film porno gay: histoire, représentations et construction d’une identité* (Paris: H&O Editions, 2002), 12.

⁴⁶⁰ *Hommes entre eux*, directed by Norbert Terry (1976; France).

⁴⁶¹ Unfortunately, little of Tensi’s work survives, although much of it is catalogued by Christophe Bier. For a description of her work see Bier, *Dictionnaire des films*, 137.

and themes).⁴⁶² *Le Dragon* became one of the points of Paris's gay compass. Roland Barthes wrote about a visit in September 1979: 'I must lose the habit of *calculating* pleasures (or distractions), I go back out and see the new porno film at *Le Dragon*: as always - and maybe even more so - lamentable. I hardly dare come on to the guy sitting next to me, though it is undoubtedly possible (idiotic fear of being rejected). Go down to the darkroom [cruising area]; I always regret that sordid episode afterwards since every time I experience such loneliness.'⁴⁶³ This melancholic account is quite typical of what D. A. Miller has called the 'elegiac note accompanying all Barthes's late writing.'⁴⁶⁴ Barthes' description of *Le Dragon* is a reminder that failure and loneliness were also elements of cruising. And these negative experiences contrast sharply with the simulated joy on screen.

Despite its popularity, the legal restrictions of the X-rating soon began to put *Le Dragon* at risk. To combat the law's financial constraints, Terry turned his business into an official private 'association' in 1979: *Club Vidéo Gay*. This, according to Mathieu Trachman, relied upon a clause of the 1901 law regulating not-for-profit organization in clubs and societies and was one of the many tactics used by pornographers to circumvent the 1976 law.⁴⁶⁵ By masquerading

⁴⁶² While *Le Dragon* was the most famous, other Parisian cinemas that showed gay pornography were *Le Hollywood Boulevard* and *Le TCB* (both in the 9th). Of course, cinemas had long been sites of male-male sexual pleasure and men did not need pornography to take advantage of the anonymity and darkness they afforded. The large Egyptian revival *Louxor* cinema in Barbès was one well-known example of a "cruising" cinema. The journalist and activist Guy Hocquenghem described the goings-on during a showing of *Jason and the Argonauts*: 'adossés au mur, des attendants tâchent de profiter du crépuscule bleu qui y filtre ou des brefs éclats de la porte qui bat convulsivement pour choisir un compagnon de débauche filmique.' Hocquenghem, *Le gay voyage*, 133.

⁴⁶³ Barthes, *Incidents*, 161.

⁴⁶⁴ D. A. Miller, *Bringing out Roland Barthes* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 51.

⁴⁶⁵ Other tactics included submitting an edited version of a film to the CNC for approval and then playing the unedited version in theatres. Trachman, *Le travail pornographique*, 51.

as a private club that arranged film screenings, Terry's cinemas could avoid paying taxes on tickets. These ticket sales and a 30-franc membership fee financed the club. Terry was frank about his reasons for forming the association, a mixture of business sense and political activism: 'Nous avons créé le Club pour répondre à l'action proxénétiste du gouvernement. Quand nous recevions 19F du prix d'un billet, nous devions reverser 9,08F au gouvernement. Il était aberrant devoir donner 50% de la recette à Giscard, pour alimenter les flics qui venaient ensuite faire des descentes au ciné.'⁴⁶⁶ The association's newsletter, *La Lettre du Vidéo-Gay*, reported that some members had complained about the club model - that they preferred a discreet and easy visit rather than a subscription and the need to possess an incriminating membership card. But in 1980 Terry claimed that the club had nonetheless recruited 30,000 members in the first nine months of its existence.⁴⁶⁷ As well as access to the cinema, these new members could enjoy the club's small library, regular debates and access to services like lawyers and sexual health doctors.

Although the rudimentary newsletter was probably produced to make the *Club Vidéo Gay* appear like more of a club than it really was, it is noteworthy for the political viewpoint that Terry expressed in his editorials. He argued for achieving gay liberation by way of the porn cinema: 'Mais tout aussi importante que la réforme des lois, il y a réforme des mentalités, qui demandera beaucoup

⁴⁶⁶ Interview with Terry in Jean-François Garsi, *Cinéma homosexuels* (Paris: Papyrus, 1981), 91. A report in *Gai Pied* about a raid on *Le Dragon* in early 1979, describes how two men were arrested for "gross indecency" (*outrage public à la pudeur*). After pleading guilty they were given fines of 500F and 2 month suspended prison sentences, typical punishments for such a misdemeanor. 'Brèves,' *Gai Pied*, April 1979, 3. However, in his 1979 interview with *Gai Pied*, Terry claimed that the regularity of police raids on the Club was necessary because of the high incidence of theft, presumably to make his clients feel safer. Philippe Bernier, 'Norbert Terry,' 12.

⁴⁶⁷ Norbert Terry, 'Editorial,' *La Lettre du Vidéo-Gay*, September 9, 1980, 4.

de temps, de patience et d'esprit de suite. Que ceux qui hésitent viennent au Club Vidéo-Gay, se détendre, voir une bonne baisotte à l'écran, guigner une âme soeur en quête d'une âme soeur, ou simplement s'évader de la masse pesante du conformisme hétéro.⁴⁶⁸ It is doubtful if members paid much attention to Terry's political proclamations, but his business was certainly successful, eventually opening a branch on Paris's Boulevard de Clichy and in Nice, Lyon and Munich.⁴⁶⁹ By the end of the 1980s, however, Terry's own pornographic output had declined, and his cinemas played more and more American imports.⁴⁷⁰ Liberation by way of the bar, sex shop and porn cinema had become a familiar feature of gay male life in 1980s France, and the operation of the *Club Vidéo Gay* serves to underline the blurred distinction between political and commercial activity in the 1970s.

Gay pornography and the eroticisation of the commercial

Alongside the mechanics of production and consumption of pornography, the films themselves, as products, can be used to explore France's gay commercial culture – however 'lamentable' Barthes may have found them. Men's desires became visible not only in the clothes that they wore and the sexual styles they adopted, but also in the pornographic films that they produced and consumed. The production, content and consumption of these films are a valuable (and overlooked) resource in exploring the intersections of the commercial and the political, and the ways in which new gay commercial culture was transmitted and eroticised.

⁴⁶⁸ Norbert Terry, 'Editorial,' *La Lettre du Vidéo-Gay*, February 2, 1980, 2.

⁴⁶⁹ 'Club Vidéo Gay' (advertisement), *Samourai*, January 1983, 66.

⁴⁷⁰ Bertrand Philbert, "Jean-Daniel Cadinot," *Samourai*, February 1983, 31.

One of the most prominent ways in which gay pornography engaged with the politics of gay liberation was through its shared fascination with the United States. Between 1976 and 1978, Norbert Terry funded the production of six films to be shot on location in New York City.⁴⁷¹ These films featured a mixed French and American cast and often prominently featured the city in their titles (*New York City Inferno*, *New York After Midnight* and *Eric à New York*), presumably to clearly advertise their fashionable contents.⁴⁷²

One of the clearest expressions of the attitudes of French gay men towards America in the 1970s was *New York City Inferno*, directed by Jacques Scandelari in 1977 and released the following year. The film follows the story of Jérôme, who has landed in New York in order to find his partner Paul, who, it transpires, has been swallowed up by the city's hard sex scene. Paul's letters back home to Paris punctuate the film and are read over shots of Jérôme wandering the city streets, riding the Staten Island ferry, or eating in diners. These long scenes languidly eroticize the city. Jérôme looks for sex in cruising grounds near underpasses and the West Village's broken piers and abandoned warehouses, post-industrial spaces that are covered in graffiti and are ripe with

⁴⁷¹ These six films were: *A la recherche de Douglas*, directed by Nano Cecchini [François About] (1978; New York); *Eric à New York*, directed by Nano Cecchini [François About] (1978; New York, USA); *Gay Casting*, directed by Nano Cecchini [François About] (1978, New York, USA); *New York After Midnight*, directed by Jacques Scandelari (1978; New York, USA); *New York City Inferno*, directed by Marvin Merkins [Jacques Scandelari] (1978; New York, USA: Classic Bareback Film, 2007) DVD; *Un couple moderne*, directed by Marvin Merkins [Jacques Scandelari] (1978; New York, USA).

⁴⁷² Compare this homosexual erotic fixation on the United States with the overwhelmingly Franco-French titles of films produced for heterosexual consumption. Studios produced films featuring nuns, boarding school girls, chatelaines and even eighteenth century period-pieces, the Marquis de Sade and other libertines being popular characters. See for example: *Viols en cornettes*, directed by Olivier Mato [Olivier Mathot] (1983; France); *Pensionnaires très expertes*, directed by Jean Luret (1979; France); *La châteleine*, directed by Joë de Palmer (1982; France).

danger and promise. The powerful erotics of New York City were as much a personal experience for the film's creators as its characters. The director of photography, François About, who partnered with Scandelari on the film remembers that it was 'à ce moment que j'ai vraiment accepté mon homosexualité et que, avec Scandelari j'ai fait *New York City Inferno* dans lequel Il y a beaucoup de moi qui découvrais cette ville fastueuse où tout m'étonnait.'⁴⁷³ Of course, the idea of New York as a perilous metropolis was not a notion confined to French tourists. Miriam Greenberg has shown the ways in which New York was the 'capital of the 1970s,' a city caught between its declining industrial past and projecting a neoliberal future.⁴⁷⁴ The appropriation of abandoned industrial spaces as sets for international pornography must be seen as a part of the same process of economic and cultural transition, with outsiders also projecting their own hopes onto the city.

If the erotic potential of New York's bars, streets and waterfronts fascinated the film's creators, *New York City Inferno* also explores more disturbing aspects of the city's gay scene. In his review for the glossy monthly *Spécial man*, Philippe de Mazières expressed distress at the trajectory of the film's plot: 'Et les rapports bestiaux des folles moustachues de NYC sont sans commune mesure avec les tendres attouchements juvéniles des petits scouts français... NYC inferno est le reflet d'un désir sauvage et violent qui devient pour certains, comme une drogue douce, l'unique raison de vivre.'⁴⁷⁵ In its justification for the

⁴⁷³ About's interview appears in Jacques Zimmer, *Histoires du cinéma X par celles et ceux qui l'ont conçu, produit, commenté ou interprété* (Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2011), 259.

⁴⁷⁴ Miriam Greenberg, *Branding New York: How a City in Crisis was Sold to the World* (London: Routledge, 2008), 38-9.

⁴⁷⁵ Philippe de Mazières, 'New York City Inferno,' *Spécial man: l'homosexualité au cinéma*, 73.

film's X-rating, the CNC noted that many of the scenes were presented with 'un certain élément de cruauté.'⁴⁷⁶ The Commission's comments were often moralistic, but this assessment accurately describes the film makers' intentions. The film's opening sex scene presents Jérôme having sex with his taxi driver in an abattoir; the driver is hanging onto a pig's corpse as he is being penetrated. It is hard to image a more brutal visual metaphor for the worth of gay bodies.⁴⁷⁷ The film culminates in a scene at the 'Warehouse club,' where Jérôme finds his lost lover, who is in thrall to his new 'master.' A live rock band screeches, men in ghoul masks writhe on wooden scaffolding, shots intercut in a crescendo of noise and flesh. If Scandelari titillates at first, by the film's close he clearly wishes to shock and unsettle. This interplay between America as a land of opportunity and a frightening place of excess was turned into pornography to be shown nightly at *Le Dragon* cinema, demonstrating how the genre amplified both the joys and fears of unrestrained sexual liberation in order to fascinate and stimulate its audience.

If Scandelari wanted to shock and excite the men who sat in the cinema back home in Paris, he also intended to educate them. Politics breaks into the film explicitly when a New Yorker explains the current state of the gay movement in the United States to Jérôme, describing the new difficulties they were facing with the rise of Anita Bryant's 'Save our Children' campaign. Unusually for a film where francophone actors improbably pop up all over the city to converse with our French protagonist, the whole scene plays out in English, suggesting

⁴⁷⁶ Bier, *Dictionnaire des films*, 704.

⁴⁷⁷ This juxtaposition of meat and men is also taken up by Guy Hocquenghem in his account of the Mineshaft bar in New York's Meatpacking district for the French newspaper *Libération*. He describes the doors of the bar opening onto a pavement slick with blood from the day's butchery work. Hocquenghem, *Le gay voyage*, 51.

that his interlocutor 'John' is a real activist rather than an actor.⁴⁷⁸ The scene certainly has an unscripted feel; the French man sits patiently listening to his American counterpart and undergoes a political apprenticeship which mirrors the sexual apprenticeship that drives the film. The content of this political exchange would not have been comprehensible to all customers at *Le Dragon* as the original was not subtitled, and the extended dialogue would likely have sent attentions wandering to equally bored neighbors. But the scene caught the attention of *Soft Men's* magazine, whose editor Jean-Christophe Balmann thought that the exchange was important enough to translate and print for his readers.⁴⁷⁹

Just as the American gay market was dramatized by pornographic filmmakers, so were domestic commercial sex spots. Jean Etienne Siry's 1978 film *Et Dieu créa les hommes* plays out like a tour of Paris's gay commercial premises.⁴⁸⁰ After the death of his lover, the protagonist, Lucien, goes out looking for sex and finds it in a pornographic cinema, a sauna and then the bar Les Toilettes (filmed in the Keller bar). *Et Dieu créa les hommes* depicts places with which many of its audience were already familiar and reworks them into pornography. A scene set in a pornographic cinema, for instance, can be read as an ironic nod to the viewer's own experience of watching the film in such an environment. The scene even seems to invite the viewer to copy Lucien and to repair to the toilets with his partner for a more private experience (and presumably to stop watching the film). Lucien then visits a sauna (the Continental Opéra in the

⁴⁷⁸ Unfortunately, I have been unable to recognise this activist. He is unnamed in the film, and uncredited. The name 'John' only appears in the translated dialogue printed in *Soft Men's* magazine; 'New York City Inferno,' *Soft Men's*, May 1978, 40-41.

⁴⁷⁹ 'New York City Inferno,' 40-41.

⁴⁸⁰ *Et Dieu créa les hommes*, directed by Jean-Etienne Siry, (1978; France).

ninth) where he witnesses a man being fisted by two partners. Lucien watches, perhaps as the naïve cinemagoer does, first aghast then intrigued as he is shown the slow process of lubrication and massage by which the act is made possible. The staging of this scene is an illustration of Richard Dyer's argument that pornography not only reflects sexual practices, it also constructs new erotic trends; pornography's display of the sexual act can constitute a form of sexual education, particularly for niche activities.⁴⁸¹ As the film progresses Lucien gallops through all the sexual and commercial possibilities that Paris affords him, even engaging in (literal) telephone sex, a scene which leads *de Mazières* to comment on Siry's obsession with inserting objects into his actors, a nod to the sexual gadgets proliferating on the gay marketplace, and the appearance of commercial phone lines offering sexually explicit chat and encounters.⁴⁸²

Similarly, in *New York City Inferno*, Jérôme begins his quest to become an S&M master with a visit to a sex shop. With the help of the shopkeeper, he browses the shelves and inspects and tries on the various products in a scene that never quite breaks into sex. Jérôme's initiation into the New York scene occurs through consumption, just as it had for his partner Paul before him. One of Paul's letters reports: 'Encore un jour est passé et quelque chose appris pour moi. Hier je suis allé acheter quelques vêtements cuir et des gadgets comme ils disent ici, je ne sais pas si tu aimerais les utiliser avec moi mais ça m'amuse

⁴⁸¹ Richard Dyer, 'Idol Thoughts: Orgasm and Self-Reflexivity in Gay Pornography,' *Critical quarterly* 36, no.1, (1994): 49-62.

⁴⁸² Phillippe de Mazières, 'Et Dieu créa les hommes,' *Spécial man: Dossier l'homosexualité au cinéma*, 52. Props provide Siry with many playful opportunities in *Et Dieu Créa Les Hommes*. A scene in which butter is used as an impromptu lubricant can be read as a reference to the anal rape scene in *Last Tango in Paris* (1972, Bernardo Bertolucci), one of the most influential and controversial sex scenes of the decade.

beaucoup.’⁴⁸³ If in *Et Dieu créa les hommes* it is the spaces of consumption that are eroticized, in *New York City Inferno* it is the process of shopping itself. The pornography of the gay liberation movement also contained an element of both ‘sex education’ and ‘consumer education’ when it came to depicting sexual practices in the new gay commercial landscape.

On the one hand, while the mutually reinforcing relationship between joyful sex and consumption implies hope, these films are also characterized by a sense of the trauma that was characteristic of the uncertainties of the decade. The plot of *Et Dieu créa les hommes* is in many ways a tragic one. Lucien believes that he has been jilted and once he has smashed and spit on his lover’s portrait, he finds out that, in fact, his lover is dead. The sex that Lucien engages in becomes increasingly extreme, and in an ending that could not be accused of subtlety, the film closes with a poem:

Je traîne le jour
 et puis la nuit.
 Enfant de l’ombre
 Et de personne
 Les rues, les bars,
 Sont mes abris,
 Au tout venant
 Je m’abandonne...
 Mon Dieu, pourquoi

⁴⁸³ Merkins, *New York City Inferno*.

M'as-tu fait homme?

POURQUOI AS-TU

CRÉE LES HOMMES?...⁴⁸⁴

The trajectory of *Et Dieu créa les hommes* could be a case of a pornographic film reproducing the trope of tragic homosexual love common in literature, in a cloying attempt to lend itself gravitas. Or it could be read as a political message warning of the dangers of limitless sexual liberation bereft of affective links. The critic Alain Minard went so far as to claim that the film shows Siry as a Christian moralist.⁴⁸⁵ De Mazières' review declared that the film: 'vous tend un miroir. Regardez-vous! Et pour accentuer il vous crache dessus, il vous pisse dessus, et si vous bande encore tous les espoirs sont permis pour les exploitants de la déchéance.'⁴⁸⁶ These films seem to warn against itinerant desire and question the link between sex and commerce. Yet given that the pornographic medium relies on such desire and its commercial resonance, the message seems at once subversive (in that it undermines pornography itself) and simply hypocritical.

Disguising the commercial: Jean-Daniel Cadinot

The pornography that gay French men produced in the 1970s and 80s was thus caught between a vision of problematic freedom in America and precarious toleration at home, the pleasures of the ghetto and more purist political projects. But not all directors fell into the mode of first selling sex and then

⁴⁸⁴ Siry, *Et Dieu créa les hommes*.

⁴⁸⁵ Alain Minard, 'Et Dieu créa les hommes,' in Bier, *Dictionnaire des films*, 358.

⁴⁸⁶ De Mazières, 'Et Dieu créa les hommes,' 52.

condemning their own work with moralizing poetry. Jean-Daniel Cadinot, the most enduring and commercially successful director and businessman to emerge from this milieu, stood apart from his late-1970s peers by presenting the audience a retreat into fantasies. It is Cadinot's fantastical touch as a filmmaker that would make him the most famous gay porn director that France has ever produced. His directing career would span thirty years and over seventy films.

Originally a photographer, Cadinot made the move into film with the production of his first short *Stop*, which was filmed in 1979 and released in France the following year. In contrast to the cruder styles of Scandelari or Terry, Cadinot had a talent for cinematography. He controlled the casting, scenario and camera operation, aiming to create a gay pornographic *cinema d'auteur*, film as a direct expression of a director's vision, without intermediary.⁴⁸⁷ In an interview in 1982, Cadinot mentions some of his favorite films, including those produced by the American pornography directors Joe Gage (*El Paso Wrecking Corp*), William Higgins (*Pacific Coast Highway*, *The Boys of Venice*) and Jim French (*Every Which Way*).⁴⁸⁸ But what is striking is not the way in which Cadinot assimilates the work of these contemporaries, but how he stands apart from them. While he did not work in a vacuum and did not claim to do so, Cadinot has a clear aesthetic independence from both American productions and his fellow Frenchmen. Instead of finding erotic inspiration in the real-life

⁴⁸⁷ Philip Simpson, "Authorship," in Roberta E. Pearson and Philip Sampson, eds., *Critical Dictionary of Film and Television Theory* (London: Routledge, 2001), 30.

⁴⁸⁸ Bertrand Philbert, 'Jean-Daniel Cadinot,' 30; *El Paso Wrecking Corp*, directed by Joe Gage, (1977; California, USA: HIS Video, 2000) DVD; *Pacific Coast Highway*, directed by William Higgins (1981; California, USA: Catalina Video, 2004) DVD; *The Boys of Venice*, directed by William Higgins (1979; California, USA: Catalina Video, 2005) DVD; *Every Which Way*, directed by Jim French (1979; California, USA).

action of sex clubs and backrooms, Cadinot mined and eroticized the images of France's collective memory, a technique that would sustain his imagination and popularity throughout his career. René-Paul Leraton explains Cadinot's success as being the result of this ability to speak intimately to the experience of a particular generation of French men, a generation of which he was a part: 'Cadinot reprend tous ces moments de notre vie et y fait se passer ce qu'on fantasmait. Le dortoir, la tente de camping scout, la chambrée, se chargent d'érotisme et d'une sexualité explicite et libératrice.'⁴⁸⁹

Another factor in his success was his attention to new technological realities. Cadinot quickly realized the value of VHS tape to the availability of pornography and began to make films for home distribution very early in his career. He conceptualized many of his films with the video player in mind, imagining the viewer to be watching his films in the comfort of home, in private rather than as a collective experience. In his 1983 interview with the gay magazine *Samourai*, Cadinot explained his relationship to new VHS technology; unlike a film watched in the cinema, home video allowed the viewer to pause, rewind and watch at leisure and Cadinot conceived his pornography around this home-viewing experience.⁴⁹⁰ This approach also explains Cadinot's usual practice of casting a single protagonist. This protagonist tends to play a sexually passive role and the viewer is invited to engage with him as he embarks on a sequence of sexual encounters, a sort of 'passive odyssey,' as Christian Fournier has described it.⁴⁹¹ This freedom from the space of the adult cinema

⁴⁸⁹ Leraton, *Gay Porn*, 72.

⁴⁹⁰ Bertrand Philbert, 'Jean-Daniel Cadinot,' 29.

⁴⁹¹ Fournier argues that in presenting us with these 'passive odysseys,' Cadinot creates a unique hero who is 'actively passive.' Christian Fournier, 'Cadinot,' in Philippe Di Folco, ed., *Dictionnaire de la pornographie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2005), 71.

allowed Cadinot to explore the fantasy world of his viewer in his own home. In this domestic space he became, in his own words, the creator of ‘contagious erotic dreams.’⁴⁹² For Cadinot, a retreat into fantasy was also a retreat into the home, away from the contemporary gay scene. This private sexual release likely became more important for him as the gay community became conscious of the AIDS epidemic, but the tendency is also visible in Cadinot’s pre-AIDS-era work.

It is worth examining some of the erotic preoccupations in which Cadinot found refuge, since they show a retreat into fantasy more pronounced than the more ‘realist’ pornography of his peers, focused on commercial spaces. Cadinot’s second feature film, *Sacré collègue* (1982), introduces two of his enduring fascinations: educational institutions and religion. This film could be read as a pornographic reimagining of Roger Peyrefitte’s writings on love between schoolboys, and in it Cadinot turns the setting of the all-boys boarding school into what Jaap Kooijman has called a ‘pornotopia.’⁴⁹³ *Les minets sauvages*, (1984) develops these dreams of unrestrained antics in the dormitory, this time set in a reform school. These films are a pornographed version of the sort of sexual experimentation that a whole generation of French gay men must have experienced (or fantasized about) before mixed-sex education became widespread in France in the 1960s and 1970s.⁴⁹⁴ Cadinot’s deft touches help root his films in a longer context of homosexuality in French art and literature.

⁴⁹² Martel, *The Pink and the Black*, 166.

⁴⁹³ Jaap Kooijman borrows this term from Steven Marcus’s *The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Corgi, 1964), 271. Kooijman applies this term to Cadinot’s films set in North Africa, but it could easily be extended to all of Cadinot’s early work. Jaap Kooijman, ‘Pleasures of the orient: Cadinot’s Maghreb as Gay Male Pornotopia,’ *Indiscretions*, 22 (2011): 97-111.

⁴⁹⁴ For a history of juvenile homosexuality in institutional environments in this period see Revenin, *Une histoire des garçons et des filles*, 155-204.

In *Les minets sauvages* the inmates of the reform school gather around a large table to make silk flowers in scenes that echo Jean Genet's juxtaposition of imprisoned masculinity and floral imagery in his novel *Miracle de la rose* (*The Miracle of the Rose*, 1946).⁴⁹⁵ In *Sacré collège*, the pupils pick armfuls of rhododendrons to decorate the chapel's altar.

Of course, setting a pornographic film in a school raises issues of age and consent, and here Cadinot's fantasies appear more problematic. The sign at the gates of the school displayed in the opening shot of *Sacré collège* states that the institution depicted is a boarding school for boys aged 11 to 18, a device that purposely added ambiguity to the characters' ages. The 'Coral Affair,' a scandal that occurred in the year of the film's release, in which a number of prominent writers and academics were accused of abusing boys in care at the Coral special educational establishment near Nîmes, threw a problematic light on Cadinot's choice of setting, but did not stop Cadinot re-using it in subsequent films.⁴⁹⁶

One of Cadinot's methods for clearly distancing his work from the issue of child abuse and non-consensual sex was to stress the consent and enjoyment of his actors. This move also had the effect of emphasizing the willingness of his stars, sidestepping the commercial relationship between filmmaker and actor that underpinned his work. That Cadinot's films were authentic representations of actors enjoying themselves was a part of his marketing. Cadinot claimed to produce his films in an atmosphere of camaraderie; he wanted his actors to

⁴⁹⁵ See for instance, the transformation of chains into roses in the novel's titular miracle: Jean Genet, *Miracle de la rose* (Lyon: L'Arbalète, 1946), 25.

⁴⁹⁶ Indeed, Cadinot would take up the setting of a reform school in *Les minets sauvages* just two years later. Discussion of the Coral Affair and its impact can be found in Verdrager, *L'enfant interdit*, 29-30.

become friends and enjoy each other to make for more convincing pornography.⁴⁹⁷ On the set of a Cadinot photo shoot in the summer of 1977, an actor named only as François claimed: ‘J’ai déjà travaillé avec Jean-Daniel et avec lui on a toujours l’impression de s’amuser! Les liens qu’il tisse entre nous et lui sont grisants.’⁴⁹⁸ In 1983, the journalist Kevin Kratz interviewed porn performers for a piece in *Samourai* magazine, comparing their experiences. While ‘Dominique’ emphasized that he was motivated only by financial gain, ‘Franck’ was clear that he was involved ‘par plaisir d’abord’ and that he was now in a relationship with one of his co-stars.⁴⁹⁹ Cadinot’s desire that his actors enjoy themselves on film stands in contrast to Norbert Terry’s filmmaking style. Terry made his actors sign contracts stating they would not have any sexual contact with each other outside of the shoot to avoid exhausting their energies, a stark contrast to Cadinot’s encouragement of relationships between the cast members.⁵⁰⁰ Cadinot used this fluid boundary between pornography and reality to increase the identification of his viewers with the actors on screen, deepening their engagement in fantasy rather than provoking the sort of self-reflection on sex and cruising that Siry attempted to encourage with his clumsy use of poetry.

The reality of work in the pornography industry could of course be much less joyful, and was much more exploitative than Cadinot’s films let on.⁵⁰¹ But Cadinot’s success depended upon the way that he elided the economic reality

⁴⁹⁷ ‘Une journée pas comme les autres,’ *Incognito*, 4 (undated) 1977, 33.

⁴⁹⁸ ‘Une journée pas comme les autres,’ 33.

⁴⁹⁹ Kevin Kratz, ‘Pour le plaisir,’ *Samourai*, March 1983, 68.

⁵⁰⁰ Philippe Bernier, ‘Norbert Terry,’ 12.

⁵⁰¹ For a thorough examination of contemporary working conditions in the pornography industry from a French perspective see Trachmann, *Le travail pornographique*.

that underpinned his business. Perhaps it is for this reason that Cadinot thought the label ‘pornography’ had such negative connotations: ‘pour moi le porno c’est quelque chose de laid, de sale. Mais c’est aussi montrer un acte sexuel. Et nous faisons tous les actes sexuels donc nous faisons tous du porno.’⁵⁰² Cadinot was praised by contemporaries precisely because he managed to evacuate the notion of financial transaction from his work. Luc Pinhaus’s review of Cadinot’s work in *Gai Pied* magazine gushed: ‘Les garçons de Cadinot, d’une beauté expressive, c’est-à-dire émouvante – ce n’est certes pas l’univers des clones – bandent et prennent leur pied au film auquel ils ne *semblent* pas participer uniquement parce que *business is business*.’⁵⁰³ Pinhaus’s use of the English expression ‘business is business’ equated the ‘clones’ of other films with a world of insincere sex-as-transaction; he clearly had the pornography that took direct inspiration from America’s commercial spaces in mind.

But even though Cadinot attempted to evacuate the financial and sexual transaction from his work by avoiding depiction of the commercial gay scene and all the compromises it entailed, he could not fully escape his contemporary political milieu. While most of Cadinot’s obsessions have generally gone unexamined, his foregrounding of the North African man, another erotic theme with deep roots in the French imagination, has received criticism. Maxime Cervulle argues that Cadinot’s 1984 film *Harem* is the pornographic illustration of the racial politics of gay liberation, and in particular the FHAR’s 1971

⁵⁰² Bertrand Philbert, ‘Jean-Daniel Cadinot,’ 30.

⁵⁰³ Luc Pinhaus, ‘Jean-Daniel Cadinot, humour et tendresse dans l’érotico-porno,’ *Gai Pied Hebdo*, December 18-24, 1982, 10.

'manifesto of the 343 sluts'. In *Harem* Cadinot eroticizes racial stereotypes for his audience. He portrays the white French boy as the passive partner in a succession of encounters with sex in the open-air market, in the hammam bathhouse, with the tailor, thus playing on the classic stereotypes of the hopeful holidaymaker. Cervulle argues that Cadinot and the FHAR both represent an instrumentalization of racist notions of Arab men in service to the liberation of white, French subjects: 'Caught between the politics of porn and the erotic charge of politics, the nonwhite subject is reduced to a body to be exploited by white pornographers and revolutionaries alike as both a sign and a mode of exchange, as both a battlefield and a playground.'⁵⁰⁴ But although *Harem* does lean on racist stereotypes, Cervulle overlooks the diversity of many of Cadinot's other productions. Cadinot's work of course bears the imprint of gay liberation's 'homonormativity': the tendency to see the 'normal' gay subject as French, cis-male, white, young, and abled. The FHAR's politics and Cadinot's pornography bookend France's gay liberation moment, and both underlining that gay liberation's subject was the white, French man. But although Cadinot exploited racialized fantasies in his work set outside of France, his attitude towards race within France seems to have been much less charged. Despite often featuring an exclusively passive white protagonist, Cadinot's early work does not tend to assign sexual roles exclusively along racial lines.⁵⁰⁵

If Cadinot's problematic portrayal of North Africa receives critical attention today, it is because he became an international figure, exporting his vision

⁵⁰⁴ Maxime Cervulle, 'French Homonormativity,' 176.

⁵⁰⁵ To take just one example, the black actor who plays one of the students in *Sacré Collège* engages in both active and passive sexual roles.

around the globe (latterly facilitated by the internet). By 1984, Cadinot was the only French director left making commercial gay pornography in France. The VHS revolution produced a flood of US imports, and Cadinot was the only producer to survive.

Either through an explicit eroticisation of the commercial, or an attempt to sidestep it altogether, the gay pornography produced after legalisation had to engage with the problems and opportunities posed by gay commercial culture. In this way, pornography contributed to the ongoing discourse in the period between the commercial and the political. Judging by its popularity, audiences were also engaged in these questions, although perhaps Cadinot's success showed that audiences preferred these questions hidden behind a veil of artistry.

Creating real and imagined networks: The commercial gay press

New adult cinemas like *Le Dragon* brought men together in commercial spaces to watch films that wrestled with the anxiety and the desire caused by the transformations taking place in gay men's lives. The sorts of sexual and amical connections created at the adult cinema (and in the bar scene) were complemented by the virtual communities and networks fostered by the commercial gay press.⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰⁶ I will (perhaps crudely) label these magazines 'commercial' as opposed to the 'political' journals produced by the FHAR or the GLH, for instance. This distinction begins to break down with the arrival of *Gai Pied*, however, which blended the elements of the 'commercial' and 'political' press.

Magazines such as *Andros*, *Don*, *Incognito* and *Homo* played a key role in underpinning the growth of commercial culture in France. Unlike the journals produced by the GLH groups, what these magazines shared was their commercial orientation. Some existed mainly to promote other products distributed by the publishing company. Others had a more traditional model and supported their sales by the advertising they carried. To label these magazines as 'commercial' is not to diminish their importance, both to the people who read them and to the development of France's gay commercial culture. In her examination of the interplay between the LGBT movement and the market in the 1990s, Alexandra Chasin explains that: 'Perhaps more than any other institution, the gay and lesbian press has been a key site of intersection between the gay and lesbian political movement and the lesbian and gay niche market.... the gay and lesbian press embodies the complex relationship *between* the movement and the market.'⁵⁰⁷ It is in the 1970s that this relationship emerged in France. There was a symbiotic relationship between the variety and quality of the gay press, and the diversity and quantity of the businesses that they advertised. The commercial press played a key role in underpinning commercial gay culture, and creating a real and imagined community of gay men in France.

Commercial magazines trading in same-sex desire existed in France before the 1970s. In the post-war period, Julian Jackson notes that bodybuilding magazines such as *Physique Pictoral* from the US were some of the only

⁵⁰⁷ Chasin, Alexandra, *Selling Out: The Gay and Lesbian Movement Goes to Market* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 57.

legitimate representations of the male nude on the French market.⁵⁰⁸ French equivalents did exist, such as *Sciences culturistes*, *La culture physique* and *Apollon-Venus*, but because of the censorious climate, these magazines were essentially 'closeted', presenting male nudes for the 'appreciation' of an ostensibly heterosexual audience. During this time, Pierre Guénin, one of the most important figures in gay publishing in this period, began his career at *Cinémonde* magazine. He eventually persuaded its editor to feature pictures of semi-naked men, as they already did for women. The move was a success and Guénin established his own magazines, first the short-lived *Eden*, then *Olympe* in 1969. Guénin went on to found the company *Editions Sport, Art, Nature* (SAN), which would publish a plethora of titles across the 1970s.⁵⁰⁹ Jackson pinpoints the importance of *Olympe*: 'Guénin's magazine offered a hedonistic product that contrasted with *Arcadie's* austerity. Its readership formed a kind of virtual, if unacknowledged, homosexual community, the forerunner of a new consumerist gay culture...'⁵¹⁰

Some of the traits of the early 'closeted' commercial magazines continued into the 1970s. At the start of the decade, titles such as *In Magazine Masculin* and *Nous les Hommes* presented themselves in a coded fashion, valorising masculinity as an excuse to show homoerotic images. More through evasion than political conviction, these magazines were often neither explicitly homosexual nor heterosexual. Bisexuality, which was so often derided by radical political groups, was sometimes the stated orientation of these

⁵⁰⁸ Jackson, *Living in Arcadia*, 173.

⁵⁰⁹ Guénin narrates this trajectory in his autobiography *La Gay révolution, 1920-2006* (Paris: Cosmo Editions, 2006), 114-121.

⁵¹⁰ Jackson, *Living in Arcadia*, 176-7.

magazines: *Olympe* had the subtitle ‘revue bisexuelle’.⁵¹¹ *Don* called itself a ‘homophile’ review, explicitly rejecting the label ‘homosexual’ in principle (but often using it in practice). Guénin claimed that his openness to all sexualities was one of his main achievements: ‘en donnant autant d’importance aux hétérosexuels qu’aux homosexuels et aux bisexuels, j’ai normalisé ces deux dernières catégories mises toujours “à part”.’⁵¹² Although it is hard to say whether Guénin was so enthusiastic about bisexuality because of a genuine desire to rehabilitate ignored bisexuals or because, as gay liberation activists might have argued, it provided a useful cover for those questioning their homosexuality.

As the 1970s progressed commercial magazines became markedly more open about the sexual orientation of their target audience. *Nous les Hommes*, another publication from Guénin’s Editions SAN, began life in early 1970 ostensibly as a magazine that marketed itself as ‘100% viril’.⁵¹³ The tone was of masculine camaraderie, and the language a thinly-veiled hyper-heterosexuality. The first issue featured the bodybuilder Kirk Morris and the actress Anna Gaël, but by 1974 the magazine featured two naked men on its cover.⁵¹⁴ By 1977 the magazine was reviewing gay pornography while still retaining some of its concern with hypermasculinity; its highest praise for *Homologues ou la soif du mâle* was that it was a film ‘d’atmosphère 100% virile...’⁵¹⁵ But by 1982, this preoccupation with virility had largely fallen away

⁵¹¹ The claim to be France’s first bisexual appears surprisingly early, first appearing in 1970. Cover, *Olympe*, September 1970.

⁵¹² Janine Schasnow, interview with Pierre Guénin, *In magazine*, February-March 1976, 2.

⁵¹³ ‘Pourquoi “nous les hommes?”’ *Nous les Hommes*, Spring 1970, 2.

⁵¹⁴ Cover, *Nous les Hommes*, Spring 1970, 1.

⁵¹⁵ Igor Floquet ‘La soif du mâle,’ *Nous les Hommes*, November-December 1977, 40.

and the magazine contained rubrics like 'la vie en gai'.⁵¹⁶ If a mixture of dissimulation and an insistence on masculinity sold copies in the early 1970s, in the 1980s being 'out' was the more commercially viable option, and if masculinity was still emphasised, it was now openly for its sexual allure. Whilst it may be an indication of changing sexual tastes rather than proof of the number of men who were living out of the closet, the trajectory of these magazines shows that living 'la vie en gai' rather than a life of successful dissimulation was now an aspiration that many men were prepared to buy into.

This increasing openness did not come without a price to the publishers, who in the late 1970s were at the sharp end of state censorship. As Giscard lurched to the right in the run up to and after losses in the 1978 municipal elections, many titles with overt homosexual content were banned from public display on the grounds of the protection of minors. Titles that were affected in the worst spate of censorship in 1978-9 included *Dialogues Homophiles*, *Incognito*, *Nouvel Homo*, *In* and *Olympe*.⁵¹⁷ Despite regular drives for subscribers, most titles were unable to survive the loss of sales that these bans entailed. Due to the persistent fear of censorship, magazines tended to appear and disappear, changing titles in a bid to avoid censorship. In 1977, after *Don* magazine was banned for display, *Incognito* magazine appeared in its place, explaining to its readers that it had attempted to rename the magazine *Don nouveau*, but the name was too similar to its previous incarnation and caused the magazine to be seized. Exasperated, the magazine declared: 'Nous laissons nos lecteurs se

⁵¹⁶ 'La vie en gay,' *Hommes*, Spring 1982, 28.

⁵¹⁷ Jackson, *Living in Arcadia*, 229.

livrer à cette gymnastique intellectuelle née des caprices de nos chats fourrés.⁵¹⁸

This constant churn of titles did have the beneficial side-effect of making the magazines appear fresh to readers, when in fact much of the content was repetitive, if not reused wholesale from a sister title.

To bolster revenues, many commercial publications operated in a closed economic circuit, with advertising encouraging the purchase of products distributed by their own mail order company. This was true for the titles *Homo 2000* and *Man* which were distributed by the mail order company SEDEM. The company sold aphrodisiacs, penis pumps and various other sex aids alongside imported American videos on super-8.⁵¹⁹ Jean Le Bitoux attacked the 'ignoble return' of *Homo 2000* in early 1980, and its preponderance of articles 'drained' from *Gai Pied*.⁵²⁰

Yet even when publications were little more than glorified catalogues, one of the most enduring features in these commercial publications was the – pretended or real – connections they made between readers. Even the lowest quality magazine could still provide a lifeline to a lonely reader. Readers did not hesitate to correspond; Guénin claimed that he received over two thousand letters a month.⁵²¹ *Andros's* letters section regularly ran to twelve pages or more. *Incognito* magazine claimed that over a two-year period it (and its predecessor *Don*) had received 15,000 letters, with some readers sending up to 18 letters each.⁵²² *Incognito* listed the number of letters received by region, with Paris

⁵¹⁸ 'Dernière minute,' *Incognito*, 1 (undated) 1977, 2.

⁵¹⁹ 'Callboy,' advertisement, *Homo 2000*, 1 (undated) 1979, 10.

⁵²⁰ Jean Le Bitoux, 'Le temps presse,' *Gai Pied*, February 1980, 4.

⁵²¹ Guénin, *La Gay Révolution*, 121.

⁵²² Jean Coquelle, 'Qui nous écrit?,' *Incognito magazine*, 1 (undated) 1977, 64.

contributing by far the most at over 3,000, while only eight were received from Corsica, belying the stereotype that these magazines – and their letters pages – were only for lonely provincial men starved of Paris's opportunities.⁵²³

Readers were given succour in their loneliness by reading the life stories of others. 'Pierre B' from Besançon wrote in to tell *Andros* that he read 'homophile' reviews because: 'Elles font sortir de l'isolement, de la solitude, par les témoignages décrivant des états d'âme vécus...Par la correspondance permettent d'établir un réseau d'entraide.'⁵²⁴ These sorts of contributions were explicitly encouraged by *New Boys* magazine, which told readers to write in to recount their life story, apparently for a study which they were preparing (but which did not materialise): 'Comment vivez-vous votre homosexualité? Avec vos parents? Avec vos amis? Vos amants? Vos employeurs? Quelles difficultés rencontrez-vous dans votre vie quotidienne et vos rapports avec les autres? Vos peines! Vos angoisses! Vos joies! Vos espoirs.'⁵²⁵ The 'life experiences' printed followed a formulaic structure. Readers explained their background, their first (usually idyllic) sexual experiences, which later led to heartbreak or bad decisions such as an unwilling marriage or enforced celibacy. Examples of men happy in their homosexuality were rare. This almost standardised mode of expressing one's own life story was perhaps self-perpetuating, readers imitating the expression of other readers and following the suggestions of the magazine.

⁵²³ Coquelle, 'Qui nous écrit?' 64.

⁵²⁴ 'Pierre B.,' letter, *Andros*, 4 (May?) 1976, 61.

⁵²⁵ 'Racontez-nous votre vie,' *New Boys* 1, (undated) 1979, 38.

Sometimes letters sections were used for more innovative commercial ends. *Andros* solicited its letter-writers to also submit nude photographs of themselves for a competition.⁵²⁶ *New Boys* printed erotic letters alongside the usual tragic life experiences. Many repeated the clichéd tropes of the erotic stories that appeared in the magazine itself - such as sexual initiation by a gym teacher or a classmate.⁵²⁷ The veneer of realism afforded by the device of a 'letter from a reader' contributed to their popularity, with readers regularly writing in enthusiastically to ask for follow-ups from the letters printed in previous months. Letters from readers became such a trope of the commercial press that even mail order catalogues such as *Universal Man* began to include them.⁵²⁸ Although the letters appearing in such catalogues are most probably fabricated, as were the 'erotic' letters, their inclusion demonstrate the power of an imagined community to sell goods.

The men writing in to these magazines were not just happy to share their sad stories and fantasies. As consumers, the men corresponding with these magazines certainly knew what they wanted. And although letters sections were heavily edited to reflect the overall tone of the magazine, letters commenting on the content were often printed – detailing what type of men readers desired, complaints about what they did not like: 'sur un modèle nu, pas de chaussettes ridicules svp.'⁵²⁹ Although more naïve readers could easily be taken in by the illusion of closeness with the featured models, one wrote in to ask: 'J'aimerais avoir des renseignements sur Dieter et rencontrer Bryan. Un problème: je ne

⁵²⁶ 'Exprimez-vous par la photographie!', *Andros* 1, (February?) 1976, 54-55.

⁵²⁷ See for instance: Athlète, 'Vous écrivez: Initiation au sport,' *New Boys*, 2 (undated) 1979, 14-15.

⁵²⁸ *Universal Man Catalogue*, Summer 1980. Private papers, courtesy of Marc Devirnoy.

⁵²⁹ Docteur C., letter, *Jean-Paul*, Summer 1980, 39.

parle ni anglais, ni allemand.’⁵³⁰ Printing these letters made it appear that the magazine was attentive to their readers’ desires, and men reading other men’s letters were made aware that other readers shared their interests. In this way, commercial press fostered at least a feeling of dialogue between the magazine and its readers, and a community amongst the readers themselves. Commerce and community were intertwined here on a virtual level. Guénin saw in this virtual community a political importance that had gone unrecognised by gay activists: ‘[les militants] ne savent pas à quel point mon courrier des lecteurs a pu apporter du réconfort à plusieurs générations de gays.’⁵³¹

Reconciling commerce and politics: *Gai Pied* magazine

In 1979 a new publication would break the impasse in French gay print media between a mainly low-quality commercial press and a low-circulation political press. *Gai Pied* was a project by ex-GLH militant and *Libération* journalist Jean Le Bitoux alongside his business partner Gérard Vappereau. After leaving the GLH-PQ, Le Bitoux conceived of a media project that would be more ambitious than any attempted by a militant group. In February 1979, 20,000 copies of an initial ‘issue zero’ were distributed before the magazine was properly launched in April.⁵³² Almost overnight, *Gai Pied* became a touchstone for the gay community in France. After a year on sale they claimed to reach 35,000 readers per month, sold in over 2000 kiosks, with 1200 subscribers, a substantially higher distribution and national visibility than any other gay title had achieved.⁵³³ The magazine had expected to be kept afloat via a combination

⁵³⁰ Régis A., letter, *Olympe*, Winter 1979, 31.

⁵³¹ Guénin, *La Gay Révolution*, 131.

⁵³² Thomas Dupuy, *Les années Gai Pied (1979-1992)* (Paris: Editions des Ailes Sur un Tracteur, 2014), 14.

⁵³³ Dupuy, *Les années Gai Pied*, 34.

of advertising and sales revenue, but it had to appeal to its readers to raise the money to continue in November 1979.⁵³⁴ The appeal was successful, and the magazine was able to keep afloat without another such appeal for over a decade.

Yet commercial pressures were always in the background for a publication torn between its activist roots and its mainstream success. Commercial pressures caused *Gai Pied* to undergo two crises, first in 1981, after which the journal moved to a weekly format, and then in 1983 after which Jean Le Bitoux and much of the original team resigned. In 1981, a power struggle took place between Le Bitoux and Jacky Fougeray, the magazine's ambitious director of publication. Fougeray attempted to take control of the magazine to move it in a more commercial direction, but was sacked by Le Bitoux, who in response reorganised the internal structure of the magazine. In the notes of the away-weekend during which the restructure was worked out, Le Bitoux linked the commercialisation of the magazine and integrationist politics: 'Si nous restons décidés à améliorer le produit journal, sa diffusion, sa maquette, sa promotion, nous ne sommes sans doute pas prêt à privilégier son glissement progressif vers le seul discours "intégrationniste"'⁵³⁵ To Le Bitoux, a purely commercial product would betray the magazine's radical origins.

However, elsewhere in the same document Le Bitoux makes concessions to the new commercialised gay community that they had helped create. Sounding rather similar to David Girard's call to be critical consumers in his opening

⁵³⁴ Jean Le Bitoux, 'Une symphonie jouée par un orchestra de chambre,' *Gai Pied*, November 1979, 1.

⁵³⁵ Jean Le Bitoux, 'Du journalisme homosexuel,' 11 March 1981, MS 0547 (3), (MC).

editorial for *5 sur 5*, Le Bitoux set out his vision for the relationship that *Gai Pied* would have with the market: ‘un organe d’information et de comparaison relie les “consommateurs”, casse la sérialisation, permet de comparer les prix et d’orienter les dépenses...Finies les années d’arnaques supportées à cause d’un mauvais rapport de forces...pour une affirmation financière et politique’⁵³⁶

This was a third way, a magazine supported by commerce, but which retained an editorial stance that was at a critical remove from it.

After the restructuring, to increase its revenues *Gai Pied* would change to a weekly format with the new title *Gai Pied hebdo* in November 1982. As well as wanting to increase revenues, the magazine claimed that this move was a response to the increasing pace of gay political and commercial culture, which *Gai Pied* itself had helped to create in the few years since they began publishing: ‘L’article 331, alinéa 3 est abrogé: la majorité sexuelle pour tous, à quinze ans! Fréquence Gaie [a gay radio station created in 1981] émet 24 heures sur 24. *Gai Pied* est le grand journal des homosexuels et... de leurs amis!’.⁵³⁷

Despite the concessions to commercialism in their move to a weekly format, the underlying tension between liberation activism and the commercial activities of the magazine remained. 1983’s crisis was in many ways a repeat of the first. This time problems came from without rather than within as Le Bitoux became frustrated at the interference of advertisers on the editorial team, particularly over the issue of accepting advertising from David Girard’s establishments. Girard was regularly accused of not letting in foreigners or anyone over forty

⁵³⁶ Le Bitoux, ‘Du journalisme homosexuel’.

⁵³⁷ *Gai Pied hebdo* (advertisement), *Gai Pied*, November 1982, 25.

into his saunas, but critique of such practices was apparently suppressed. After a tumultuous general meeting on the 3rd of July, Jean Le Bitoux announced his resignation in the magazine itself, with typical force: 'nous nous sommes heurtés, au fil des numéros de l'hebdomadaire, à l'immédiate fascination pour le fantasme, à la logique à court terme du discours commercial et à l'interférence pernicieuse du publicitaire sur le rédactionnel.'⁵³⁸ Frank Arnal, one of the magazine's magaging editors, saw Le Bitoux's resignation as an unfortunate side-effect of a necessary evolution in the magazine toward professionalization, a necessary condition for its stability as it took on more political responsibilities after the disappearance of organisations such as the CUARH and as the AIDS crisis worsened.⁵³⁹ These successive crises in France's most important gay publication illustrate the tensions that remained between the advocates of the press as a political tool and those who wished to maximise *Gai Pied's* commercial interests.

Yet despite these internal quarrels, the success of *Gai Pied* was undeniable. By working - sometimes precariously - at the intersection of the political and the commercial, *Gai Pied* succeeded in creating a genuine national dialogue between gay men. If the gay community constructed by most commercial magazines contained an element of artificiality and exploitation, *Gai Pied* created something much more genuine. *Gai Pied* helped to foster a gay community through news, letters and personals adverts, and facilitated a gay market through the advertising that appeared in the magazine. Bars and

⁵³⁸ Jean Le Bitoux, 'Prière d'insérer,' *Gai Pied hebdo*, July 16, 1983, 3.

⁵³⁹ Frank Arnal, 'The Gay Press and Movement in France,' in Aart Hendriks, Rob Tielman and Evert van der Veen, eds., *The Third Pink Book: A Global View of Lesbian and Gay Liberation and Oppression* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1993), 43-44.

restaurants were regular advertisers in the gay press throughout the period, but by the early 1980s there was a marked increase in the number and variety of companies advertising themselves to a homosexual clientele. *Gai Pied's* first issue contained advertising for a dating agency, underwear, books and pornographic films.⁵⁴⁰ The number of adverts in the magazine increased steadily. After just three years on sale, *Gai Pied* contained advertising for a wide range of goods and services targeted at the gay market including soft furnishings, clothing, beauty salons, psychoanalysts, poppers, plumbers, electricians, builders, holiday spots and home security.⁵⁴¹ Where *Gai Pied* led others followed, and into the 1980s magazines relied less on closed networks of mail order companies and began to even attract advertisements from mainstream companies. For instance, Kawasaki motorbikes advertised on the back cover of *Dialogues au Masculin* in 1976.⁵⁴² Jacky Fougeray's project after leaving *Gai Pied*, *Samourai* magazine, seemed tailor-made to appeal to mainstream advertisers. *Samourai* printed high fashion advertising from Gianfranco Ferre alongside pages advertising the latest Colt films on VHS imported from America.⁵⁴³

The language used in these adverts show the way in which men were expected to interact with the products advertised. Comparable to the scenes of sexual and consumer education found in contemporary gay pornography, adverts relied

⁵⁴⁰ *Gai Pied*, April 1979.

⁵⁴¹ These examples were taken from *Gai Pied*, May 1982. Most adverts were contained within the 'Rezo' pages, which were a separate pull-out designed primarily to contain the magazine's personals adverts. Although more 'mainstream' advertising (including for books from major publishers, usually by writers who contributed to the magazine) appeared in the front.

⁵⁴² 'Kawasaki' (advertisement), *Dialogues au Masculin*, July 1976, back cover.

⁵⁴³ 'Gianfranco Ferre' (advertisement), *Samourai*, December 1982, 2; 'Colt' (advertisement), *Samourai*, December 1982, 3.

heavily on the language of 'trying' and 'daring'. Adverts promised: 'Des slips dingues que vous n'oseriez les imaginer,'; 'Vos photos les plus osées développées par un spécialiste gay'; "Suis-moi..." "Tu vas où?..." King Sauna'; 'osez les poppers...'⁵⁴⁴ The ubiquitous language of 'daring' in the adverts complements a context in which many men are daring to advertise themselves and put themselves on the market in the personals adverts that the magazine featured. The language of many commercial adverts gave men a sense they were pushing boundaries, taking chances, trying new things. Companies were aware that many of their consumers would be trying out a new sexual identity and they would be susceptible to the language of daring that would resonate with their experience of adopting a gay identity. Often adverts would also invite the reader to join a community (and implicitly, a gay community). *Gai Pied* regularly featured adverts for the dating agency Clan Redman for instance, offering community solidarity and dating for leather men.⁵⁴⁵ Advertising thus reflected and reinforced the language of coming out, self-assertion and community creation. In the words of a contemporary sociological report on gay men in France: 'la presse homo façonne une image, construit un monde, moule des corps, peint les modèles à suivre, c'est bien une communauté qu'il s'agit de construire.'⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴⁴ All examples of advertising slogans taken from *Gai Pied*, November 1982, 29-31, 36, 55.

⁵⁴⁵ 'Clan Redman' (advertisement), *Gai Pied*, November 1982, 52.

⁵⁴⁶ Bach-Ignasse, Cavailhes, Dutey, *Rapport Gai*, 69.

Conclusion: Politics and the market

Just as Frank Arnal believed that the resignation of Le Bitoux at *Gai Pied* meant the end of gay liberation militancy, by the early 1980s it was easy for many political activists to believe that the gay liberation movement had been subsumed by commercial interests. As Sibalis notes: ‘Initially at least, the commercial success of Le Marais appeared to signal the impending collapse of the gay liberation movement,’ the new sense of gay identity that had emerged by the early 1980s ‘owed more to capitalism and consumerism than to the gay liberation movement.’⁵⁴⁷ It is certainly true that commercial culture had succeeded in spreading new fashions and sexual styles, allowing men to develop a gay identity from their homosexual attraction by buying into real and imagined communities of like-minded men. Commercial venues had facilitated same-sex sexual encounters for hundreds of years, but the Keller or Le Manhattan were not just places to find a mate, they were places to try on a new identity, to play at being the hyper-masculine clone that you had seen in a porn film at Le Dragon the week before, or witness a scene that you had read a critique of in *Gai Pied*. This was the new generation of gay men who, in the words of the owner of the Broad bar in the Marais, Jean-Claude Détails: “Ils sont pédés mais ils n’y pensent plus...Tous ces jeunes ont dépassé le stade de l’homosexualité à problèmes.” Facile, en 1982! a-t-on envie d’ajouter.⁵⁴⁸ It is a cliché that each generation of gay men believes that the next generation has it easier than they did. However, Détails rightly sees a link between the commercial scene and the achievement of one of the aims of liberation politics – living without shame.

⁵⁴⁷ Sibalis ‘Paris’, 33.

⁵⁴⁸ Fougeray, ‘La troisième génération,’ 67.

Politics and commercial culture were not separate, antagonistic forces. It would be wrong to plot the rise of the 'ghetto' against the demise of 'gay liberation'. Such an approach reproduces the polemics of the early 1970s: commercial culture and liberation politics were intimately intertwined. Commercial products, such as the press and pornography were a reflection of, and themselves reflected upon, the problems posed by the sexual liberation of gay men.

The growth and later flourishing of gay commercial culture in France was certainly a new development in the 1970s, but it should not be taken as a permanent change. Gay guides from the early 1980s seem unusually full compared to what can be found on Paris's streets today. A walk along the Rue Sainte-Anne is a faintly melancholy experience, with traces of the street's gay past visible only to a keen eye. The Piano Bar is now a rusted sign and a dirty facade. Only the Tilt sauna remains open at number 41. The Marais is today in decline as a gay area, a development mirrored in the gay press; France's largest gay magazine, *Têtu*, ceased publication in 2015.⁵⁴⁹ Many of the Marais's streets are undergoing a form of hyper-gentrification, with a Starbucks outlet recently supplanted by a row of luxury clothing stores.⁵⁵⁰

This is not to say that we should mourn the Marais. Businesses catering to same-sex desire tend to surface and sink leaving little trace. And just as in the

⁵⁴⁹ http://www.liberation.fr/futurs/2016/10/30/y-a-t-il-une-malediction-sur-la-presse-homo-francaise_1524926, last accessed January 2017.

⁵⁵⁰ <http://www.lefigaro.fr/mode-homme/2014/12/26/30007-20141226ARTFIG00197-quatre-noms-du-luxe-deferlent-dans-le-marais.php>, last accessed May 2015.

1970s, today's evolving commercial situation mirrors a changing political landscape. Legal equality may have brought a decline in the sort of gay community created in the liberation period, a gay community soldered together through a conjunction of commerce and liberation politics. This suggests that gay commercial culture was bound up with the political claims of liberation, claims that do not resonate in the same way today.

This latter fragility contrasts with the resilience of the establishments and the people who frequented them in the face of police repression in the 1970s. Like many other aspects of homosexual life in France, state repression shaped these spaces and the experience of those who frequented them. Repression is the reverse-side of this narrative. If the radical liberationists believed that gay business owners were in cosy collaboration with capitalism, it certainly did not seem that way for those whose publications were censored, or their establishments raided. It is to this repression, an element of continuity in homosexual life, that we shall turn next.

Part Two: Continuities

Chapter Three: Policing Homosexuality

For many times and places, police records are one of the only sources of torchlight by which we can discern the shadowy outline of 'the homosexual'. If our sources in the 1970s are so abundant that we do not have to rely upon police records, this does not mean that policing had diminished in importance. Police repression of homosexuality was an experience that the homosexual men living in the 1970s shared with previous generations. Examining the transformation that took place in gay men's experience in the 1970s, also means considering these aspects of continuity, and the ways in which repression shaped lives.

The legal framework that regulated the way homosexuality was policed had not changed substantially since 1942, or indeed since the abolition of the crime of sodomy in 1791.⁵⁵¹ The lack of an explicit prohibition of homosexual acts in France must not be confused with a lack of police and judicial interest in controlling and limiting homosexual activity. The main legal instruments used by the police were public decency legislation and legislation designed to protect under-21s (and from 1975 under 18s) from the influence of homosexuality. This legal framework is key to understanding the police's overriding motive to contain homosexuality in the private sphere, primarily because of the danger that they believed it posed to youth and public order. In the absence of an outright criminalisation of homosexual acts, the policing of homosexuality in

⁵⁵¹ For the changing legal framework in Revolutionary France see Michael Sibalis, 'The Regulation of Male Homosexuality in Revolutionary and Napoleonic France,' in Jeffrey Merrick and Bryant T. Ragan, eds., *Homosexuality in Modern France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 80-101.

France was the policing of borders: between childhood and adulthood, public and private, obscenity and normality, political and apolitical. This is not to say that these borders were unchanging. While these boundaries had been relatively fixed in the immediate post-war years, the 1970s and early 1980s were a moment where the tectonic plates of morality slipped, and a shift in the relationship between the police and homosexuals occurred. The policing of homosexuality, always concerned with borders and limits in a state that did not enforce a blanket ban, was forced to respond to these shifts.

Police and judicial repression ran counter to gay men's increasing political and commercial confidence and media visibility in the period. Although it seems that both arrests and prosecutions were in decline across the decade, it was an uneven decline, prone to fits of renewed activity. To investigate this unevenness, this chapter will first explore the continuities with the past evident in the 1970s by considering the longer history of the policing of homosexuality in France, before moving on to look at police activity in four main areas in the period: relationships between adults and minors, *outrage public à la pudeur* (gross indecency), the policing of commercial spaces and finally the policing of political activity.

The policing of same-sex activity after 1791

The crime of sodomy was abolished in France with the Revolutionary penal code of 1791, alongside other crimes of 'morality' such as blasphemy, suicide and sacrilege. Prior to this, sodomy had been an offence punishable by death by fire, although by the eighteenth-century cases of execution were rare; if execution was carried out, it tended to be because the crime of sodomy was

committed in combination with other serious crimes.⁵⁵² The Napoleonic legal code of 1810 also contained no mention of sodomy. But this absence of legislation is misleading. The jurist Jean Danet argues that the ‘silence’ of the Penal Code should be contrasted with the ‘bavardage’ of judges when it came to matters of sexual morality in the nineteenth century.⁵⁵³ He argues that the silence of the Code was a purposeful tactic, intended to minimise the visibility of homosexuality as repression was carried out by other means: ‘Soit par crainte du scandale, soit par une conscience de l’immensité de la tâche, on préfère cantonner le problème et se limiter à une répression possible, réaliste en quelque sorte.’⁵⁵⁴ The lack of specific legislation had the advantage of reducing the visibility of homosexual acts, avoiding the sort of scandal that rocked France’s neighbours over the channel. The French press had been fascinated by the successive trials of Oscar Wilde, and the prurient press coverage it earned in Britain, praising by implication their own reserve when it came to such matters.⁵⁵⁵

The police and judiciary found other means by which to carry out this ‘realist’ repression. In her work on the policing of the boundaries between the sexes, Laure Murat argues that, from the Revolution onwards, even though homosexuality may have been legal: ‘la pédérastie restait dans l’esprit du plus grand nombre, et de la police en particulier, “la plus ignoble des passions” et un

⁵⁵² Michel Rey, ‘Police et Sodomie à Paris au XVIIIe siècle: Du péché au désordre,’ *Revue d’histoire moderne et contemporaine* 29, no. 1 (January-March 1982), 113; For a detailed study of a number of sodomy cases see Jeffrey Merrick, ‘Sodomitical Inclinations in Early Eighteenth-Century Paris,’ *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 30, no.3, (Spring 1997): 289-295.

⁵⁵³ Jean Danet, *Discours juridiques et perversions sexuelles: XIXème et XXème siècles* (Nantes: Université de Nantes Faculté de Droit et de Sciences Politiques, 1977), 9.

⁵⁵⁴ Danet, *Discours juridiques*, 82.

⁵⁵⁵ For the impact of the Wilde trials in France see Nancy Erber ‘The French Trials of Oscar Wilde,’ *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 6, no.4 (April 1996); 562-7.

trouble à l'ordre public contre lequel il convenait de lutter.⁵⁵⁶ Murat looks past the silence of the Penal Code to emphasise the extent to which the persecution of homosexuality (or 'pederasty' at this point) was a persistent feature of policing.

Into the twentieth century, repression became more explicit, as the Penal Code was modified to legislate on matters of sexual morality. In 1942 Marshall Pétain modified article 334 of the Penal Code to punish 'les actes impudiques ou contre nature [commis] avec un mineur de son sexe âgé de moins de vingt et un ans.'⁵⁵⁷ By using the language of 'unnatural' acts, the 1942 law broke with the revolutionary legal heritage of moral neutrality when it came to sexual acts. Michael Sibalis has traced the origins of the Vichy law. He rightly points out that the oppression of same-sex activity by the Vichy regime was not aimed at a mirroring of Nazi policy, or a scapegoating of homosexuals as one of the groups responsible for the *débâcle* (an argument often put forward by gay liberation activists). Rather, the law was a response to a longer history of interwar demands for the repression of same-sex activity to protect against the corruption of youth and the navy.⁵⁵⁸

Following from the 1942 law, which was not repealed on the liberation, there was a tightening of legal restrictions on homosexual activity. In 1960, a deputy from the Gaullist *Union Pour la Nouvelle République* (UNR), Paul Mirguet,

⁵⁵⁶ Laure Murat, *La loi du genre: Une histoire culturelle du 'troisième sexe'* (Paris: Fayard, 2006), 28.

⁵⁵⁷ <http://actu.dalloz-etudiant.fr/le-billet/article/de-la-majorite-sexuelle-homosexuelle/h/1da755a8529b3a96bdfa17c13ef47001.html>, last accessed March 2016.

⁵⁵⁸ Michael Sibalis, 'Homophobia, Vichy France and the "Crime of homosexuality": The origins of the ordinance of 6 August 1942,' *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 8, 3, (2002); 304-6.

proposed the addition of homosexuality to a list of ‘fléaux sociaux’, which included alcoholism, drug addiction, tuberculosis, prostitution and procurement. The amendment intended to grant the government powers to issue ordinances to fight such ‘plagues’. These powers allowed the government to amend article 330, line 2 of the Penal Code to introduce significantly higher penalties for those found guilty of ‘outrage public à la pudeur’ (roughly, gross indecency) when the act committed was ‘contre nature avec un individu du même sexe’, doubling the possible penalty to three years’ imprisonment and a maximum fine of 15,000F.⁵⁵⁹ This article would loom large in coming debates over penal reform.

However symbolically important the discriminatory language of the amendment was, the real effect of the new penalties was relatively limited. Christian Gury argues for instance that magistrates rarely used the powers given to them.⁵⁶⁰ However, an examination of sentencing statistics shows that punishments for homosexual acts of *outrage public à la pudeur* tended to skew to higher penalties for homosexual actions after the implementation of Mirguet’s amendment. In 1968 eleven men were sentenced to between three to five years imprisonment for the crime of homosexual *outrage public à la pudeur*, while in the same year only two heterosexual cases were sentenced with the same severity; yet the total number of cases of heterosexual infractions was over ten times higher than homosexual ones.⁵⁶¹ The impact of Mirguet’s amendment was the lingering persistence of the conviction that homosexuality

⁵⁵⁹ For an account of the context and development of Mirguet’s amendment see Jackson, *Living in Arcadia*, 97-98.

⁵⁶⁰ Christian Gury, *L’Homosexuel et la loi* (Lausanne: Editions de l’Aire, 1981), 170.

⁵⁶¹ *Compte général de l’administration de la justice criminelle et de la justice civile et commerciale* (Paris: Documentation Française, 1969).

must be controlled, a conviction that had been latent since the precocious attempt at divorcing morality and legality during the Revolution.

Just as important as this legal apparatus was the police's will to punish homosexuality. In 1967, the criminology professor Marcel Le Clère published a policing manual reserved for distribution to police professionals and magistrates. In it, he describes homosexuality as a 'péri-délit sexuel', a state that predisposes crime: 'Cette disposition peut dériver de l'inversion... mais elle est beaucoup plus souvent *acquise*, spécialement par la corruption de jeunes, objet de sollicitations précoces; de 15 ans à 20 ans en effet, ceux-ci se présentent sous l'aspect le plus séduisant et avec une disponibilité sexuelle facile à dévier.'⁵⁶² To Le Clère, the police had a duty to repress and control subjects exhibiting such behaviour. However, Le Clère was less enthusiastic about prosecution, he believed that court cases could lead to unhelpful and unseemly public attention being placed on such acts (noting that even the United Kingdom was wisely moving away from such an approach). Instead what was required was constant vigilance and surveillance of homosexual meeting-places: 'la police doit surveiller les milieux spéciaux, se constituant ainsi une source préalable de renseignements au cas de crime ou délit, connaître les lieux publics servant d'occasion ou de rencontre: certains cinémas et clubs, les kermesses et les foires, les établissements de nuit spéciaux.'⁵⁶³ This notion of pre-emptive surveillance spreads beyond the remit of the Penal Code's text. Le Clère's opinions reveal not only a deep hostility to homosexuals, but a conception of

⁵⁶² Marcel Le Clère, *Manuel de police technique* (Paris: Editions Police-Revue, 1967), 143. (emphasis his).

⁵⁶³ Le Clère, *Manuel*, 147.

them based on reproduction through contagion. In this vision, the police undertake a sort of public campaign: ‘on ne guérira pas les homos mais, on détruira, ce qui est mieux, leur perpétuelle parthénogénèse dans le monde actuel.’⁵⁶⁴

Looking beyond the lack of an outright ban on homosexual acts to consider other methods of legal repression, the French case appears less exceptional and tacks closer to other nations. Because of a shared legal heritage in the Napoleonic Code, Italy’s legislations was most similar to France. In his work on the links between France and Spain, Geoffroy Huard charts a history of the Spanish prosecution of homosexuality, which whilst absent from the Penal Code of 1810, returns to Spanish law, when Primo de Rivera’s dictatorship reintroduced persecution under the guise of ‘acts against decency with a person of the same sex’, article 616, in circumstances that would foreshadow France’s experience. The word ‘homosexual’ would appear in the Penal Code with Franco’s inclusion of a law restricting ‘vagabonds, delinquents and homosexuals’ in 1954.⁵⁶⁵ In the 1960s nations across Western Europe began to converge upon a system similar to the French case, in which homosexual acts themselves were decriminalised whilst maintaining a strong police repression of public manifestations of ‘indecenty’. In England and Wales, after the Sexual Offences Act 1967, homosexual sexual activity was legal only in private and between two consenting adult males over twenty-one.⁵⁶⁶ A strict definition of

⁵⁶⁴ Le Clère, *Manuel*, 147.

⁵⁶⁵ Geoffroy Huard, ‘Histoire de l’homosexualité en France et Espagne 1945-1975: Réévaluer la “libération homosexuelle”’, doctoral thesis, Universidad de Cádiz, Université de Picardie-Jules Verne, 132.

⁵⁶⁶ For an account of reform in the UK from the Wolfenden Report to the 1967 law see Patrick Higgins, *Heterosexual Dictatorship: Male Homosexuality in Postwar Britain* (London: Fourth Estate, 1996), 123-148.

privacy meant that convictions for gross indecency among men increased rather than decreased after the law was introduced.⁵⁶⁷ Germany followed a similar logic of tentative liberalisation in its abolition of the notorious Nazi-era paragraph 175 in 1969.⁵⁶⁸ A strict definition of privacy and continuing age discrimination in terms of the age of consent made the legal atmosphere for gay men across the continent very similar in the 1970s, with the exception of the precociously liberalised age of consent in the Netherlands and Sweden (equalised in 1971 and 1972 respectively). Where a formal interdiction on homosexual practices was not in force, a complex and persistent legal apparatus existed to oppress homosexual activity through other means, particularly the protection of the 'decency' of the public sphere, and the protection of minors. The legal rationale for the repression of homosexuality across the continent was everywhere shifted in the postwar period towards policing moral boundaries, and the repressive apparatus reflected this.

Histories of repression

Perhaps because of the changing legal context in the West, by the 1970s, the longer history of the repression of homosexuality became the object of increasing historical attention. Policing, and the records that it generated, not

⁵⁶⁷ Jeffrey Weeks finds that after decriminalisation 'between 1967 and 1976 the recorded instances of indecency between males doubled, the number of prosecutions trebled and the number of convictions quadrupled.' Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800* (London: Longman, 1989), 275.

⁵⁶⁸ See Dagmar Herzog, *Sex After Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 222-223.

only underpinned much early attempts at gay and lesbian history, but thinking about the repression of sexuality has also furnished the discipline with much of its theoretical underpinning.

Histories produced by men involved in gay liberation activism in the 1970s tend to concentrate on homosexual repression. This interest in the history of repression served a contemporary political function. Through their historical studies, historian-activists could describe the diffuse societal oppression against which they believed earlier generations of homosexuals had fought. They drew legitimacy from finding versions of themselves in the past. Pierre Hahn's work *Nos ancêtres les pervers* traces accounts of homosexuals under the Second Empire, concluding that: 'Les premiers combats, en faveur du droit des homosexuels à disposer d'eux-mêmes, commencent à peine. Il faudra un siècle pour les voir briser le cadre de... la délinquance pathologique, où on les tenait emprisonnés.'⁵⁶⁹ Just a few years after the publication of Hahn's work, Michel Rey pushed the timeframe a century earlier to examine the policing of sodomy in Paris, finding that the police no longer believed that it was punishable as a sin but as an 'attentat à l'ordre, du fait des rencontres furtives, des glissements sociaux, au moins imaginaires, qu'elle semble permettre...'⁵⁷⁰

These early historians of homosexuality were not always optimistic when they placed the past in apposition to the present. Maurice Lever's 1985 *Les Bûchers de Sodome* attempts to place the repression of homosexuals into a historical context that stretched back to antiquity. The book culminates in an unusually

⁵⁶⁹ Hahn, *Nos ancêtres les pervers*, 85.

⁵⁷⁰ Rey, 'Police et Sodomie à Paris,' 123.

pessimistic vision of the contemporary gay movement: ‘Les conquêtes du mouvement gay? Parlons-en: le cul et la baise. A part ça, quoi d’autre?’⁵⁷¹ Sexual repression for Lever gave homosexual life its texture and vigour, freedom to pursue whatever sex one wanted was not freedom at all. Despite their differing uses of the past, what these histories share is a concentration on the shaping of homosexual identity in history through repression.

Since the publication in 1976 of Michel Foucault’s first volume of his *Histoire de la sexualité, la volonté de savoir*, the role of the repressive mechanisms of the state and society has been fundamental to understanding the development of a ‘homosexual’ identity. Unlike other early historians of homosexuality who saw repression as stifling non-heterosexual sexuality, Foucault saw in the nineteenth century a great discursive flourishing around sex dictated by institutions at repression as a discursive flourishing: ‘De l’impératif singulier qui impose à chacun de faire de sa sexualité un discours permanent, jusqu’aux mécanismes multiples qui, dans l’ordre de l’économie, de la pédagogie, de la médecine, de la justice, incident, extraient, aménagent, institutionnalisent le discours du sexe, c’est une immense prolixité que notre civilisation a requise et organisée.’⁵⁷² More recent studies have complicated Foucault’s account by returning to the dynamics of secrecy and the unsaid. Harry Cocks’s work on Britain in the early nineteenth century suggests that: “The institutionalisation of the “open secrecy” of sodomy in legal and police practice in turn produced a particular form of representation, which both identified and denied the

⁵⁷¹ Lever, *Les Bûchers de Sodome*, 406. Instrumentalising LGBT history to score contemporary political point is a current strong in the French historiography, as we have seen with the infamous debates over Martel’s *The Pink and the Black*.

⁵⁷² Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité 1*, 45-6.

existence of the “unnatural crime”.⁵⁷³ In this view, the production of legal discourse is not the only way state repression can operate: silence and denial are also forms of control. Another shift away from Foucault has been towards a consideration of practices over the analysis of a monolithic legal discourse. Matt Cook argues that historians must not think of the law as a Foucauldian monolith, but instead ‘assess the significance of particular politicians, judges or police officers in exploring how the operations of the law might differ in time or place.’⁵⁷⁴

The dominance of Foucault’s work has meant that studies of the policing of sexuality tend to focus on the nineteenth century, this situation is aggravated by practical problems which intervene when considering more recent temporal terrain. Faced with diverse articulations of homosexual desire and identity as the twentieth century gathers pace, the question is not of the discursive creation of an identifiable ‘homosexual’ type through ‘repressive’ discourse, but the shape and extent of police action and attitudes toward sexuality during a century in which the place of homosexuality was changing in society. Nevertheless, the workings of the police and the law remain a key piece of the picture, albeit a piece that has lost some of its explanatory weight and primacy when it comes to the construction of identity. One fruitful approach to the policing of sexuality that deals with this changing role of policing is the turn toward conceptions of space in the production and repression of sexual identity. This is particularly evident in work that concentrates on the geography of the

⁵⁷³ Harry Cocks, *Nameless Offences: Homosexual Desire in the Nineteenth Century* (London: IB Taurus, 2010, 1st ed. 2003), 200.

⁵⁷⁴ Matt Cook, ‘Law,’ in Harry Cocks and Matt Houlbrook, eds., *The Modern History of Sexuality* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006), 66.

city.⁵⁷⁵ Another has been the relationship between the legal framework surrounding sexuality and the conception of citizenship.⁵⁷⁶

Police forces, easily embarrassed by a recent past, can be reluctant to release documents into the archives that deal with the suppression of homosexuality. This is especially true of documents that could embarrass surviving service members in a changed moral climate. This is the case with documentation in France, although the situation is changing. For sexual cases that made their way to court, judicial dossiers are under a one-hundred year restriction due to privacy issues when it is possible that the people concerned are still living, although it is possible to gain access with special permission.⁵⁷⁷ I have been able to obtain cases that occurred in Paris dating from 1968 to 1972, with later documents yet to be released from the courts and placed into the archives.⁵⁷⁸ These archives can be supplemented with reports in the press, especially the gay press, which became very interested in police activity around homosexuality at the end of the decade.

Quantifying crime

Official statistics provide an important source for discerning the shape and size of the repressive apparatus that existed in France. Two separate sets of statistics

⁵⁷⁵ London has been the subject of a number of such studies in recent years. Most notably: Matt Cook, *London and the Culture of Homosexuality, 1885 - 1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Matt Houlbrook, *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918-1957* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005).

⁵⁷⁶ The best example of this approach is Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

⁵⁷⁷ In France, documents that contain details about sexual crimes are held under *dérogation*. It is possible, however, to obtain access through application to the Minister of Culture and Communication.

⁵⁷⁸ It would have been possible to obtain similar documents from the same time frame from other departmental archives to gauge the texture of policing across the whole nation in the postwar period, but this is outside the scope of this study.

exist: those collected by the police for the ministry of the interior, and those collected by the judiciary.⁵⁷⁹ The police statistics represent recorded crime, and since it was the police themselves who ‘discovered’ most crimes of gross indecency, these can be taken as an indication of the police’s willingness to detect such crime. Crimes against minors were a mixture of reported and ‘discovered’ crime. The judicial statistics record prosecutions that went before the courts. Crimes of gross indecency and all but the most extreme cases of sex with minors (involving murder for instance) were classed as ‘délits’ (misdemeanours) and tried before a ‘Tribunal de Grande Instance’.

Both sets of statistics separate out offences committed between members of the same sex, into their own category of ‘homosexual’ offences. Although the term ‘homosexualité’ or ‘homosexuel’ does not appear in the Penal Code, the statistics published by police and judiciary in the 1970s have no trouble in using the term. The police statistics list ‘homosexualité avec mineurs’ and ‘OPP [outrage public à la pudeur] par homosexuels’ as categories of misdemeanour under ‘mœurs et sexualité’, alongside rape, other ‘attentats à la pudeur’ and ‘excitation de mineurs à la débauche’.⁵⁸⁰ The statistics published by the judiciary baldly lists the crime ‘homosexualité’ without explanatory notes, although the designation changes to ‘outrage public à personne du même sexe’ in 1976, suggesting that the category refers to people prosecuted under article

⁵⁷⁹ La criminalité en France d’après les statistiques de la police judiciaire (Paris: La Documentation Française, multiple editions, 1973-1983); Compte général de l’administration de la justice criminelle et de la justice civile et commerciale (Paris: Documentation Française, multiple editions, 1968-1978).

⁵⁸⁰ La criminalité en France d’après les statistiques de la police judiciaire (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1973), 28.

330-2 of the Penal Code.⁵⁸¹ Similarly, rather than being subsumed in all cases of ‘excitation de mineurs à la débauche’ cases of ‘homosexualité avec mineurs’ were split out into their own category, presumably because of the legal difference in the age of consent, although the records continue to do so after the equalisation of the law in 1982.

These figures must be treated with caution. Firstly, the criteria for categorisation is not explained in either set of statistics. For instance, it is unclear whether a crime involving a sole male exhibitionist would have been classified, especially if they were found on a known cruising ground, or interacting with an *agent provocateur*. Another limitation of the statistics is their inconsistency over time. The attempt to split out statistics on homosexual activity is pursued between 1973 and 1983 in the police statistics; where the Judicial statistics cover the period until 1978. After these short bursts of statistical curiosity by the authorities, the records revert to bundling all crimes against minors and all cases of gross indecency together. The statistics that they contain do not match up; the numbers collected by the police forces are higher than the cases tried, as not all cases went to court, and not all of those accused were found guilty. This gap is not the only factor that must be treated with caution, and the figures do not paint a full picture of police or judicial activity around homosexuality.

⁵⁸¹ Note that this statistic includes women prosecuted for homosexual activity, although the breakdown by sex included elsewhere shows that these cases were rare and only constituted a handful a year at most.

Furthermore, these crime statistics do not give us a reflection of how many men were having sex in cruising grounds, or illicit relations with minors. Statistics are only indicative of the success that the police had in detecting crime and the will of the judiciary to punish offenders. Furthermore, a reduction in the statistics does not necessarily indicate a decline in police repression of homosexuality. The general decrease in cases of *outrage public à la pudeur* as the decade progresses directly correlates with the growth of the commercial gay scene, and could mean that cruising grounds were less populated than before (unfortunately, quantifying cruisers is impossible). An alternative, if less likely, explanation is that men became more skilled in evading the police.⁵⁸² Despite these reservations and problems of interpretation, the existence of an attempt at quantifying crimes of 'homosexuality' in both the police and judicial statistics clearly represents an official acknowledgement that homosexuality was a phenomenon to be monitored and controlled, rather than just another form of indecency, or crime of adult against minor.

Despite misgivings about their exactitude, some broad conclusions can be drawn from the figures. Overall (and with important exceptions) there is a general downward trend in the police's discovery, and the judiciary's prosecution of homosexual activity in the period. According to statistics collected by the police, prosecutions of homosexuals for the crime of 'outrage public à la pudeur' decreased by 9% between 1973 and 1983.⁵⁸³ According to the judicial statistics, successful prosecutions for homosexual 'outrage public à la

⁵⁸² After Mitterrand's reforms in 1982, the gay press became more vocal in its opposition to the police and began to give explicit advice on how to evade the police and how to deal with arrest. See for instance Hervé Liffra, 'Police, que faire?' *Homophonies*, December 1983, 30.

⁵⁸³ See appendix 1, fig. 3.

pudeur' decreased by 61% between 1968 and 1978.⁵⁸⁴ From these statistics, the willingness of the judiciary to punish cases seems to have decreased faster than the police's detection of crime, although the gap between the two is never greater than a few hundred cases. For cases of sex with minors, crimes recorded by the police were falling over the decade from 1973 up until the change in the law in 1982, decreasing by 49%.⁵⁸⁵ Unsurprisingly, after the change in the age of consent, the number of these cases continued to drop. Statistics produced by the police and judiciary suggest that Le Clère's advice was broadly followed by law enforcement.

Julian Jackson has argued that the downward trajectory in prosecutions was felt by contemporary men, with André Baudry's annual letters to members of Arcadie mentioning the issue of police harassment less and less.⁵⁸⁶ But this general downward trend (and general feeling of decreased police activity) was not shared by everyone. At the turn of the 1980s, there was an increase in cases of *outrage public à la pudeur* among men recorded by the police. The average number of cases collated annually by the police between 1973 and 1983 stands at 362, although the number of cases ranged from 251 (in 1979) to 600 (in 1981).⁵⁸⁷ This spike in 1981 was a 70% increase on the previous year.⁵⁸⁸ This spike in prosecutions comes, paradoxically, at a moment of legal liberalisation after the election of François Mitterrand and the equalisation of the age of

⁵⁸⁴ See appendix 1, fig. 1.

⁵⁸⁵ See appendix 1, fig. 3.

⁵⁸⁶ Jackson, *Living in Arcadia*, 210-11.

⁵⁸⁷ See appendix 1, fig. 3

⁵⁸⁸ Unfortunately, the judicial statistics for 1981 do not separate homosexual crimes from other 'outrages public à la pudeur' and 'attentats à la pudeur', but for this collated statistic they show a decrease in successful prosecutions suggesting that the spike was not mirrored in courts.

consent in 1982. An increase in repression at this time suggests that local police attitudes towards homosexuality were just as important as the legal framework that was in place.⁵⁸⁹

The judicial statistics also provide demographic information about offenders.⁵⁹⁰ From these demographics, we learn that prosecutions for 'homosexual' offences were suffered mainly by the working class, with skilled and unskilled workers taking the largest share of prosecutions.⁵⁹¹ This is perhaps unsurprising when we consider the 'privacy' requirements for legal homosexual activity, much easier for the well-off to fulfil with access to their own private space. That said, men from all walks of life engaged in cruising, and categories of professionals, such as middle and higher management, make up a small but not negligible portion of the statistics.

Policing the boundary between adult and minor

As shown by its prominent place in both the penal code and the statistics gathered by the police and judiciary, protecting minors from homosexual acts was a preoccupation for the authorities. As in Le Clère's manual, there was a persistent notion that homosexuality was a trait acquired in youth from predatory homosexuals, and that the spread of homosexuality could be contained by reducing the exposure of minors to it. Policing the shifting

⁵⁸⁹ The localised reasons for the increase in prosecutions in the early 1980s are considered below.

⁵⁹⁰ Statistics on the racial profile of offenders are not collected. It has been illegal to collect such statistics in France since 1978, although this information is not available throughout the period in question.

⁵⁹¹ See appendix 1, fig. 2.

boundary between adult and minor was thus one of policing's main prerogatives.

To examine the policing of this boundary, use can be made of cases brought before Paris's Tribunal de Grande Instance in the period. As Patrick Higgins argues for Britain, a concentration on a series of ordinary cases allows us 'to see how the law worked in practice,' giving much more colour and detail than a concentration on statistics, or on the most famous trials.⁵⁹² Cases are also useful in considering the more fluid attitudes of the police and judges. What remains of these trials in the French case are the judicial dossiers, the bundles of police and witness statements and other pieces of evidence that were prepared for judges at trials. These dossiers provide a window into both police methods and the judicial treatment of these cases. But we must be careful not to conflate the language of the dossiers with the authentic voices of the accused, or of the victims. Witness statements are mediated by the police. For the most part these are voices from the typewriters, and possibly the minds, of police officers. From these records, we can only obliquely read the experiences of the victims themselves, whose own voices seem to cut through only rarely, often in order to resist.

Police mediation of statements is most apparent in cases involving children. In a case involving a man accused of abusing a boy of ten on a trip with their local brass band, the young victim's statement reads: 'Au mois de mai 1970 je suis allé en voyage à Colmar avec le Réveil Suresnois. Robert V. participait à cette

⁵⁹² Higgins, *Heterosexual Dictatorship*, 179.

sortie ainsi que Jacques B. Au cours du voyage Robert a palpé et touché “ma pipite”, moi je n’ai pas touché à la sienne.’⁵⁹³ This is clearly not the language of a child, made clear by the way in which childish terms most likely used by the witness are placed in inverted commas to distinguish them in the text of the statement. While the voices of the police officers are most apparent when mediating the voices of minors, their presence in witness statements must be considered for all cases. The police, medical and other reports that make up the various dossiers are to be read primarily as evidence for the opinions and attitudes of these professionals.

A case that occurred in 1969 illustrates these professional attitudes towards cases of homosexual contact between adults and minors. In June 1969, Paul, a judo instructor in his early forties was arrested: ‘pour avoir pratiqué des attouchements impudiques sur de jeunes garçons qui lui avaient été confiés pour des leçons de judo.’⁵⁹⁴ The victims were two thirteen-year-old boys. As in other cases of adult relations with minors, a medical examination of the accused is drawn up for the judicial dossier. These examinations were carried out by two psychiatric professionals and aimed to consider whether Paul had any mental or physical ‘anomalies’ (and if so, were they ‘curable’), whether he presented a danger, and whether a penal sanction would be suitable.⁵⁹⁵ Until 1981 homosexuality was officially considered a mental condition by the French medical establishment and in the medical report drawn up for the trial, the doctors show themselves to be particularly concerned with previous

⁵⁹³ 1914 W 34, (AP). Names in judicial cases have been edited as a condition of access to the judicial records, and for reasons of privacy.

⁵⁹⁴ 1902 W 1, (AP).

⁵⁹⁵ These were the standard criteria for all psychiatric examinations.

manifestations of homosexual desire. They find Paul to be ‘sensible à tous ces jeunes gens’, a weakness which has got him into trouble with the authorities before, when he claimed to be provoked into homosexual acts by a young scout: ‘il a ainsi découvert les plaisirs homo-sexuels [sic].’⁵⁹⁶ These ‘temptations’ did not stop Paul from having a heterosexual relationship with his female partner: ‘il entretient des relations sexuelles normales et entièrement satisfaisantes avec sa concubine sans éprouver le besoin de se complaire dans des phantasmes pédophiles ou homosexuels.’⁵⁹⁷ The doctors conclude that Paul does not suffer from any psychosis, but he does suffer from emotional immaturity and ‘latent’ homosexual tendencies, which are seen as contributing to his crime.⁵⁹⁸

Homosexual and paedophilic tendencies are conflated here, and are presented as the moral traps of a weak mind. In her history of paedophilia in France, Anne-Claude Ambroise-Rendu emphasises the ‘cousinage entre homosexuels et pédophiles’ in the mind of the police and judiciary in the period, caused by the uneven age of consent.⁵⁹⁹ To further emphasise this link between morality, homosexuality and paedophilia, the police investigated Paul’s standing in the community. They conducted enquiries into his behaviour from neighbours and former members of the judo clubs he worked with. His behaviour was often described as ‘bizarre’, and the police discovered that ‘effeminate’ young men made frequent visits to his home. Paul was given a 15-month suspended sentence, obliged to undergo psychiatric treatment, and to pay 2000F to the families of his victims in a concomitant civil case.

⁵⁹⁶ 1902 W 1, (AP).

⁵⁹⁷ 1902 W 1, (AP).

⁵⁹⁸ 1902 W 1, (AP).

⁵⁹⁹ Anne-Claude Ambroise-Rendu, *Histoire de la pédophilie XIXe-XXIe siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 2014), 167.

Another case illustrates the way in which the authorities made links between what they saw as different moral failings. A case was discovered by the police in which a 39-year-old man who was found to be living with a sixteen-year-old boy that he had picked up in the toilets of a cinema in Drancy. In the medical report for the trial, the older man's homosexual impulses and emotional weakness were linked to alcoholism to prove general moral failure: 'On trouve chez lui la "quête affective" si fréquente chez les homosexuels. Il poursuit l'âme-soeur et comme il vieillit ce n'est pas un protecteur mais un protégé qu'il recherche dans la vie... Il se laisse aller à l'occasion homosexuelle, comme il se laisse aller à boire.'⁶⁰⁰ In cases where the boundary between child and adult had been breached, the law and the medical profession worked in concert to investigate sexual desires and morality.

Often, the limit between adult and child was more morally (if not legally) ambiguous. A case tried in 1971 saw the prosecution of a 38-year-old literature teacher, Joseph, for sexual activity with a 20-year-old student, Serge. This relationship came to light because of an unrelated incident involving Joseph's resistance to police officers. In November 1970, the police discovered an abandoned car on the side of the road in Paris's fifth arrondissement with the two men fleeing the scene. The police gave chase and apprehended the pair, but Joseph resisted arrest and slapped one of the officers, apparently in a rage.⁶⁰¹ Resisting the police may have spurred the officers into further investigation of the exact nature of the relationship between the two men, after the discovery

⁶⁰⁰ 1902 W 1, (AP).

⁶⁰¹ 1914 W 30, (AP).

that Serge was under twenty-one. Their initial witness statements, taken immediately after the incident, suggest that the police attempted to tease out evidence for a homosexual relationship. Joseph claims that the pair met in a Latin Quarter bookshop, where Serge says they met in a bar. According to Serge they were both ‘pris d’amitié’ when they met, where Joseph says that ‘une amitié particulière nous lie mon ami Serge et moi.’⁶⁰² The older man quickly became a fixture at Serge’s family home, and Serge regularly stays at Joseph’s apartment. In order to discover a crime, the police’s interest extends from euphemisms of ‘friendship’ to the precise nature of sexual acts and preferences. Serge’s initial witness statement reads as though the police are running through a list of sexual practices with the student:

‘Nos rapports sexuels se sont bornés à des caresses, des baisers. Nous nous sommes également masturbés. Il est exact que nous avons pratiqué le “COIT BUCCAL” ... Ce n’était pas la première fois que je faisais l’amour avec un homme... Je ne me rapelle pas avoir “sodomisé” mon ami. Je reconnais qu’il m’a demandé à plusieurs reprises, non il me l’a plutôt fait comprendre, qu’il aimerait se faire sodomiser.’⁶⁰³

Intimate knowledge of sexual acts appears to be important to officers in determining the severity of the crime committed. Despite their confessions about their relationship in their first statements, the pair make new statements six months later in which they both deny any ‘relations contre nature’. Joseph claims: ‘Je ne suis pas un homo-sexuel [sic]... J’avais avec [Serge] des relations

⁶⁰² 1914 W 30, (AP).

⁶⁰³ 1914 W 30, (AP).

d'amitié affectueuse. Il m'arrivait de l'embrasser même devant ses parents. Il m'arrivait d'avoir pour lui des gestes de tendresse... Tout s'arrêtait là.'⁶⁰⁴ Despite their attempts at limiting their relationship to a 'friendship' in the eyes of the law, the police had done enough to convince the judge that the border between adult and minor had been breached. Joseph was convicted under article 331-3 and sentenced to a four-month suspended sentence and a 500F fine.⁶⁰⁵

Another case which blurred the lines between adult and minor, victim and perpetrator was prosecuted in May 1971 and concerned a 24-year-old man and a minor described as being '15 ½' years old.⁶⁰⁶ The older man, Jean, a shop worker at the Galleries Lafayette, picked up the younger, Laurence, in the Gare du Nord at around ten in the evening. Jean proposed that the teenager come and stay at his apartment for the night. The case is unusual for the accused's candour, which appears to break the usual language that the police would use to mediate such a narrative. Laurence's desire is not masked in his witness statement: 'j'ai demandé du feu à un jeune garçon blond... Je l'ai invité à venir chez moi passer la nuit. Il devrait avoir compris ce qui allait se passer, puisqu'il avait l'habitude de traîner à la Gare du Nord.'⁶⁰⁷ It is with the same frankness, and a hint of humour, that Jean describes what happened after he found the minor in his bed: 'j'avais sucé un peu sa verge. Je précise que je ne suis pas un professionnel, comme certains et notamment les travestis sur les boulevards.'⁶⁰⁸ This first encounter at the station led to an acquaintance between the two that

⁶⁰⁴ 1914 W 30, (AP).

⁶⁰⁵ 1914 W 30, (AP).

⁶⁰⁶ 1914 W 30, (AP).

⁶⁰⁷ 1914 W 30, (AP).

⁶⁰⁸ 1914 W 30, (AP).

saw Jean repeatedly visit Laurence's apartment, even introducing the older man to his friends. Things quickly turned sour, however, and Laurence and a friend clumsily attempted to blackmail Jean. Failing to obtain an absurdly inflated ransom from Jean, Laurence and his friend turned to burglary. It was on their second attempt at a break-in that they were caught by the police, who discovered the sexual history between the adult and minor.

The older man clearly intended to take advantage of the minor's precarious situation for his own sexual gratification, but the latter also believed that by using his status as a minor he could turn the situation to his advantage and attempt extortion. Jean's lawyer encapsulated the situation in a letter to the judge: 'Si même, l'homosexualité ne fait pas de doute, il est bien certain que jusqu'à présent, [Jean] n'avait jamais eu de problèmes, n'ayant jamais entrepris de mineurs, et dans la présente affaire, il est au moins autant victime qu'auteur du délit.'⁶⁰⁹ The judge was relatively lenient, condemning Jean to a two-month suspended sentence and a 300F fine. However, Jean had been in preventative custody at Fresnes prison for a full two months after his arrest.⁶¹⁰ Even in a case in which the lines of victimhood were blurred, we can see that the police's main motivation was to punish the perpetrator of sexual crime.

Cases such as these show the police's desire to link homosexual acts and moral failure, often in conjunction with the medical profession, in order to secure conviction and reinforce the boundary between adult and minor, even when

⁶⁰⁹ 1914 W 30, (AP).

⁶¹⁰ Laurence and his accomplice were tried separately at a children's tribunal for the attempted burglary.

victimhood is ambiguous. Furthermore, the boundary between adult and minor could be used as a weapon to investigate and prosecute relationships on the fringe of legality when they came to the attention of the police. These relationships were prosecuted as manifestations of the general corruption of public order, and in the police's pursuit and methods of prosecution, do not appear to have changed since the Vichy law of 1942.

Policing the boundary between public and private

An even deeper continuity in police practice can be seen in their wider efforts to protect public order. The legal notion of *outrage public à la pudeur* played the most statistically important role in the policing of homosexuality. *Outrage public à la pudeur* was an invention of the nineteenth century, originally introduced into the penal code in 1810 as article 330.⁶¹¹ In her overview of the legal history of the concept of *pudeur*, Marcela Iacub argues that the concept of 'publicity' was always elastic.⁶¹² From the very first case, prosecuted in 1813 after a passing police officer caught a man and woman having sex in the total darkness of an alley, the law was interpreted in a broad sense: 'La publicité pouvait exister, même si elle avait été purement *virtuelle*.'⁶¹³ This notion that all that was required was a possible public, a potential passer-by, meant that there was a steady increase in the purview of this law across the nineteenth century. Indeed, Iacub demonstrates that this notion of 'public' was easily extended to enclosed spaces such as theatres and cabarets. Even a paying

⁶¹¹ The law was eventually updated to cover 'exhibition sexuelle' in the penal code reform of 1992.

⁶¹² Iacub, *Par le trou de la serrure*, 71.

⁶¹³ Iacub, *Par le trou de la serrure*, 71, emphasis in original.

audience, even one warned of what they were about to see, constituted a ‘public’ in the eyes of the law. The law even began to invade domestic spaces, where the notion of ‘public’ was extended to a bystander, or there was a possibility that sexual activity could be seen or overheard by a third party. An 1879 case involving two men having sex in a private bedroom, behind a dividing wall, but in the presence of another person on the other side of the wall, was successfully prosecuted under public decency laws.⁶¹⁴ The boundary between public and private was therefore much more elastic than it first appears. Police and the judiciary were able to stretch the notion of what constituted ‘public’ indecency in order to banish sexual activity from public space, with a particular focus on ‘deviant’ activity. This long legal heritage had important consequences in the 1970s not only on homosexual men’s actions in public spaces but also on the burgeoning gay commercial scene, and on representations of homosexuality on stage.⁶¹⁵

The difference between homosexual and heterosexual decency crimes was that the police tended not to seek out offenders for heterosexual infractions.⁶¹⁶ For homosexual activity, the police were far more proactive. Article 330 was most commonly used in service of the policing of public space used as cruising grounds. Parks, squares and public urinals (*pissotières*, or *vespasiennes*) were well-known meeting places for men seeking sexual contact with other men. The most effective instrument that the police had for reducing the instances of

⁶¹⁴ Iacub, *Par le trou de la serrure*, 109.

⁶¹⁵ See below.

⁶¹⁶ For instance, a case in 1969 saw the arrest of a heterosexual couple caught having intercourse on a lawn by a neighbour in an opposite building looking out from her balcony. Other cases included the police discovering that sexual activity had happened in public, or with an audience, whilst investigating other sexual crime, such as accusations of rape. 1902 W 45, (AP).

homosexual acts in public was fear. The threat of a police raid was never far from the minds of those using cruising grounds.⁶¹⁷ One of the main fears that men had was having their identities checked and their names, addresses and even employers' details recorded, a process known as *fichage*. Murat notes that the three surviving series of police documentation describing the policing of homosexuality in Paris in the nineteenth century are essentially 'fichiers de renseignements' referring to known or suspected 'Pédés' 'Pédérastes et divers' and 'femmes galantes et homosexuels'.⁶¹⁸ The logic underpinning this tactic was that, as homosexuals were inevitably bound up with the criminal underworld, it was prudent for the police officer to collect information on their identities and actions. In his policing manual, Le Clère emphasised the need to record blatant instances of homosexuality on the grounds that homosexuality led 'almost automatically' to criminality: 'considérer les adeptes de ces pratiques comme malades ou coupables crée un double devoir de les fichier lorsque les faits sont patents.'⁶¹⁹

However, despite frequent references to men being asked for their details, no such records are currently available in Paris's police archives. The lack of such documentation makes it unclear to what extent this information gathering was a systematic practice, or whether it was intended more to intimidate than to gather intelligence against individual persons. The documentation may be unavailable because it is sensitive and not been deposited in the archives, or conversely it was deemed inconsequential and has been destroyed. It is likely

⁶¹⁷ A fear only matched by that of the many violent thugs who also frequented such places.

⁶¹⁸ Murat, *La Loi du genre*, 39, n.1.

⁶¹⁹ Le Clère, *Manuel*, 147.

that practices varied across police forces, as did the storage and use of the information gathered. A strange case in Toulouse in 1979 saw a break-in at one of the city's police stations and the theft of documents. The contents came to light when they were compiled into a 38-page booklet and posted through letterboxes around the town by a group calling itself POLICE (*Parti Ouvrier Libertaire International Communiste Estudiantin*).⁶²⁰ The documents included a register of locals in which information about their sexuality was detailed: 'M. Y "fréquent le milieu homosexuel"'.⁶²¹ Glimpses of the infamous 'fichiers' can be caught, then, and perhaps they are best understood in this sense, as a vague threat of the knowledge of your homosexuality being held and potentially made public by the state. *Fichage* showed the state inspiring fear of publicity to maintain public order.

The practice of *fichage* was not the only way in which the boundary between public and private was policed. Once the police discovered homosexual acts, judicial dossiers show that they were also keen to detect homosexual identities. In a case involving men picked up by the police for cruising in the Tuileries gardens, the police report implies evidence for guilt in the admission of a homosexual identity: 'Il admet cependant être homosexuel et être venu aux Jardins des Tuileries en toute connaissance de cause, sachant pertinemment qu'il s'agit d'un lieu habituel de rendez-vous des invertis.'⁶²² The text of the statement mixes the language of homosexual identity with an older language of gender inversion. The word *inverti* was rather outmoded by the early 1970s, but

⁶²⁰ J.M. Durand-Souffland, 'Un document mettant en cause les services de sûreté est distribué dans les boîtes aux lettres', *Le Monde*, November 17, 1979, 19.

⁶²¹ Durand-Souffland, 'Un document,' 19.

⁶²² 1914 W 1, (AP).

it serves as reminder of the institutional memory of a force that had long kept watch for men seeking men for sex in public spaces.

Police pressure for the accused to explain and put into text their sexual identity sometimes led to resistance. Minor cases were often dealt with by the police taking men to the police station to have their details recorded, a sufficiently frightening process to act as a deterrent for many.⁶²³ Cases with aggravating factors are those more likely to become visible to the historian through judicial processes. One of these aggravating factors was the arrested individual's attitude towards the police. In cases where there was verbal or physical resistance to the police, there was impetus for the police to pursue a more serious charge rather than content themselves with dispensing a warning, taking names or making the men they rounded up spend a night in the cells.

It is in these cases of resistance that evidence lies of men asserting their own individuality, their sexual identity and the ordinariness of their actions. Two men arrested in the Tuileries gardens in 1971 at the well-known cruising spot the Saut du Loup give us an example of this assertion of homosexual identity, which potentially led to their harsh treatment in the courts: 'H. déclare: "L'amour avec les femmes ne m'intéresse pas. Depuis 14 ans j'ai des relations avec des hommes." S. ajoute: "Je suis homosexuel depuis mon passage à l'armée."' ⁶²⁴ As is usual with the reports, the questioning is omitted, but the clear implication is that they are being asked about their sexual identity. S. expressed a dismissive attitude when asked whether he recognised the facts of

⁶²³The experience of this process is recounted in the testimonies in part three.

⁶²⁴ 1914 W 1, (AP).

the case presented to him: 'je n'ai pas à expliquer mes désirs. Les témoins n'ont pas pu voir ce que nous faisons.'⁶²⁵ The men's resistance of the police's claims to have seen the oral sex act they were engaged in was certainly intended as a serious challenge to the police, and shows a certain knowledge of the evidence needed for conviction. However, it was not legally necessary for a sexual act in public to have been witnessed by the police (or anybody, for that matter) for it to constitute an *outrage public à la pudeur*. The fact that the act had taken place in public was enough. The pair were each given a two-month prison sentence, not the usual suspended sentence. Resistance in this case was based on an affirmation of the strength and ordinariness of homosexual desire. Such defiance was a tactic of powerlessness, but no doubt served an important personal purpose, a bolstering of defiant self-esteem in potentially humiliating circumstances. At the time of this arrest, the FHAR had not yet been founded, but the attitude of defiance and resistance in this trial report chimes with the texts and tracts that would start to be produced later in the same year.

Not all men resisted the police through an affirmation of their homosexuality, others resisted with violence, and through the denial of a homosexual identity or desire. In June 1970, two men were arrested after fleeing and assaulting a police officer when caught together in a urinal opposite the town hall of the 16th arrondissement. The police claimed: 'Lors leur interpellation ils ont opposé une vive résistance.'⁶²⁶ One man punched a police officer in the face, while the other attempted to flee the scene. They were evasive and combative when their sexual identity is brought into question, with one of them refusing the charge that he

⁶²⁵ 1914 W 1, (AP).

⁶²⁶ 1902 W 45, (AP).

let himself be masturbated: ‘cet homme m’a adressé la parole pour me faire des propositions du genre “tu veux me baiser”... J’étais un peu éméché, et je me suis moqué de cet individu, en lui disant que je n’étais pas un pédéraste.’⁶²⁷ Of course, these men may not have identified as homosexual, but nonetheless the spectre of a deviant identity hung over the encounter. The use of the older insult ‘pederast’ suggests that this was perhaps not a man who was up to date with the latest vocabulary to describe homosexual identity. Denying being a ‘pederast’ and that any homosexual act had taken place did not help the pair and they were both condemned to two-month prison sentences and fines of 300F.

The prosecution of homosexuality was not restricted to those who searched for, and found, their partners in public places. Laws on *outrage public à la pudeur* were suitably elastic to extend into the policing of more private sexual activity in the name of public decency. For instance, a case in 1970 involved a man prosecuted for having sex in the corridor of his apartment building after he was spotted by his concierge. The concierge claimed: ‘C’était au petit matin. La minuterie du couloir était allumée. Ensuite, ces deux hommes ont baissé leur pantalon, et L. et cet homme “ont fait leur affaire”. Je n’ai pas vu leur sexe. Vu les mouvements de ces deux hommes j’ai bien compris que L. se faisait sodomiser.’⁶²⁸ An apartment corridor is not a cruising ground, but the fact that a homosexual act had been seen was enough to ensure a prosecution.

The boundary between public and private was one of the main sites of activity when it came to policing homosexuality. And the potential for discovery

⁶²⁷ 1902 W 45, (AP).

⁶²⁸ 1914 W 3, (AP).

extended into spaces that one might assume were private. A man with a curious concierge could be in just as risky a position as a man taking a stroll at the Saut du Loup. The narrow border between ‘public’ and ‘private’ would come under increasing pressure as homosexuality became more prominent in the public sphere, but the police and judiciary were armed with an elastic legal framework with which to meet this challenge.

Commercial enterprise and the police

Policing public decency also meant close monitoring of commercial venues that attracted a homosexual clientele. The policing of morality in commercial venues was another manifestation of attempts to limit the visibility of homosexuality in public space. The policing of the night-time economy was undertaken mainly by the *Brigade Mondaine*, a special unit that had existed in various forms since the creation of a *Police des Moeurs* in 1747 specially to monitor Parisian nightlife.⁶²⁹ In 1975, the unit became the *Brigade des Stupéfiants et du Proxénétisme*. Although the name change implies a greater focus on the policing of drugs and prostitution, the service maintained a special team set up to specially monitor homosexuals.⁶³⁰ Huard argues that in the 1950s and 1960s the *brigade’s* remit even extended beyond the surveillance of commercial

⁶²⁹ Véronique Willemin, *La Mondaine, histoire et archives de la police des mœurs* (Paris: Hoëbeke, 2009), 21.

⁶³⁰ Documents for this service are available in the Archives de la Préfecture de Police, Paris, up to the year 1954, with later documents remaining in closed archives at the police headquarters, Quai des Orfèvres. The only writer to have seen these documents is Véronique Willemin, who through a personal connection has been able to use them to write her sympathetic history of the service, *La Mondaine*.

venues to the houses and private gatherings of homosexual men known to the service.⁶³¹

The *Mondaine* holds a special place in the French imagination, a police service that deals with the dirty glamour of Paris's underbelly.⁶³² Former members of the service perpetuated its seedy image and turned it to profit. After his retirement, the unit's former head, Roger Le Taillanter, began publishing crime novels based on the experiences of his career. In his 1982 novel *Paris sur vices*, he gives a fictionalised glimpse into the workings of the 'groupe des homosexuels' (clearly a name that was meant to be a cheap joke) at the *brigade*:

'pour ne pas être trop souvent accusés d'obscurantisme ou, ce qui était plus grave, d'entraves à l'épanouissement des jeunes personnalités, voire de racisme sexuel, Raudès [the head of the section] et ses hommes se contentaient de cerner au plus près l'évolution d'un milieu qui, paradoxalement, ne cessait de s'élargir bien que par nature la notion de reproduction en fût absente... Les affaires criminelles étaient, dans cette faune, plus nombreuses et plus complexes qu'ailleurs.'⁶³³

While Taillanter's pulp fiction is sensational - with thinly veiled cameos made by famous homosexuals such as Roger Peyrefitte for comedic effect – his

⁶³¹ Huard, 'Histoire de l'homosexualité en France et Espagne 1945-1975', 53-56.

⁶³² Numerous books have been published on the service whose main objective is to titillate and scandalise. For an example from the period see Maurice Vincent *La Brigade Mondaine: Dossiers secrets relevés par Maurice Vincent* (Paris: Presses de la Cité, 1972). The service lent itself easily to pornographic treatment and it is perhaps no coincidence that it was a gay man, the filmmaker Jacques Scandelari, who created a (heterosexual) pornographic film based on the service, *Brigade Mondaine* (1978).

⁶³³ Roger Le Taillanter, *Paris sur vices: La descente aux enfers de la Brigade Mondaine* (Paris: Juillard, 1982), 36.

condescending tone suggests something of the general attitude of the head of the *Brigade Mondaine* toward homosexuals. A fascination with the notion of non-heterosexual reproduction and contagion in the 'transmission' of homosexuality is also evident. In an interview that Taillanter gave for *Gai Pied* in 1982, he unapologetically explained the service's approach: 'Nous, nous considérons que le milieu homosexuel, où les affaires criminelles sont plus nombreuses et plus complexes, doit être surveillé et cerné de près par une équipe spécialisée.'⁶³⁴ He even goes on to suggest that homosexuals should have been grateful for the police presence: 'nous assurons une mission de protection et surtout d'observation. Les homosexuels, par le manque de selectivité de leurs relations, sont plus souvent victimes d'agressions, de chantages, de rackets.'⁶³⁵ Fifteen years after the publication of Le Clère's policing manual, Taillanter repeats its prescriptions nearly word for word. If homosexuals are not criminals in the letter of the law, they stand at very short remove from criminality.

With the archives of the service unavailable for the 1970s, its activities become visible mainly through evidence presented to the courts. For instance, in 1971 the brigade made multiple visits to a cabaret on Paris's rue Marignan after they heard reports that the show contained homoerotic content.⁶³⁶ They demanded that contentious parts of the stage show (including a same-sex kiss) be cut from the show, and eventually decided that the content was so outrageous that they arrested the performers and the owners of the establishment. Those arrested were shocked to find that such on-stage depictions could be even be considered

⁶³⁴ Marco Lemaire, 'Les confidences de l'ex-shérif de "Paris-sur-vices,"' *Gai Pied*, April 1982, 7.

⁶³⁵ Lemaire, 'Les confidences,' 7.

⁶³⁶ 1914 W 40, (AP).

an offence, especially in what they considered a private space, and considering the popularity of nude shows depicting women. Yet arguments against the public nature of the show were dealt with swiftly by the magistrate:

‘Attendu qu’un cabaret constitue un lieu public par destination, dans lequel toute personne a la possibilité d’être admise à la seule condition de consommer pendant le spectacle... le consentement des témoins ne peut modifier le caractère public de l’établissement... Attendu que l’outrage public à la pudeur ne nécessite pas pour être constitué l’apport d’éléments graveleux ou d’empreints de vulgarité; qu’il est réalisé par la représentation publique d’effusions ou d’exhibitions sexuelles réservées à la vie privée même en présence de témoins consentants.’⁶³⁷

The border between public and private was strictly enforced by the judge and a rather tame depiction of homoeroticism ended up costing the performers 1000F in fines, and the director 4500F.⁶³⁸

The precedent that a paying clientele did not constitute a ‘private’ space coupled with the *Mondaine’s* preoccupation with public decency led to cases in which public decency legislation was stretched to its limit. In what would become the most famous example of such action, police from the *Brigade Mondaine* raided the backroom of the bar Le Manhattan in Paris’s 5th arrondissement. Le Manhattan had been open since 1974, and although it held no licence for dancing (something that had been outlawed between men in Paris by a local by-

⁶³⁷ 1914 W 40, (AP).

⁶³⁸ 1914 W 40, (AP).

law since 1949) they did have a licence to stay open until dawn and play music.⁶³⁹ The police were not looking for illicit dancers; they were looking to catch men engaging in sexual contact on the premises. Bars such as the Manhattan, and the sexual athletics going on in their backrooms, posed a new issue for the police, who had not before dealt with such a degree of consensual, unremunerated sex in commercial establishments. There was a tension between how far the authorities were willing to permit such activities and their growing popularity on the marketplace. Raiding these bars and their backrooms became a method of regulation through haphazard, and often heavy-handed police presence.

On the night of the 26th of May 1977, the police entered the Manhattan disguised in the 'uniform' of a regular – jeans, leather jacket and heavy work boots. They made their way into the back of the establishment to the barely-lit backroom where they turned on their handheld torches and arrested nine men, including two managers of the bar. Seven of the men were charged with *outrage public à la pudeur* and the two bar managers were charged under articles 59 and 60 of the penal code that outlawed the 'facilitation' of such acts. Apart from one married man, the accused were all single, aged 22 to 48, and held occupations ranging from a head of advertising, a bank employee, a lifeguard and a chef.⁶⁴⁰ Rather than plead guilty and accept a fine, three of the accused – Michel Chomarat, Philippe Smits and Marc Djeballa – decided to defend themselves, and subsequently appealed their charges, on the grounds that a conviction of

⁶³⁹ C.H., 'La police, armés d'un projecteur, "débusquent" un outrage public à la pudeur,' *Libération*, March 25, 1978., 7.

⁶⁴⁰ 'Citation, January 25, 1978,' MS 631 / I, (MC).

outrage public à la pudeur was unsound since the backroom of the Manhattan was not a 'public' space.

The case was taken up by the lawyer Alexandre Rozier, who made his career defending gay men before the law and would later act as the lawyer for the CUARH on cases against the excesses of police activity against homosexuals in public parks and gardens and for defendants in the 'Coral' paedophilia scandal.⁶⁴¹ Rozier's defence rested on the notion of what sort of 'public' would be capable of witnessing the acts in which his clients were caught, arguing that the public in the Manhattan bar were friends, a minority within a minority: 'les adeptes de la "tenue cuir" constituent au sein même des homosexuels, une minorité marginalisée.... Ils disposent, dans Paris, d'un petit nombre de lieux de rendez-vous, qui leur sont réservés, à l'exclusion des homosexuels "classiques".'⁶⁴² To gain entry to this 'marginalised minority' the police had had to dress in leather jackets, denim and boots. Once inside, they had to cross the bar, enter the backroom and turn on their torches to witness the scene. Rozier argued that, given these circumstances, the Manhattan bar's backroom could not be considered public: 'On ne saurait considérer que les Inspecteurs de Police travestis et porteurs de projecteurs électriques puissent constituer un tel "public."⁶⁴³ The first judges to rule on the case affirmed the public nature of the bar, asserting that the manager himself admitted that it was not a private club and that it was listed in the *Gault et Millau* guide to Paris: 'son adresse, son numéro de téléphone et une rubrique décrivant son ambiance particulière'.⁶⁴⁴

⁶⁴¹ Gérard Bach, 'La mort d'Alexandre Rozier,' *Homophonies*, October 1984, 11.

⁶⁴² 'Audience, October 3, 1978,' MS 631 / I, (MC).

⁶⁴³ 'Audience, October 3, 1978,' MS 631 / I, (MC).

⁶⁴⁴ 'Mémoire ampliatif pour M. Smits, M. Chomarar et M. Djeballa,' January 14, 1981, MS 631 / I, (MC).

The fact that ‘displays of genitalia’ had taken place in a premises licensed to serve alcohol to the public was considered enough to find the accused guilty.

Despite the judgement, Jean Le Bitoux, writing in *Libération*, hailed the defendants’ willingness to fight the case as a turning point in the relationship between the courts and gay men: ‘Le 3 octobre 1978 est à marquer d’une pierre rose dans l’histoire “gay”. Pour la première fois, des personnes accusées d’outrages publics à la pudeur sur personnes du même sexe comparaissaient en correctionnelle et sans complexe, en tout cas sans nier leur homosexualité.’⁶⁴⁵ The case even produced a mildly sympathetic article in *Le Monde*: ‘Totalemment logique? Oui, à s’en tenir à la lettre de la loi. Dure loi pour les homosexuels... A considérer l’évolution des moeurs, cette logique s’émousse quelque peu.’⁶⁴⁶ A polemic from the novelist Jean-Louis Bory in *Le Matin* likened the case to Nazi persecution of homosexuals.⁶⁴⁷ Although resistance of police repression was evident in various forms, pleading not guilty was a rare tactic.

Despite sympathetic noises in the media and Rozier’s energetic defence, a judge upheld the convention that a space reserved for a paying clientele still constituted a public space. After two appeals were rejected the men were eventually fined 500F each, although in a display of leniency the conviction was not to appear in their criminal record.⁶⁴⁸ For one of the accused, Michel

⁶⁴⁵ N.P., ‘Une pierre rose dans l’histoire gay,’ *Libération*, October 4, 1978, 7. Emphasis in original.

⁶⁴⁶ Michel Kajman, ‘L’état des lois et l’état des moeurs,’ *Le Monde*, October 5, 1978, 12.

⁶⁴⁷ Jean-Louis Bory and Michel Cyprien, ‘Une forme de racism,’ *Le Matin*, 26 October 1978.

⁶⁴⁸ ‘Audience, October 3, 1978,’ MS 631 / I, (MC).

Chomarat, the experience of being arrested and the support of the CUARH led to a lifetime of political activism.⁶⁴⁹

The Manhattan bar was not alone in being targeted in this way. Despite the police's tolerance of many commercial venues in which sex could be had on the premises, Iacub finds that raids on (heterosexual) swingers clubs and mixed, or homosexual, saunas were common in the 1970s as these establishments became more numerous in the capital and elsewhere.⁶⁵⁰ Raids and attempts at restricting the viability of new commercial popular venues aimed at a gay clientele led to a rash of local action in Paris. In 1981, *Gai Pied* reported that the Trap and the BH, both clubs in the newly fashionable Marais district had their licenses and opening hours restricted, and Le Village had to close for a week after the police discovered the presence of sex workers in the bar.⁶⁵¹

Cases of the repression of commercial enterprises serving the growing gay market were not limited to Paris. In Lyon, the gay bar Le Cercle André Gide was raided and closed in September 1979 after police discovered a minor aged seventeen among the clientele after a raid. The owner reported being surprised at the 'ponctualité d'une police qui semblait fort bien renseignée et dont la présence ce soir-là n'était pas seulement le fait du hasard.'⁶⁵² As in the Manhattan case, the (local) publicity surrounding the raid was turned into a political issue by the bar owner, who claimed that under the cover of reasonable motives: 'va sans doute contribuer à marginaliser davantage encore, en

⁶⁴⁹ Michel Chomarat, interview with the author, January 2015.

⁶⁵⁰ Iacub, *Par le trou de la serrure*, 228.

⁶⁵¹ 'Retour de l'ordre moral à Paris', *Gai Pied*, March 1981, 24.

⁶⁵² 'L'inculpation de l'animateur du cercle "André Gide": Une répression accrue contre la population homosexuelle?', *Le Progrès*, September 8, 1979, 5.

l'installant dans l'insécurité permanente, un population homosexuelle qui ne veut plus dissimuler sa différence.'⁶⁵³ The Lyon bar owners claimed that it was a well-known police tactic to plant minors in order to shut them down or put pressure on them. A tactic that allowed the police to claim the establishments posed both a threat to public order and to the young.

The repression of commercial spaces shows the police and the justice system trying to deal with new evolutions in gay sexual and commercial culture using the same instruments of control – notably a conception of public space in which any manifestation of homosexual acts was corrupting – that had long been used to police outdoor cruising grounds, carnivals and dancing venues. If the policing of newly confident gay commercial establishments posed a new problem for the police, they responded with well-established tactics and legal instruments. The close police surveillance of these establishments contradicts the assertion by liberation activists that the gay 'ghetto' worked in tandem with the police and judiciary as a part of the same repressive machinery. And as the Manhattan case demonstrates, these arrests could themselves be turned into political causes. The presence of the police had the potential to turn spaces such as bars and clubs that were not explicitly 'political' (in the same way that a march or a liberation group was) into sites of solidarity and struggle, particularly in the publicity that cases were able to gain towards the later 1970s.

Policing gay politics

⁶⁵³ 'L'inculpation de l'animateur du cercle "André Gide,"' 5.

Another new challenge to the police was the increasing visibility of political groups advocating gay liberation. After the shock to the state of the radical political contestations of May 1968, the police and the intelligence service the *Renseignements Généraux*, took a particular interest in the far-left groups that appeared from the student milieu. Groups that declared themselves ‘revolutionary’ and against the Fifth Republic became a target for police surveillance. This was the case for the homosexual revolutionary groups that sprung up in France after the events of May, the most prominent of these being the FHAR. The police sought to temper the FHAR’s activities under the same logic as the ghetto’s bars and clubs, to limit the visibility and influence of public manifestations of homosexuality. Yet unlike the heavy-handed tactics of the *Brigade Mondaine* in policing commercial establishments, in dealing with political groups the police were more careful. They were aware that their presence could catalyse political engagement, or at least help to foster community solidarity.

The FHAR’s mixture of sexuality and far-left rhetoric led the police to categorise the group with other movements ‘of personal liberation’ such as the feminist MLF. In a document detailing such groups, the intelligence services interpreted the FHAR’s aims as: ‘Parvenir à une société sans classes par la destruction de la cellule familiale, “pilier du capitalisme et de la société bourgeoise occidentale”. Sous prétexte de libéralisation du sexe, le mouvement cherche à entraîner les homosexuels vers la révolution prolétarienne.’⁶⁵⁴ For the police, fermenting proletarian revolution was more important than the homosexual

⁶⁵⁴ ‘Mouvements dits de “libération personnelle”’ (undated), 143W 06, 784169, (PP).

rhetoric of the group. However, the group's interest in the political potential of the sexual act would put them at the intersection of the surveillance of political groups and the policing of public sexual activity.

Surveillance of the FHAR by the *Renseignements Généraux* consisted of the attendance of its meetings, the procurement of publications and intelligence gathering about individual members. This activity around the FHAR was bound up with the surveillance of other radical political groups in the wake of 1968. A memorandum written in September 1972 by the 'Direction des renseignements généraux' listed the aims of the service in this area: '1. Le contrôle de l'activité des mouvements révolutionnaires proprement dits. 2. L'information en milieu étudiantin et lycéen.'⁶⁵⁵ As a revolutionary movement whose membership was largely made up of students, and who operated on the campuses of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and at the University of Vincennes, the FHAR came under both categories. Alongside their monitoring of the group's activities, the police kept information on key members of the group, including Guy Hocquenghem, Alain Fleig and Guy Maës.⁶⁵⁶ Letters to the organisation appear to have been intercepted, including a letter from the anarchist activist Daniel Guérin that expresses his support for the group soon after its creation.⁶⁵⁷ Information kept on members appears to have been relatively trivial, or easy to obtain. For instance, a report on Hocquenghem (the most heavily monitored member) notes that he had recently written an article in the *Nouvel Observateur*

⁶⁵⁵ 143W 06, 784169, (PP).

⁶⁵⁶ 143W 06, 784169, (PP).

⁶⁵⁷ Curiously, a letter sent to Jean-Paul Sartre from a young man in Tours complaining of the harsh repression of homosexuals undertaken by the mayor (and future minister) Jean Royer also makes its way into the FHAR's police file. This is perhaps an indication that any material pertaining to homosexual politics from surveillance operations was filed there. Guérin to the FHAR, May 4, 1971, 143W 06, 784169, (PP).

explaining his actions ‘au service de la révolution sexuelle’ alongside his previous interactions with the police after other political engagements.⁶⁵⁸

The group was aware of police presence at their meetings. In one of the daily reports produced from the surveillance of activity at the Cité Universitaire, an officer notes that members of the movement had brought up the issue of police infiltration; one speaker raised the issue of militants being prosecuted for ‘l’incitation de mineurs à la débauche’ or ‘le détournement de mineurs’ presumably for the group’s advocacy of paedophilia.⁶⁵⁹ Another member playfully reminds the police that could be present that they themselves could be punished for their close relations with the FHAR.⁶⁶⁰ Just as men were aware of police being present in civilian clothing on cruising grounds, they were aware of their presence in the FHAR. Here they directly addressed this presence, and even made light of it, performing a small act of defiance.

Interest in the FHAR was due to the general imperative to monitor groups with ‘revolutionary’ aims, but the group’s enthusiastic mixture of sex and politics posed specific problems for the police. A police report from October 1971 noted the increasing sexual activity at the meetings: ‘le 11 octobre, une vingtaine de personnes se sont livrées à des débats collectifs. Le 18 octobre, le groupe a compté 40 personnes et le 25 octobre, il s’élevait à une centaine de participants, nus pour la plupart.’⁶⁶¹ With an open campus, the Beaux-Arts administration were too few to be able to regain control of the situation. The report also notes

⁶⁵⁸ 143W 06, 784169, (PP).

⁶⁵⁹ Report, July 2, 1971, 143W 06, 784169, (PP).

⁶⁶⁰ Report, July 2, 1971, 143W 06, 784169, (PP).

⁶⁶¹ Report, July 2, 1971, 143W 06, 784169, (PP).

the increasing irritation of the local population at the meetings of the group: 'témoins de l'arrivé et du départ de l'étrange faune qui fréquente ces réunions bien particulières.'⁶⁶² The police's prudish language is symptomatic of a force caught between moral condemnation of the group and concern about their political radicalism.

Despite their initial policy of surveillance rather than intervention, after a request from the Beaux-Arts administration for their help, the police were forced to act. Considering their action to repress public manifestations of homosexuality in commercial spaces and on cruising grounds, it is surprising that the police did not act with more alacrity. One explanation for this could have been a fear of reigniting a political group that the police knew was in decline after its initial flourishing in 1971. When it came to it, the police acted against the FHAR in coordination with the faculty of the Beaux-Arts and at the request of local residents. As early as November 1972, the group was aiming to move from the Beaux-Arts due to pressure placed on it by the administration.⁶⁶³ Little intervention from the police was ultimately necessary once they moved against the group in February 1974, as the meetings were by then moribund. By 1975, long after its heyday, the police considered the group definitively dead: 'le FHAR n'existe plus et il ne constitue même plus pour beaucoup un sigle, semblable au MLF pour rallier les homosexuels révolutionnaires.'⁶⁶⁴

⁶⁶² Report, July 2, 1971, 143W 06, 784169, (PP).

⁶⁶³ 'Le Front Homosexuel d'Action Révolutionnaire envisage de lancer une vaste action de propagande...' November 2, 1972, 143W 06, 784169, APP.

⁶⁶⁴ 'Le courant homosexuel révolutionnaire et ses difficultés de survie.' February 24, 1975, 143W 06, 784169, APP.

The police interest in the FHAR was another manifestation of the policing of the boundary between public and private. Where Arcadie had prided itself on a good relationship with law enforcement, the police's suspicion of the FHAR stemmed not only from the group's hostility to the state, but also its strategy of public discussion (and celebration) of homosexuality and homosexual sex.⁶⁶⁵ The police interest in the repression of the FHAR stemmed from a mixture of the group's revolutionary political rhetoric and their unabashed use of meetings for cruising. If the radical political rhetoric was new, the police's reluctance to act reveals the same sort of logic that had extended throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: a desire to minimise the potential for scandal through the avoidance of publicity. It is unlikely that the French police had New York's Stonewall riots in mind when approaching the FHAR situation (or if the group would have resisted in such a manner even in its more energetic early phase) but a lack of forceful intervention until the group's dying days avoided the inflammation of the situation and the creation of a wider cause.

Conclusion: Towards liberalisation?

The legal apparatus used to police homosexuality was not static in the 1970s and early 1980s, and the general trend of legislation (if not strictly police practices) was towards liberalisation. However, as can be seen by the spike in prosecutions for gross indecency in 1981, repression could operate most severely at the brink of a moral and legal shift.

⁶⁶⁵ Jackson, *Living in Arcadia*, 93-95.

As we have seen, the main instrument of police repression of homosexual activity was the law on *outrage public à la pudeur*, a law that remained in place until 1992's Penal Code reform.⁶⁶⁶ Yet change in attitudes towards the policing of homosexual activity came with action initiated from above. In 1981 the Minister of the Interior, Gaston Defferre, had a letter sent to Paris's police instructing them to end discriminatory policing practices against homosexuals, ordering: 'aucune distinction, aucune discrimination, ni, à plus forte raison, aucune suspicion ne saurait peser sur des personnes en fonction de leur seule orientation sexuelle.'⁶⁶⁷ The spike in police interest in *outrage public à la pudeur* in 1981 could be seen as the catalyst for Defferre's letter requesting that the police relent their activities, which were seen to be excessive in light of the new administration. This would certainly appear to be the case when we consider that the CUARH frequently accused the police of ignoring Defferre's orders entirely, and led a sustained campaign against police harassment throughout the early 1980s.⁶⁶⁸

However, action from the government did not equate to a simple decline in repression. From the late 1970s and into Mitterrand's first term, there was a hardening of attitudes in Paris at a local level. In 1981, the mayor of Paris, Jacques Chirac, created a special force, the police *brigade des parcs et jardins* to police these spaces.⁶⁶⁹ In a press interview, Chirac claimed that the brigade

⁶⁶⁶ Iacub, *Par le trou de la serrure*, 239.

⁶⁶⁷ 'Le communiqué du ministère de l'Intérieur,' *Homophonies*, July-August 1981, 5.

⁶⁶⁸ See in particular the CUARH's campaign to discover the truth about the nature and extent of *fichage*: 'Dossier police,' *Homophonies*, December 1981, 9-13.

⁶⁶⁹ The archive of the *brigade des parcs et jardins* is held at Paris's prefecture of police archives. However, my requests to see the material on the service were turned down, as it was deemed by the head archivist as 'hors sujet.' The archives, which are run by police staff, are notoriously protective of the reputation of the police force.

was made up of eighty personnel, and that they had done a 'spectacular' job of curtailing behaviour in Paris's public spaces that was: 'épouvantable, intolérable, inacceptable.'⁶⁷⁰ The gay press soon began reporting violent experiences at the hands of the new service. In October 1981, a matter of months after the creation of the brigade, Gérard Bach complained in the CUARH's journal *Homophonies* that: 'Malheureusement, il semble que cette brigade, loin de s'attaquer à ceux qui viennent par exemple, agresser les homos dans les jardins, s'en prenne prioritairement aux paisibles dragueurs à la recherche d'amour...'⁶⁷¹ Bach includes the testimony of a man who was attacked by the force at the Trocadero: 'je croyais que c'était des voyous. Après m'avoir frappé le visage, ils m'ont revelé et traîné vers la rue. Je leur ai dit: "Je vais appeler la police".'; ils ont rétorqué: "Nous, on en fait partie de la police"⁶⁷². Later, the magazine would describe the brigade as Chirac's *milice*, a reference to Vichy's anti-resistance organisation.⁶⁷³ The brutal activities of the brigade were a part of a larger campaign to sanitise Paris's public spaces led by Chirac. From December 1979 for instance, JC Décaux began to replace Paris's *pissoirs* with modern automatic 'sanisettes'; plans were also put in place to close parks at night and install higher fences.⁶⁷⁴ These local measures help to explain the rise in prosecutions for *outrage public à la pudeur* among men at the turn of the decade, a continuation of a longer history of the repression of homosexual acts in the public sphere.

⁶⁷⁰ Victor Franco, 'Jacques Chirac: Oui, Paris reste dangereux,' *Journal du Dimanche*, September 13, 1981, 2.

⁶⁷¹ Gérard Bach, 'Paris: Chirac ou l'insécurité des homos,' *Homophonies*, October 1981, 4.

⁶⁷² Bach, 'Paris: Chirac ou l'insécurité des homos,' 4.

⁶⁷³ Hervé Liffra, 'La milice de J. Chirac,' *Homophonies*, March 1983, 6-8.

⁶⁷⁴ Xavier Deschamps, 'Un étrange complot pour un bombardement,' *Gai Pied*, November 1979, 8.

The activities of the *brigade des parcs et jardins* in Paris demonstrate the stubborn continuity of police repression. Indeed, the policing of homosexuality in the 1970s was characterised by continuities in behaviour and attitudes that had operated since the nineteenth century. Although the policing of homosexuality was declining throughout the period, decline was not only uneven, it was also underpinned by persistent assumptions about the need to monitor and control homosexual activity.

Relative silence in legal texts, advancing liberalisation and a slow decline in prosecutions masked a persistent concern within the police and judiciary to repress homosexuality, enforce the border between adult and minor and to preserve public 'decency'. New political groups and commercial spaces would challenge the police during the 1970s, and they were met with a force which continued to use a flexible legal heritage to pursue repression. Into the 1980s, because of a general movement of the state towards liberalisation in social matters, the political will to repress homosexuality in the public sphere weakened. Yet, this was not necessarily the end to the police monitoring of homosexual activity. The HIV/AIDS epidemic would provide new impetus for restrictions on sex between men, and with it an excuse to raid commercial establishments that catered to men looking for sex.⁶⁷⁵ This was clearly no triumphant liberation, rather a slow and uneven transformation of police practices.

⁶⁷⁵ Reports in the gay press of raids on bars continued to be commonplace. For instance, on the night of the 13-14 January the police raided a number of gay bars in Les Halles, including David Girard's popular club Haute Tension. Hervé Liffra, 'La police contre les gais,' *Homophonies*, February 1984, 5.

Chapter Four: In the Public Eye. Gay Men, Literature and the Media

Just as the assumptions that underpinned the policing of homosexuality in France were based on older notions of contagion and danger, the increasing access that homosexuals had to the public sphere in the 1970s was also coded according to much older stereotypes, dating back at least to the late nineteenth-century. Nowhere is this tension between the enduring phenomenon of homosexuality and its adaptation to a changing France more apparent than in the presence of gay men in the public eye.

Homosexuality as the preserve of Parisian aesthetes was of course a tired stereotype, but this should not obscure the fact that homosexuals in France had long enjoyed status and visibility in the arts and literature. Homosexuality was a subject broached in literature, but also contained by it. The mythology of gay liberation rests upon the narrative arc of 'silence' to 'speech', but in a nation that produced literary stars as diverse as André Gide, Jean Genet, Henry de Montherlant, and Roger Peyrefitte (to name a few) such a narrative cannot be imposed. In his work on the concept of the public sphere, the literary scholar Michael Warner has argued that: 'The bourgeois public sphere has been structured from the outset by a logic of abstraction that provides a privilege for unmarked identities: the male, the white, the middle class, the normal.'⁶⁷⁶ Following this logic, the writers under discussion used these 'unmarked'

⁶⁷⁶ Michael Warner, 'The Mass Public and the Mass Subject,' in Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992), 383.

identities, and their status as writers, to access the public sphere. They thus opened possibilities by speaking about homosexuality, but by doing so they submitted it to a normalising process.

Visibility is not, of course, the same as acceptance, and the new, avowedly 'gay' generation who came to the fore in the 1970s sought to harness the possibilities of the space in the public sphere that they had inherited to express a new message. But speaking from the sofas of literary television debates, publishing books and writing opinion pieces, the group of openly homosexual writers who emerged in the 1970s could do as much to undermine the political aims of gay liberation as advance them. Homosexual men in the public eye in France were caught between the possibilities afforded to them and the limitations that this role imposed upon them.

This chapter will argue that a new generation of openly homosexual male writers were not only visible in the French media throughout the 1970s, but became the mediatised spokesmen of homosexuality in France, fulfilling a role formerly occupied by 'experts' in medicine, the priesthood, and psychiatry. This wresting of discourse on homosexuality away from these 'experts' was certainly a new phenomenon. However, the role of the homosexual Parisian literary intellectual was one with deeper roots in French cultural history. If the message that these men expressed moved with the times, the form - the figure of the Parisian literary intellectual - remained remarkably static. To explore this ambiguous transformation of homosexual men in the public sphere this chapter will begin by looking at the new generation of homosexual writers in France, and what they owed to a longer tradition of the homosexual literary intellectual.

I will then turn to consider two writers with diverging approaches to coming out as homosexuals into the public eye, and the difficult emergence of the notion of 'gay writers' and 'gay culture' in the period. Illustrating the changing mediatisation of homosexuals, the chapter closes with an examination of the appearances of these writers on television.

Homosexuality, literature and the intellectual

The homosexual writers that began to emerge into the public eye in France after 1968 constituted a loose grouping, united not by their literary style, concerns or even politics, but by their visibility in the media as men who had openly declared their homosexuality. They were a diverse group, but their achievements and exposure meant that they reached the pinnacle of French literary life in the period. They counted three Prix Goncourt awards, regular media appearances, posts in universities, columns in major national newspapers and latterly a chair in the Académie Française. By the close of the 1970s this group was loosely comprised of the activist and man-of-letters Guy Hocquenghem; Jean-Louis Bory, the winner of the first post-liberation Prix Goncourt; Yves Navarre and Dominique Fernandez, both novelists who would also win the Goncourt in 1980 and 1982, respectively; alongside other figures who were less prominent in the media but were important in literary circles such as Renaud Camus and Tony Duvert. This is not to ignore older writers who were still prominent in public life: Jean Genet made political interventions on various contemporary topics after 1968; on the other end of the political spectrum, Roger Peyrefitte, the author of *Les Amitiés particulières*, would also make regular appearances in the media discussing the subject and continue to publish (increasingly explicit) works of fiction.

The new generation of writers would owe much to their forebears. Their position in the public eye rested on the already established space for homosexuality in the literary world. Eva Ahlstedt claims that during the early 1920s, with the publication of Marcel Proust's two volumes of *Sodome et Gomorrhe*, homosexuality gained its rightful place in French letters.⁶⁷⁷ The presence of homosexuality grew with the publication (outside of private editions) of André Gide's *Corydon* in 1924.⁶⁷⁸ The vision of homosexuality expressed in *Corydon* was an elitist one. Florence Tamagne argues that for Gide: 'Pederasts are intellectuals, artists, aesthetes, who know how to distinguish true beauty and who care more for the heart than the body.'⁶⁷⁹ In many ways the text was already old fashioned compared to contemporary sexuality.⁶⁸⁰ Gide would acknowledge his own sexuality in print in 1926 with the publication of the autobiographical *Si le grain ne meurt*, whose second part is devoted to his personal discovery of homosexuality and sexual experiences in Algeria.⁶⁸¹ Where some critics praised what they saw as his sincerity and courage in his resistance of moral norms, others did not understand his discussion of his private life in public, preferring Proust's discretion.⁶⁸² This tension between the use of literature as a confessional medium and the use of literary devices to maintain a discreet distance from the self would continue to be a feature of homosexuality in French literary life well into the 1970s.

⁶⁷⁷ Eva Ahlstadt, *André Gide et le débat sur l'homosexualité: de L'Immoraliste (1902) à Si le grain ne meurt (1926)* (Gothenburg: Gothenburg University Press, 1994), 71-72.

⁶⁷⁸ Ahlstadt, *André Gide*, 71.

⁶⁷⁹ Tamagne, *A History of Homosexuality in Europe*, 134.

⁶⁸⁰ Tamagne, *A History of Homosexuality in Europe*, 149-150.

⁶⁸¹ André Gide, *Si le grain ne meurt* (Paris: Gallimard, 1928), 285-369.

⁶⁸² Ahlstadt, *André Gide*, 132.

Gide, a literary giant of interwar France, used his work to become a ‘defender’ of homosexuality, a political act that would be influential on later homosexual writers. Florence Tamagne points out that, in the absence of a homosexual movement based on law reform or the science-based approach taken by contemporaries in Germany (Magnus Hirschfeld’s prominent *Wissenschaftlich-humanitäres Komitee* for instance): ‘Asserting homosexual rights was... left to a few key figures, who personally identified with the homosexual cause.’⁶⁸³ Where in Britain and Germany, early arguments for toleration of homosexuality were made from a liberal scientific-medical viewpoint, in the context of the Third Republic literary activity served this function. The only French homosexual review in the interwar period, *Inversions*, gave Gide’s work an ecstatic reception.⁶⁸⁴ Gide’s work became, in the words of Julian Jackson, ‘an almost obligatory point of homosexual pilgrimage.’⁶⁸⁵ His influence on generations of homosexuals is particularly visible in the homophile review *Arcadie*, whose pages featured his name more prominently than perhaps any other.⁶⁸⁶ This prominence should not be mistaken for uncritical adulation. By the 1950s, Gide’s historical and ‘scientific’ justifications for homosexuality and pederasty were increasingly dated. Despite this, Gide’s preferred mode of expression, literary prose, remained *Arcadie*’s model until its closure in 1982.⁶⁸⁷ *Arcadie*’s extraordinary longevity can be explained in part by the continuing relevance of the literary defence of homosexuality in France, revitalised by the new generation of openly gay writers who, whilst often no friend of *Arcadie*’s, gave its idiom enduring

⁶⁸³ Tamagne, *A History of Homosexuality in Europe*, 123.

⁶⁸⁴ Tamagne, *A History of Homosexuality in Europe*, 102.

⁶⁸⁵ Jackson, *Living in Arcadia*, 116.

⁶⁸⁶ Jackson, *Living in Arcadia*, 117.

⁶⁸⁷ Jackson, *Living in Arcadia*, 117.

relevance. While the new gay liberation groups of the 1970s concentrated on leftist activism, older forms of engagement, pioneered by Gide and maintained by *Arcadie*, endured.

The literary defence of homosexuality was thus one of the enduring features of homosexuality's appearance in the public sphere in France. This was a message best transmitted by a figure who could draw on the authority of the 'intellectual'. According to Ruth Harris, the birth of the world of the intellectuals can be dated to the Dreyfus affair that rocked France at the close of the nineteenth century. It was from this point that 'for almost a hundred years after [intellectuals] played an unusual role in French political culture. No other European country gave such influence to opinion-makers outside the political class.'⁶⁸⁸ Towards the close of this hundred-year reign, spurred on by fears of the demise of the intellectual in France, the historiography of the birth and role of intellectuals in the nation has grown rapidly.⁶⁸⁹ But 'the intellectuals' are not just an identifiable set of figures intervening in national debates, the 'intellectual' is also a role, a performance, from which those outside of the elite few can draw. For the historian of ideas Stefan Collini, the label 'intellectual' designates: 'performance in a role or, more accurately, a structure of relations... If a certain figure repeatedly succeeds, on the basis of creative or scholarly activity, in using a given medium of expression to reach a genuine public to express views on a general theme, then by definition, that figure is, in that

⁶⁸⁸ Ruth Harris, *The Man on Devil's Island: Alfred Dreyfus and the Affair that Divided France* (London: Allen Lane, 2010), 382.

⁶⁸⁹ See for instance Christophe Charle, *Naissance des "intellectuels" 1880-1900* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1990).

particular context, successfully functioning as an intellectual.⁶⁹⁰ Whilst Collini is writing in a British context, this definition is appropriate to France, and the writers under consideration.

Uncontestably towering intellectuals such as Jean-Paul Sartre would support homosexuals' claims to liberation in the 1970s.⁶⁹¹ and the petition, the quintessential tool of the postwar French intellectual, would also be mobilised to change the unequal age of consent.⁶⁹² Away from these sporadic interventions from major figures was a proliferation of minor writers regularly engaging with the media and the public about homosexuality. These were figures whose status makes their claim to the label 'intellectual' a little more tenuous, who perhaps lacked the broad range of interventions to strictly warrant the name, but who nevertheless leveraged some of the cultural importance of the intellectual to make interventions on the issue of homosexuality. A move toward a broader vision of the intellectual in which the role was not a rigid ideal but a series of tropes from which to draw could bring in more minor figures. This approach would begin to incorporate the new struggles of the 1970s into a history of 'the intellectual' in France.

The work of the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu helps to understand how the figure of the intellectual was manipulated by those in the media, and how the press and television mediated the presentation of homosexual figures. Bourdieu

⁶⁹⁰ Stefan Collini, *Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) 52-3.

⁶⁹¹ Sartre was pivotal in the founding of *Tout!* and was also interviewed for *Gai Pied* just before his death: Jean Le Bitoux and Gilles Barbedette, 'Sartre et les homosexuels,' *Gai Pied*, April 1980, 11-14.

⁶⁹² On the importance of petitions see Jean-François Sirinelli, *Intellectuels et passions françaises: Manifestes et pétitions au XXe siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 1990).

argued that since the decline of the patronage of Church and Court, 'symbolic goods' such as works of art and literature operated in a market made up of an ever growing and diversifying public of consumers.⁶⁹³ Rather than intellectual products being creations independent of their public, they are shaped by it. While on the surface it may appear that this market gives the writer (or the artist) great liberty, Bourdieu argues that this is an illusion: 'it constitutes no more than the condition of their submission to the laws of the market of symbolic goods.'⁶⁹⁴ Indeed, Bourdieu sees the market as an even more subtle and persuasive influencer of intellectual goods than the power of patronage which formerly served this purpose. The new homosexual writers of the 1970s must be seen as part of a market. In these terms, homosexuality became a symbolic quality that conferred a rare, and therefore potentially valuable quality, one that could gain attention in the media and be marketed to consumers. Furthermore, writers were themselves forced by both the market and the changing political landscape to take positions with regard to their homosexuality in order to use it both as a political tool, but also as a factor to differentiate themselves from others in a competitive media marketplace.

The notion that intellectual goods, and the media, function as a marketplace is not restricted to France. But the phenomenon of a group of writers engaged with the media not only about their own work, but also about their homosexuality, is perhaps more unique to France. In Britain, Jeffrey Weeks notes briefly that the worlds of show-business and literature were generally

⁶⁹³ Pierre Bourdieu, 'The market of symbolic goods' in *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993) 4.

⁶⁹⁴ Bourdieu, 'The market of symbolic goods,' 4.

tolerant, with the coming out of writers such as Robin Maugham and Angus Wilson, yet they were figures with minor media visibility.⁶⁹⁵ An important British exception would be Christopher Isherwood's revealing autobiography *Christopher and his Kind*, in which he made clear his own homosexuality, a facet of his life that had been concealed in his previous work.⁶⁹⁶ Despite a broader range of homosexuals writing about themselves and the new gay world around them in the United States, writers such as John Rechy, Andrew Holleran and Larry Kramer did not earn broad national media exposure. In his examination of media visibility of gay men and lesbians in America, Larry Gross finds that most representations of gay men and women in the 1970s came not from public figures or documentary-style programming, but sitcoms, dramas and made-for-TV movies.⁶⁹⁷

Like Isherwood, Gore Vidal is an exception, although one with his own ambiguities. Vidal appeared on a 1967 episode of *CBS Reports* entitled 'The Homosexuals', the first national broadcast dedicated to the topic. Vidal discussed the place of homosexuals in the society, and in the arts more specifically, boldly declaring amid hostile commentators and footage of arrests that: 'It is as natural to be homosexual as it is to be heterosexual. And the difference between a homosexual and a heterosexual is about the difference between someone who has brown eyes and someone who has blue eyes.'⁶⁹⁸ In his discussion of the programme Gross fails to mention Vidal's appearance,

⁶⁹⁵ Weeks, *Coming out*, 228.

⁶⁹⁶ Christopher Isherwood, *Christopher and his Kind* (New York: Farrar, Straus Giroux, 1976).

⁶⁹⁷ Larry Gross, *Up From Invisibility: Lesbians, Gay Men, and the Media in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 81-85.

⁶⁹⁸ *CBS Reports*, CBS, first broadcast March 7, 1967, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n2UNcDH5ao>, last accessed December 2015.

perhaps wilfully ignoring the media representation that the 'literary intellectual' could give in favour of examining media representations of more 'ordinary' gay men. But Gross is perhaps also wary of Vidal because of the author's notoriously difficult relationship with homosexual identity; he always preferred sexual fluidity over constraining categorisation. His biographer Fred Kaplan claims that Vidal 'feared labelling that might be used against him... He had no desire to complicate his life with public announcements about private matters.'⁶⁹⁹

Vidal and Isherwood stand out as exceptions, their sheer literary prominence making them very different actors on the public stage than the profusion of comparatively minor writers openly discussing homosexuality in France. Another difference may be found in the focus that many American gay men had on entering and influencing academia, where in France this was less of a preoccupation. Where most of the French figures discussed in this chapter had careers outside of the university structure, or were only tangentially involved with academic life, there was concerted effort in the US to increase the visibility of gay men and lesbians and to promote work about them.⁷⁰⁰ Jeffrey Escoffier's examination of gay intellectuals in America looks at their emergence always in relation to academia, either in terms of a struggle for acceptance in universities, or the tensions between gay intellectuals working in the academy and those who chose to work within gay and lesbian communities.⁷⁰¹ In France, the struggle for acceptance into academia was less relevant than in the United States, as

⁶⁹⁹ Fred Kaplan, *Gore Vidal: A Biography* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999), 205.

⁷⁰⁰ Exceptions here are Dominique Fernandez, who was a professor of Italian at the University of Rennes II, and Guy Hocquenghem taught with René Schérer at Paris VIII.

⁷⁰¹ Escoffier, *American Homo*, 99-185.

there existed increasing opportunities for access to the public sphere in print and on the airwaves, at least for a particular Paris-based elite of gay male writers. This was a position made possible by the longer history of homosexuality in literature, but also through their own media positioning and profiles.

Two writers of liberation: Jean-Louis Bory and Guy Hocquenghem

Two writers who most fully took advantage of the position that they occupied as both literary figures and politically active homosexuals were Jean-Louis Bory and Guy Hocquenghem. Although of different generations, (Bory was born in 1919 and Hocquenghem in 1946) they both gained recognition at a precocious age. Bory won the second post-liberation Prix Goncourt at the age of 26 with his novel *Mon village à l'heure allemande* (1945). A teacher by profession, his Goncourt win launched him into the literary limelight, he wrote many novels and became the film critic for the popular radio program *Le Masque et la plume*, and the literary critic at the *Nouvel Observateur*. He would not begin making political interventions about homosexuality until early in the 1970s, when, after already having established himself in the public eye, he performed his coming out.

Guy Hocquenghem's rise to prominence was similarly precocious, but it was more explicitly political, and unlike the older Bory, was open about his sexuality from the start. Where Bory's career trajectory was marked by the aftermath of the Liberation, Hocquenghem's was marked by the defining episode of his own generation, May 1968. A student at the Ecole Normale Supérieure, Hocquenghem was heavily involved in the events of 1968, first with the

Trotskyist *Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire* (JCR), before being excluded alongside others involved in its 'maospontex' tendency and gravitating towards the Maoist *Vive la Révolution* (VLR) group; although he would become best known for his prominent role in the FHAR.⁷⁰² As a writer he gained public and intellectual attention with the publication of *Le Désir homosexuel* in 1973, before working as a columnist for *Libération*, publishing novels and teaching on the philosophy course with his former teacher (and lover) René Schérer at the radical Vincennes campus.

Despite their differences, both men held a certain cultural legitimacy that allowed them to make political interventions. Furthermore, both writers performed a public coming out in the early 1970s. Although they approached the public disclosure of their homosexuality in different manners, their individual trajectories illustrate the ways in which the process of 'coming out' developed in France, particularly in relation to the sort of marketplace positioning that Bordieu describes.

In 1971, Hocquenghem was the first figure of the emergent gay liberation movement in France to publicly declare his sexuality. He did this through an article entitled 'La Révolution des Homosexuels' in the pages of the *Nouvel Observateur*.⁷⁰³ In it, he recounts his discovery of his sexuality, his shame at having to hide himself, and the difficulties of living a double life, especially within the leftist political groups with which he was involved. Many aspects of

⁷⁰² Marshall, Guy Hocquenghem, 5.

⁷⁰³ Guy Hocquenghem, François Paul-Boncour, 'La révolution des homosexuels,' *Le Nouvel Observateur*, January 10, 1972, 32-5.

what would become the standard tropes of the coming out story are already present here in early form. Prior to the act of coming out, shame, dissimulation and self-policing defined his experience: 'J'ai commencé à vivre deux vies séparées: je devenais un homosexuel... Je m'interdisais toute affectation qui aurait pu paraître efféminée.... J'avais honte de mon corps... J'étais condamné au mensonge et à la dissimulation.'⁷⁰⁴ Revelation and relief finally arrives upon meeting other homosexuals. In Hocquenghem's case, this was an encounter with an early incarnation of the FHAR. Alongside this physical encounter is an emotional encounter with literature. During his adolescence, Hocquenghem began precociously writing his 'memoirs: 'j'étais un petit Rimbaud à la manque, un mineur qui cherche à être détourné.'⁷⁰⁵ Here we see that, despite the novelty of Hocquenghem's confessional article in a mainstream news magazine, it is not difficult for him to root his experience in a longer literary history. The personal drama of the coming out narrative that Hocquenghem pioneered in the French media would prove much more enduring than the liberation rhetoric that otherwise peppers the article.

The drama of coming out was further orchestrated by an article in the following issue, in which Guy's mother, Madeleine Hocquenghem, gave her response. Rather than the leftist politics that Hocquenghem emphasises, here family is at the forefront. Madeleine's main emotion was regret. While she says she has no problem with homosexuals (they are 'des êtres humains semblables aux autres') she condemns her son's use of the media to air aspects of their private family dynamic: 'Cette interview m'apparaissait, dans une certaine mesure, comme un

⁷⁰⁴ Hocquenghem, Paul-Boncour, 'La révolution des homosexuels,' 32.

⁷⁰⁵ Hocquenghem, Paul-Boncour, 'La révolution des homosexuels', 32.

viol...'⁷⁰⁶ Her allusion to sexual violence here is telling: Guy had breached the dividing wall between public and private. She is scornful when she writes: 'Peut-être ton exhibitionnisme est-il pour toi une chance de libération.'⁷⁰⁷ According to a biographer of Hocquenghem, Ron Haas, this exchange was: 'the literary event that, probably more than any single other, helped establish the cause of gay liberation firmly in the wider public consciousness.'⁷⁰⁸ Yet as has been noted, French gay liberation activists did not see the act of coming out as having the same importance as activists in the US or UK did at the time, and often had a more personally ambiguous relationship to visibility. Stress much be placed on Hocquenghem's article not as a political intervention, but as a media event. A young '68 militant using the pages of the *Nouvel Observateur* to 'come out' coded the act as radical, but also an act reserved for those with the cultural capital to access this space, and extricate themselves from the messiness of day-to-day prejudice through writing.

Jean-Louis Bory's coming out process was more protracted, and was in part a response to Hocquenghem's action. Whilst he had been in the public eye since 1945, he did not announce his sexual orientation until over twenty years later. Bory slowly shaped his approach to his own sexuality in his novels, which became increasingly direct about their characters' homosexuality as his career progressed. His first novel to feature explicitly homosexual characters was 1969's *La Peau des zèbres*. The novel centres on two couples who live their lives openly as homosexuals, without reference to a fixed homosexual identity.⁷⁰⁹

⁷⁰⁶ Madeleine Hocquenghem, 'Lettre à mon fils,' *Le Nouvel Observateur*, January 17, 1972, 36.

⁷⁰⁷ Hocquenghem 'Lettre à mon fils', 36.

⁷⁰⁸ Ron Haas, 'Utopia aborted: May '68 and the philosophy of Guy Hocquenghem,' *Proceedings of the Western Society for French History* 32, (2004); 405.

⁷⁰⁹ Jean-Louis Bory, *La Peau des zèbres* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969).

These are characters who are homosexual, but who live their homosexuality without complex, whose sexuality is a detail of their lives. The indifference with which the homosexual relationships at the centre of the novel were treated would become Bory's ideal.

Homosexuality was becoming clearly articulated in Bory's novels, but until 1973 Bory maintained the fiction that his characters' orientations were in no way a reflection of his own experience. In 1973 Bory edged closer to his own biography and published the slim volume *Ma moitié d'orange*. It would become one of the most widely read piece of writing on homosexuality published in France the 1970s.⁷¹⁰ However, Bory's sales are not in proportion with the bravery of the text. He describes his identification with a female alter ego 'Denise' who he has been searching for his entire life, the other half of the 'orange' that would complete him. When he writes that he is looking for: 'Un autre comme moi qui me ressemblerait comme un frère,' he immediately reins himself in: 'Un frère qui soit aussi femme, je veux dire: épouse, amante.'⁷¹¹ His biographer Daniel Garcia rightly points out that: 'on peut reprocher à Jean-Louis d'avoir joué à cache-cache avec son sujet.'⁷¹² The book is maddeningly oblique; homosexuality is not named on any of its 127 pages.

Unsatisfied by the lingering evasiveness in *Ma moitié d'orange*, Bory published an article entitled 'Oui, je suis homosexuel' in the review *Accord* in April 1973. Alluding to Proust's injunction to 'never say I' when writing of homosexuality,

⁷¹⁰ Over 50,000 copies were sold, a contemporary success for a 'niche' title, it would also see later re-editions. Daniel Garcia, *Jean-Louis Bory* (Paris: Flammarion, 1991), 200.

⁷¹¹ Jean-Louis Bory, *Ma moitié d'orange* (Paris: Julliard, 1973), 25.

⁷¹² Garcia, *Jean-Louis Bory*, 201.

Bory wrote that: 'Il a bien fallu que je dise "je", que je finisse par dire "je"... Et qu'on me dise pas: "C'est affaire de vie privée. Ça ne regarde personne" C'est faux!'⁷¹³ Although Bory's coming out was a longer, more drawn-out process than Hocquenghem's, it was also performed via the press, and expressed partly through literary allusions. But where Bory gradually introduced his homosexuality to a literary and media establishment had already granted him a measure of success; Hocquenghem used his homosexuality to differentiate himself and position himself against this establishment. Their contrasting media appearances illustrate this difference.

Bory would come to argue for the 'droit à l'indifférence', by which he meant that ideally society would treat homosexuality as an inconsequential quirk of personality and taste.⁷¹⁴ Without acknowledgement, Bory had taken a central tenant of 1950s homophile ideology, and by expressing it in public, as a homosexual man, he updated it to the new context of 1970s visibility. Indeed, Bory blended this moderate appeal with the stirring language of revolution, even if the more radical elements of gay liberation are not present here; for instance, in freeing both homosexuals and heterosexuals from sexual repression he claims that 'le sexe aura son 1789.'⁷¹⁵ But if Bory wished his sexuality to be treated as an incidental detail of his personality he was to be sorely disappointed. The irony is that through a process of hiding and revealing he himself had made homosexuality a guiding feature of his work and central to his public persona.

⁷¹³ The article is reproduced in Garcia, *Jean-Louis Bory*, 202.

⁷¹⁴ This is most fully argued in Jean-Louis Bory and Guy Hocquenghem, *Comment nous appelez-vous déjà? Ces hommes que l'on dit homosexuels* (Paris: Calmann-Levy, 1977), 129-30.

⁷¹⁵ Bory and Hocquenghem, *Comment nous appelez-vous déjà?*, 134.

Because of his moderate politics, and because he was a reliably warm and funny performer, Bory regularly appeared on television, in both serious and light entertainment programming. For instance, Bory appeared on the chat show *Samedi Soir* in February 1973 after the publication of *Ma moitié d'orange*. As is characteristic of the book, and Bory's appearances before the *Accord* article, homosexuality is treated as an open secret. Bory skirts the topic. In his brief interview with the presenter Philippe Bouvard he touches on many of the themes that would become common in his media appearances on the topic of homosexuality: 'On arrive toujours à un moment dans la vie où on a marre de mentir, à soi d'abord, puis aux autres, et on veut justement vivre en accord avec sa nature profonde et ne pas avoir ni honte ni le goût de tricher.'⁷¹⁶ Yet Bouvard is hostile, and is determined to turn the issue into entertainment for an audience that was prone to giggles. Bouvard comments that people leave Bory alone because of the bourgeois literary circles in which he moves, to which Bory replies: 'là vous avez la conception très parisienne du fait que vous êtes persuadé que "les artistes" sont des gens qui se permettent de tout... c'est pas vrai.'⁷¹⁷ Bouvard closes the interview by joking that if he had a sixteen-year-old son he would be wary of letting leaving him in Bory's company. The personal toll of representing a maligned minority is etched on Bory's face; he gives a pained smile as Bouvard sweeps across the studio to his next guest.

In contrast to Bory's accommodating performances, Hocquenghem built a career on appearing as a provocateur and 'an outsider' to the establishment. In

⁷¹⁶ *Samedi Soir*, Antenne 2, first broadcast February 17, 1973.

⁷¹⁷ *Samedi Soir*, February 17, 1973.

his work on Hocquenghem, Bill Marshall claims that he ‘recalcitrantly played’ his role of ‘public homosexual.’⁷¹⁸ Nowhere is this more visible than in his appearances on television. In 1979 Hocquenghem appeared on Bernard Pivot’s *Apostrophes*, the influential Friday evening literary show, to discuss ‘Les intellectuels journalistes’ on the release of his new book *La Beauté du métis*. Hocquenghem’s appearance and performance on the show is in striking contrast to the other guests, Jean Daniel, the editor of *Le Nouvel Observateur*, Jean François Revel, the editor of *L’Express*, and Georges Suffert, the editor of *Le Point*’s ‘Idées’ section. Where these much older and greyer men sit in suits and ties, Hocquenghem smokes, slouched in jeans with a youthful spray of curls. Homosexuality is not the theme of the program, nor is it a major point of discussion, but Hocquenghem’s alternative self-presentation and alternative sexuality go hand-in-hand. Where the other men speak in low, measured sentences, Hocquenghem speaks with excitable energy. As Tamara Chaplin reminds us, expressing ideas on television, and engaging in dialogue, is as much about visual representation and corporeality as it is about language.⁷¹⁹ On the stage of *Apostrophes*, Hocquenghem embodies and performs his difference.

Throughout the broadcast, Hocquenghem interjected to attack his fellow guests. He argued that they formed journalism’s old guard, producers of ‘commentaires sur commentaires et opinions sur opinions,’⁷²⁰ fruitless exercises in positioning compared to ‘real’ political activity. When Pivot opened the floor up to debate, Jean Daniel praised Hocquenghem’s new book, but

⁷¹⁸ Marshall, *Guy Hocquenghem*, 13.

⁷¹⁹ Tamara Chaplin, *Turning on the Mind: French Philosophers on Television* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007), 12.

⁷²⁰ *Apostrophes*, Antenne 2, first broadcast April 20, 1979.

found a contradiction between his confrontational presentation and journalism and his rather traditional writing style: 'je trouve que rien n'est plus classique, n'est plus français, n'est plus parisien que ce merveilleux petit pamphlet...vous avez un cravate quand vous écrivez, vous n'êtes pas en jean'⁷²¹ This provoked Hocquenghem, who accused the *Nouvel Observateur* of being at one with *L'Express* and *Le Point*, all a part of 'les grands journaux commerciaux avec les moyens qu'il faut' not like the more marginal (and therefore authentic) newspapers like *Libération* and *Charlie Hebdo*.⁷²² Daniel in turn lost his patience with Hocquenghem, accusing him of being an impostor:

'l'imposture ça consist à prendre les parures, les vêtements, les oripeaux de la marginalité pour entrer dans le pamphlet le plus conformiste, le plus classique qu'il soit... vous savez pour être iconoclaste, ce que vous prétendez là, il faudrait qu'il y a des îcones. Il y en a plus d'îcones! La pédérasie, j'en suis entourée. Vous avez une grande-mère juif? J'en ai deux... vous représentez une certaine imposture qui est visible dans la différence du style dès que vous entrez en littérature, alors vous mettez le smoking ...'⁷²³

Though the product of a heated exchange, there is truth in Daniel's admonishment. Hocquenghem used his media appearances to perform the role of the outsider, even if his *curriculum vitae* was typical of a Parisian literary elite: a graduate of the rue de l'Ulm, works published by major houses such as Grasset and Calmann-Lévy, a side line in opinion journalism, and a position at the university of Vincennes. Haas claims that Hocquenghem's confrontational

⁷²¹ *Apostrophes*, April 20, 1979.

⁷²² *Apostrophes*, April 20, 1979.

⁷²³ *Apostrophes*, April 20, 1979.

performances on television show that he had no qualms about harming his own career, because ‘of the many things that interested Hocquenghem throughout his lifetime, a career was never one of them’.⁷²⁴ Yet in fact, Hocquenghem used controversy precisely to build his career, and to fashion a distinct media personality. He was well aware of where he stood in relation to others. Reflecting on his own career as a writer in 1985, Hocquenghem would claim that, unlike the many writers that were discussing homosexuality at that time, he was interested in writing about the subject ‘quand c’était moins couru et plus risqué.’⁷²⁵ Hocquenghem successfully leveraged the cultural capital that his literary activities afforded him whilst at the same time maintaining the appearance of an outsider. His transgressive public ‘coming out’ can also be seen in these terms, both as a political act alongside his other engagements and as a piece of personal positioning in the media market.

The differences between Hocquenghem and Bory did not preclude their collaboration. The two published a joint collection of essays and short stories in 1977. The collection aims to foreground the experience of living openly as a gay man, with the first words of the foreword recalling their shared experience of coming out: ‘Nous avons décidé tous deux de vivre au grand jour notre homosexualité.’⁷²⁶ From this shared departure, the book goes on to emphasise their divergent approaches. It does this by contrasting two pieces of writing, Bory’s ‘Vivre à Midi’ and Hocquenghem’s ‘Oiseau de nuit.’ ‘Vivre à midi’ is an apologia for homosexuality that reads as old-fashioned in its verbosity, with

⁷²⁴ Haas, ‘Utopia aborted’, 410.

⁷²⁵ Guy Hocquenghem, ‘Où en est l’homosexualité en 85, ou pourquoi je ne veux pas être un “écrivain gay,”’ *Masques*, Spring-Summer 1985, 112.

⁷²⁶ Bory and Hocquenghem, *Comment nous appelez-vous déjà?*, 8.

Bory never getting away from the loquacious writing that he had previously used to mask his sexuality. Even when presenting himself openly, Bory loses himself in the grammar of concealment: 'J'en suis. Tu en es. En est-il?... *En*: pronom adverbial représentatif d'une chose, ou d'un lieu, ou d'une personne, ou d'une groupe de personnes. Ce *en-là*, de quoi est-il représentatif?'⁷²⁷

Hocquenghem's 'Oiseau de Nuit', by contrast, is a short story that is direct and painful in its vision of homosexual experience. We follow a gay man as he attempts to pick up a straight man in a Paris bar, taking him on a tour of after-dark cruising spots accompanied by a stream of frustrated conversation and attempts at seduction.⁷²⁸ Hocquenghem's story describes the itinerant longing that Hocquenghem saw as essential to homosexual desire. It is the energy of the FHAR passed into exhausted, depressive mode. Where Bory is essentially positive about the possibilities of living (and writing) openly, but finds it painful to do so; Hocquenghem expresses his sexuality, but sees a darker vision. *Comment vous appelez-vous* underlines the divergent approaches to being homosexual in the public eye taken by Bory and Hocquenghem in the 1970s.

What Bory and Hocquenghem shared was a commitment to visibility, but the act of coming out did not go unquestioned. Michel Foucault's work on sexuality and the confessional was in dialogue with these authors.⁷²⁹ As Didier Eribon argues, it is not a coincidence that Foucault's thought on the construction of homosexuality in the nineteenth century reads very similarly to Hocquenghem;

⁷²⁷ Bory and Hocquenghem, *Comment nous appelez-vous déjà?*, 11.

⁷²⁸ 'Oiseau de nuit' was later dramatised in the final portion of Hocquenghem and Lionel Soukaz's film *Race d'Ep*, (1979; France).

⁷²⁹ This presence was not lost on either of the writers. Foucault even appears as an affectionate caricature of a bald philosopher in Bory's 1977 novel *Le Pied*.

Le Désir homosexuel also described homosexuality as a recent invention rather than an essential part of the human condition.⁷³⁰ Indeed, Eribon goes so far as to claim that: ‘C’est assurément au livre d’Hocquenghem que Foucault voudra répondre lorsqu’il commencera son *Histoire de la Sexualité*.’⁷³¹

The book the Foucault wrote in response also aimed to describe the pitfalls of visibility. Rather than a means of liberation, Foucault believed that the injunction to put our sexual preferences into speech was a means of control:

‘C’est peut être là pour la première fois que s’impose sous la forme d’une contrainte générale, cette injonction si particulière à l’Occident moderne... la tâche, quasi infinie, de dire, de se dire à soi-même et de dire à un autre, aussi souvent que possible, tout ce qui peut concerner le jeu des plaisirs, sensations et pensées innombrables qui, à travers l’âme et le corps, ont quelque affinité avec le sexe.’⁷³²

Foucault himself resisted the idea of coming out because of its potential to solidify sexuality through discourse, and thus open the potential for domination. It is hard not to think that the new injunction to ‘come out’ was in Foucault’s mind when he was writing of: ‘la tâche, quasi infinie, de dire...’ and the discursive and identitarian traps into which one could be led by such an injunction.

⁷³⁰ Eribon, *Réflexions*, 441.

⁷³¹ Eribon, *Réflexions*, 443.

⁷³² Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité* 1, 29.

In this way, *La volonté de savoir* can be read as an intervention in contemporary debate around homosexual identity. If the ‘confessional’ discourse that Foucault describes as produced by the Church, science and medicine constituted the ‘truth’ of sex, then why simply add another ‘confessional’ mode, this time one produced by the injunction to come out? According to James Miller, Foucault adopted a complex strategy for dealing with his sexuality in public, commenting in one interview: ‘Between the affirmation, “I am a homosexual” and the refusal to say this, there lies a highly ambiguous dialectic.’⁷³³ Foucault thus avoided the confessional trap in which Hocquenghem and others had been placed by their media exposure. Eribon remarks that ‘Aux plus radicaux des militants, à ceux qui lui faisaient la leçon, Foucault n’était sans doute pas mécontent de rétorquer qu’ils étaient piégés par les ruses du pouvoir qu’ils entendaient combattre.’⁷³⁴ In terms of the dynamics of media exposure, Foucault was right to have been suspicious of coming out in the public eye.

‘Gay writers’ and ‘gay culture’?

Bory and Hocquenghem, although perhaps most visible, were not alone. They were part of a larger group of writers in France who openly identified as homosexual and explored homosexuality in their work. Although many of these men had narrower media profiles than the two discussed above, they were in no sense marginal. These writers were a loose grouping, whose most prominent

⁷³³ Quoted in James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), 256.

⁷³⁴ Eribon, *Réflexions*, 448.

members were the Goncourt winner (and later Académie member) Dominique Fernandez and fellow Goncourt winner Yves Navarre. These writers had an ambiguous and often hostile relationship with the idea that their writing was intimately tied with their sexual identity. Nevertheless, these writers used homosexuality as both inspiration for their work and as a differentiating factor in the literary market. Furthermore, the 1970s was a moment at which some began to question whether gay writing could provide a unique viewpoint on society and human nature, and whether they themselves were part of a new literary phenomenon of 'gay writers'.

This controversial situation of gay writing in France can be contrasted to the situation elsewhere, particularly in the United States, perhaps the only other nation with a similar prevalence of widely distributed writing by openly gay men on the market, albeit less visible in the national media. The relationship of American gay writers to their sexual identity was very different to that of their French counterparts. The novelist Edmund White, an American with a long association with France, and with the practise of gay writing, has complained that: 'Whereas most English-language writers perceive the evolution of openly gay fiction as progressive, in France the same label is treated contemptuously as reactionary and belittling.'⁷³⁵ He continues: 'But what cannot be denied is that homosexuality itself constitutes both a subject and a point of view for many major writers in the 20th century, and to say that to classify them as homosexual writers is 'belittling' means that one considers homosexuality itself to be an

⁷³⁵ Edmund White, 'Today the Artist is a Saint Who Writes His Own Life,' *London Review of Books* 17, no. 5, (March 9, 1995); 6.

unmentionable stain.⁷³⁶ White correctly identifies the tension for writers who identify as gay in France, who were caught between the use of their personal experience of sexuality in their work, and a wish to repudiate a narrowing of identity.

Two writers who achieved literary success and public profiles in the period, Yves Navarre and Dominique Fernandez offer an example of the tensions and contradictions in the notion of gay writing and gay culture in France and the ways in which writers managed their image in the media. Navarre was born in 1940 in Gers and published his first novel *Lady Black* in 1971. Same-sex attraction had been a theme of all of Navarre's work and he did not perform a coming out (precocious like Bory or belated like Bory and later Fernandez) rather, he had always been open about his sexuality. One of his first television appearances was on the *Emission médicale* in 1973 to defend homosexuality (discussed below), although as the 1970s progressed his media profile became more about his own writing than his sexuality. Appearing first in the public eye as a homosexual, Navarre began to distance himself somewhat from his sexuality. For instance, on the release of one of his novel, *Le petit galopin de nos corps* (1977) he appeared on the daytime television program *Aujourd'hui Madame*. In a roundtable discussion ('Des auteurs face à leurs lectrices') one reader praises the novel for being 'tendre, bouleversant, pudique', especially considering the 'vague de pornographie' which she believed France was experiencing.⁷³⁷ Navarre agrees and explains that this is precisely why he emphasises the universal value of love over homosexuality in the novel:

⁷³⁶ White, 'Today the Artist is a Saint,' 7.

⁷³⁷ *Aujourd'hui Madame*, Antenne 2, first broadcast June 13, 1977.

‘l’amour pour eux c’est la compagnie, le regard, le geste, la continuité, la tenacité, le quotidien, beaucoup plus que l’acte sexuel.’⁷³⁸ As the discussion continues, Navarre further de-emphasises the subject of homosexuality: ‘le mot ‘homosexuel’ c’est un mot qui se hérissé de fils de fer à barbellé parce que depuis quatre, cinq ans les médias ont récupéré le problème de nôtre, de *ma* minorité... en termes de spectacle et ont créé une nouvelle forme de racisme – celui des homosexuels dont on parle *trop*...’⁷³⁹ Navarre is acutely aware of the issues of appearing in public, of the tensions between the vocation of the writer to talk about universal human experience and the minority experience of homosexuality. Here he is playing a double game, careful to assert himself as a homosexual (in his talk of ‘*ma* minorité’) whilst at the same time emphasising the universal aspects of his writing.

By contrast, Dominique Fernandez placed much more emphasis on the unique perspective provided by his sexuality. Older than Navarre (born in 1929 in Neuilly-sur-Seine), Fernandez was an ENS graduate, professor of Italian and a prominent novelist by the 1970s. Like Bory he was slow to declare his homosexuality. He was married until 1971, and began to speak openly on the publication of his novel *L’Étoile Rose* in 1978. As ever, the combination of literary success and homosexuality was intriguing to the French media. On the novel’s publication, Fernandez was an item on the evening news. The newsreader placed him in a longer tradition of homosexual literary figures in France, but it also describes Fernandez’s difference from them: ‘Proust, Genet ou Montherlant nous livraient des expériences tragiques ou honteuses.

⁷³⁸ *Aujourd’hui Madame*, June 13, 1977.

⁷³⁹ *Aujourd’hui Madame*, June 13, 1977.

Dominique Fernandez lui fait un plaidoyer pour la liberté. C'est la première fois qu'un professeur d'université se déclare ouvertement homosexuel.⁷⁴⁰

Fernandez was unapologetic about his novel as a political intervention:

'dans le milieu Parisien et intellectuel il y a une certaine liberté. Mais, dès que vous sortez du milieu intellectuel, si vous allez chez un ouvrier de Renault... vous trouvez une hostilité, le refus totale... et c'est pour ça que je bats, non seulement pour l'homosexualité, mais pour le droit de toutes les minorités d'être elles-mêmes.'⁷⁴¹

Fernandez's tone is perhaps not surprising considering that *L'Étoile Rose* itself is a tale of coming to terms with and asserting sexual identity. The protagonist meets a young gay American man who takes him away from his life of closeted cruising and medical intervention and inducts him into a world of political and sexual liberation. One of the novel's moments of salvation is his discovery of the word 'gay' from the lips of his American lover.⁷⁴² As both the title (in its allusion to the Nazi emblem) and Fernandez's media comments make clear, the book was very much a political intervention. Writing in *Masques*, Jean-Pierre Joecker thought the book encapsulated the spirit of the decade, as important a book as Gide's *Corydon*.⁷⁴³

⁷⁴⁰ *Journal 20h*, Antenne 2, first broadcast December 1, 1978.

⁷⁴¹ *Journal 20h*, December 1, 1978.

⁷⁴² Fernandez, *L'Étoile rose*, 312.

⁷⁴³ Jean-Pierre Joecker, 'De l'explosion gaie à la fin de l'homosexualité,' *Masques*, Spring-Summer 1985, 6.

Fernandez's straightforwardness about sexuality complemented his literary style and it did not exclude him from success in the literary establishment. Indeed, all of these writers achieved mainstream literary success. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the awards that they received.⁷⁴⁴ Navarre's Goncourt-winning novel *Le jardin d'acclimatation* (1980) is a family drama of the *haute bourgeoisie* centring on Henri Prouillan, a former minister and his family.⁷⁴⁵ The plot's tragic locus is Henri's homosexual son Bertrand, who is forced to undergo a lobotomy at his father's request, fearing potential scandal. The novel presents Bertrand as a vulnerable victim of the force of moral censure, political ambition and the collusion of the medical establishment. Bertrand's homosexuality haunts the novel. As would be expected of an eventual prize winner, the novel had a warm reception in the press. By this time, Navarre was such a prolific novelist and figure of the French literary *rentrée* that the critic Bernard Alliot listed his new work under the note 'Et voici les habitués'.⁷⁴⁶ The coverage tended to de-emphasise the 'homosexual' aspect of the novel, taking *Le Jardin d'acclimatation* as a family drama in which Navarre takes aim at the starchy morality of the haute-bourgeoisie: 'Yves Navarre, lui, se montre plus sévère, mais ses coups épargnent les êtres pour accabler une classe: la bourgeoisie qui dévore ses enfants.'⁷⁴⁷ In this reading of the novel, Bertrand's homosexuality is as a literary device signalling deviance, and it is the drama of the imposition of morality at the centre of the novel.

⁷⁴⁴ Jocelyn François, a prominent lesbian writer, also won the Prix Fémina, a counterweight to the Goncourt, in 1980 for her novel *Joue-nous España* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1980).

⁷⁴⁵ Yves Navarre, *Le Jardin d'acclimatation* (Paris: Flammarion, 1980).

⁷⁴⁶ Bernard Alliot, 'La rentrée chez les éditeurs,' *Le Monde*, August 29, 1980, 11.

⁷⁴⁷ Gabrielle Rolin, 'Yves Navarre dénonce les moeurs bourgeoises,' *Le Monde*, September 26, 1980, 18.

By contrast, Dominique Fernandez's 1982 Goncourt winner *Dans la main de l'ange* deals more directly with homosexual experience, through the fictionalised biography of the Italian filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini, who was murdered three years earlier.⁷⁴⁸ The subject of Pasolini's life appears strange for a writer who was often so optimistic about homosexual identity. Fernandez was portraying a life overshadowed by the controversy over his death that had flared up seven years earlier.⁷⁴⁹ *Le Monde's* critic judged the book as 'l'histoire d'un destin d'homosexuel,' although Pasolini's particular trajectory was marked by the fact that this was a destiny pursued in a world that was rapidly changing and less able to accommodate a generation 'qui vivait l'homosexualité comme une malédiction.'⁷⁵⁰ In the gay press, the novel's engagement with questions over change and the generational experience of homosexuality were generally ignored in favour of self-congratulation over a second gay Goncourt winner. In *Gai Pied hebdo*, Jean Le Bitoux hailed Fernandez's win as 'notre Goncourt'.⁷⁵¹ Fernandez was unabashed by his associations with the gay community, when asked whether he considered whether the prize was also a victory for homosexuality he declared: 'Bien sûr, et c'est ainsi que je l'interprète. Ce sera le cas parce qu'entre 150,000 et 300,000 personnes vont lire mon livre, et permettre à beaucoup de réfléchir sur l'homosexualité à travers cet itinéraire de Pier Paolo.'⁷⁵² Fernandez used the Goncourt's prominence, and the cultural

⁷⁴⁸ Dominique Fernandez, *Dans la main de l'ange* (Paris: Grasset, 1982).

⁷⁴⁹ On the death of the Italian director, murdered in November 1975, Hocquenghem wrote an inflammatory article lamenting the loss of the world of deviance and delinquency that had once characterised homosexuality, and had claimed the life of the director. He was attacked by the GLH Paris, who in the same newspaper claimed that Hocquenghem had lost touch with a world that was still violent for many: Guy Hocquenghem, 'Tout le monde ne peut pas mourir dans son lit,' *Libération*, March 29, 1976, 11; Des militants du GLH Politique et Quotidien, 'Guy Hocquenghem confond le goût du sperme et celui du sang,' *Libération*, April 20, 1976, 2.

⁷⁵⁰ Bertrand Poirot-Delpech, 'Pasolini ou l'abjection choisie,' *Le Monde*, August 27, 1982, 9.

⁷⁵¹ Jean Le Bitoux, 'Dominique Fernandez, notre Goncourt '82,' *Gai Pied hebdo*, November 27, 1982, 5.

⁷⁵² Le Bitoux 'Dominique Fernandez,' 5.

authority that successful novelists were granted in the French public sphere to make a political point. Although later in the interview he shows a certain cynicism about the use of homosexuality in the literary market to generate sales: 'Mais parce que c'est la mode, la production actuelle part trop du seul fait homosexuel: on espère une bonne vente du livre parce qu'un petit scandale'⁷⁵³ Indeed, Navarre and Fernandez's successive Goncourt wins can be seen as a part of a certain vogue for homosexuality in French publishing at the turn of the 1980s, in an atmosphere where gay men were becoming increasingly prominent in the media.

Literary success and increased visibility were self-reinforcing. *Gai Pied hebdo's* excitable reception of Fernandez's win shows us the emphasis that the gay press placed on the power of cultural products. A dedicated attempt to weave together the products of gay writers and to explore the notion of gay culture was the publication of *Masques: Revue des homosexualités* in 1979. The journal grew out of a project of a group of members of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), who had set up a commission in early 1976 to investigate the relationship between the aims of the party and homosexuality. The group eventually resigned from the LCR due to the party's lack of interest in homosexual politics. This break heralded a move away from far-left activism towards an interest in locating and exploring gay culture. In their first letter to subscribers, the editorial team asked: 'Avons-nous réussi à restituer un regard gai sur le monde?'⁷⁵⁴

⁷⁵³ Le Bitoux 'Dominique Fernandez,' 5.

⁷⁵⁴ 'La lettre de *Masques*, 'no.1, May 22, 1979. NAF 28675, (MP).

This desire to express a subjectivity that was authentically 'gai' ('gay' with a French inflection) sat at the heart of *Masques'* cultural and political project. In issue seven, the editorial team asked writers about their views on the relationship between literature and their own homosexuality. Most rejected the limiting notion of being a writer defined by sexuality, or the idea of there being a 'homosexual' literary genre. Renaud Camus dismissed the question outright, preferring an affirmation of the kind of evasive and multiple identity-creation of which Foucault surely would have approved: 'Que rien n'est ridicule comme le concept d' "écrivain homosexuel," sauf peut-être ceux de "écrivain catholique," "écrivain Breton," "écrivain d'avant-garde". Je me résous mal à être un "écrivain", j'aimerais mieux en être deux, ou trois, ou davantage.'⁷⁵⁵ By contrast, Dominique Fernandez embraced the creative invention that he found in sexuality, an inseparable part of his identity: 'Je ne peux pas séparer ce qui est homosexuel et ce qui ne le serait pas...L'homosexualité fait tellement partie de ma vision du monde, de ma sensibilité, qu'on ne peut pas introduire une distinction.'⁷⁵⁶

There was thus an underlying tension between the success that many of these writers had found in explicitly writing about homosexuality and their anxiety at not being limited to the label of a 'gay writer'. In *Libération*, Navarre lamented the limitations of his media profile as a gay writer: 'Oh je vous reconnais, vous êtes passé à la télé dans l'émission sur les pédés... Un nouveau racisme, celui des homosexuels "don't on parle tout le temps"... Le forme actuelle de fascisme

⁷⁵⁵ Jean-Pierre Joecker, 'Homosexualités et création littéraire,' *Masques*, Winter 1980, 34.

⁷⁵⁶ Joecker, 'Homosexualités et création littéraire,' 30.

n'est plus de baïlloner, mais de faire dire.⁷⁵⁷ Despite weariness at being the spokesmen for homosexuality, their engagement with the topic in *Masques* suggests that they still had enthusiasm for thinking over the topic, perhaps because they can be sure that they are writing for a sympathetic audience.

As the *Masques* project shows, the field of 'culture' began to take on more urgency as activists began to drift away from hard-left groups, and to realise its hold on public perceptions of homosexuality, particularly in the media. Yet the literary prominence of openly homosexual men also had a conservative bent, as homosexuality became a fixture of elite literary prizes and sanitized discussion on literary panels it was gradually eroded of its earlier ability to scandalise. Caught between the forces of radicalism and the literary and media establishment, exploring what 'gay culture' or 'gay writing' was of great political importance. And this importance was compounded by the increasingly important role that gay writers played as spokesmen for homosexuality on the television.

Defending homosexuality on television

Until the late 1960s, the direct discussion of homosexuality in the broadcast media in France was rare. When programmes began to be made on the topic, they tended to frame it in terms of a moral issue that occasioned debate. This framing required the participation of figures who had cultural and intellectual legitimacy. At first, doctors, psychiatrists and priests were considered to

⁷⁵⁷ Yves Navarre 'Une place entre l'ombre et le soleil,' *Libération*, April 25, 1977, 15.

possess these qualities and thus speak publically on the topic. But as the 1970s progressed, openly homosexual writers played an increasingly prominent role in these programs, coming to dominate the public discussion of homosexuality in televised format by the early 1980s. Personal experience replaced professional expertise, and the cultural legitimacy conferred by the status of being a writer made access to broadcast media possible. By the 1970s, television had become France's main broadcast medium, with 65% of French people claiming to watch television every day in 1973, and rising to 69% by 1981.⁷⁵⁸ Chaplin has written about the crucial role of French intellectuals' use of the television, not only in mediating ideas to the masses (and television shaping the discipline in turn) but also in shaping a French cultural imaginary, an imaginary which gave wide room to intellectual debate.⁷⁵⁹

One of the first programs to engage in intellectual and moral debate around homosexuality was 1973's *Émission Médicale*. As the title suggests, the program focused on homosexuality as a phenomenon that required a medical opinion, even intervention. Introducing his topic, the presenter Etienne Lalou stated his wish to examine with a dispassionate gaze 'ce phénomène troublant et souvent douloureux'.⁷⁶⁰ Lalou introduced the opinions of various branches of medical science, including an endocrinologist and a psychoanalyst. The endocrinologist presents the viewer with a confusing amount of data, but encouragingly concludes that there is not necessarily a link between homosexuality and

⁷⁵⁸ By contrast those who 'never watched' television was only around 5-6% in the period. Cited in Isabelle Gaillard, *La télévision: Histoire d'un objet de consommation 1945-1985* (Paris: Éditions du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques, Institut national de l'audiovisuel, 2012), 290.

⁷⁵⁹ Chaplin, *Turning on the Mind*.

⁷⁶⁰ *Émission médicale*, Antenne 1, first broadcast November 29, 1973.

physical disorder. The psychoanalyst is given by far the most time. He argues in a classically Freudian sense that homosexuality can be the result of: 'une certaine immaturation affective, et l'homosexualité peut aller de pair avec cette immaturation.'⁷⁶¹

However, in a sign of changes to come, other voices are also present, albeit framed as medical case studies. Faces in silhouette recount their personal experiences, including a lorry driver, a homosexual couple and a woman who talks about her son.⁷⁶² Yves Navarre (relatively unknown at the time) and the head of Arcadie, André Baudry, appear as spokespeople for homosexuality. Baudry gives a much more spirited performance than Navarre, and the clearest argument in favour of tolerance. He is at his most convincing when he describes the ordinariness of homosexuality, claiming that men from all walks of life had contacted him at Arcadie. Despite some homophobic voices, the *Émission Médicale* marked one of the first times in French television history that homosexuals began to speak for their own experience on screen, even if this experience was framed as a 'social issue' and heavily mediated by the discourse of medicalised disorder.

As the 1970s progressed, the medicalised representation of homosexuality on television retreated. It had its last gasp in 1977 on the confrontational debate show *L'Huile sur le Feu* where the doctor Henri Amoroso (who had written on the sex lives of the French) was faced with Jean-Louis Bory. The presenter,

⁷⁶¹ *Émission médicale*, November 29, 1973.

⁷⁶² Lesbianism is conspicuously absent here, the working definition of 'homosexuality' seems to implicitly cover only men. This was a state of events that would also change only very slowly over the decade.

Philippe Bouvard, introduced Amoroso by repeating the doctor's pronouncement that Bory was: 'un grand malade enferme dans sa névrose constitutionnelle, se sachant incurable il a décidé à utiliser cette infirmité naturelle à des fins publicitaires thérapeutiques et consolatrices'⁷⁶³ Perhaps referring to Bory's gender-play in *Ma moitié d'orange*, Amoroso sneered: 'en entrant dans le débat je voulais savoir si je dois l'appeler monsieur ou madame'.⁷⁶⁴ Bory mounted a spirited self-defence, claiming that he would: 'refuse le masque et le ghetto auxquels il aimerait m'enfermer.'⁷⁶⁵ Bory says that he is not looking for tolerance but acceptance. This angers Amoroso who shouts: 'mais ça vous ne l'aurez jamais!'⁷⁶⁶ It is Bory who gains the sympathy of the studio audience, primarily by displaying a light-hearted humour at Amoroso's personal attacks. This confrontation between Bory's gentleness and Amoroso's brutishness marks the point at which homophobia began to be gradually de-legitimised, a part of the longer process described by Eric Fassin whereby homophobes, rather than homosexuals, become those seen as problematic in society.⁷⁶⁷

However, as the medicalised conception of homosexuality became less visible on French screens, a new one began to emerge. This evolution can be marked by the content of three successive 'debates' around homosexuality: 'Des amitiés particulières aux amours insolites' on *Les Dossiers de l'Écran* in 1975; 'Ces

⁷⁶³ *L'Huile sur le Feu*, Antenne 2, first broadcast April 18, 1977.

⁷⁶⁴ *L'Huile sur le Feu*, April 18, 1977.

⁷⁶⁵ *L'Huile sur le Feu*, April 18, 1977.

⁷⁶⁶ *L'Huile sur le Feu*, April 18, 1977.

⁷⁶⁷ Fassin, *L'Inversion*. After the broadcast, Dr Amoroso became a target of gay liberation activists. In 1978 he was confronted by a dozen stinkbomb-weilding activists in Marseille at an appearance at a bookshop. He responded in typically irrational and abusive style. 'Amoroso face aux pédés,' *Libération*, March 25, 1978, 7.

hommes qui s'aiment' a *Question de Temps* special in 1979; and another edition of *Les Dossiers de l'Écran* in 1984 entitled 'Être gay aujourd'hui'. Where elsewhere homosexuality was mentioned as an item in a news or magazine-style program, or tangentially because of the presence of homosexual participants; these were programmes whose whole running time was dedicated to the topic, advertising their intentions prominently and being screened in prime slots.

Les Dossiers de l'Écran in 1975 featured a round-table debate on homosexuality after the screening of the 1964 film adaptation of Roger Peyrefitte's novel *Les Amitiés particulières*. The programme had been rescheduled twice since its first planned screening in 1973, once apparently on the wishes of President Pompidou himself.⁷⁶⁸ The producers set two sides against each other, the 'homosexuals' and the 'experts'. On the one side André Baudry, Jean-Louis Bory, Yves Navarre and Roger Peyrefitte; and on the other a neurologist, an endocrinologist, a priest and the former deputy and author of the 1960 'fléau social' amendment Paul Mirguet. The adversarial structure of the programme implicitly set homosexuality up as a social issue. But if the producers intended this framing to produce a spirited debate, especially with the inclusion of Mirguet, they were surely disappointed. The panellists generally found themselves in agreement on the morally neutral nature of homosexuality. The endocrinologist claimed there was no distinguishable hormonal difference between homosexuals and heterosexuals, and the neurologist admitted no neurological difference either. The only friction was created by Mirguet, who

⁷⁶⁸ Jackson, *Living in Arcadia*, 207. The politics of the day's television schedule were clear: the same day as the *Dossiers de l'Écran* broadcast the popular daytime magazine show *Aujourd'hui Madame* took the declining French birth rate as its theme. *Aujourd'hui Madame*, Antenne 2, first broadcast January 21, 1975.

predicted the degeneration of the white race through a declining birth rate. But he appeared as an isolated figure, out of step with post-68 morality. This was a rhetorical victory over a notorious (if by then diminished) moral crusader, a bogey-man whose legislation outlived his ability to rouse homophobic sentiment. Perhaps through curiosity, and the small controversy over its delay, the program drew a large audience of 19 million viewers.⁷⁶⁹

It would be another four years before a similar program was screened. The *Question de Temps* special in 1979 was initiated by Fernandez with the help of Jean Le Bitoux.⁷⁷⁰ The programme is heavily reliant on the Parisian literary and militant milieu for its footage, but it succeeds in moving away from the confrontational discourse of previous television features. Even the title of the programme - 'ces hommes qui s'aiment' - signalled a move away from 'amours insolites'. The program was also the first to set itself up in direct dialogue with public opinion on the subject, opening with 'vox pops' filmed outside Blanche metro station in Paris. One older man claims '[les homosexuels] ont pourri le quartier'; a young man with slicked-back hair and a leather jacket coolly says 'j'aime pas du tout, franchement pas du tout'; and a young woman shrugs 'ils sont comme ils sont, c'est tout... j'ai des amis comme ça et je les aime beaucoup.'⁷⁷¹ This opening made clear the makers' intention to change such opinions, part of a 'media strategy' of acceptance.⁷⁷²

⁷⁶⁹ Martel, *The Pink and the Black*, 85.

⁷⁷⁰ Le Bitoux, 'The construction of a political and media presence,' 261.

⁷⁷¹ *Question de Temps: Ces Hommes qui s'Aiment*, Antenne 2, first broadcast November 5, 1979.

⁷⁷² Le Bitoux, 'The construction of a political and media presence.'

The panel of guests was made up of Fernandez, the socialist deputy Raymond Fournils, and the deputy and civil liberties campaigner Henri Caillavet. The prominence of politicians demonstrates the new framing of the issue that Le Bitoux and Fernandez were aiming for. For them, homosexuality was no longer a social issue, but a political issue. A meeting of the GLH Marseille was featured, and rather than in silhouette, most 'ordinary' homosexuals appeared undisguised. But the new politicised outlook did not exclude a more established 'literary' approach to the subject. Fernandez broached the question of identity via the politics of language: 'Pourquoi réduire toujours au sexe quand c'est homosexualité. Les américains ont trouvé un mot merveilleux qui est le mot 'gay' qui a une connotation tout à fait différente, tonique et joyeuse'⁷⁷³ This was one of the first times that the word 'gay' had been introduced to the French public on television, by a literary figure, underlining the seamless intertwining of politics, literature and sexuality in the media.

This novel term would feature prominently in the second edition of *Les Dossiers de l'Écran* devoted entirely to the question of homosexuality in 1984. Titled *Être gay aujourd'hui*, it marked a notable change in the portrayal of gay men in broadcast media in just over a decade - it was also unique in its inclusion of women. It demonstrates the predominance of literary figures in the representation of homosexuality in French media. The presenter Alain Jérôme was keen on framing the program around progress, claiming that much had changed since the *Dossiers de l'Écran* broadcast in 1975, and that now there are

⁷⁷³ *Question de Temps*, November 5, 1979.

even 'certains d'entre eux qui s'affichent'.⁷⁷⁴ After the legal gains of the early Mitterrand years the question now was 'quel place s'occupe aujourd'hui en 84 l'homosexuel?' Apart from the historian Paul Veyne, the panel were all homosexuals, and apart from a doctor, were all drawn from the literary world. Dominique Fernandez was present, alongside Renaud Camus, the journalist and novelist Hugo Marsan, the novelist Jocelyn Françoise, the classicist Paul Veyne. The doctor, Didier Seux, was himself openly gay. The programme is notable for its attempt at a gender mix with the novel inclusion of a François, signalling a belated opening of the range of 'homosexuality' to both genders. She managed to remain in good humour despite being frequently talked over by her male counterparts.

The show strikes a strange tone. The panel was in a self-congratulatory mood for the progress made, but this contrasted with the homophobic stereotypes expressed by members of the public calling in to give their opinions. Callers asked why gay men were so effeminate, why homosexuals cannot be trusted with children and whether AIDS was a punishment from God. The panel shrugged off these contributions, preferring to tread the well-worn debates of liberation politics - the possibility of homosexual relationships and the place of the commercial ghetto for instance. When asked about the biggest changes that had taken place in the last decade, they agreed that the change in law has had an impact, but they also emphasised media representation. Hugo Marsan claimed that a young gay man now had referents for himself in the media, and a new gay print media catering to him. What Le Bitoux would later call the

⁷⁷⁴ *Les Dossiers de l'Écran: Être Gay Aujourd'hui*, Antenne 2, first broadcast September 4, 1984.

'media strategy' was seen to have been very effective in achieving visibility in the public eye for homosexuals in France, although given the callers' questions, it is less sure whether wider public attitudes had moved very far.

The enduring notion of homosexuality as a phenomenon of a Parisian literary elite could have been at the root of this hostility. One of the repeated inconsistencies of the programmes discussing homosexuality in the 1970s was their apparent wish to include, or at least consider 'ordinary' homosexuals when in fact the same literary circle dominated. This contradiction was regularly criticised within the letters pages of gay magazines. Here the argument was regularly made that these mediatised writers contributed to, rather than alleviated, the isolation of the majority who were unable to lead an imagined life of freedom in Paris. In a roundtable interview in *Masques* with numerous 'ordinary' men who expressed their experiences of the 1970s, the topic of homosexuals in the media drew a fierce reaction. 'Bertrand' claimed: 'Nous ne devrions pas jouer le jeu des hétéros en donnant nous-mêmes de l'importance à des Navarre, Yourcenar et autres. Je suis absolument contre la représentation des homos à travers les gens célèbres.'⁷⁷⁵ 'Christian' wrote into *Gai Pied* in 1981 to complain that in his interventions on television, Yves Navarre placed himself 'dans une tour d'ivoire, un intouchable en quelque sorte; "écrivain-artiste homosexuel."⁷⁷⁶ He wondered if his opinions would be different if he were a teacher, or a plumber. Other men had more fundamental disagreements with increasing homosexual visibility. Another *Gai Pied* letter-writer, Jean-Jacques

⁷⁷⁵ Nelly Melo and Patrick Lorenzo, 'Vécus par ceux et celles qui l'ont vécu,' *Masques*, Summer 1981, 86.

⁷⁷⁶ Christian, letter, *Gai Pied*, January 1981, 2.

Passay, wondered whether visibility was not just another trap laid by heterosexual society, arguing that homosexuals were moving from closets to glass cases: 'La vitrine, c'est alors le statut bizarre de pédé reconnu à qui l'on concède le droit d'exister au grand jour à condition qu'il s'en tienne à ce rôle.'⁷⁷⁷

However, for many, the appearance of openly homosexual men in the media was central to their own self-affirmation as homosexuals. So much so that their impact could only be assessed after their loss. After Bory's death by suicide in June 1979, 'Antoine' wrote to *Gai Pied* to express the effect the writer had had upon his life, after seeing him on *Dossiers de l'Écran*: 'Je sais que ce problème est au fond de moi, mais je n'en sais ni la profondeur, ni les implications. C'est à ce moment que Jean-Louis Bory intervient pour la première fois dans ma vie... Il est époustouflant, drôle, chaleureux, profond, sachant émouvoir, sans jamais sombrer dans le misérabilisme.'⁷⁷⁸ The loss of Bory was also a point of reflection for his colleagues on the damage wrought by visibility in a homophobic society. The vitriolic press coverage suffered by Bory must have had a negative effect.⁷⁷⁹ Guy Hocquenghem believed that his suicide was linked to the public role that he played, and in which he felt himself trapped: 'Il devient "écrivain gay" le jour où, à la suite du FHAR, il écrit sa "moitié d'orange". Il est tout de suite prisonnier de cette image de militantisme homo ; cette prison n'est sans doute pas pour rien dans son suicide.'⁷⁸⁰ Despite having followed an analogous career trajectory, Hocquenghem believed that he had avoided such a fate.

⁷⁷⁷ Jean-Jacques Passay, letter, *Gai Pied*, January 1981, 2.

⁷⁷⁸ Antoine, letter, *Gai Pied*, July-August 1979, 2.

⁷⁷⁹ See for instance a 1978 article in the right-wing *Minute* which hailed the return of 'Bory-le-clown' and mocking his recent reclusion to recover from depression: Jean-Pierre Montespan, 'Le retour de Bory-le-clown,' *Minute*, 27 September 1978, 31.

⁷⁸⁰ Hocquenghem, 'Où en est l'homosexualité en 85,' 111.

The deaths of other writers by suicide such as Pierre Hahn in 1981, and Yves Navarre in 1994 meant that it was not only a personal tragedy, but also a collective one that preoccupied both thinkers and ordinary men. In an article that he contributed to the first issue of *Gai Pied*, Michel Foucault meditated upon the relationship between homosexuality and suicide. He claimed to be amused by a psychiatric text which claimed that homosexuals 'often' committed suicide, and played with this idea of repetition: 'A défaut de noces avec le bon sexe, ils se marient avec la mort... Mais ils sont tout aussi incapables de mourir tout à fait que de vivre vraiment.'⁷⁸¹ Foucault light-heartedly suggested that homosexuals, as failed heterosexuals, were always caught between life and death. Not everyone could be as sanguine as Foucault about the tragedies that had touched their lives. Writing in a column in *Gai Pied*, the doctor Serge Hefez described his grief at the death of a friend by overdose, and wondered whether there was an inability to form relationships that was at the heart of contemporary gay experience, and which led to such extreme attempts at solutions.⁷⁸²

Conclusion: the problems of appearing in public

The spectre of suicide shows us that homosexual men appearing in the media were not simply the harbingers of good news about liberation. They could also act as conductors of negative experience, an equally important function. These were men that were aware of the contradictions of their position as visible

⁷⁸¹ Michel Foucault, 'Un plaisir si simple,' *Gai Pied*, April 1979, 1.

⁷⁸² Serge Hefez, 'Chronique du moi,' *Gai Pied*, December 1979, 5.

spokesmen for the experience of a category of people that they themselves knew was impossibly diverse.

When put in international perspective, the presence and prevalence of openly gay men in the public eye in France during the 1970s is striking. They were granted a mostly respectful space to defend their sexuality, to the point of fearing overexposure and a monopolisation of the discourse on homosexuality by literary figures. But these men were operating in a nation that already had a longer history of associating homosexuality and a literary elite. They at once wished to capitalise on, and get away from, the inheritance of their illustrious forebears. With the added impetus of the legacy of '68, and the model of the 'public intellectual' from which they could draw legitimacy, men such as Hocquenghem and Bory could position themselves as spokesmen for homosexuality in the public eye, and Navarre and Fernandez could carve out a version of American-style 'gay writing'. Homosexuality was thus increasingly visible in the media in the 1970s, but it was also contained, restricted to a small group who regularly stressed their own unusual position. Held up as spokesmen for their sexuality, they appeared to be representative only of a small group, living in a tolerant milieu.

The new generation of gay authors thus found themselves hamstrung, not because of a lack of access to the public sphere, but because of the shape of the space afforded to them. If the writers who came out as homosexual in the public eye in the 1970s could express a new message, they were dogged by the notion that it this was a message expressed by a Parisian literary elite, and the implication that homosexuality had always been a predilection of such

aesthetes. Their protests to the contrary sometimes rang hollow considering their sheer predominance as spokespeople for homosexuality by the early 1980s. Just as the experience of 'ordinary' homosexuals had been framed almost entirely by the institutions of Church and medicine, by the early 1980s these voices were now mediated by a different elite, a Parisian literary circle. This was certainly a change for the better, as these men presented a thoughtful and diverse approach to homosexuality, and contributed positively to the transformation of the place of homosexuality within French society. Nevertheless, as Foucault had warned, there were many unseen snares when it came to speaking one's homosexuality.

If these public figures provided an important touchstone for many men living through the 1970s, the lives and works of writers in the public eye map imperfectly onto the experiences of most ordinary men. Recounting their life stories today, these men describe more complicated narratives of visibility and invisibility.

Part Three: Some Life Stories

The life stories of men with little or no public profile were glimpsed only rarely on the programmes dealing with homosexuality broadcast in the 1970s. Yet the proliferation of letters to magazines, round-tables and reflections conducted by activist groups show that there was a deep desire to narrate one's own life and to share experience. This chapter, which concentrates on the life stories of seven men without a public profile, collected through interviews, will show that life stories of the 1970s challenge any simple or teleological narrative of liberation. Although the men interviewed have all come to identify as gay or bisexual, they did so by routes and means that do not map well onto a narrative of coming out, increasing visibility, or politicised assertiveness. The ambiguities of the closet feature strongly throughout their lives and there are varying degrees of ease with their sexuality. To draw out a single conclusion or 'typical' life from the diversity of experience would be a mistake. Life stories highlight the gap between the political rhetoric of liberation and the public discourse on homosexuality and how men remember their own lives. What is striking is not that these men experienced the 1970s as a moment of liberation, but that elements of continuity dominate their experience, figuring just as strongly as a sense of rupture associated with the 1970s.

Recent histories of the 'generation' of 1968, to which the men interviewed in this chapter loosely belong, have emphasised the variation in their experience over generalisations about political radicalisation. Jean-François Sirinelli reminds us that: 'cette jeunesse française, même parcourue à cette date par de

puissants courants d'homogénéisation, n'en reste pas moins diverse sociologiquement et culturellement...'⁷⁸³ Ambitious oral histories have expanded our knowledge of the aftermath of 1968 for those who participated, or those who were tangential to the events.⁷⁸⁴ Despite this growing will to narrate lives and to collect testimony for the period, there has been no large-scale oral history project concerning gay men conducted in France analogous to those that took place in the US or the UK.⁷⁸⁵ Whereas in Anglo-American historiography, oral history and gay and lesbian history have had a mutually reinforcing relationship, in France the former has seen success where the latter quickly floundered.⁷⁸⁶ France missed the activist-led first wave of gay and lesbian oral history and thus produced nothing like the seminal works of Esther Newton, Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Madeline Davis.⁷⁸⁷

Despite the lack of oral history projects interrogating French gay, lesbian and queer lives, reflection on the intersection between personal experience and historical processes has reached a high level of sophistication. In 1987 Pierre Nora invited several prominent historians to reflect on the ways in which their

⁷⁸³ Sirinelli, *Comprendre*, 461.

⁷⁸⁴ See Gildea, Mark and Warring, eds., *Europe's 1968*.

⁷⁸⁵ For the United States see for instance the Act Up oral history project at the New York Public Library, the testimonies at the GLBT Historical Society archives in San Francisco and those at the LGBT Community Center in New York. For the UK, the Hall-Carpenter Oral History Project is held at the British Library. Something of a French exception was Michael Pollack's work; he conducted interviews for his research on gay men and the AIDS crisis; these are now held at the *Institut Mémoires de l'Édition Contemporaine*, Caen. While studies of gay men in France often use interviews with historical actors as part of their source base, the only published piece to use an oral history methodology is William Poulain-Deltour, 'France's Gais retraités: Questioning the "Image of the closet,"' *Modern and Contemporary France* 16, no.3, (2008): 313-328.

⁷⁸⁶ For an assessment of oral history's early years in France see: Paul Thompson, 'The New Oral History in France,' *Oral History* 8, no.1, (Spring, 1980): 14-20.

⁷⁸⁷ Esther Newton, *Cherry Grove, Fire Island: Sixty Years in America's First Gay and Lesbian Town* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993); Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Madeline Davis, *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

own subjectivity impacted their work, and to fight what Nora saw as a tendency to 's'effacer devant leur travail, à dissimuler leur personnalité derrière leur savoir, à se barricader derrière leurs fiches, à se fuir eux-mêmes dans une autre époque...'⁷⁸⁸ However, the thoughtful contributions to Nora's book did not extend to self-reflection upon the historian's own sexuality, or thoughts on what part sexual desire might play in the pursuit of their subject-matter.

This link between research and sexuality has been pursued outside of the history faculty. As with much French critical reflection on LGBT studies, Didier Eribon has led the way. His *Retour à Reims* uses autobiography to reflect upon broader issues of class, shame and sexuality. Eribon himself makes the link between history, life experience and critical analysis, regretting that the personal origin of his work was not made more explicit earlier. He says that the whole first part of his celebrated *Réflexions sur la question gay* can be read: 'comme une autobiographie transfigurée en analyse historique et théorique, ou, si l'on préfère, comme une analyse historique et théorique ancrée dans une expérience personnelle.'⁷⁸⁹

Eribon takes his commitment to personal experience further in a second volume, *Retours sur retour à Reims*, which reproduces self-critical interviews. In it he explores the mutually-reinforcing relationship between personal experience and sociological reflection:

⁷⁸⁸ Pierre Nora, ed., *Essais d'ego-histoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987), 5.

⁷⁸⁹ Didier Eribon, *Retour à Reims* (Paris: Flammarion, 2010, 1st ed., Fayard, 2009), 22.

Je n'avais pas l'intention d'écrire une autobiographie, mais plutôt de proposer une analyse du monde social et une réflexion théorique en l'ancrant dans l'expérience personnelle. Et donc on peut dire que l'analyse théorique naît de l'expérience personnelle ou en tout cas s'appuie sur elle. Mais on pourrait aussi bien affirmer que c'est le regard théorique qui m'a permis de donner forme et signification à cette expérience vécue.⁷⁹⁰

Heavily influenced by Eribon, other French gay male writers have attempted to use their own life experience for personal and sociological reflection. Most notably Edouard Louis's *En finir avec Eddy Bellegueule*, a meditation upon a difficult childhood marked by homophobia in northern France.⁷⁹¹ Novelists have also explored the blending of autobiography and historical fiction, using the genre of 'autofiction'. Mathieu Lindon's *Ce qu'aimer veut dire* and Claude Arnaud's *Qu'as-tu fait de tes frères?* contain a mixture of personal and imaginative reflections upon figures who towered over intellectual life in 1970s France, such as Félix Guattari and Michel Foucault.⁷⁹² As these works stray into the genre of autofiction it is impossible, and indeed beside the point, to separate fact from fiction. Edmund White sees autofiction as a genre with particular appeal to gay writers: "The form itself, which is neither purely fact nor fiction gives the writer both the prestige of confession (this is my story, only I have the right to tell it and no one can challenge my authority in this domain), and the total freedom of imaginative invention (I'm a novelist, I can say whatever I please, and you can't hold me responsible for the opinions

⁷⁹⁰ Didier Eribon, *Retours sur retour à Reims* (Paris: Editions Cartouche, 2011), 40.

⁷⁹¹ Edouard Louis, *En finir avec Eddy Bellegueule* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2014).

⁷⁹² Claude Arnaud, *Qu'as-tu fait de tes frères?* (Paris: Grasset, 2010); Mathieu Lindon, *Ce qu'aimer veut dire* (Paris: POL, 2011).

expressed by my characters, not even by my narrator).⁷⁹³ White locates autofiction within a broader history of the emergence of 'a new gay fiction' in the US, France and the UK in the late 1970s. Compared to novelists, historians are rightly constrained by the demands of their discipline. However, we can learn from these subtle and imaginative uses of personal experience to engage with the past.

These innovative uses of personal experience were influential in the development of the small-scale oral history project that provides the evidence for this chapter. I recruited participants primarily from the Paris-based gay retirees' association Les Gais Retraités, who were kind enough to introduce me to their members.⁷⁹⁴ Semi-structured interviews allowed me to orient testimonies around common themes, but as much as possible I let the men I spoke to recount their lives in their own words rather than answer a series of set questions. Although it was clear that I was primarily interested in the 1970s, we discussed their lives as a whole. Of course, where for a historian a time period can seem well-defined, for those who lived through it, such a periodization appears artificial. That said, when recounting their lives, both the events of May 1968 and the prolonged AIDS crisis certainly provided strong points of orientation for memory, and markers of change.

The intrusion of my self into my field of study, more obvious here than anywhere else, was another challenge. Being a gay man had many advantages.

⁷⁹³ White, Edmund, 'Today the artist,' 6.

⁷⁹⁴ I have used the same association as William Poulain-Deltour's study, however, we have not interviewed any of the same people; his study concentrated on men who came of age a generation earlier. Permission was granted for the project from Queen Mary, University of London's ethics committee on 12th August 2015.

Practically, it allowed me easier access to an organisation that is rightly protective of its members. More profoundly, a shared strand of identity established some common ground between my interviewees and myself, producing an intimacy that (although at times superficial) eased the sharing of personal or painful experience. However other strands of my identity – not being a French national and a noticeable difference in age for instance – provided a sense of difference and distance. Sometimes interviewees would feel a pedagogical impulse to explain, rather than describe, the world that they lived in. This was often productive, but could also inhibit the flow of the interview.

I have not conducted the sort of large-scale oral history project that would allow me to make grand statements on what constituted 'gay life' in France in the 1970s. Indeed, the very nature of homosexual desire, its presence in men of all backgrounds, races and classes, means that it is hard to conceive of a project that could make such statements possible. Nor do I claim that the men I have interviewed are archetypes. Instead, through reflection upon a small number of life stories, I will tease out commonalities and contrasts. I have not verified the testimonies against other sources, as this would be nearly impossible to do comprehensively, and besides the point.⁷⁹⁵ In presenting these life stories I am more interested in the ways in which these men narrate and construct their experience of the 1970s, and the emotions elicited by their remembrance of the period. In this way, the dynamics of hindsight are important, rather than an impediment. As Matt Cook reminds us, when using testimony, we must

⁷⁹⁵ Here I follow Alessandro Portelli's observation that 'the diversity of oral history consists in the fact that "wrong" statements are still psychologically "true," and that this truth may be as important as factually reliable accounts.' Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (New York: State University of New York, 1991), 51.

recognise that marginal subjects are used to engaging in the definition and redefinition of their identities, and are well aware of the discourses that influence their lives.⁷⁹⁶ Rather than imposing a collective narrative, letting my interviewees explain their own lives has thus been a guiding principle.

The lives and experiences of my interviewees will be presented thematically. Whilst this has the disadvantage of not allowing me to give extended voice to interviewees, it does allow more explicit comparison of their varied experience. I will first briefly introduce each of my interlocutors, before moving on to the thematic points that can be teased out of the interviews. I will look at the men's childhoods, how they viewed their own sexuality and negotiated their knowledge of it, how they met other people and formed relationships, their experience of politics and the police, and their working lives, all the while keeping a focus on the dynamics of visibility that shaped their experience.

Marc is the youngest of my interviewees, born in 1956 in the eastern city of Metz, to a Catholic family of modest means.⁷⁹⁷ He studied business and became an advertising manager, travelling all over France before settling down and opening a restaurant with his partner in Metz. After this venture closed, they lived in Paris through the 1990s, before recently retiring to live in Normandy. **Philippe** was born in Paris in 1952, and grew up in the Marais next to the Place des Vosges. His parents owned a small jewellery factory. He did not follow his father into this business, instead fulfilling a lifelong desire to become an English

⁷⁹⁶ Matt Cook, *Queer Domesticities* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 17.

⁷⁹⁷ Some of the participants' names have been changed for the purpose of anonymity, according to their wishes.

teacher. He taught for many years at a Catholic *lycée* in a close suburb of Paris, until his recent retirement. **Joël** was born in 1951 in Normandy to a family of shopkeepers. He moved to Paris in his teens and established his own grocery shop there, before expanding the business into a series of restaurants. He still lives in Paris. **Patrice** was born in 1950 in Angers to a bourgeois family. After an education interrupted by the events of 1968 he eventually completed his training to become a psychologist. Despite acknowledging his homosexuality from a young age, he was married for 24 years and had two children. He lived his adult life in Nantes and Rouen, until he moved to Paris to retire in 2013.

Jean was born in the Ariège in south-west France in 1948 to a well-to-do family; his mother was a teacher and his father was an entrepreneur in marble quarrying. He trained in law, but his interest in performing arts led him to become the director of a provincial opera house and, later, a post in the Ministry of Culture. **Michel** was born in 1943 in Strasbourg and was brought up by his aunt, the head of a *lycée*. He moved to Lyon to study theatre at the famous Ecole de la Rue Blanche, before spending his life working as an actor. Michel is bisexual, was married for over fifteen years and fathered two children. **Charles**, the oldest of the group, was born in 1938 in Cardona, a small town in south-western Uruguay. His birth mother abandoned him to the care of the state. He emigrated to Paris in 1968, and spent four years living in New York around 1973-77. He has had a number of jobs, including housekeeping, kitchen portering, administration and finally working in the university library at Jussieu.

Growing up and moving away

All my interviewees were aware of their difference from a young age. Philippe describes a happy, even ideal childhood in the Marais; he accompanied his sociable parents everywhere, to restaurants, theatres, cinemas, music halls. But from his earliest memories he describes feeling different, even if this difference is hard to put into words: 'Les plus loin souvenirs que j'ai, je me souviens que, bon, j'étais... pas attiré... enfin j'avais plus... j'ai jamais été attiré par les petites filles, c'était plutôt par les garçons de ma classe, mais enfin d'une façon très neutre, je sautais pas sur les gens! Mais bon, ça m'a toujours préoccupé.'⁷⁹⁸ But if this sexual difference preoccupied his childhood, Philippe claims quite emphatically that this didn't cause him any personal anguish, even if he was concerned about the reaction of others: 'j'ai eu aucun problème, j'ai jamais eu la moindre problème à ce niveau-là, personne n'est au courant dehors des gens que je fréquentais, pas ma famille... mais bon, ça m'a posé aucun problème, il y en a qui se pose des problèmes insurmontable, moi, ça m'a posé aucun problème.'⁷⁹⁹ Philippe was clear that his sexuality did not cause him problems precisely because he kept it to himself. Even though his parents were fairly cosmopolitan Parisians, he dealt with his sexuality through dissimulation. Rather than being the source of anguish, the closet freed him from the problematic aspects of his sexuality from the start.

Philippe felt no religious sanction, the closet was a logical rather than moral solution. In contrast, as Jean was growing up, he had a deeply conflicted relationship between his sexuality and his religious convictions: 'Moi, je savais

⁷⁹⁸ Philippe, interview with the author, June 2015.

⁷⁹⁹ Philippe, June 2015.

que j'étais attiré par les garçons... je l'ai très vite compris, mais j'hésitais à passer à l'acte, parce que, parce que mon éducation d'abord, religieuse, religieuse catholique, à laquelle je croyais, donc voilà, il y avait les principes. Donc ça, ça c'était un vrai tourment.'⁸⁰⁰ At one point he even considered entering the priesthood. Jean worked through his religious and moral scruples using the analytical skills that he had honed during his training as a lawyer, coupled with the presence of a friend who enjoyed debating. Their discussions led Jean away from absolutes and towards a moral relativism with regard to sexuality:

J'ai assez vite considéré que, en étant avocat, pour moi un vrai avocat est celui qui défende n'importe quelle cause... et donc, ça amène tout naturellement à penser que chacun a sa vérité, que, qu'est ce qui autorise à considérer que l'un est meilleur que l'autre, qu'un pont de vue est meilleur qu'un autre? C'est simplement un ensemble de règles sociales... et bien, si j'étais homosexuel, ça valait bien l'hétérosexualité... Voilà... à chacun sa vérité.⁸⁰¹

For Jean, sexuality was an intellectual problem to be solved, but this was not a coolly rational exercise. His intellectual ability to rationalise his sexuality was linked to an intimate sense of the authenticity of his desire. Once he had come to the realisation that his sexuality was both inescapable and equal to heterosexuality, he says he remained faithful to his real desires: 'je n'allais pas tricher, je n'allais pas flirter avec les filles, ça ne m'intéressais pas, j'aimais les mecs...'⁸⁰²

⁸⁰⁰ Jean, interview with the author, June 2015.

⁸⁰¹ Jean, June 2015.

⁸⁰² Jean, June 2015.

Others were not so much concerned by the substance of their desire, rather what they felt was the oppressive context in which it was experienced. Patrice recalls having sexual contact with his male classmates from an early age. This unproblematised sexual discovery contrasted with his family's homophobia: 'Dans ma famille, c'était une honte, l'homosexualité... quand on voyait des choses à la télé, ma mère disait des choses du genre "oh! je ne supporterai pas qu'un de mes enfants soit comme ça."' ⁸⁰³ Marc has a similar memory of his father hurling abuse when the singer Charles Trenet appeared on the television. He recounts that it was at this moment that he decided not to tell his parents about his own homosexuality. ⁸⁰⁴

Joël's problem was less to do with his family's reaction to his sexuality than with the stifling atmosphere of his Normandy hometown. He can still recall the adolescent alexandrine verse that he wrote as a young man:

J'ai peur de la folie et pourtant elle me guette,
 elle est là, je la sens et je lui crie arrête!
 ne m'entraîne pas encore dans ce gouffre sans fin,
 pour vaincre mes tourments il me faut ma raison. ⁸⁰⁵

Even if he recounts these lines years later with irony, the emotion that inspired them still lingers, keeping the verse in Joël's memory: 'Je savais si je restais là-

⁸⁰³ Patrice, interview with the author, August 2015.

⁸⁰⁴ Marc, interview with the author, July 2016.

⁸⁰⁵ Joël, interview with the author, June 2015.

bas j'allais couler... donc pour moi c'était vitale... je suis parti, j'ai fugué'.⁸⁰⁶ Escaping for Joël was not just a case of escaping homophobia. Indeed, he reports having no real problems with homophobia within his family, that his immediate family were always aware of his sexuality. He declares bluntly that: 'Il n'y a pas eu un "coming out"'.⁸⁰⁷ There was no need to come out if he had never been closeted, he had always been open about his sexuality: 'Je n'ai jamais rien caché, ni à ma famille, ni à mes voisins, ni à mes commerçants, à personne, ni à mes salariés, j'ai jamais rien caché'.⁸⁰⁸ He even grew up with the knowledge that there were other members of his extended family who were homosexual. Unlike others, his immediate family were not the problem: it was the difference he felt with the wider community that had Joël yearning to move away.

Leaving behind places of birth is a recurrent theme in gay men's life stories, and the weight of difference caused by homosexuality means that a disproportionate number of homosexuals flee their familial milieu, for however long or to whatever degree; and Paris exerts a strong attraction, even for those who stay behind. Didier Eribon writes of the need to escape to the city as one of homosexuality's defining aspects: 'On conçoit que l'un des principes structurants des subjectivités gays et lesbiennes consiste à chercher les moyens de fuir l'injure et la violence, que cela passe par la dissimulation de soi-même ou par l'émigration vers des lieux plus cléments. C'est pourquoi les vies gays regardent vers la ville et ses réseaux de sociabilité'.⁸⁰⁹ Importantly, Eribon

⁸⁰⁶ Joël, June 2015.

⁸⁰⁷ Joël, June 2015.

⁸⁰⁸ Joël, June 2015.

⁸⁰⁹ Eribon, *Réflexions*, 30.

emphasises sociability rather than merely sexual possibilities. For Joël, who did not experience physical violence, leaving Normandy for Paris was a matter of being able to live as a gay man, and sociability was key: ‘Tout le monde pensent que c’était une histoire de sexe, mais non pas du tout, c’est tout simplement vivre.’⁸¹⁰ When speaking of his adolescence, a short anecdote comes back to him, which seemed to him a vision of what could have happened to him if he had never left: ‘Quand j’étais adolescent, il y avait deux filles qui se sont jetées de la falaise... et pour comprendre que c’était un amour voilé... et ça m’a vraiment... pas traumatisé mais, c’est vrai que c’est pas terrible ça, faut partir.’⁸¹¹ While still a minor, Joël ran away to Paris. Rather than bring him back, his parents kept an eye on him through the intermediary of a family friend. Joël describes this acceptance of his departure as ‘un rejet de leur part, mais un rejet intelligent.’⁸¹² Even if they came looking for him, he was never going back.

Yet although Paris exerted an irresistible pull for some, the city and its imagined inhabitants repulsed others. What for some was a haven, was for others perceived as a trap. In his youth, Patrice had a lively interest in the stage, often saving money to travel into Paris to see productions. He dreamed of pursuing a career in the theatre, but rather than feel as though his homosexuality could be more easily expressed in a more welcoming environment, he had an overwhelming fear of becoming ensnared in a stereotypical world of campery that he found repellent: ‘Je croyais à l’époque que si je pratiquais mon homosexualité j’allais devenir [feminine voice] “une sorte de personnage” que je

⁸¹⁰ Joël, June 2015.

⁸¹¹ Joël, June 2015.

⁸¹² Joël, June 2015.

ne voulais surtout pas devenir. Et donc, ça, ça m'a fait peur et je restais en province.'⁸¹³ In hindsight Patrice regrets his youthful cowardice, and sees this as a pivotal decision at the root of his later difficulties: 'je crois que j'ai mené une vie difficile sur le plan de mon intimité. Parce que, je n'ai pas voulu faire de théâtre à Paris, je n'ai pas voulu accepter mon homosexualité, je voulais en priorité avoir des enfants, je n'ai pas voulu dire à ma femme que j'étais homosexuel... Alors forcément il y a des trucs qui se sont retournés contre moi.'⁸¹⁴

But what about those already in Paris? Philippe was born in the city, and it provided him with his first glimpses of non-heterosexual life. He remembers attending the theatre with his parents to see shows such as 'Brancato et Charpini', a variety act which depicted a gay couple, one in drag. He remembers the raucous laughter at these on-stage stereotypes, although he did not think it especially malicious. More exciting encounters came in his teenage years after chancing upon an article in *France Dimanche* while sitting at the hairdressers; in it, he read an account of the cruising that occurred in Paris's parks and gardens. After being made aware of the location of men seeking other men in the city, Philippe timidly began to explore Paris's numerous cruising grounds, starting with the Tuileries gardens:

Je devais avoir quatorze ans, je suis allé pour me rendre compte, pour voir, et-là il y a un monsieur qui m'a suivi, bon là alors j'ai pris peur, j'ai du partir

⁸¹³ Patrice, August 2015.

⁸¹⁴ Patrice, August 2015.

rapidement! Mais j'ai quand même vu ce qui se passait... Bon j'y suis retourné plusieurs fois... et bon j'essayais de voir, de repérer des endroits...⁸¹⁵

This occasional and tentative exploration, watching the comings and goings of the cruising men, lasted a few years before Philippe had his first sexual encounter. One afternoon, around the age of seventeen, while walking in the Tuileries, he was approached by a man: 'qui m'a dit, "on peut se voir autre part?" un monsieur très bien, très élégant, qui sentait bon parfum... j'étais pourtant timide mais j'ai dit oui, donc je l'ai suivi...'⁸¹⁶ The man took him to his office, empty on a Saturday, behind the Gare Saint-Lazare: 'et il m'a emmené dans un bureau qui était le sien apparemment, le bureau du directeur, il a mis une couverture par terre... et voilà! C'est passé comme ça la première fois.'⁸¹⁷ Philippe would wait a few months before plucking up the courage to go again, but soon a second and a third encounter in the Tuileries followed this first one. A pattern was established for his sexual life.

Escaping a childhood milieu was an altogether different experience for Charles, who grew up in foster care in his native Uruguay after being abandoned by his parents. Childhood was not a happy experience, and escape was vital: 'J'avais beaucoup de mal-être... je vivais pas bien, mais je savais pas pourquoi, à la maison ça allait pas, on disait que j'étais lunatique, ça veut dire un mauvais caractère.... et puis j'ai vécu comme ça, j'ai grandi comme ça...'⁸¹⁸ He conceived of his homosexuality as another defect among many, but this deep sense of

⁸¹⁵ Philippe, June 2015.

⁸¹⁶ Philippe, June 2015.

⁸¹⁷ Philippe, June 2015.

⁸¹⁸ Charles, interview with the author, June 2015.

unease did not preclude him from forming relationships. At the age of eighteen he had his first boyfriend, although the relationship remained hidden: ‘Il fallait se cacher.... je pouvais pas mettre la main sur l’épaule, “ah, non non non! On peut nous voir!” Toujours comme ça.’⁸¹⁹

Despite his caution, it was Charles’s homosexuality that allowed him to meet the man who would change his life and facilitate his move to France. After leaving his hometown in his teens and to work in Montevideo, Charles had a fortuitous encounter with Jacques, an employee at the French embassy. The men, a generation apart in age, quickly developed a deep friendship. When Charles mentioned that he was thinking of moving to the US, Jacques protested, and persuaded Charles that he should instead move to Europe. But to get to Europe, Charles needed a visa, and Jacques’ solution was to adopt him. Charles was at first resistant, worried that Jacques could regret the decision, that Jacques would have a legal responsibility to care for him, or that his feelings for Charles could change: ‘mais si un jour je change de façon d’être, si je deviens méchant, il y a des choses comme ça dans la vie. Il m’a dit, “si j’avais mon propre fils il pourrait devenir méchant aussi”’.⁸²⁰ Jacques’s feeling for Charles, and desire to help him, clearly overcame any potential misgivings. Finding a lawyer and suitable witnesses took time. After a painful encounter in which Charles’ attempts to reconcile with his father were rebuffed, the administration was concluded in 1968 and Charles moved to Paris soon after. Talking to Charles about his adoptive father brings him close to tears:

⁸¹⁹ Charles, June 2015.

⁸²⁰ Charles, June 2015.

C'était un envoyé de Dieu... Souvent je prie pour lui... Souvent je pense à lui et je parle avec lui en disant "qu'est-ce que je pourrais faire pour toi? Si la réincarnation existe je vais t'aller trouver dans un autre monde dans une autre vie pour que je puisse faire pour toi ce que tu as fait pour moi" parce qu'il m'a permis vivre ici, vivre bien, vivre autre chose...⁸²¹

Charles's experience, the use of adoption to formalise bonds between homosexual men (for both practical and emotional purposes) was not necessarily an isolated case. The novelist Roger Peyrefitte famously adopted his personal secretary and protégé Alain-Philippe Malagnac for instance. Michel Foucault talked of the possibilities of formalising new types of relationships between people, especially between people of the same sex. Halperin describes Foucault as being 'intrigued' by the possibility of expanding the practice of adoption, asking: 'Why shouldn't I adopt a friend who's ten years younger than I am?... We should try to imagine a new relational right which permits all possible types of relations to exist and not be prevented, blocked or annulled by impoverished relational institutions.'⁸²² Foucault was speaking hypothetically, but he would have been aware of the practice when making these comments. Unfortunately for Charles, Jacques did not live for long after his move, and they only saw each other on Jacques' few visits to Paris and once when Charles was in New York.

Politics

In their connections to Paris, some of my interviewees were geographically

⁸²¹ Charles, June 2015.

⁸²² Halperin, Saint Foucault, 82.

proximate to France's epicentre of radical political organisation. However, despite this proximity, most were indifferent, or even openly hostile to gay liberation organising. This could be a product of selection bias in my search for men without a public profile, men who have not come to prominence through political organising. Still, it is important to consider an alternative view on political organisation that sees it with indifference, rather than a source of energy and radicalism.

Most interviewees viewed political activism as a minority pursuit. Philippe's reaction was characteristic, when asked if he had any involvement in gay political movements he shrugged: 'La plupart n'ont aucun engagement.'⁸²³ For Philippe, who for many years compartmentalised his life and restricted his sexuality to Paris's cruising spots, the politicised gay media was alienating: 'Il y avait le *Gai Pied*, je l'achetais de temps en temps... c'était très politisé, c'était des mouvements d'extrême gauche etcetera, ça ne me plaisait pas spécialement, c'était pas exactement mes convictions...'⁸²⁴ Others, such as Charles, had sympathy for the movement but had no interest in participation, apart from later marching in Pride parades from time to time.

Others still had a broad conception of political engagement with sexuality that extended beyond participation in movements. Joël, living in Paris by the time of the FHAR, expressed regret at not standing in solidarity with the gay movement, but still felt it as a phenomenon that was removed from his own life: 'Le FHAR, tout ça, je suivais ça, mais je ne sentais pas concerné et le peu d'amis

⁸²³ Philippe, June 2015.

⁸²⁴ Philippe, June 2015.

que j'avais ne sentaient pas concernés non plus.'⁸²⁵ He puts this lack of interest down to his own feeling of freedom within his sexuality: 'J'ai jamais été militant, parce que je n'avais pas le besoin d'être militant. Ça c'est ce que beaucoup d'homosexuels militants oublient... il y a quand même une grosse majorité d'homosexuels qui n'ont pas eu besoin d'être militant parce qu'ils n'ont pas eu de confrontation...'⁸²⁶ Even without direct participation in the movement, he feels he has lived a 'political' life in his resolute openness about his sexuality: 'Le militantisme c'est de dire au quotidien "je suis homosexuel".'⁸²⁷

Where some were indifferent to political organising around their sexuality, others were hostile. Jean regrets what he sees as the cost of the changes brought about by the events of May 1968:

En réalité on a simplement fait tomber un voile hypocrite, parce qu'avant Mai 68 on vivait parfaitement son homosexualité à condition de respecter quelques conventions sociales, quelques apparences sociales... c'est sûr que quand même on s'amusait et même je te dis c'était plus excitant, il y a ce côté 'clan', les gens qui se retrouvaient, indiscutablement ça crée une certaine maçonnerie homosexuelle.⁸²⁸

There may be an element of nostalgia in Jean's recollections, but his viewpoint is a reminder that the changes brought about in the 1970s were not welcomed

⁸²⁵ Joël, June 2015.

⁸²⁶ Joël, June 2015.

⁸²⁷ Joël, June 2015.

⁸²⁸ Jean, June 2015.

by all, certainly those who had little trouble managing their lives behind the 'voile hypocrite'.

An exception to this general (if low-level) hostility to gay political activism is Michel, who was involved in the FHAR from its early days. He describes the meetings as being split into two distinct parts, the meeting in the hall, which was "sérieuse", entre guillemets', and the cruising which was happening upstairs, 'surtout une orgie'.⁸²⁹ Michel enjoyed the latter part the most. Of the FHAR's ideological impact he emphasises the animosity that they had for the previous generation of militants at Arcadie. As he reflects upon the distinction between the groups, he decides that he rather prefers the word 'homophilie' for what it expresses about love. In any case, despite his attendance at FHAR meetings, he was never that convinced about the need for radical gay politics; he claimed, dismissively: 'c'est pas moi, ça vaut pas la peine.'⁸³⁰

This dismissal of liberation politics is perhaps partly due to the course Michel's life took after participating in the FHAR; although he was involved in the most radical sexual liberation group that France had ever seen, he ended up marrying a woman only a few years later, in 1977. How did he understand this chain of events? He says that as the 1970s went on he discovered his capacity for bisexuality, the fact that he is 'quatre-vingt-dix pour cent homo, dix pour cent hétéro.'⁸³¹ He stresses that the two children that the marriage produced were born of love rather than obligation. Michel explains that his wife was always a

⁸²⁹ Michel, interview with the author, June 2015.

⁸³⁰ Michel, June 2015.

⁸³¹ Michel, June 2015.

very open-minded person, who had known about his previous homosexual relationships. Even so, Michel's sudden conversion to married life was a surprise to the people that he frequented when he was involved in liberation politics. He recounts that, whilst attending a reunion for his theatre school, many of his cohort who he had not seen for nearly fifty years were shocked to hear that he had been married. It was only years later that things began to change again, when in 1992 he met a man in a café and was 'séduit comme une fillette de la campagne'.⁸³² The man was not strictly a gigolo, but did expect generosity from Michel, which soon began to affect the family finances, and brought about the split with his wife. Perhaps there is no conflict at all between his (brief) political participation and his marriage. Michel himself does not make the link explicit, but in a sense his sexual fluidity embodies the FHAR's rhetoric of free-flowing desire that does not conform to the homo/heterosexuality binary. Even if Michel himself does not explain his sexuality in these politicised terms, preferring the term 'bisexual', something of the FHAR's sense of sexual possibility survives with him.

Most interviewees were sceptical about the impact of liberation activism on their lives, and this scepticism extended to the role that national legislation played. Legislative changes on a national level tended not to be mentioned unprompted. An exception was Marc and the role that he thought that the lowering of the age of majority had on his life. Marc turned eighteen in 1974, the same year that the age of majority was lowered from twenty-one to eighteen. Overnight, Marc was legally made an adult. His reaction was to immediately

⁸³² Michel, June 2015.

begin his immersion into the gay scene: 'le jour même où la loi était voté au parlement, j'ai commencé à fréquenter les endroits gais.'⁸³³ First he visited the only gay bar in Metz, and within weeks he had travelled over the border to sample the bars of Sarbruck, then on to Luxembourg, before travelling further afield in France, eventually to Paris: 'c'était vraiment nirvana quoi.'⁸³⁴ This was a journey of youthful discovery facilitated by the change in the law.

Living authentically, in and out of the closet

If, as Joël claims, the act of living openly as a homosexual was a form of political militancy, it was not an easy undertaking. Although these lives contained their fair share of joy, these men were forced to carefully control knowledge about their sexuality. Furthermore, the ordinary fabric of life, finding friends, finding partners, and navigating the social world, presented complications for homosexual men. These difficulties could be alleviated somewhat by making use of the new commercial spaces of the 1970s, but these new spaces produced their own issues.

One of the recurring difficulties faced by these men was managing their social identity and sexual preference. As a young man starting his career as a lawyer in Toulouse, Jean's sexuality was restricted to weekly visits to one of the city's only gay clubs:

J'allais une fois par semaine dans une boîte gay... c'était un des lieux où il y avait des garçons qui se travestissaient pour chanter des airs à la mode de

⁸³³ Marc, July 2016.

⁸³⁴ Marc, July 2016.

Dalida... c'était très rigolo. Et voilà, après la danse du tapis à la fin... c'était très charmant, très charmant! Mais, c'était déjà dans un coin pas très éclairé dans le centre du vieux Toulouse, on regardait à droit et à gauche avant de rentrer, on était très discret.⁸³⁵

Although Jean made peace with his own sexuality, he was never able to 'come out' to his family, his sexuality remained a taboo subject with his parents. This taboo was broken only once, when his mother received an anonymous phone call: 'La seule fois que ça a été abordé, c'était la fin de sa vie... elle avait eu un coup de téléphone disant que j'étais homosexuel, je crois qu'elle m'a posé la question... je me suis sorti par une boutade.'⁸³⁶ Jean's father was already dead, and his mother would die soon after. But even after the death of his close family, discretion continued to play a key part in his life. Jean continues to value his privacy. He compares the organisation of his life to the spatial layout of his apartment. He lives on a busy boulevard by the Opéra, but access to the apartment is through a complicated series of doors and stairwells that requires either accompaniment or detailed instructions. This way, he enjoys living in the heart of the city, yet he is still able to control access to his personal space: 'j'ai pu ici mener la plus belle histoire de ma vie... j'étais extrêmement heureux...'⁸³⁷

For Philippe, another only child, his sexuality was always strictly closed off from his 'other' lives, including his family. As an adolescent, he talked about being

⁸³⁵ Jean, June 2015.

Jackson explains the *danse du tapis*, which was also performed at Arcadie's club at the time as a dance where men would stand in a circle and other men would enter the circle each holding a small rolled up mat. The men holding the mat would choose a partner, the pair would enter the circle, kneel on the mat and kiss. The original holder of the mat would then take his place in the circle. Jackson, *Living in Arcadia*, 2-3.

⁸³⁶ Jean, June 2015.

⁸³⁷ Jean, June 2015.

moved by the beauty of the relationships between boys presented in Roger Peyrefitte's 1943 novel *Les Amitiés particulières*: 'je l'avais mais je l'avais caché, je le lisais quand mes parents n'était pas là... c'était une belle histoire disons... je devais avoir quatorze, quinze ans quand j'ai acheté le livre et ça m'a beaucoup plu, je disais ils ont de la chance, c'est rare d'être comme ça!'⁸³⁸ However, despite being transported by Peyrefitte's novel, he explicitly excluded any such relationship from his own life:

J'avais ma vie professionnelle, ma vie familiale, avec ma famille, mes amis, et puis le restant, la partie gay... pendant des années c'était uniquement le sauna... uniquement, que je rencontrais les gens là, mais je les voyais jamais en dehors, jamais, jamais, jamais. Une fois ou deux, il y en a qui me dit "on va se revoir?" et bon... c'était jamais au-delà de ça, de deux ou trois rencontres, je faisais en sorte pour que ça s'arrête... pour un ou deux, il y en a qui était un peu surpris qu'au bout de la deuxième fois que je leur dis "c'est terminé".⁸³⁹

If Philippe maintained a cordon sanitaire between his sexual life and the rest of his life, he had little problem in finding partners in Paris's commercial spots. Philippe found his partners in the saunas that he used to enjoy frequenting, an improvement on the cruising grounds that had grown overly familiar: 'c'était très *you again!*⁸⁴⁰. Saunas were much more agreeable to Philippe, he found it much easier to make contact there, and he found it altogether more 'chic' than cruising in the Tuileries. Philippe had only one other expression of his homosexuality, as he aged he gathered around him a small group of homosexual

⁸³⁸ Philippe, June 2015.

⁸³⁹ Philippe, June 2015.

⁸⁴⁰ Philippe, June 2015.

friends, with whom he would sometimes dine at gay-friendly restaurants. He does not recount his self-limiting arrangement with sadness or regret, rather with an acknowledgement that that was the way things had to be. He says he was neither lonely, nor unhappy, but he does return to the notion of the secret, insisting on impossibility: ‘Je voulais me protéger, je voulais pas rompre avec mon travail, avec ma famille, donc, voilà... si j’étais seul, pourquoi pas? Mais je n’étais pas seul, j’avais ma mère, ma famille, c’était pas possible. C’était une partie secrète totale.’⁸⁴¹ This state of affairs carried on until the age of fifty, when Philippe met his current partner, also in a sauna. What made this encounter different, Philippe believes, was his age. Age added a new sense of urgency and a willingness to pursue a relationship. The couple now live together and Philippe has even introduced his partner to his elderly mother. For Philippe, although he made use of the new commercial spaces that proliferated in the 1970s, much older forms of secrecy and compartmentalisation governed his life until very recently.

The new commercial spots of the 1970s facilitated the compartmentalisation of lives as much as they aided visibility. Patrice married his wife in 1972. He made the decision to marry after failing to reconcile his instinct to have children and his homosexuality. Although he loved his wife, and they had a fulfilled sex life, Patrice emphasises that he was always homosexual, or at best a ‘une vie planqué de faux hétérosexuel.’⁸⁴² His homosexual impulses never left him. On the very day of his marriage he stopped at a *pissotière* and masturbated with another

⁸⁴¹ Philippe, June 2015.

⁸⁴² Patrice, August 2015.

man.⁸⁴³ Thus began a life in which Patrice had to carefully manage knowledge about his sexuality: ‘J’ai dû vraiment faire une fracture entre ma vie familiale d’un côté, avec mes amis hétéros etcetera, et puis mes aventures homosexuelles d’un autre.... Je restais clandestin.’ Sometimes he would enter into short relationships with other married men who breached this divide and became friends of the family. But Paris was the main outlet for his homosexual life. Now living a closeted life in the provinces as a family man, to Patrice Paris transformed from a place of frightening theatrical stereotypes to a haven: ‘Même moi, en tant que mec marié, et venant sur un très petit créneau de ‘weekend prolongé’... j’avais vraiment des chances d’avoir des relations homosexuelles.’⁸⁴⁴ But Patrice’s weekends in Paris were infrequent, and his frustration at his inauthentic home life would often flare up on his return.

Joël also frequented Paris’s commercial gay spaces, but he did not desire to segment his life in the same way as Philippe or Patrice. Perhaps because of his openness about his sexuality, he found the experience of the scene frustrating rather than convenient: ‘grosse fête mais pas vraiment d’amis... c’était uniquement des histoires de cul, des relations mais pas des amis.’⁸⁴⁵ Friendship was more difficult to come by than sexual partners on a scene that many wished to exclude from other areas of their life. In his search for community Joël was profoundly moved by Andrew Holleran’s novel *The Dancer from the Dance* (which appeared in French in 1979 as *Le Danseur de Manhattan*): ‘il y a un livre... qui a eu un gros impact sur moi... c’était d’Andrew Holleran, *Le Danseur*

⁸⁴³ Patrice, August 2015.

⁸⁴⁴ Patrice, August 2015.

⁸⁴⁵ Joël, June 2015.

de Manhattan...pour moi ça c'était vraiment un déclic.⁸⁴⁶ What struck him the most about the book was 'l'esprit communautaire, qu'il existait un ghetto auquel je n'adhérais pas mais qu'il existait un ghetto qui était relativement sympathique, qu'il existait des dérives.'⁸⁴⁷ Joël's reaction to the idea that there was a community of gay men in America was joyful, he even uses the word 'ghetto' not as a way of damning homosexual association but as a valorising term. Joël may not have found the sort of community described by Holleran in New York's famed Everard Baths in Paris's saunas, but slowly friendships were formed from the contacts he made there. Then, like Philippe (although much earlier in life) he found lasting love in a Paris sauna. He met his life partner in a sauna in 1984; they are still together today.

Not everybody enjoyed cruising, in Paris' saunas, or public spaces. Charles talks of his enduring solitude, and lack of luck when it came to finding men. He attributes this in part to the racism he experienced on the scene, as a Latino man: 'mais moi, vraiment les gens ne venaient pas vers moi... c'était horrible... ça me faisait mal bien sûr, parce que tu te sentais rejeté. Dans le milieu il y a tellement de racisme c'est vrai, le plus raciste c'est le milieu homo.'⁸⁴⁸ He did not much enjoy the social opportunities that the scene afforded: 'je n'allais pas dans les bars, je n'étais pas un garçon de fumer avec un verre à la main et papoter comme ça, non.... j'aurais pas trop le sauna parce que j'avais pas trop de succès, tu montais les escaliers, tu descendais... toujours ça, c'était horrible.'⁸⁴⁹ Charles did, however, have more success while he lived in the US.

⁸⁴⁶ Joël, June 2015.

⁸⁴⁷ Joël, June 2015.

⁸⁴⁸ Charles, June 2015.

⁸⁴⁹ Charles, June 2015.

Unlike Joël's dreams of New York through Holleran's literature, Charles experienced the city himself in the 1970s: 'Dans les années soixante-dix à New York tout le monde faisait l'amour comme on disait "même derrière un arbre" ... là j'avais un peu plus de chance parce que tout le monde l'avait, comme disait un ami "si tu n'a pas de chance ici je sais pas qu'est-ce qu'il te faut!" [laughter]'.⁸⁵⁰ He describes the scenes he saw in the warehouses at the bottom of Christopher Street like something out of a Visconti film: 'c'était dangereux, mais on allait quand même, la police arrivait comme ça avec les gros lampes de poche, tout le monde sortait comme des cafards... quand tu allumes le four les cafards à New York ça sortait partout, et les homosexuels c'était pareil ... c'était comme la drogue, tu savais que c'était dangereux mais tu y allais.'⁸⁵¹ Charles's memory of New York is tinted with the sexual success of his youth, but he still has a keen sense of the dangers that the city posed, a view not unlike the French pornography of the 1970s.

Dangers

In New York as in Paris, cruising was a dangerous pastime in terms of the attention it drew from both police and potential attackers. Although the police were a presence that was acknowledged by all, none of my interviewees had experienced prosecution. For all my interviewees, the police acted as a vague, multiform threat. Marc was aware of the repressive tactics of the police from a young age, even before he was aware of the homosexual activity they targeted. He vividly remembers an episode from his childhood. When he was in his early teens, he used to go to the cinema in Metz in the evenings. As his parents lived

⁸⁵⁰ Charles, June 2015.

⁸⁵¹ Charles, June 2015.

outside the city, he would stay with his grandmother in town. To get to his grandmother's house, he had to pass an outdoor urinal. One evening, while passing by the urinal on his way to his grandmother's, a police car stopped in front of him: 'il y a quatre police baraqués qui sortent de la voiture qui me sautent dessus, qui me couchent par terre, qui me mettent les mains dans le dos, qui me fouillent, qui me prennent les papiers et qui me demandent ce que je fais là... un des policiers me dit "on veut plus jamais te voir ici."' ⁸⁵² He recounted the story to his grandmother, and parents, who were just as confused as he was. After this episode, he always walked the long route back to avoid the urinal. It was only in his late teens when he discovered the root of the police's suspicion, but the impression of a dangerous and forbidden place, and an heavy-headed police force, lingered.

If the actions of the police were incomprehensible to a young Marc, the feeling was shared by many into adult life. Many interviewees mention the threat of the police's *fiche*. But if the threat of the *fiche* was constant, its exact workings were a mystery to those threatened by it. Philippe seemed quite sure of an (unspecified) threat: 'il fallait produire sa carte d'identité, et après il y avait des listes... il fallait pas se retrouver trois, quatre fois arrêté, parce qu'à ce moment-là il doit y avoir des problèmes j'imagine...' ⁸⁵³ Charles was convinced that if his name had been on the register then he would have been denied his post at the Jussieu library. Some, however, were more sceptical, Jean was dismissive of the notion: 'Le fichage, je n'y crois pas beaucoup.' ⁸⁵⁴ It seems that, if the *fiche* did

⁸⁵² Marc, July 2016.

⁸⁵³ Philippe, June 2015.

⁸⁵⁴ Jean, June 2015.

exist, then it was predominantly a scare tactic, and considering its endurance in the French gay imagination, it was an effective one.

Alongside the spectre of the *fiche*, there were real brushes with the law. Jean was once caught by police in a stairwell of the Paris metro semi-nude; he claims that the dangers of cruising increased the excitement it offered: ‘C’est vrai qu’il était très excitant d’ailleurs... c’est que c’était défendu... ça c’était très excitant.’⁸⁵⁵ For others, contact with the police was more a fact of life than something to provoke excitement. Charles claims that his frequent contact with the police, and their interest in him, was because of his need to prove his French nationality. One evening stands out for Charles; he found himself caught by the police in the Tuileries with another man, a Scandinavian. He remembers seeing an unknown man coming from a way off, but he wrongly assumed that it was someone approaching to join in. It was in fact was a plain-clothes policeman. They were taken to the station, but after they had their names and addresses taken, nothing else came of it: ‘Moi, blanc mais étranger... en plus avec l’accent, il faut voir les papiers pour croire. La police a dit “mais tu n’a pas un piaule pour l’amener chez toi?” j’ai dit que c’est pas évident c’est vrai, tu peux te faire voler...’⁸⁵⁶ Soon after Charles was arrested again in another cruising ground, a urinal to the north of Paris. Since his first encounter with the police he had become more prudent; he realised that the police were coming and acted accordingly: ‘Je suis sorti tranquillement... je savais que je ne pouvais pas m’échapper, il vaut mieux être “comme ça” [chut]...’⁸⁵⁷ Charles describes these

⁸⁵⁵ Jean, June 2015.

⁸⁵⁶ Charles, June 2015.

⁸⁵⁷ Charles, June 2015.

contacts with the police as routine, a normal hazard of cruising. Perhaps because he accepted policing as routine, Charles does not appear to have any resentment towards the police. Indeed, he cheerily emphasises their good humour:

‘il y avait un garçon, qui habitait très loin de Paris, à l’autre côté... on lui a dit “mais qu’est-ce que vous faites là?” et il a dit “je suis venu pisser!” “vous venez de la Porte d’Orléans pour venir pisser ici?!” Quand j’ai entendu ça je pensais que la police n’était pas très méchant, finalement, ils s’amusaient.’⁸⁵⁸

Charles thought that the main danger of cruising was not the presence of the police but the frequent arrival of muggers: ‘Dans les parcs et partout il y a toujours des gens qui vont te voler, te casser la gueule.’⁸⁵⁹ He even recalled a policeman stating that they kept such a close eye on cruising grounds not to punish the men using them but to catch the criminals that they attracted, a direct repetition of the sort of logic of repression that saw homosexuals as part of a criminal underworld that was in policing manuals of the 1970s. Just as he learnt to manage the risks that the police posed, Charles says he avoided beatings by not going out too late at night, not taking people home and avoiding approaching groups of men. Of course, the police did not have the protection of cruising men as their top priority and were also capable of cruelty, but though the police were a presence for those who regularly went cruising, their

⁸⁵⁸ Charles, June 2015.

⁸⁵⁹ Charles, June 2015.

memories of the police were not necessarily of a dangerous and concerted repressive force, rather as one of many nuisances that had to be managed.

Work

Another relationship with authority that had to be carefully managed was that between sexuality and the world of work. For some, especially those employed in public functions, work was a source of great anxiety as a place full of potentially compromising situations. The only man I interviewed who was resolutely out of the closet at work was Joël. He had the advantage of being his own boss, but even so, he claims to have been always open about his sexuality in his business dealings, while he was a shopkeeper and later the owner of a restaurant: ‘moi j’étais indépendant, j’étais commerçant donc je n’avais pas le regard d’un supérieur... moi je pouvais dire merde à tout le monde en fait... mais je pense que si j’étais salarié je l’aurais fait quand même!’⁸⁶⁰

Others were in a more difficult personal and professional position. For Philippe, working at a Catholic *lycée* meant that any disclosure of his sexuality was impossible, a state of affairs which added to the compartmentalisation of his life. He policed himself strictly: ‘personne ne l’a jamais su.’⁸⁶¹ But despite this self-imposed policy of non-disclosure, he would often encounter other homosexuals through his work. Once he ran into a former student at a well-known cruising ground on one of the quays of the Seine ‘Tata beach’ (still popular today): ‘il dit “ah! Mais qu’est-ce que vous faites là?!” je dis “ben je

⁸⁶⁰ Joël, June 2015.

⁸⁶¹ Philippe, June 2015.

rentre chez moi!” Il était gêné.⁸⁶² Despite the student’s initial embarrassment, they agreed to meet again and this chance encounter led to a lifelong friendship, one of the few homosexual friends that Philippe had, and who became part of his dining circle. Philippe has vivid memories of another, serious, moment in which his careful compartmentalisation of his life was breached:

Un jour je vais au sauna, je m’installe pour prendre le sauna, et je regarde la personne qui était à côté, ah! C’était la personne en charge de la religion dans mon lycée... il m’a dit bonjour, je lui ai dit bonjour, bon parce que je l’avais vu et il m’avait vu... bon, après on a parlé, il était au courant pour moi et j’étais au courant pour lui, point final...⁸⁶³

Even in potentially repressive environment for a gay man – a Catholic school – Philippe and his colleague supported each other. This support was through mutual discretion and secret-keeping rather than supporting mutual visibility.

For Jean, working in the legal profession also meant he needed to handle himself with discretion. However, his situation changed when he moved to work in the arts and an environment much more accommodating to homosexuality. He stresses that in this protected world of tolerance, bonds of personal and professional solidarity formed. He finds that in today’s atmosphere of general tolerance, these bonds are weaker today, despite political gains: ‘on formait un ‘clan’ réellement’.⁸⁶⁴ This ‘clan’ (of a certain social

⁸⁶² Philippe, June 2015.

⁸⁶³ Philippe, June 2015.

⁸⁶⁴ Jean, June 2015.

class, but not without a certain porosity usually based on desirability) would implicitly support one another in the cultured world that Jean inhabited.

On the other side of the class divide, Charles also found a network of mutual support in the world of work. When he arrived in Paris in 1968 it was without a job, or a place to live. A fortuitous encounter with other Spanish-speakers on the Champs-Élysées led to his first employment as a housekeeper. Then, on a night out dancing he met a man who worked at an advertising agency who gave him a better job, working in the office canteen. He would eventually be promoted to work as a clerk in the agency. When he moved to New York he found work housekeeping for gay clients, first in Manhattan, then out in Bellport, east of New York City. He enjoyed working for these gay clients, for the personal freedom that their employment afforded: 'On était affectueux, on se cachait pas.'⁸⁶⁵ Charles also appreciated the glimpse into the 'beau monde' that these employers gave him. During the summer months in Bellport, Charles was free and alone in the house during the week while his employers were working, and he had the run of the house. Now economic differences, rather than differences in sexuality, were most evident: 'je jouais à l'enfant riche!'⁸⁶⁶ Charles thus relied on networks of gay friendship to survive.

Even though he had often found employment through his gay friends, and in some jobs he was 'out', this did not mean that Charles was always open about his sexuality at work. He was very sensitive to his surroundings and the appropriateness of disclosure, especially when in later life he worked as a

⁸⁶⁵ Charles, June 2015.

⁸⁶⁶ Charles, June 2015.

librarian at Jussieu. His main fear was a trap of visibility, that he would be labelled: ‘Après, tu es le pédé.’⁸⁶⁷ However, Charles explains that his discretion in the workplace was not simply a case of acting heterosexual, it was a much subtler social interaction with his peers:

C’est... le “non-dit”. Tout le monde sait, mais personne dit rien... Quand tu travailles, comme moi vingt-cinq ans, tu ne parles pas de ta femme, tu ne parles pas d’enfants, tu ne parles pas de famille. Alors tout le monde parle de son mari, qu’ils ont fâché, divorcé, les enfants, les problèmes, mais toi tu ne parles pas de ça... Quand on te pose pas la question, c’est qu’on a compris! [rires] et ça m’a facilité la vie.⁸⁶⁸

In this way, Charles lived periods of his life in full visibility, immersed in a world surrounded by gay men, and other periods where his professional life was dominated by the unsaid.

Marc managed his professional life in a similar way to Charles, but when the unspoken risked becoming explicit, he used humour to deflect suspicion. When questioning got a little too close for comfort, or too specific about his home life, Marc used irony: ‘J’allais même jusqu’à faire de l’humour en disant “ben, pourquoi tu poses la question parce que je suis gay!” donc ça faisait rire tout le monde parce que personne n’y croyait et j’avais comme ça l’impression de dire la vérité, tout en ne le disant pas.’⁸⁶⁹ Comedy provided a defense, and some

⁸⁶⁷ Charles, June 2015.

⁸⁶⁸ Charles, June 2015.

⁸⁶⁹ Marc, July 2016.

‘I used to go so far as to make a joke by saying: “eh, why are you asking that, because I’m gay!” so that made everyone laugh because nobody believed it and in that way I had the impression of telling the truth, while not being truthful.’

relief. Managing disclosure of your sexuality was often stressful, but it also provided comedic material, and a way of bonding with others. Amid laughter, Charles recalls: ‘j’avais un ami qui disait: “Nous faisons attention mais il y a toujours une plume qui tombe!”’⁸⁷⁰

Change, progress and reflections

Although always wary of the risk that recollections of youth are always tinted rose, interviewees tend to stress how different their lives were before the HIV-AIDS crisis. This difference is most often described in terms of a sexual freedom; the freedom to act with sexual spontaneity when the moment arrived. Charles says: ‘Maintenant c’est plus contraignant, avant c’était plus facile, il n’y avait pas les préservatifs et il n’y avait pas le SIDA, aujourd’hui malgré tout il y a le SIDA.’⁸⁷¹ Even for those who were only ever on the fringes of the storied sexual hedonism of the 1970s, that world is still lost, symbolised in the hesitation that the condom brings to the sexual encounter. The spectre of AIDS means that men’s narratives often circle back around to the crisis, drawn to reflect on their luck in avoiding it. Michel for instance, attributes his survival to his (at that point faithful) marriage. He recalls the slogan of an AIDS-awareness poster campaign that he feels was aimed directly at him, as a bisexual, whose slogan he recalls roughly: ‘quand je suis avec Robert je protège Liliane, quand je suis avec Liliane je protège Robert’.⁸⁷² Joël attributes his survival to his

⁸⁷⁰ Charles, June 2015.

‘I had a friend who said: “We may be careful, but we always drop a feather!”

⁸⁷¹ Charles, June 2015.

‘Now things are more restrictive, before it was easier, there weren’t any condoms and there wasn’t any AIDS, today despite everything there’s AIDS.’

⁸⁷² Michel, June 2015.

monogamous relationship, and Patrice to the limitations imposed on his homosexual life at that point due to his marriage.

Jean has a different conception of time and progress. Instead of increased liberty since the events of May '68, he sees a deterioration in personal freedom: 'Avant 68, on faisait tout ce qu'on voulait, et plus que maintenant, en gardant une apparence... maintenant, on peut plus librement s'exprimer, quoique il y a des retours de bâton depuis le 'mariage pour tous', mais, de façon générale, on restreint de plus en plus le champ de liberté.'⁸⁷³ For Jean too, even if his idea of 'freedom' seems much larger than the freedom of sexual inhibition that Charles misses, increased legal equality for gay men in France in the wake of the AIDS crisis has not translated to the type of freedom that the careful hypocrisies of the pre-68 era could afford to a lucky few.

As has been shown, diversity of experience is more prominent in testimonies than firm conclusions. Nevertheless, in all these life stories we see a changing and ambiguous relationship with the notion of 'the closet'. William Poulain-Deltour argues that men who came of age before the 1970s have little relationship to the 'image of the closet' that gained real traction in France in the early 1990s: 'a masked and painful "before" ruptured by an emancipatory "after"'.⁸⁷⁴ But where Poulain-Deltour disrupts this by arguing that many men were living their homosexuality openly before the arrival of liberation politics. This is partially true, but to complicate the situation further, most men were not always either fully 'in' or fully 'out' of the closet, both these states coexisted,

⁸⁷³ Jean, June 2015.

⁸⁷⁴ Poulain-Deltour, 'France's Gais retraités', 317.

not just within homosexual men as generational groups (as Poulain-Deltour implies) but within the same person. For any non-heterosexual, this constant negotiation of the knowledge of your sexuality with the outside world is an obvious condition of being outside 'normality'. But for older gay men the stakes were perhaps higher, the management of the knowledge of their sexual identity was one of the key ways in which their lives were ordered.⁸⁷⁵ In a similar vein, Scott Gunther claims that the history of homosexuality in France from 1942 to the 2000s can be read as in terms of homosexuals' changing relationship with the 'elastic closet of French Republicanism.'⁸⁷⁶ But talking to men about their own lives proves only the complexity of men's revealing and hiding, being 'in' or 'out' at different times and in different situations. Perhaps then, the concept of the 'closet' only be used when talking about very specific and personal relationships of knowledge about sexuality rather than an idiom that describes broad historical processes, which tend to dissolve in the grey area of the *non-dit*.

My selection of interviewees is of course far too small to make any systematic conclusions about gay men's lives in the 1970s. Instead, these interweaving narratives provide us with some impressions of the decade. How men experienced growing up, their relationship to their place of birth, how they found friendship groups and partners, how they negotiated their working lives and their sexuality – these were all key elements of how these men lived their sexual attraction that are revealed through their own narration. These

⁸⁷⁵ For a theoretical perspective on the epistemological importance of negotiating 'the closet' see Eve Sedgwick's seminal *Epistemology of the Closet*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

⁸⁷⁶ Gunther, *The Elastic Closet*.

memories narrate a complicated relationship to the closet, a sense of the sexual mores of the 1970s, and the distance of much radical political rhetoric to the experience and trajectory of these lives. As getting to know these men became a part of my own life experience, I was struck most by the joy and humour of these men, even when reflecting on lives that contain their share of pain. Charles put it best when he reflected on the life he had been able to build thanks to his homosexuality:

Et si je devais revenir, si la vie existe après et on revient, je voudrais revenir homosexuel. Parce qu'on s'amuse... c'est différent notre vie, on est plus libre et tout ça, que les hétérosexuels, avec le mariage, et leurs enfants. Moi je veux revenir pareil, même s'il faut souffrir...⁸⁷⁷

⁸⁷⁷ Charles, June 2015.

Conclusion: The arrival of HIV/AIDS

Often during interviews, the memory of the HIV/AIDS tugs at interviewees. As they try to recall the years prior to the crisis they cannot ignore the emotion of the years that followed. The first case of the disease appeared in France in 1981, and the virus was successfully identified by French team of scientists at the Institut Pasteur in 1984.⁸⁷⁸ Only aware of these developments in retrospect, interviewees tend to focus on their feelings of loss, both of loved ones, and of a way of life. Charles reflected on the contrast between his experience of the 1980s with the previous decade: 'avant, c'était les meilleurs années pour tout le monde... mais j'ai vu des gens mourir, des amis. C'était horrible, les homosexuels ils ont vécu quelque chose de terrible. Quand je pense aux beaux garçons qui venaient à Fire Island...'⁸⁷⁹ Michel stressed that the 1970s were another world, a world where: 'il n'y avait pas de SIDA, il faut insister à ça.'⁸⁸⁰ Indeed, Michel repeated the point multiple times, as if to recall to himself a time when the virus did not exist.

At first, the disease appeared as a rumour from the United States, site of so many events and initial evolutions in homosexual experience in the past ten years. In his fictionalised retelling of the period, Hervé Guibert learns of the condition from a friend who has recently been on the other side of the Atlantic: 'Lui-même l'évoquait comme un mystère, avec réalité et scepticisme.'⁸⁸¹ The French gay press initially greeted the disease with the same sense of mistrust,

⁸⁷⁸ For an account of the birth of the HIV-AIDS crisis in France see: Patrice Pinell, *Une épidémie politique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2002), 37-54.

⁸⁷⁹ Charles, June 2015.

⁸⁸⁰ Michel, June 2015.

⁸⁸¹ Hervé Guibert, *A l'ami qui ne m'a pas sauvé la vie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), 21.

tipping into sarcasm in the face of what they saw as a threat inflated by homophobia. In January 1982 *Gai Pied's* medical correspondent Claude Lejeune published his first long discussion of the health problems facing a number of gay men in the US.⁸⁸² Entitled 'US Gai Cancer', Lejeune takes an incredulous tone when assessing the early signs of the epidemic, taking aim at what he saw as a symptom of the exhaustion of gay liberation politics: 'ne sommes-nous pas, une fois de plus, victimes de ce puritanisme qui nous colle aux chromosomes et dont les gays américains ne sont pas arrivés à se départir? Le sexe libère-t-il vraiment?... de la Morale, encore de la Morale, toujours de la Morale.'⁸⁸³ In posing his analysis in terms of sexual liberation, Lejeune makes use of the political framework of the seventies to tackle the new crisis. After years of exploring the ways in which medical science pathologised homosexuality, Lejeune's position is unsurprising. To gay men from this political background, the idea of a 'gay cancer' was preposterous. Indeed, in a possibly apocryphal story often repeated for its overtones of tragic irony, Michel Foucault is said to have fallen off his chair in laughter when told of the new disease by Guibert.⁸⁸⁴

Confusion over the cause of the disease led to the initial rumour that the drug amyl nitrate ('poppers'), which had arrived on the French market in the late 1970s, was to blame. In the spring of 1983 *Samourai* published an article by Lejeune. In it he dismissed the notion of poppers being to blame for the spread

⁸⁸² The very first mention of the disease had appeared in a short article the previous September. Antoine Perruchot, 'Amour à risques : Une quarantaine de cas de maladie de Kaposi aux Etats-Unis,' *Gai Pied*, September 1981, 7.

⁸⁸³ Claude Lejeune, 'U.S. Gai Cancer,' *Gai Pied*, January 1982, 8.

⁸⁸⁴ Guibert, *A l'ami*, 21.

of the disease.⁸⁸⁵ However, the consternation about poppers, and Lejeune's language, shows us how much of that which had appeared new and liberating at the end of the 1970s now took on a frightening allure. According to Lejeune, poppers were: 'partie intégrante du désir homosexuel à l'heure américaine. Arrivés d'Outre-Atlantique avec notre sortie du placard, transformant le pédé en gay.'⁸⁸⁶ The idea of poppers causing 'gay cancer' was of course widespread in other nations, and was soon dispelled with new medical information. But in France the blaming of poppers represented fears of commercialisation and Americanisation inherited from the experience of the 1970s. These prior experiences coloured the initial reaction to the disease.

Evidence began to escalate and in the face of this new threat, homosexual organisations had to regroup and reorganise. Lejeune, and his professional group, the *Association des Médecins Gais* (AMG) abandoned their initial scepticism. A member of the AMG, Patrice Meyer, founded the first group solely targeted on fighting the epidemic in France in 1983, *Vaincre le SIDA* (VLS).⁸⁸⁷ In 1984, after the death of his lover Michel Foucault, Daniel Defert founded AIDES.⁸⁸⁸ Defert's organisation, although later overshadowed by more radical groups such as Didier Lestrade's Act Up Paris, would grow to become France's largest and most enduring HIV/AIDS organisation, still in existence to this day.⁸⁸⁹

⁸⁸⁵ Claude Lejeune, 'Cancer gay, la vérité,' *Samouraï*, March 1983, 5.

⁸⁸⁶ Lejeune, 'Cancer gay, la vérité,' 5.

⁸⁸⁷ Pinell, *Une épidémie politique*, 41-46.

⁸⁸⁸ Olivier Maguet, Christine Cladéron, *AIDES, une réponse communautaire à l'épidémie de sida* (Paris: AIDES, 2007), 17-18.

⁸⁸⁹ See www.aides.org, last accessed March 2017.

The initial response to the crisis, and what this response says about the state of homosexual activism in France after a decade of liberation politics has been the subject of controversy. Frédéric Martel argues that after the successes of the early Mitterrand years: 'there were few homosexual militants, and they had no legitimacy and no troops.'⁸⁹⁰ He may be correct in stating the fragmented and exhausted state of political organising after the gains under Mitterrand, but Martel goes on to argue that when they were warned about the crisis by the medical profession, homosexual activists and businessmen dismissed their concerns and 'lost interest': 'the beginning of the darkest chapter of this dark history.'⁸⁹¹ As Patrice Pinell rightly points out, this accusation relies on historical anachronism, Martel assumes greater medical knowledge of historical actors than was available at the time, even to medical professionals: 'si des médecins n'étaient pas à même de démêler les différentes questions que posait le "cancer gay" comment peut-on supposer que des patrons d'établissements commerciaux aient une réaction différente?'⁸⁹² Furthermore, to blame the intensity of the crisis on the perceived failures of activists implies that they were indeed capable of action, if only they were not blinded by communitarian 'group think'. As has been demonstrated, France's gay liberation groups had little useful experience in dealing with state authorities, and any experience that they had had was only very recent. AIDS was a wholly new challenge, so to expect a ready response from a group of people in distress and confusion is to lack empathy with their situation and to accuse through hindsight. In fact, the speed with which organisations such as VLS and AIDES

⁸⁹⁰ Martel, *The Pink and the Black*, 211.

⁸⁹¹ Martel, *The Pink and the Black*, 192.

⁸⁹² Patrice Pinell and Pierre-Olivier de Busscher, 'Tout rose ou tout noir?,' *Transcriptase* 44 (April 1996); 24.

appeared and began organising responses to the epidemic in circumstances of grief and illness is remarkable.

In this new situation, the political legacy of gay liberation was very little use. What was invaluable were the individual networks of sociability and support that had been forged over the period through political practice. Less visible to the historian, but no less important were the networks of friendship and love forged through the commercial scene and the sense of shared identity fostered through the 1970s. Bars and clubs provided a useful ready-made network through which to spread information and resources, once organisation around the message of 'safe-sex' was fully developed by the close of the decade.

The epidemic was at its worst among those who had most benefited from the transformations in homosexual experience wrought in the 1970s – namely the urban gay men with the money and inclination to spend time on the commercial scene. Forty-eight cases of HIV/AIDS were declared in France in 1982.⁸⁹³ By 1984, this number had risen to a total of 376 cases, with homosexual men making up 62% of diagnoses.⁸⁹⁴ At the close of the decade, 11,317 cases had been identified, 79% of them in homosexual men, and 4849 deaths, 81% of these being in homosexual men.⁸⁹⁵ The speed and severity of the virus's spread amongst gay men meant that the years after 1983 were overshadowed by the virus and its effects. The virus's shadow was also cast backwards upon the 1970s. The *Masques* founder Alain Lecoultre saw a more sinister and lasting

⁸⁹³ Christophe Broqua, *Agir pour ne pas mourir: Act Up, les homosexuels et le sida* (Paris: Presses de la fondation nationale de sciences politiques, 2005), 36.

⁸⁹⁴ Broqua, *Agir*, 38, n.20.

⁸⁹⁵ Broqua, *Agir*, 48, n.35.

transformation occurring at the turn of the 1980s: 'l'homosexualité avant le SIDA était associé à la vie, à la joie, à la transgression, était devenu symbole de mort.'⁸⁹⁶ The 1970s appear bathed in a golden light after the grief of the following decades. Sexual liberty and pleasure came to the fore, before these were tainted by the virus.

The toll of the later crisis has distorted our view of the 1970s. Either we look back with nostalgia at what was lost, or with anger at what mistakes were made. However, the transformation that took place for homosexuals in the 1970s was also a phenomenon that was evident to contemporaries even before the AIDS crisis added a complicating layer of distortion. Trying to understand the decade that had just passed was a preoccupation for men writing at the turn of the 1980s. Alain Lecoultre reflected on over ten years of change in the pages of *Masques*: 'On peut légitimement parler de l'émergence d'une société gaie dont les membres, s'ils le désirent peuvent presque vivre en vase clos. La presse gaie fournit les adresses des corps de métiers les plus divers, du plombier au garagiste en passant par les inévitables coiffeurs et décorateurs. Malade, on peut s'adresser aux médecins gais, en vacances, on partira avec les gais loisirs et en cas de pépin, des avocats gais vous conseilleront.'⁸⁹⁷

Yet this idea of a life immersed in a gay identity was true for only a very small Parisian minority, if it was true for any. And for some contemporary commentators, the visibility that brought about all these gay plumbers,

⁸⁹⁶ Alain Lecoultre, interview with the author, July 2014.

⁸⁹⁷ Alain Sanzio [Alain Lecoultre], 'Splendeurs et misères des gais 80,' *Masques*, Spring-Summer 1985, 55.

mechanics and doctors was worrying rather than liberating. If there was a sense of triumph and change in the air, there was an equal sense of dread. In 1983 *Gai Pied hebdo* featured the cover story on 'les premiers camps de concentration,' illustrated with a mournful drawing of concentration camp inmates, a striking departure from the usual smiling topless models.⁸⁹⁸ Coverage of the experience of homosexuals under Nazism was not new, but at the dawn of the HIV/AIDS crisis, the headline made it clear that the magazine's editors believed that these camps were not necessarily the last. Just as homosexuals had enjoyed a brief period of tolerance and visibility in Berlin in the 1920s, the position of homosexuals in the 1980s could be just as precarious. *Gai Pied's* fears were of course proved correct, but not in the ways which they could have imagined.

Driven by this spirit of enquiry into the changes that had or had not taken place since 1968, in the early 1980s the *Fédération des Lieux Associatifs Gais* (FLAG) undertook a sociological survey of people who used France's new gay community centres. They distributed a questionnaire and carried out interviews of men and women, publishing their findings through the Editions Persona in 1984.⁸⁹⁹ The printed testimonies reveal diversity of experience reflecting a decade of ambivalent change. 'Alain' was 27 years old and lived the sort of open homosexuality that one might expect of a young, politically engaged Parisian: 'A 18 ans, de façon consciente, j'ai accepté mon homosexualité, plus précisément j'ai choisi de la vivre, non de la refouler ou de

⁸⁹⁸ Yves Edel, 'Premiers camps pour homosexuels : Histoire du mouvement gai allemand avant la guerre,' *Gai Pied hebdo*, 19 March 1983, 21-24.

⁸⁹⁹ Cavailles, Dutey and Bach-Ignasse, *Rapport gai*.

la sublimer... J'ai entendu parler d'un mouvement homo à l'époque du FHAR, jusqu'en 77 j'étais dans un GLH. Personnellement, le militantisme homo représente une étape sinon nécessaire, du moins utile de prise de conscience et d'action commune...'⁹⁰⁰ But to be young and Parisian was not necessarily an indicator of a happiness. Jean, a 34-year-old civil servant experienced his homosexuality very differently: 'Idéalement j'aurais préféré être hétéro... J'ai pensé au suicide: c'était indirectement lié à mon homosexualité: l'étranglement par la solitude, l'écrasement par l'impression d'impasse.'⁹⁰¹ Of course, liberation politics was never going to make every man who was attracted to his own sex happy, but Jean's testimony tells of a life remarkably untouched by the political developments of the period, or the social gains.

And if liberation politics, the new gay commercial market and increased visibility could pass one by, it was also possible to accept oneself without engagement in these new phenomena. Norbert, a 42 year old man living in a couple in a town outside of Paris said: 'Au travail et avec les voisins, ni mon ami ni moi-même n'avons dissimulé notre homosexualité: aucun ennui... Je suis homosexuel mais intégré; pour moi, l'homosexualité c'est un mode de vie.'⁹⁰² This was certainly not 'liberation' but a step towards the sort of livable integration that would have been approved of by Arcadie.

These testimonies show something of the variation in contemporary experience, none of which map onto the trajectory of gay liberation politics set

⁹⁰⁰ Cavailhes, Dutey and Bach-Ignasse, *Rapport gai*, 232.

⁹⁰¹ Cavailhes, Dutey and Bach-Ignasse, *Rapport gai*, 225.

⁹⁰² Cavailhes, Dutey and Bach-Ignasse, *Rapport gai*, 226.

out nearly a decade earlier. Perhaps the most important change in the period was the fact that there could now be more variety of experience, an easing of moral condemnation and the flourishing of commercial spaces and information networks which meant that people were more and more able to mould their own personal lives. The increased interest in the expression and exploration of this homosexual experience seems to suggest that this was a phenomenon of which contemporaries were well aware.

The project of the *Rapport Gai*, alongside the other coverage of the turn of the decade, shows French homosexuals trying to understand the changes that they had undergone in the 1970s, and to square these changes with the promises of societal transformation that gay liberation groups expressed at the opening of the decade. Our own views of the 1970s are still dominated by these first attempts at understanding, and later events such as the loss of life in the HIV-AIDS crisis and the arguments over marriage equality have further distanced us from a decade of homosexual experience that is in the very recent past.

Instead, we must consider the period from May 1968 until the onset of the HIV-AIDS crisis as a distinct moment in the experience of homosexual men in France. Clearly those who had lived through the 1970s felt the change that had either swept through their lives, or gave them a sense of being left behind as a new breed of openly gay men animated Parisian nightlife and came to media prominence through their creative accomplishments. This image of the new urban gay man was two parts fantasy and one-part reality. But it was a convenient image that played upon the fears of militants for whom the dreams of liberation politics died hard, and a fantasy which played upon the desires of

the many men living in much more restricted circumstances. For homosexuals across France, the 1970s was marked with this double play of expectation and reality, change and continuity. The decade contained many political dead ends, not least in the complete failure of homosexuality to act as an engine of socialist revolution.

A number of approaches become possible if we move away from a teleology of a political liberation and see a more contingent transformation in homosexual experience. A more nuanced understanding of the interplay between the political discourse of gay liberation and homosexual experience could help us better explore the social and cultural creations of gay men and lesbians. This could lead us to an examination of the contours of an identifiable 'gay culture' which emerged alongside gay liberation politics, but which was not always commensurate with its aims.⁹⁰³

A re-evaluation of 'liberation' as a category of historical analysis also has further implications for future research. I have shown the need for a re-evaluation of the category of 'liberation' to take account of the socio-cultural underpinnings of what has previously been understood as a primarily political project. If the idea of liberation is best understood as a political discourse rather than a historical process, and it is a contingent phenomenon rather than an inevitable process, then it leads us to an examination of the narratives and metaphors produced by this discourse. For instance, if the injunction to 'come out' after Stonewall is understood as a political tactic rather than a historical process of

⁹⁰³ David Halperin has started this process, although taking a more personal and anecdotal approach in *How to be Gay* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2012).

individual and community visibility, then we must investigate how the notion of 'coming out' as an act and metaphor came to be invested with such personal and political power. The changing concept of 'coming out' could be tracked across both time and national context. Taking contingency as a starting point and examining one of the most central metaphors of queer life and experience in the twentieth century, we can approach an understanding of one of the most striking socio-cultural changes to have taken place in the West in the past sixty years: an uneven but nevertheless clear change in the acceptance of homosexuality in society.

Coming back to the 1970s, 'gay liberation' was a process so uneven and diverse that it loses its sense as a category of historical analysis. When talking about the 'liberation moment' of the 1970s it would be more proper to talk of a process of transformation in the visibility of homosexual men in France, in political discourse, the commercial market and in the media. This increasing visibility did not correlate directly with an improvement in the situation of homosexuals either – the persistence of policing in the period and persistent stereotyping confirms this. What is clear is that the 1970s was a site of experiment in the field of sexual identity and lifestyle. Many of these experiments were wildly successful – the adoption of a homosexual identity for instance – others such as the campaign to abolish the age of consent, were less lasting in their influence. When we call upon the potent symbols of 'liberation', either as a historical marker or to make a political point, we must be as mindful of liberation's mythologies and missteps as we are of its achievements.

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Appendix One: Policing Statistics

Fig. 1: Condemnation statistics compiled from *Compte général de l'administration de la justice criminelle et de la justice civile et commerciale* (Paris: Documentation Française, multiple editions, 1968-1978).

YEAR	CRIME DESCRIPTION	TOTAL CONDAMNATIONS
1968	Homosexualité	419
	Outrage public à la pudeur	4599
1969	Homosexualité	284
	Outrage public à la pudeur	3368
1970	Homosexualité	269
	Outrage public à la pudeur	3466
1971	Homosexualité	306
	Outrage public à la pudeur	3777
1972	Homosexualité	222
	Outrage public à la pudeur	3637
1973	Homosexualité	251
	Outrage public à la pudeur	3358
1974	Homosexualité	147
	Outrage public à la pudeur	2017
1975	Homosexualité	179
	Outrage public à la pudeur	3047

1976	Outrage public à personne du même sexe	155
	Outrage public à la pudeur	3352
1977	Outrage public à personne du même sexe	138
	Outrage public à la pudeur	2727
1978	Outrage public à personne du même sexe	162
	Outrage public à la pudeur	2404
1979	Outrage public à la pudeur et attentat à la pudeur	2614
1980	Outrage public à la pudeur et attentat à la pudeur	2573
1981	Outrage public à la pudeur et attentat à la pudeur	1957
1982	Outrage public à la pudeur et attentat à la pudeur	4716
1983	Outrage public à la pudeur et attentat à la pudeur	4300

Fig 2: Condemnations by profession compiled from *Compte général de l'administration de la justice criminelle et de la justice civile et commerciale* (Paris: Documentation Française, multiple editions, 1968-1978).

Profession	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
salariés agricoles	16	8	7	5	16	5	3	2	3	5	1
petits commerçants	25	14	17	11	12	14	3	8	3	5	5
professions libérales	2	1	1	1	2	0	1	1	1	1	1
profs, professions littéraires et scientifiques	2		2	4	1	4	0	2	0	2	1
Cadres admin supérieurs	7	3	5	3	6	6	5	4	1	4	5

Cadres admin moyens	16	14	12	9	13	7	6	4	5	5	2
employés de bureau	28	17	17	22	23	18	8	12	11	15	10
Ouvriers qualifiés	79	45	42	50	46	35	29	26	17	21	16
Ouvriers spécialisés	51	41	34	28	40	36	23	31	32	11	20
Manoeuvres	43	39	28	42	23	35	16	5	10	6	8

Fig 3: Detected crimes compiled from *La criminalité en France d'après les statistiques de la police judiciaire*, (Paris: La Documentation Française, multiple editions, 1973-1983)

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
Attentats à la pudeur'	5310	5604	4901	4500	5032	5466	5803	6317	6550	7185	6773
Outrage public à la pudeur par homosexuels	446	476	316	269	262	252	251	352	600	371	388
Outrage public à la pudeur par autres personnes	5112	5520	4991	5132	5080	5034	5649	6157	6639	5411	5247

Homosexualité avec mineurs	198	179	177	117	100	126	125	195	173	125	106
Excitations de mineurs à la débauche	450	511	381	367	403	468	473	472	482	525	461

Appendix Two: Translations from the French

Introduction

“The word homosexual irritates me. And the word homophile even more. I’m a “haemophilic!” [*hémophile*]. I think there are people who are lost souls, and people who aren’t so lost, people who want to liberate themselves, and those that don’t want to, or aren’t able to.’⁹⁰⁴

“Today nobody organises around that vague notion of “sexual liberty” anymore, except the gays and for theirs alone.’⁹⁰⁵

‘Finally, that’s it; and now I feel liberated. I accept who I am; and now I find I’m just as good as anyone. Quite simply, I haven’t chosen to be homosexual... I even think, as a Christian, that God wanted me this way.’⁹⁰⁶

‘1965-1985 is a historically ambivalent phase; it is pregnant with possibility and progress, but also carrying contradictions such that the promised future finds itself troubled by these contradictions, and the progress promised takes other forms than those initially predicted.’⁹⁰⁷

‘the end of the easy times.’⁹⁰⁸

⁹⁰⁴ All translations, unless otherwise stated, are my own. Jean Daniel Cadinot, ‘Jean Daniel Cadinot fait le point,’ *Nouvel homo*, June 1976, 47.

⁹⁰⁵ Jean Le Bitoux, ‘Le papier du mois,’ *Gai Pied*, September 1982, 5.

⁹⁰⁶ ‘Jean-Philippe,’ letter, *David et Jonathan*, Summer 1982, 23.

⁹⁰⁷ Jean-François Sirinelli, *Les vingt décisives 1965-1985: le passé proche de notre avenir* (Paris: Fayard, 2007), 41.

⁹⁰⁸ Jean Fourastié, *Les Trente Glorieuses ou la révolution invisible* (Paris: Fayard, 1979), 255.

'degradation of moral values.'⁹⁰⁹

'advanced liberal society'⁹¹⁰

'neo-bourgeois of the 1980s, the maoist-leftist-antis spitting on their past have profited from the national hypocrisy of the socialist powers-that-be.'⁹¹¹

'Parallel to the aspiration to assimilation through resemblance, which, in in a certain manner, was the foundation of the 'Republican pact' and had cemented French society, we can see the appearance in these post-68 years the claim to a right to difference.'⁹¹²

'the catalyst for organised leftism's destruction.'⁹¹³

'The sudden and abrupt wave of the FHAR, in the wake of 1968, brought homosexuals to come out of the darkest depths; it was the birth of the homosexual movement in France.'⁹¹⁴

'We threw ourselves into the organisation of national meetings, support groups, moments of visibility, political positions and film festivals. The culture

⁹⁰⁹ Interopinion, 'Le baromètre de la France,' *L'Express*, December 9, 1974, 74.

⁹¹⁰ Emile Chabal, 'French Political Culture in the 1970s: Liberalism, Identity Politics and the Modest State,' *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 42 (2016): 252.

⁹¹¹ Guy Hocquenghem, *Lettre ouverte à ceux qui sont passés du col Mao au Rotary* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1986), 13.

⁹¹² Sirinelli, *Les vingt décisives*, 127-8.

⁹¹³ Jean-Pierre Le Goff, *Mai 68: L'héritage impossible* (Paris: Editions La Découverte, 1998), 297.

⁹¹⁴ Jacques Girard, *Le Mouvement homosexuel*, (Paris: Editions Syros, 1981), 183.

of evasion, fuelled by fear, insults, shame and lynching or police checks, seemed to have had its day... I was convinced that dark shadows would never again hinder our upward dynamic.⁹¹⁵

‘Difference? The horror! Visibility? Obscenity!’⁹¹⁶

‘A largely fantastical enemy.’⁹¹⁷

‘I privilege the individual with his free choice, over the group and its orders: each homosexual must have the freedom to construct himself.’⁹¹⁸

‘It is necessary to completely rethink emotional and sexual education by purely and simply banning the interventions of militant LGBT associations.’⁹¹⁹

‘unfortunately, if that is possible in Great Britain, I fear that in France that would fall within the realm of science fiction.’⁹²⁰

‘When we founded the FHAR, the word homosexual was not very widespread, contrary to our belief nowadays. It was me who had most often used it, purely

⁹¹⁵ Jean Le Bitoux, Hervé Chevaux and Bruno Proth, *Citoyen de seconde zone: trente ans de lutte pour la reconnaissance de l’homosexualité en France 1971-2002* (Paris: Hachette, 2003), 406.

⁹¹⁶ La Veuve Cycliste, ‘Martel en tête, pas en mémoire,’ *La revue h* 1, (Spring 1996); 46

⁹¹⁷ Philippe Colomb, ‘Le rose du destin et le noir de la politique,’ *La revue h* 3, (Winter 1996/1997); 40-44.

⁹¹⁸ Frédéric Martel, ‘Un gay n’a pas à critiquer la communauté gay,’ *Esprit*, November 1996, 212.

⁹¹⁹ ‘Stop à la diffusion du genre à l’école,’ 3 October 2016, <http://www.lamanifpourtous.fr/actualites/cp-stop-a-la-diffusion-du-genre-a-lecole/>, accessed November 2016.

⁹²⁰ Florian Bardou, ‘En France, les “Queer Studies” au ban de la fac,’ http://www.liberation.fr/debats/2016/10/12/en-france-les-queer-studies-au-ban-de-la-fac_1521522, [last accessed November 2016].

for technical reasons and the impossibility of employing the word Gay... that was a code word, nobody could have known what it meant.’⁹²¹

‘I will permit myself the use, every now and again, the word *achrien* to signify homosexual, pederast, pederastic or the quaint “like that” [*comme ça*], a word that Tony Duparc and I quite recently concocted because its predecessors did not entirely suit us, and seemed to us ridiculous, imprecise or ambiguous.’⁹²²

‘One needs to “go a step further”... Rejecting the “biologist” and “naturalist” notion of sexuality, Foucault wishes to oppose them with the invention of new modes of life which escape questions of “identity” and “desire.”’⁹²³

Part one: Changes

Chapter one: Liberation politics, from revolutionary aspirations to modest realities

‘National march for the rights and freedoms of homosexuals.’⁹²⁴

‘Student who questions everything / The relationship between student and teacher. / Have you also thought to question, / The relationship between man and woman?’⁹²⁵

⁹²¹ Guy Hocquenghem, interview by Jean-Pierre Joecker, *Masques*, Summer 1981, 9-11.

⁹²² Renaud Camus, *Chroniques achriennes* (Paris: P.O.L., 1984), 9.

⁹²³ Didier Eribon, *Michel Foucault et ses contemporains* (Paris: Fayard, 1994), 284.

⁹²⁴ ‘Notre préférence fera la différence’, *Homophonies*, May 1981, 3.

⁹²⁵ Françoise Picq, *Libération des femmes, quarante ans de mouvement*, (Brest, Editions-dialogues.fr, 2011), 14.

‘I am part of the question of homosexuality as it is lived by common people, like me [...] I was under the rather crude impression that homosexuality was just a bourgeois thing. As a working class fag I felt doubly oppressed.’⁹²⁶

‘The submissive attitude, the eyes of a beaten dog, the wall-hugging of the typical homosexual... For one glorious Jean Genet, a hundred thousand shameful pederasts, condemned to unhappiness.’⁹²⁷

‘The CAPR launches an appeal so that you, pederasts, lesbians, etc... become conscious of your right to freely express your opinions or your amorous peculiarities and to promote by your own example a real sexual revolution, which the so-called sexual majority needs just as much as we do.’⁹²⁸

‘Old reactionary Marchionesses.’⁹²⁹

‘The Sorbonne Occupation Committee were worried about the presence of homosexuals around the toilets. It risked “discrediting” the movement.’⁹³⁰

⁹²⁶ Jean Le Bitoux, *Entretiens sur la question gay* (Béziers: H&O Editions, 2005), 83.

⁹²⁷ Michael Sibalis, “Mai 68: le Comité d’Action Pédérastique Révolutionnaire occupe la Sorbonne,” *Genre, sexualité & société* 10, (Autumn 2013): 17, accessed August 2016, DOI : 10.4000/gss.3009; 18.

⁹²⁸ Sibalis, ‘Mai 68,’ 18.

⁹²⁹ Sibalis, ‘Mai 68,’ 22.

⁹³⁰ Sibalis, ‘Mai 68,’ 22.

‘You haven’t read Freud, you haven’t read Marx, you haven’t understood anything!’⁹³¹

‘The first time I went to hand out leaflets in the Tuileries... there was a queen who shrieked and said to me... “I don’t want to be rehabilitated, to be normalised!”’⁹³²

‘You could say that the Americans loosened me up.’⁹³³

‘Intellectual laboratory... and a producer of autonomous homosexual knowledge.’⁹³⁴

‘Free and unregulated abortion!’⁹³⁵

‘Imagine that homosexuality became a social model, and well I don’t know, very quickly we would stop reproducing... All the same, in homosexuality there is a negation of life or the laws of life.’⁹³⁶

‘To make an appeal to France’s homosexuals.’⁹³⁷

⁹³¹ Guy Chevalier, interview with the author, July 2014.

⁹³² Guy Chevalier, interview with the author, July 2014.

⁹³³ Guy Chevalier, interview with the author, July 2014.

⁹³⁴ Massimo Prearo, *Le moment politique de l’homosexualité: mouvements, identités et communautés en France* (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 2014), 91.

⁹³⁵ Françoise d’Eaubonne, ‘Le FHAR, origines et illustrations,’ *La revue h 2* (Autumn 1996); 20.

⁹³⁶ <http://www.france.qrd.org/media/revue-h/001/probleme.html>, accessed August 2016.

⁹³⁷ Sibalis, ‘Gay Liberation Comes to France,’ 266; Guy Chevalier, interview with the author, July 2014.

‘Let’s stop hugging the walls!’⁹³⁸

‘You daren’t say it, you daren’t say it even to yourself.’⁹³⁹

‘police registration, prison, dismissal, insults, beatings, sardonic smiles, pitying looks.’⁹⁴⁰

‘Those who think they are normal’⁹⁴¹

‘You are individually responsible for the vile injury that you have made us suffer by condemning our desire.’⁹⁴²

‘gruff, masculine proletarian, with a deep voice, burly physique and a swagger.’⁹⁴³

‘It’s true that you don’t choose to become a homosexual, in any case I don’t think that I’ve chosen. One fine day at sixth form the other little students called me a fag – I didn’t know what that meant, but I was vaguely proud because I had the impression that they envied me.’⁹⁴⁴

‘Queen, fag: our brothers. Dyke, lesbian: our sisters.’⁹⁴⁵

⁹³⁸ FHAR, ‘Arrêtons de raser les murs,’ *Tout!*, April 23, 1971, 7.

⁹³⁹ FHAR, ‘Adresse à ceux qui sont comme nous,’ *Tout!*, April 23, 1971, 7.

⁹⁴⁰ FHAR, ‘Adresse à ceux qui sont comme nous,’ 7.

⁹⁴¹ FHAR, ‘Adresse à ceux qui se croient normaux,’ *Tout!*, April 23, 1971, 6.

⁹⁴² FHAR, ‘Adresse à ceux qui se croient normaux,’ 6.

⁹⁴³ FHAR, ‘Adresse à ceux qui se croient normaux,’ 6.

⁹⁴⁴ Un du FHAR, ‘Homosexuels,’ *Tout!*, April 23, 1971, 7.

⁹⁴⁵ FHAR, ‘Notre vocabulaire,’ *Tout!*, April 23, 1971, 6.

‘Because he cannot escape fate, he will be his own fate; as his life is rendered unliveable, he will live this impossibility to live just as though he himself had purposefully created it...’⁹⁴⁶

‘the affirmation of homosexual pride via the positive valorisation of a specific identity.’⁹⁴⁷

‘This guy, he had the face of a dirty Arab, and he didn’t exactly smell of roses, but he had had enough of his monk-like solitude...’⁹⁴⁸

‘We’re more than 343 sluts. We get fucked up the arse by Arabs. We’re proud of it and we’ll do it again.’⁹⁴⁹

‘Let it be known that in France it is our Arab friends who fuck us and never the other way around. How can’t you see in that a revenge that we have consented to against the colonising West?’⁹⁵⁰

‘Our Berber friends’⁹⁵¹

⁹⁴⁶ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Saint Genet: Comédien et martyr* (Paris: Gallimard, 1952), 55.

⁹⁴⁷ Yves Roussel, ‘Le mouvement homosexuel français face aux stratégies identitaires,’ *Les temps modernes* 582 (May-June 1995): 97.

⁹⁴⁸ FHAR, ‘15 berges,’ *Tout!*, April 23, 1971, 7.

⁹⁴⁹ FHAR, ‘15 berges,’ 7.

⁹⁵⁰ FHAR, ‘15 berges,’ 7.

⁹⁵¹ Georges Lapassade, ‘Ce que j’ai retenu du FHAR,’ *Têtu*, March 2001, 93.

‘Sometimes we tell ourselves that we don’t like straights, because they’re phalocrats, but we really like Arabs, and they’re phalocrats, we like to taste a little virility.’⁹⁵²

‘It’s the mentality of a lot of fags. What are Arabs? A bit of cock and that’s all.’⁹⁵³

‘We homosexuals who have spoken up in this issue of *Recherches*, we are in solidarity with their struggle. Because we have with them loving relations. Because their liberation will also be ours.’⁹⁵⁴

‘Is it that, yes or no, as a sexual practice, the homosexual will receive the same rights of expression and exercise that so-called normal sexuality has?’⁹⁵⁵

‘our right to homosexuality is revolutionary.’⁹⁵⁶

‘Homosexuals will liberate themselves! We will destroy bourgeois-capitalist society!’⁹⁵⁷

‘We are a social plague!’⁹⁵⁸

⁹⁵² FHAR, ‘Les arabes et nous,’ *Recherches: Trois milliards de pervers. La grande encyclopédie des homosexualités* 12 (March 1973): 10.

⁹⁵³ FHAR, ‘Les arabes et nous,’ 16.

⁹⁵⁴ ‘Vivent nos amants de Berbérie,’ *Recherches: Trois milliards de pervers. La grande encyclopédie des homosexualités* 12 (March 1973); 2

⁹⁵⁵ *Recherches: Trois milliards de pervers*, (Paris: Acratie, 2014), 15.

⁹⁵⁶ *FHAR: Rapport contre la normalité* (Paris: Editions Champ Libre, 1971) 78.

⁹⁵⁷ *FHAR: Rapport contre la normalité*, 78.

⁹⁵⁸ Scenes from the march can be found in Carole Roussopoulos’s 1971 film *Le F.H.A.R. (Front Homosexuel d’Action Révolutionnaire)*.

'Go and get your heads checked you bunch of pederasts, the PCF is healthy!'⁹⁵⁹

'Fags and the revolution'⁹⁶⁰

'socialist utopia... involves not only the struggle to abolish the wage system and private property... it also involves a struggle right now to make human relations *between subjects* possible.'⁹⁶¹

'instead of understanding this dispersion of amorous energy as an inability to locate a centre, we can instead see in action the non-exclusive connections produced by polymorphous desire.'⁹⁶²

'cruising machine'; 'fuckorama'.⁹⁶³

'an arbitrary slice of an uninterrupted and multiple flux.'⁹⁶⁴

'Here, homosexual practices are considered a non-sexuality, something which has not yet found its form, as sexuality exclusively means heterosexuality.'⁹⁶⁵

⁹⁵⁹ Pierre Albertini, 'Communisme,' in *Dictionnaire de l'homophobie*, ed. Louis-Georges Tin (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2003), 106.

⁹⁶⁰ FHAR, 'Pédés et la révolution,' *Tout!*, 12, April 1971, 9.

⁹⁶¹ FHAR, 'Pédés et la révolution,' 9.

⁹⁶² Guy Hocquenghem, *Le désir homosexuel*, (1972; repr., Paris: Fayard, 2000), 151.

⁹⁶³ Françoise d'Eaubonne, 'Le FHAR: Tensions et déclin,' *La revue h 3* (winter 1996/1997); 25.

⁹⁶⁴ Hocquenghem, *Le désir homosexuel*, 24.

⁹⁶⁵ Hocquenghem, *Le désir homosexuel*, 180.

‘Separating sex from everything else is castration... This is the case for so-called ‘heterosexuality’ and so-called ‘homosexuality’, if sexuality doesn’t exist how could there be ‘homo’ and ‘hetero’ sexuality?’⁹⁶⁶

‘It is in a socialist society that the mutual inclusion of homosexuality and heterosexuality will appear. Then there will no longer be homos, nor heteros, nor bisexuals, but a free sexuality.’⁹⁶⁷

‘a giant cruising ground over six floors in a university building, probably the best-frequented cruising ground in Paris, if not Europe...’⁹⁶⁸

‘equalisation of relations’⁹⁶⁹

‘I helped those who stopped it transforming into a structure, into a bureaucracy. It belonged to everyone, it should not have belonged to anyone.’⁹⁷⁰

‘a brutal explosion’⁹⁷¹

‘quite simply misogynist’⁹⁷²

⁹⁶⁶ ‘Pour en finir avec le cul,’ *Le Fléau Social*, August 1973, 24.

⁹⁶⁷ Anne-Marie Fauret and Guy Maës, ‘Pourquoi venons-nous au FHAR?’ *L’Antinorm*, December 1972, 3.

⁹⁶⁸ Guy Hocquenghem, *L’Après-Mai des faunes* (Paris: Grasset, 1974), 196.

⁹⁶⁹ Fauret and Maës, ‘Pourquoi venons-nous au FHAR?’, 3.

⁹⁷⁰ Laurent Dispot, ‘Aventuriers de la liberté,’ *Gai pied hebdo*, March 7, 1991, 59.

⁹⁷¹ Quelques uns du FHAR, ‘FHAR bilan,’ *Tout!*, June 30, 1971, 9.

⁹⁷² Quelques uns du FHAR, ‘FHAR bilan,’ 9.

‘It is now time to really approach all those homosexuals who suffer from their condition and to show them that we are there so that they can become us.’⁹⁷³

‘As I was listening to these pre-prepared diatribes made by the orators at the FHAR’s general meetings I began to want to poke fun.’⁹⁷⁴

‘It was the first time that I had heard intellectual words, and as I wouldn’t have been able to argue my case, I kept my mouth shut.’⁹⁷⁵

‘merchant scum’⁹⁷⁶

‘Your sexual liberation is not ours.’⁹⁷⁷

‘The women explained that they were sick of men wolf-whistling at them in the streets.’ To which the fags responded that for them that’s all that they asked for: that men whistle at them, that they put their hands on their arses.’

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‘the spokesperson of your revolutionary homosexuality’⁹⁷⁹

⁹⁷³ Quelques uns du FHAR, ‘FHAR bilan,’ 9.

⁹⁷⁴ Paquita Paquin, *Vingt ans sans dormir 1968-1983* (Paris: Denoël, 2005), 37.

⁹⁷⁵ François Jonquet, *Jenny Bel’Air: une créature* (Paris: Pauvert, 2001), 209-210.

⁹⁷⁶ Jonquet interviews Hazéra in *Jenny Bel’Air*, 47.

⁹⁷⁷ MLF, ‘Votre libération sexuelle n’est pas la nôtre,’ *Tout!*, June 30, 1971, 3.

⁹⁷⁸ Guy Hocquenghem, ‘De la mixité au sein du FHAR,’ *Actuel*, November 1972, 9.

⁹⁷⁹ Quelques uns du FHAR, ‘FHAR bilan,’ *Tout!*, June 30, 1971, 9.

'Have any of you revealed your homosexuality to your parents?'; 'an ostentatious and provocative attitude'⁹⁸⁰

'it's not so easy to talk to your family. The problem isn't on the level of political prejudices, it's much more profound.'⁹⁸¹

'I am experiencing real emotional and sexual poverty'; 'my last chance to find people who understand me.'⁹⁸²

'We are not Mérie Grégoire... To make political and/or sexual revolution for others, you need to start with yourself. We cannot do anything here at the FHAR...'⁹⁸³

'To destroy this hideous monster that they have persuaded me that I am,'
'from the will to suicide, I am moving permanently to a will to revolt.'⁹⁸⁴

'It is simpler if each person fulfils themselves without imposing on others...
We will not make revolution by sexuality alone.'⁹⁸⁵

'a movement of struggle that, in order to be effective, must fight a constant battle for many years, cannot function like an open house...'⁹⁸⁶

⁹⁸⁰ Pierre Hahn, 'Répression vécue, table ronde,' *Partisans*, July-October 1972, 140-1

⁹⁸¹ Hahn, 'Répression vécue, table ronde,' 142.

⁹⁸² 'Hexagonons,' *L'Antinorm*, December 1972, 15.

⁹⁸³ 'Hexagonons,' 15.

⁹⁸⁴ Anonymised letter, 1st May 1971, from the papers of Jean Le Bitoux, with kind permission of Professor Michael Sibalís, (JLB).

⁹⁸⁵ Bernard to Jean-Louis, undated (1971 or 1972), (JLB).

⁹⁸⁶ GLH-Paris, 'Principe d'une charte d'adhésion,' 1975, JLB.

'In 1971, the FHAR was our first cry of revolt, but the lack of organisation and cohesion led to internal disintegration which allowed police repression to occur.'⁹⁸⁷

'We refuse to let ideology supplant our own experience... Long live poo, long live wee, long live poofs and down with capitalism. It means what it means.'⁹⁸⁸

'We reject normality based on a division of the sexes, which results in the domination of men and the oppression of women, and in the distinctions between homosexuals and heterosexuals, between normal and abnormal...'⁹⁸⁹

'Why call yourself a homo when heteros have no need to call themselves heteros, and by that fact, reinforce the divisions that we want to break down?'⁹⁹⁰

'Am I homosexual? Yes! No!... I'm SEXUAL, and that's that... I think that a lot of us torture ourselves, and are tortured, by self-classification...'⁹⁹¹

'We homosexuals who do not recognise ourselves at all in the bourgeois club Arcadie, wish to participate with the working class in anticapitalist combat...'⁹⁹²

⁹⁸⁷ 'Manifeste GLH PQ', January 1977, (MS).

⁹⁸⁸ 'Manifeste GLH 14-Décembre', 1975, (MS).

⁹⁸⁹ 'Manifeste GLH-PQ', January 1976, (MS).

⁹⁹⁰ Alain Huet, 'Sur l'anonymat,' *Agence Tasse*, May 5, 1977, 1.

⁹⁹¹ 'Je ne sais jamais ça,' *Interlopes*, Spring 1978, 10.

⁹⁹² 'Je ne sais jamais ça,' 10.

‘the GLH demands the abolition of the repressive articles of the Penal Code (article 330 and 331) and the different discriminatory legal texts, the end to the police registry of homosexuals and the destruction of the registers.’⁹⁹³

‘you can have a taste of Arabia – and of good quality! Not like that you find in the suburbs of Paris or Marseille...’⁹⁹⁴

‘In the non-commercial ghetto, the constant threat of repression by the police or gangs of thugs creates a high degree of guilt... that makes any form of communication other than hasty sexual consummation very difficult... In the commercial ghetto, relationships are fundamentally marked by their monetary nature, thus excluding all communication between individuals other than via their appearance.’⁹⁹⁵

‘come on, we’re going to love each other, we won’t consume each other and throw each other away afterwards, we’re going to laugh, play, enjoy all of ourselves...’⁹⁹⁶

‘The rest of the day and night I walk the length of the quays and the streets of the city until my legs become exhausted and my gaze uncertain. Why has Lyon become such a difficult city to live in?’⁹⁹⁷

⁹⁹³ GLH Marseille, ‘Homosexuels défendez vos droits et libertés’, leaflet, May 1980, (MS).

⁹⁹⁴ ‘Voyage,’ *Comme ça*, October 1979, 3.

⁹⁹⁵ ‘Réflexions’, GLH-PQ, August 1976, 25. (MS).

⁹⁹⁶ ‘J’accuse,’ *Interlopes*, Spring 1978, 4, (MC).

⁹⁹⁷ ‘La drague,’ *Interlopes*, Autumn 1977, 2, (MC).

'We don't want the enlargement of the ghetto or its democratisation; we don't want comfortable cottages under police protection or a vodka orange for 2 francs at Mylord [one of Lyon's only gay nightclubs]. Homosexual liberation means letting it flow freely as a part of all human relations..'998

'Fag Culture: A culture as artificial as a plastic steak... Desire: That which grows. It doesn't always grow in the direction the head wants...'999

'People critique Arcadie, rightly, for the timidity... of its action: nevertheless, Arcadie represents a sizeable amount of activity and a persistent effort'.1000

'We eat, we have an hour or two of politics...Then we chat in small groups, about 15 or so head off to a club to dance until 4 in the morning...'1001

'Let's talk about everyday life: on the gay scene for instance...Family, childhood... How we got through it, what injuries the young homosexual suffers... Work too, and love. Our impossible yet perennial loves.'1002

'love and shit'; 'Taking pleasure in life also means taking pleasure in shitting.'1003

998 GLH-Lyon, 'Comment empêcher les chiens d'aboyer en voiture?,' *Interlopes*, Spring 1978, 13.

999 'Abécédaire de l'homosexualité,' *Interlopes*, Spring 1979, 1, (MC)

1000 'Un peu d'histoire,' *Le bal des tantes*, 1978, 3.

1001 Letter from GLH Marseille to GLH Mulhouse, December 19, 1977, (MS).

1002 'Editorial,' *Comme ça*, September 1979, 1, (MS).

1003 The leaflet is reproduced in *Bulletin des GLH de province*, September 1976, 23, (MS).

‘homosexuals who don’t like men.’¹⁰⁰⁴

‘Aix wishes to keep itself avant-garde, to keep its sequins...’¹⁰⁰⁵

‘numerous times we had to respond to questions such as “is it true that such and such a GLH is a creation of the PQ... or of the 14th December?”’

‘Paris’s GLH-PQ has organised the accommodation. The choice has been made on physical criteria, the PQ distributing the pretty provincials amongst themselves, the less attractive can go and sleep under the bridges.’¹⁰⁰⁶

“What are you doing, how are you organising, what action are you taking?”

These are questions that we ask each other and that friends who want to start a GLH in their town ask. It’s this need that is at the origins of the Provincial Bulletin.’¹⁰⁰⁷

‘We don’t want to be spiritual advisors, thought leaders or the promoters of a new moral code.’¹⁰⁰⁸

‘The *permanences* were pretty dead. People came, since they knew about us from our leaflets... but we didn’t really know what to say to them, and them likewise.’¹⁰⁰⁹

¹⁰⁰⁴ Patrick Cardon, ‘Histoires Aixoises,’ *Fin de siècle*, Spring 1980, 47, (MS).

¹⁰⁰⁵ Cardon, ‘Histoires Aixoises,’ 47.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Impressions personnelles,’ *Agence Tasse*, March 20, 1977, 3.

¹⁰⁰⁷ GLH Bordeaux, ‘Editorial,’ 2.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Jacques Prince, ‘Editorial,’ *Agence Tasse*, December 20, 1976, 1. (MS).

¹⁰⁰⁹ ‘Tentative d’historique du GLH de Rouen,’ *Pourquoi Pas*, 1 (undated, 1978), 4. (MS).

‘Tonight I’m going to dance. I should be happy; yet I’m worried. It’s my first time in drag... I must not crack, it must not be a failure... Let’s get on stage.’¹⁰¹⁰

‘apart from the problem of the time it takes for organisation parties don’t pose any “political” problem that needs hours of discussion.’¹⁰¹¹

‘September 1975, I come across a classified advert in *Libération*. It announces a meeting of the brand new GLH... I was then depressed, buried deep in my bed, *Libé* in my hand at dawn, surrounded by cigarette butts and empty beer bottles... I was ecstatically happy to attend their meetings.’¹⁰¹²

‘For me, entering into homosexuality is almost like entering a religion... If I’m doing it, I’m doing it completely, and secondly, I’m doing it with other people... it was a social upheaval, a moral upheaval.’¹⁰¹³

‘We met once a week in someone’s apartment [the novelist, Gilles Barbedette]... it was a place where there was a great deal of togetherness [*convivialité*], we ate together, we saw each other each week to discuss things, even if the conversation went over my head a bit at the time. I looked forward to each Thursday to be with the others, to talk, go out...’¹⁰¹⁴

¹⁰¹⁰ Jean-Luc, ‘Préparatifs du bal,’ *Le bal des tantes*, 1978, 1, (MS).

¹⁰¹¹ GLH-Marseille, ‘La Boulangerie a un an’, June 1982, (MS).

¹⁰¹² Le Bitoux, Chevaux, Proth, *Citoyen de seconde zone*, 135-6.

¹⁰¹³ Christian de Leusse, interview with the author, November 2014.

¹⁰¹⁴ Jean-Michel Rousseau (alias Mélanie Badaire), interview with the author, July 2014.

'I'm caught in a trap, between my workplace, which is medieval in terms of sexuality.... and the pleasure that I've been able to take in discovering and analysing words like "phallocratism" and "machismo" etc... words I'd never heard and whose meaning and value I didn't know.'¹⁰¹⁵

'How many homos have come along [to meetings] and have said nothing, then have left and never come back. Many members weren't at ease, especially the new ones.'¹⁰¹⁶

'when we organised something, everyone found their place to do something collectively... that's how we had the cinema festival, conferences with various personalities [such as the author Dominique Fernandez]... and then the parties... there was a very strong energy, like a rocket taking off...'¹⁰¹⁷

'Aix did have the virtue... of opening eyes to the possibility of new initiatives.'¹⁰¹⁸

'We're not going to freak out about the number of votes, we really couldn't care less.'¹⁰¹⁹

'Do you at least know that there are laws that repress us? We're not saying that the whole world has to become homosexual...'¹⁰²⁰

¹⁰¹⁵ Florian du GLH Bordeaux, 'Huit heures avec la honte', 'Stage 24-25 February 1979 "Comment vivre son homosexualité"', (MS).

¹⁰¹⁶ 'GLH Clermont Ferrand, un an.', undated, 2. (MS).

¹⁰¹⁷ Christian de Leusse, interview with the author, November 2014.

¹⁰¹⁸ 'Comment les aborder... les élections'.

¹⁰¹⁹ 'Comment les aborder... les élections'.

¹⁰²⁰ The poster is reproduced in *Interlopes*, Spring 1978, 6, (MC).

‘unmasked homosexuality that does not remain the privilege of a few television stars.’¹⁰²¹

‘pose the problem of homosexual repression in current institutions through the penal code and psychiatry’¹⁰²²

‘a place created by homos, for homos... Have a drink, chat with friends, get social or legal help, meet people, browse a magazine or the latest homosexual novel, listen to music... Find out the latest news on the scene, meet others who don’t go to the usual homosexual clubs and saunas...’¹⁰²³

‘Oh the shame!... How shameful to see the walls of our town covered in posters in favour of homosexuals... Instead of a space for their meetings, perhaps a place at the Chartreux hospital would be more suited to their case.’¹⁰²⁴

‘Gender diversity is insufficient, the number of women is quite low... unstable finances... the coexistence of a very disparate clientele is sometimes delicate.’¹⁰²⁵

¹⁰²¹ ‘Le groupe de libération des homosexuels présente deux candidats à Paris,’ *Le Monde*, March 1, 1978, 8.

¹⁰²² ‘Appel de soutien au droit aux candidatures homosexuelles lors des élections législatives de Mars 1978,’ *Agence Tasse*, February 1978, 2, (MS).

¹⁰²³ Leaflet, ‘Lesbiennes, homosexuels sortons du placard!’, 1981, (MS).

¹⁰²⁴ ‘Diane et Hadrien, Dossier Technique’, April 1982, (MS).

¹⁰²⁵ ‘Diane et Hadrien, Dossier Technique’, April 1982, (MS).

'our activities are only verbal, verbose even (national meetings, *Interlopes...*)
Our group is autarchic, separated from the reality in which other homosexuals
live in other places.'¹⁰²⁶

'most of all I'm struck by the fact that a group that is focused on sexuality has
never talked about it clearly.'¹⁰²⁷

'For some, David et Jonathan is the expression of their faith lived in
homophilia [*homophilie*]... For others still (and no doubt for all!), it is
friendship, the sincerity of human relations that they most wish to find on
joining us.'¹⁰²⁸

'After the collective prayer, the reading and meditation on the Gospel or on
the Bible is the occasion for each to express himself freely, following his heart
or his head.'¹⁰²⁹

'There are men and women whose drives of the heart and of the senses are
different to that of the majority. These urges escape their will... they come
from their very nature, they come from God the creator.'¹⁰³⁰

'one can be authentically Christian as well as entirely homophile.'¹⁰³¹

¹⁰²⁶ 'Fonctionnement du groupe,' *Interlopes*, Winter 1978, 6, (MC).

¹⁰²⁷ 'Fonctionnement du groupe,' 13.

¹⁰²⁸ 'Mouvement David et Jonathan de Grenoble: Bref bilan et propositions,' NAF, 20150654/8, 25, (DJ).

¹⁰²⁹ David et Jonathan Marseille, 'Lettre de Marseille,' *David et Jonathan*, April 1974, 9.

¹⁰³⁰ Gérald de la Mauvinière, 'Editorial,' *David et Jonathan*, October 1973, 2.

¹⁰³¹ 'Compte-rendu de la reunion du vendredi 30 Mai 1975, Arcadie Nice-Côte d'Azur,' NAF, 20150654/9, 26, (DJ).

'Inopportune, useless, even harmful.'¹⁰³²

'but we cannot make out as if it does not exist. We must therefore try to understand it, in order to apply it to our own concrete situations.'¹⁰³³

'Finally some good news... Paris is returning to Christianity... The young antiquarian, slightly dubious, who has just moved to our town, will not be unmoved by this call to the love of men...'¹⁰³⁴

'they have, for the first time in the Church's history, opened the door to homosexuals and recognised the existence of a homosexual nature.'¹⁰³⁵

'violent and anti-establishment discourse of the GLH'; 'Openness, sharing, mutual recognition of differences; a fruitful experience.'¹⁰³⁶

'Liberated so you can build a satisfying relationship with your partner – if you have the luck to find one! – your friends and your relations in general...
Liberated in your faith so that your relation to Christ can become deeper, clearer, and purified.'¹⁰³⁷

¹⁰³² Max Lionnet, 'L'Emotion des Chrétiens homophiles,' *David et Jonathan*, April 1976, 4.

¹⁰³³ Lionnet, 'L'Emotion,' 4.

¹⁰³⁴ Monsieur Dimanche, 'L'amour des hommes,' *Le Figaro*, October 29, 1977, 17.

¹⁰³⁵ 'Compte-rendu des interventions faites le 28 Novembre 1981 à la reunion organise par le MRAP sur homosexualités et racismes,' NAF, 20150654/10, 30, (DJ).

¹⁰³⁶ David et Jonathan Grenoble, 'Dialogue avec le GLH,' *David et Jonathan*, December 1978, 5.

¹⁰³⁷ Gérald de la Mauvinière, 'Libérés pour quoi faire?,' *David et Jonathan*, Supplement 'Journées annuelles de réflexion,' Summer 1982, 3.

‘our activism has always been realist... our action can only be discrete, unassuming, in a word evangelical, if it wants to result in a change in the mind-set of the Christian People who surround us.’¹⁰³⁸

‘Prison, whether we like it or not, is for a homosexual laden with fantasies... As the months went by – with the help of exercise and prayer – I was in some way able to disconnect – without rejecting – my sexuality and my relation to the prisoners, by no longer projecting my fantasies on to them, which would have utterly skewed the relationship.’¹⁰³⁹

‘adults or minors, shagging is the same!’¹⁰⁴⁰

‘Our struggle must be to recognise all sexuality that is freely consented to, in particular sexualities that have the most trouble expressing themselves in our society, homosexuality, female sexuality, and the sexuality of children.’¹⁰⁴¹

‘Let’s be clear, I don’t accept paedophilia. Until fifteen or sixteen, you are fragile. To make that not a crime? Don’t count on me!’¹⁰⁴²

‘In addition to the ‘traditional’ participants, the two to three thousand of previous demonstrations, were added thousands of ‘moustaches’, ‘leathers’ and other ‘machos’. ‘The ghetto’, one clumsy member of the CUARH told me.

¹⁰³⁸ De la Mauvinière, ‘Libérés pour quoi faire?’, 3.

¹⁰³⁹ ‘J’étais en prison et vous m’avez visité,’ 1980, NAF, 20150654/8, 24, (DJ).

¹⁰⁴⁰ Gilbert, ‘Groupe de Recherche pour une Enfance Différente,’ *Homophonies*, July-August 1981, 25.

¹⁰⁴¹ Gérard Bach-Ignasse, GRED, ‘L’âge de la majorité sexuelle,’ *Homophonies*, July-August 1981, 25.

¹⁰⁴² Henri Caillavet, interview with Bernard Violet in *Mort d’un pasteur*, 98.

Actually, it is them who have made the undoubted success of this march, giving it a relaxed and diverse look.’¹⁰⁴³

Chapter two: Gay commercial spaces and consumer culture

‘the key that will open the first doors...’¹⁰⁴⁴

‘there are effects of “commercialisation” that could be considered alienating, but they should not obscure the fact that the constitution of a gay scene, of a “gay world”, was to begin with, and remain, a creator of liberties.’¹⁰⁴⁵

‘One is not born homosexual, one learns to be. The homosexual career starts with a recognition of specific sexual desires and by the apprenticeship of spaces and ways of meeting partners.’¹⁰⁴⁶

‘at night the street was packed, but in the day it [gay life] was totally invisible... I used to go in any case, half attracted to it, half angry with it.’¹⁰⁴⁷

‘Le Fiacre marked the beginning of a connection between fashion, culture and marginal sexuality.’¹⁰⁴⁸

¹⁰⁴³ Jacky Fougeray, ‘Notre préférence,’ *Gai pied*, May 1981, 2.

¹⁰⁴⁴ *Incognito Guide Europe Méditerranée: Hiver 1967-8* (Paris: Editions ASL, 1967), 2

¹⁰⁴⁵ Eribon, *Réflexions*, 212.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Michael Pollak, ‘L’homosexualité masculine, ou le bonheur dans le ghetto?’ *Communications* 35, no.35 (1982); 38-39.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Daniel Garcia, *Les années Palace* (Paris: Flammarion, 1999), 38.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Garcia, *Les années Palace*, 18.

'The Palais Royal and the Théâtre Français are loyal to him; actors, writers, designers and directors make up the core of his clientele.'¹⁰⁴⁹

'I'm still interested in the juxtaposition between homo and hetero... we benefit by showing our tendencies naturally.'¹⁰⁵⁰

'Le Palace smashes all ghettos by imposing a subversive concept and the closest one to Gay sensibility.'¹⁰⁵¹

'At Le Bronx, busy late into the night, you find yourself among homosexuals without any shame and boys knowing exactly what to do to other boys. A long bar, benches, and even bunk beds... the atmosphere is rather "sexualised", but sometimes the conversations are still Parisian. Half-Proust, half-leather, a surprising place...'¹⁰⁵²

'quite often, once a night.'¹⁰⁵³

'For months I was preoccupied with this idea, by this Desire, which tormented me, obsessed me: the desire to prostitute myself.'¹⁰⁵⁴

¹⁰⁴⁹ Jacques-Louis Delpal, *Ultra guide Paris bleu tendre* (Paris: Editions du Mont-Cenis, 1974), 32.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Audrey Coz, 'Fabrice Emaer du 7 au Palace,' *Gai Pied*, October 1980, 12.

¹⁰⁵¹ Fabrice Eamer, 'Editorial,' *Théâtre le palace magazine*, March 1983, 1.

¹⁰⁵² Delpal, *Ultra Guide*, 26.

¹⁰⁵³ *Moi Je*, Antenne 2, first broadcast January 8, 1986.

¹⁰⁵⁴ David Girard, *Cher David: Les nuits du citizen gay* (Paris: Editions Ramsay, 1986), 51.

'This gay life, which is more and more prominent and diversified in Paris and also in other big cities in the provinces.'¹⁰⁵⁵

'Don't be surprised to find in *5 sur 5* critiques of products and services that you use, in order to inform you in the most honest way possible about the service you are to receive.'¹⁰⁵⁶

'I had made my entry into Paris's gay community.'¹⁰⁵⁷

'an incredible testimony... when I read it I found it shocking... because of your sincerity... your cynicism, and I'd nearly say your arrogance... because you get the impression that for you morality doesn't exist.'¹⁰⁵⁸

'quite a perfect representation of free enterprise.'¹⁰⁵⁹

'But they're jealous, they're jealous and they can't handle it, all the militants who are all against me... So everyone who has a bar, everyone who has a restaurant, everyone who has a sauna, exploits people?'¹⁰⁶⁰

'sexual freedom, liberating sensuality, the rediscovery of one's body...'¹⁰⁶¹

¹⁰⁵⁵ David Girard, 'Pourquoi 5 sur 5?', *5 sur 5*, September 1983, 3.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Girard, 'Pourquoi 5 sur 5?', 3.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Girard, *Cher David*, 54.

¹⁰⁵⁸ *Apostrophes*, Antenne 2, first broadcast April 4, 1986.

¹⁰⁵⁹ *Apostrophes*, Antenne 2, first broadcast April 4, 1986.

¹⁰⁶⁰ *Apostrophes*, Antenne 2, first broadcast April 4, 1986.

¹⁰⁶¹ Girard, *Cher David*, 166.

'Individualism reigns. Everyone is conscious of belonging to a community, but that's more of an objective assessment, inescapable in a way, rather than a choice asserted in their minds.'¹⁰⁶²

'I don't like the word "militantism"; it evokes a political battle and a form of evangelism. However, the militant gays and I probably have the same aim in the long term: to insert gays into society.'¹⁰⁶³

'They are dressed in their work gear: greasy jeans, cowboy boots and jacket. "We show off, but we do it properly, we really show off. I love seeing the face of some poor pleb in their car at the red light."¹⁰⁶⁴

'Bikes are sexual because nothing is more sexual than a machine: not as a substitute, not "in the place of", as they are.'¹⁰⁶⁵

'So everything is for the best in the United States: this is the message of most of *Gai pied's* articles... The myth of the United States, the free country where fags... have all found general social acceptance. There you have it, those are the ideas that sell well in France.'¹⁰⁶⁶

'if we love these Anglo-American words, it's because they are vehicles of eroticism... the undeniable charm of English is due to the fact that it was in New

¹⁰⁶² Jacky Fougeray, 'La troisième génération,' *Samourai*, December 1982, 67.

¹⁰⁶³ Alain Le Douce, interview with Maurice McGrath, 'Un patron gay,' *Samourai*, May 1983, 41.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Jean-Pierre Delacroix, 'Avec...', *Sandwich*, January 5, 1980, 31-32.

¹⁰⁶⁵ The article is reprinted in Hocquenghem, *L'Après-Mai*, 181.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Dennis Altman, 'Le guêpier américain,' *Gai pied*, July-August 1979, 8.

York or San Francisco that this culture was invented and not Bordeaux or Paris.’¹⁰⁶⁷

‘the Gays are blindly running towards an extreme pleasure, which they do not want, and they certainly do not want to be reminded that it can also become extreme suffering.’¹⁰⁶⁸

‘The requirements of the PR campaign launched by the new reformist gays to target American public opinion has forced them to create an ideal image of the neo-gay, a good citizen, a regular consumer, a conscientious producer, moderate voter, which the majority of gays have ended up believing in themselves.’¹⁰⁶⁹

‘The new, uncomplicated, deodorised homo...equipped with regulation moustache and briefcase; an inoffensive passenger on a Club Med holiday, on the same chartered flight as all the rest.’¹⁰⁷⁰

‘let’s remove cruising’s moral and oedipal veneer. There are no limits to cruising.’¹⁰⁷¹

‘Maybe we would be better off asking ourselves “through homosexuality what relations can be established, invented, multiplied or modified?” the problem

¹⁰⁶⁷ Rule Britannia, ‘Lets mots anglais,’ *Samourai*, April 1983, 8.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Guy Hocquenghem, ‘Gay sanglant USA,’ *Sandwich*, December 8, 1979, 14.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Jean-Pierre Joecker, ‘San Francisco, le nouvel El Dorado gai?,’ *Masques*, Autumn 1980, 104.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Dominique Fernandez, *L’Étoile rose* (Paris: Grasset, 1978), 164.

¹⁰⁷¹ FHAR, *Recherches: Trois milliards de pervers*, March 1973, 106.

isn't to discover in yourself the truth of your sex, but to start to use sexuality to arrive at a multiplicity of relations.'¹⁰⁷²

'On a weekend when the full moon is out, dressed in all my gear, I decide to take the plunge, the act that will change me profoundly: I stick on my moustache... The result is striking, I don't recognise myself.'¹⁰⁷³

'the European capital of homosexuality, the city has nothing to envy from San Francisco and New York.'¹⁰⁷⁴

'The 'Sacramouche' welcomes all foreigners who meet there in clans: Vietnamese, South Americans, Greeks, West Indians... This mix of races irresistibly attracts rich and lonely old men in search of a soulmate [*âme frère*]...'¹⁰⁷⁵

'abandonment of political censorship in the cinema.'¹⁰⁷⁶

'the first French hard core [sic]'; 'representation on screen of unsimulated sexual acts'.¹⁰⁷⁷

'the mercantile, senile and often hideous response to our society in crisis.'¹⁰⁷⁸

¹⁰⁷² Michel Foucault, 'De l'amitié comme mode de vie', *Gai pied hebdo*, June 30, 1984, 32.

¹⁰⁷³ Roland Surzur, 'Miroir cuir,' *Gai pied*, November 1982, 28.

¹⁰⁷⁴ 'Ces drôles de boîtes où on danse moustache contre moustache,' *Minute*, November 29, 1978, 24.

¹⁰⁷⁵ 'Ces drôles de boîtes,' 25.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, *Démocratie Française* (Paris: Fayard, 1976), 16.

¹⁰⁷⁷ 'Exhibition' (advertisement), *France-Soir*, October 7, 1975, 18

¹⁰⁷⁸ Jouffa and Crawley, *Entre deux censures*, 169.

'We created the Club in response to the government's pimping. When we receive 19 francs from the price of a ticket, we had to give 9.08 francs back to the government. Giving half of our takings to Giscard was absurd, to pay for the cops who would then come and raid the cinema.'¹⁰⁷⁹

'just as important as law reform, is the change in attitudes, which needs more time, patience and thought. Those who are hesitant should come to the *Club Vidéo Gay*, relax, watch a good fuck on screen, eye up their soul mate, or simply get away from the weight of heterosexual conformism.'¹⁰⁸⁰

'it was at that moment that I accepted my homosexuality and with Scandelari I made *New York City Inferno*, in which there is a lot of myself, discovering that sumptuous city where everything shocked me.'¹⁰⁸¹

'The bestial relations of the mustached queens in New York city are incomparable to the tender juvenile pettings of little French boy scouts. *New York City Inferno* is the reflection of a wild and violent desire that becomes for some, like a drug, the only reason to live.'¹⁰⁸²

'A certain element of cruelty.'¹⁰⁸³

¹⁰⁷⁹ Interview with Terry in Jean-François Garsi, *Cinemas homosexuels* (Paris: Papyrus, 1981), 91

¹⁰⁸⁰ Norbert Terry, 'Editorial,' *La lettre du vidéo-gay*, February 2, 1980, 2.

¹⁰⁸¹ Jacques Zimmer, *Histoires du cinéma X par celles et ceux qui l'ont conçu, produit, commenté ou interprété* (Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2011), 259.

¹⁰⁸² Philippe de Mazières, 'New York City Inferno,' *Spécial man: l'homosexualité au cinéma*, 73.

¹⁰⁸³ Bier, *Dictionnaire des films*, 704.

'Another day gone by and I've learnt something else. Yesterday I went to buy some leather gear and "gadgets" like they say here, I don't know if you'd like to use them with me but I find them a lot of fun.'¹⁰⁸⁴

'I loiter all day
and then all night
Child of shadow
And of nobody
Streets and bars
are my shelter
I give myself
to all comers...

God, why have you made me a man?

Why did you create men?'¹⁰⁸⁵

'holds out a mirror to you. Look at yourself! And for emphasis it spits in your face, pisses on you and if you're still hard, all hopes are permitted for the exploiters of degradation.'¹⁰⁸⁶

'Cadinot takes back all those moments of our lives and makes our fantasies come true. The dormitory, the scout tent, the barracks, all become charged with an eroticism and a sexuality that is explicit and liberating.'¹⁰⁸⁷

¹⁰⁸⁴ Merkins, *New York City Inferno*.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Siry, *Et Dieu créa les hommes*.

¹⁰⁸⁶ De Mazières, '*Et Dieu créa les hommes*,' 52.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Leraton, *Gay Porn*, 72.

'I've already worked with Jean-Daniel and with him you always feel like you have fun! The bonds that he creates between us and himself are intoxicating.'¹⁰⁸⁸

'primarily for pleasure.'¹⁰⁸⁹

'I take it up the ass! . . . If I go with a guy it's to do something I can't do with a girl.'¹⁰⁹⁰

'for me, porno is something ugly, dirty. But it's also showing a sexual act. And we all perform sexual acts so we all make porno.'¹⁰⁹¹

'Cadinot's boys, whose beauty is vivid, even moving--this certainly isn't the world of clones--get hard and have a blast in a film in which they don't *seem* to participate only because *business is business*.'¹⁰⁹²

'by giving as much importance to heterosexuals as I did to homosexuals and to bisexuals, I normalised the last two categories, which are normally separated off.'¹⁰⁹³

¹⁰⁸⁸ 'Une journée pas comme les autres,' *Incognito*, 4 (undated) 1977, 33.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Kevin Kratz, 'Pour le plaisir,' *Samourai*, March 1983, 68.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Cadinot, *Aime, comme minet*, 1982.

¹⁰⁹¹ Bertrand Philbert, 'Jean-Daniel Cadinot,' 30.

¹⁰⁹² Luc Pinhaus, 'Jean-Daniel Cadinot, humour et tendresse dans l'érotico-porno,' *Gai pied Hebdo*, December 18-24, 1982, 10.

¹⁰⁹³ Janine Schasdow, interview with Pierre Guénin, *In magazine*, February-March 1976, 2.

'film with a 100% virile atmosphere...'1094

'We will leave it to our readers to undertake the necessary mental gymnastics, born from the will of m'learned friends.'1095

'They bring you out of isolation, out of solitude, by the testimonies confessing people's state of mind... Through the letters which establish a network of mutual support.'1096

'How do you live your homosexuality? With your parents? With your friends? Your lovers? Your employer? What difficulties do you face in your daily life and in your relationships with others? Your pains! Your worries! Your joys! Your hopes.'1097

'No ridiculous socks on a naked model please.'1098

'I would like information on Dieter and to meet Bryan. Only problem is, I don't speak English or German.'1099

'[Gay activists] do not know to what extent my letters from readers have been able to bring comfort to several generations of gays.'1100

¹⁰⁹⁴ Igor Floquet 'La soif du mâle,' *Nous les hommes*, November-December 1977, 40.

¹⁰⁹⁵ 'Dernière minute,' *Incognito*, 1 (undated) 1977, 2.

¹⁰⁹⁶ 'Pierre B.,' letter, *Andros*, 4 (May?) 1976, 61.

¹⁰⁹⁷ 'Racontez-nous votre vie,' *New Boys* 1, (undated) 1979, 38.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Docteur C., letter, *Jean-Paul*, Summer 1980, 39.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Régis A., letter, *Olympe*, Winter 1979, 31.

¹¹⁰⁰ Guénin, *La Gay Révolution*, 131.

‘If we remain determined to improve the magazine as a product, its circulation, layout, promotion, without a doubt we are ready to prioritise its progressive slide towards an “integrationist” discourse.’¹¹⁰¹

‘an organ of information and comparison to tie “consumers” together, break with sterility, and allow the comparison of prices and how best to spend... An end to the years of daylight robbery, tolerated because of a poor balance of power... for political and financial affirmation.’¹¹⁰²

‘Article 331, line 2 has been repealed: sexual majority for all at fifteen! Fréquence Gaie [a gay radio station founded in 1981] is broadcasting twenty-four hours a day. *Gai pied* is the magazine for homosexuals and... their friends!’¹¹⁰³

‘As the weekly issues passed we collided with the immediate fascination with fantasy, with the short-term logic of commercial discourse and the pernicious influence of advertising on the editorial content.’¹¹⁰⁴

‘the homosexual press creates an image, constructs a world, moulds bodies, depicts role models, really it is about constructing a community.’¹¹⁰⁵

¹¹⁰¹ Jean Le Bitoux, ‘Du journalisme homosexuel,’ 11 March 1981, MS 0547 (3), (MC).

¹¹⁰² Le Bitoux, ‘Du journalisme homosexuel’.

¹¹⁰³ *Gai pied hebdo* (advertisement), *Gai pied*, November 1982, 25.

¹¹⁰⁴ Jean Le Bitoux, ‘Prière d’insérer,’ *Gai pied hebdo*, July 16, 1983, 3.

¹¹⁰⁵ Bach-Ignasse, Cavailhes, Dutey, *Rapport Gai*, 69.

'crazy underwear you'd never dared to imagine'; 'your most daring photos developed by a gay specialist'; "Follow me..." "Where are you going?" ... King Sauna'; 'dare to try poppers'.¹¹⁰⁶

"They're fags, but they don't think about that anymore... All these young people have gone beyond the stage of having problems with homosexuality." It's tempting to reply, that's easy, in 1982!¹¹⁰⁷

Part two: Continuities

Chapter three: Policing homosexuality

'Either because of a fear of scandal, or because of a consciousness of the immensity of the task, we prefer to contain the problem, and to limit ourselves to a repression which is possible, and in a way, realist.'¹¹⁰⁸

'Pederasty remained in the mind of the majority, and in the police's mind in particular, "the most squalid of passions" and a disturbance of public order against which it agreed to fight.'¹¹⁰⁹

¹¹⁰⁶ All examples of advertising slogans taken from *Gai pied*, November 1982, 29-31, 36, 55.

¹¹⁰⁷ Fougeray, 'La troisième génération,' 67.

¹¹⁰⁸ Jean Danet, *Discours juridiques et perversions sexuelles: XIXème et XXème siècles* (Nantes: Université de Nantes Faculté de Droit et de Sciences Politiques, 1977), 82.

¹¹⁰⁹ Laure Murat, *La loi du genre: Une histoire culturelle du 'troisième sexe'* (Paris: Fayard, 2006), 28.

‘indecent or unnatural acts [committed] with a minor of your own sex aged between 18 and 21 years old.’¹¹¹⁰

‘This disposition can derive from inversion, another psychological infirmity, but it is more often *acquired*, especially by the corruption of youth, who are the object of premature solicitation; in effect, between the ages of 15 and 20, these males appear at their most seductive and they have a sexual availability that is easy to deviate.’¹¹¹¹

‘the police must keep the specialised milieu under surveillance, as this also constitutes a prerequisite source of information in case of crime or misdemeanour, they must know the public spaces which provide the opportunity for encounters: certain cinemas and clubs, fêtes and fairs, and specialised nighttime establishments.’¹¹¹²

‘Homosexuals will not be cured, but, and this is preferable, their perpetual parthenogenesis in the world today will be destroyed.’¹¹¹³

‘The first struggles, in favour of homosexuals’ right to exercise self-determination, had barely begun. It would be another century before they broke the framing... of pathological delinquency, where they were kept imprisoned.’¹¹¹⁴

¹¹¹⁰ <http://actu.dalloz-etudiant.fr/le-billet/article/de-la-majorite-sexuelle-homosexuelle/h/1da755a8529b3a96bdfa17c13ef47001.html>, last accessed March 2016.

¹¹¹¹ Marcel Le Clère, *Manuel de police technique* (Paris: Editions Police-Revue, 1967), 143. (emphasis his).

¹¹¹² Le Clère, *Manuel*, 147.

¹¹¹³ Le Clère, *Manuel*, 147.

¹¹¹⁴ Hahn, *Nos ancêtres les pervers*, 85.

‘disturbance of the peace, because of the furtive encounters and social mixing, at least in the imagination, which it seemed to allow...’¹¹¹⁵

‘The conquests of the gay movement? Let’s talk about them: sex and fucking. Apart from that, what else?’¹¹¹⁶

‘From the unique imperative that imposes on everyone to make a permanent discourse about their sexuality, all the way to the multiple mechanisms of the economy, education, medicine and justice that incite, extract, arrange and institutionalise discourse around sex. Our civilisation has required and organised an immense verbosity.’¹¹¹⁷

‘The repression of homosexuals exists, it is permanent and multiple.’¹¹¹⁸

‘In May 1970 I went on a trip to Colmar with the *Réveil Suresnois*. Robert V. participated in this excursion as well as Jacques B. During this trip Robert groped and touched “my willy”, I did not touch his.’¹¹¹⁹

‘for having carried out indecent petting on young boys who were in his care for judo lessons.’¹¹²⁰

¹¹¹⁵ Rey, ‘Police et Sodomie à Paris,’ 123.

¹¹¹⁶ Lever, *Les Bûchers de Sodome*, 406.

¹¹¹⁷ Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité 1*, 45-6.

¹¹¹⁸ GLH Marseille, ‘La répression des homosexuels existe, elle est permanente et multiforme,’ 1979, (MS).

¹¹¹⁹ 1914 W 34, (AP).

¹¹²⁰ 1902 W 1, (AP).

‘an admirer of young boys,’ ‘he had in this way discovered homo-sexual [sic] pleasures.’¹¹²¹

‘he maintained sexual relations with his partner that were normal and entirely satisfactory without feeling the need to wallow in paedophilic or homosexual phantasies.’¹¹²²

‘kinship between homosexuals and paedophiles’¹¹²³

‘We find in him the “emotional hunt” so frequent in homosexuals. He pursues a soul mate and as he ages it is not a protector but a protégé which he seeks in life... He succumbs to the homosexual encounter, like he succumbs to drink.’¹¹²⁴

‘overcome with friendship,’; ‘a particular friendship links my friend Serge and me.’¹¹²⁵

‘Our sexual relations were limited to caresses, kisses. We also masturbated one another. It is correct that we performed “ORAL INTERCOURSE”... It was not the first time that I made love to a man... I do not remember having “sodomised” my friend. I recognise that he had asked me to do so multiple times, no, more like he made it understood that he would like to be sodomised.’¹¹²⁶

¹¹²¹ 1902 W 1, (AP).

¹¹²² 1902 W 1, (AP).

¹¹²³ Anne-Claude Ambroise-Rendu, *Histoire de la pédophilie XIXe-XXIe siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 2014), 167.

¹¹²⁴ 1902 W 1, (AP).

¹¹²⁵ 1914 W 30, (AP).

¹¹²⁶ 1914 W 30, (AP).

'I am not a homo-sexuel [sic]... I had with [Serge] an affectionate friendship. Sometimes I would kiss him even in front of his parents. Sometimes, I would touch him tenderly... Everything would stop there.'¹¹²⁷

'I asked a young blond boy for a light... I invited him to come and spend the night at my apartment. He must have understood was going to happen as he had the habit of hanging around the Gare du Nord.'¹¹²⁸

'I sucked his dick a little. I want to make it clear that I'm not a professional, as some are, notably the transvestites on the boulevards.'¹¹²⁹

'If his homosexuality is without doubt, it is certain that up until now [Jean] did not have any problems, having never taken minors, and in the present case, he is as much a victim as the perpetrator of the crime.'¹¹³⁰

'Publicness could be present, even if it was purely *virtual*.'¹¹³¹

'information files'; 'Pederasts and others'; 'prostitutes and others.'¹¹³²

'if we consider those involved in these practices as sick or guilty creates a double duty to keep a record of them when the facts are obvious.'¹¹³³

¹¹²⁷ 1914 W 30, (AP).

¹¹²⁸ 1914 W 30, (AP).

¹¹²⁹ 1914 W 30, (AP).

¹¹³⁰ 1914 W 30, (AP).

¹¹³¹ Iacub, *Par le trou de la serrure*, 71, emphasis in original.

¹¹³² Murat, *La Loi du genre*, 39, n.1.

¹¹³³ Le Clère, *Manuel*, 147.

'Mr Y "frequents the homosexual scene"'¹¹³⁴

'However, he admits being homosexual, and having come to the Jardins des Tuileries in full knowledge of the facts, knowing full well that it is a habitual meeting place for inverts.'¹¹³⁵

'H declares: "The love of women does not interest me. Since I was 14 I have had relations with men." S. adds: "I have been a homosexual since I spent time in the army.'¹¹³⁶

'I do not have to explain my desires. The witnesses could not have seen what we were doing.'¹¹³⁷

'At the time of their arrest they put up strong resistance.'¹¹³⁸

'this man spoke to me to make a proposition, something like 'do you want to fuck me'... I was a bit drunk, and I made fun of this individual, telling him that I wasn't a pederast.'¹¹³⁹

'It was dawn. The light in the corridor was switched on. Then, these two men pulled down their trousers and L. and this man "did their deed". I did not see

¹¹³⁴ J.M. Durand-Souffland, 'Un document mettant en cause les services de sûreté est distribué dans les boîtes aux lettres', *Le Monde*, November 17, 1979, 19.

¹¹³⁵ 1914 W 1, (AP).

¹¹³⁶ 1914 W 1, (AP).

¹¹³⁷ 1914 W 1, (AP).

¹¹³⁸ 1902 W 45, (AP).

¹¹³⁹ 1902 W 45, (AP).

their penises. Considering the movements of these two men I understood that L was being sodomised.’¹¹⁴⁰

‘to avoid accusations of obscurantism or much more grave accusations of hindering the pleasures of young celebrities, or even sexual racism, Raudès [the head of section] and his men were happy to tightly monitor a milieu that, paradoxically, did not stop growing, although by its very nature it was devoid of reproduction... Criminal cases, amongst this sort, were more numerous and more complex than elsewhere.’¹¹⁴¹

‘We consider that the homosexual milieu, where criminal cases are more numerous and more complex, must be put under surveillance by a specialised team.’¹¹⁴²

‘we carry out a duty of protection and, above all, observation. Homosexuals, by their lack of selectivity in their choice of partners, are more often the victims of assault, blackmail and extortion.’¹¹⁴³

‘Whereas a cabaret constitutes a public place in its intended use, in which anyone has the possibility of entry on the sole condition that they make a purchase during the show... the consent of the witnesses cannot modify the public character of the establishment... Whereas it is not necessary to add an

¹¹⁴⁰ 1914 W 3, (AP).

¹¹⁴¹ Roger Le Taillanter, *Paris sur vices: La descente aux enfers de la Brigade Mondaine* (Paris: Juillard, 1982), 36.

¹¹⁴² Marco Lemaire, ‘Les confidences de l’ex-shérif de “Paris-sur-vices,”’ *Gai pied*, April 1982, 7.

¹¹⁴³ Lemaire, ‘Les confidences,’ 7.

element of smut or vulgarity for the act of gross indecency to have been committed; it is committed by the public representation of effusions or sexual exhibitions restricted to private life even in the presence of consenting witnesses.’¹¹⁴⁴

‘Even among homosexuals “leather” enthusiasts constitute a marginalised minority... In Paris they have at their disposal a small number of meeting places, which are reserved for them, and exclude “classic” homosexuals.’¹¹⁴⁵

‘We could only consider the police inspectors, dressed up [*travestis*] and carrying their torches, to constitute such an audience [*public*].’¹¹⁴⁶

‘its address, telephone number and a description explaining its particular atmosphere.’¹¹⁴⁷

‘The 3rd October 1978 is to be marked with a pink stone in “gay” history. For the first time, people accused of *gross indecency with people of their own sex* appear in court without shame, and without denying their homosexuality,’¹¹⁴⁸

¹¹⁴⁴ 1914 W 40, (AP).

¹¹⁴⁵ ‘Audience, October 3, 1978,’ MS 631 / I, (MC).

¹¹⁴⁶ ‘Audience, October 3, 1978,’ MS 631 / I, (MC).

¹¹⁴⁷ ‘Mémoire ampliatif pour M. Smits, M. Chomar et M. Djeballa,’ January 14, 1981, MS 631 / I, (MC).

¹¹⁴⁸ N.P., ‘Une pierre rose dans l’histoire gay,’ *Libération*, October 4, 1978, 7. Emphasis in original.

‘Totally logical? Yes, if we stick to the letter of the law. A harsh law for homosexuals... considering the evolution of morality, this logic is wearing down a little.’¹¹⁴⁹

‘The punctuality of the police who appeared very well informed and whose presence that evening was not only due to chance.’¹¹⁵⁰

‘will doubtlessly contribute to the further marginalisation of a homosexual population who no longer wants to hide their difference, by placing them in permanent insecurity.’¹¹⁵¹

‘Arrive at a classless society through the destruction of the family unit, which is the “pillar of capitalism and western bourgeois society.” Under the pretext of the liberalisation of sex, the movement seeks to encourage homosexuals towards the proletarian revolution.’¹¹⁵²

‘1. Controlling the activity of revolutionary movements themselves. 2. Information from the student and high school milieu.’¹¹⁵³

‘In service of the sexual revolution.’¹¹⁵⁴

¹¹⁴⁹ Michel Kajman, ‘L’état des lois et l’état des mœurs,’ *Le Monde*, October 5, 1978, 12.

¹¹⁵⁰ ‘L’inculpation de l’animateur du cercle “André Gide”: Une répression accrue contre la population homosexuelle?’, *Le Progrès*, September 8, 1979, 5.

¹¹⁵¹ ‘L’inculpation de l’animateur du cercle “André Gide,”’ 5.

¹¹⁵² ‘Mouvements dits de “libération personnelle”’ (undated), 143W 06, 784169, (PP).

¹¹⁵³ 143W 06, 784169, (PP).

¹¹⁵⁴ 143W 06, 784169, (PP).

‘On the 11th October around twenty people indulged in collective relations. On the 18th October, the group numbered 40 people and on the 25th October, this number increased to around a hundred participants, naked for the most part.’¹¹⁵⁵

‘witnesses to the comings and goings of the strange creatures who frequent these very odd meetings.’¹¹⁵⁶

‘The FHAR no longer exists and for some it no longer even represents an acronym, similar to the MLF to rally homosexual revolutionaries.’¹¹⁵⁷

‘no distinction, no discrimination, and, above all, no suspicion, shall be brought to bear upon people solely because of their sexual orientation.’¹¹⁵⁸

‘Unfortunately, it seems that this brigade, far from attaching those who come to assault homos in the parks, primarily lash out against peaceful cruisers looking for love...’¹¹⁵⁹

‘I thought they were thugs. After hitting me in the face, they pulled me up and dragged me towards the street. I told them: “I’m calling the police”; they replied: “We’re part of the police.”’¹¹⁶⁰

¹¹⁵⁵ Report, July 2, 1971, 143W 06, 784169, (PP).

¹¹⁵⁶ Report, July 2, 1971, 143W 06, 784169, (PP).

¹¹⁵⁷ Le courant homosexuel révolutionnaire et ses difficultés de survie.’ February 24, 1975, 143W 06, 784169, APP.

¹¹⁵⁸ ‘Le communiqué du ministère de l’Intérieur,’ *Homophonies*, July-August 1981, 5.

¹¹⁵⁹ Gérard Bach, ‘Paris: Chirac ou l’insécurité des homos,’ *Homophonies*, October 1981, 4.

¹¹⁶⁰ Bach, ‘Paris: Chirac ou l’insécurité des homos,’ 4.

Chapter four: In the public eye. Gay men, literature and the media

'I started to live two separate lives: I was becoming a homosexual... I forbid myself any affectation that could seem effeminate... I was ashamed of my body... I was sentenced to lies and dissimulation.'¹¹⁶¹

'I was a little would-be Rimbaud, a minor looking to be corrupted.'¹¹⁶²

'In a certain sense, this interview seems to me something like a violation...'¹¹⁶³

'Right to indifference'.¹¹⁶⁴

'sex will have its 1789'.¹¹⁶⁵

'Another like me who would resemble me like a brother'; 'A brother who is also a woman, I mean: wife, lover.'¹¹⁶⁶

'We can reproach Jean-Louis for having played hide-and-seek with his subject.'¹¹⁶⁷

¹¹⁶¹ Guy Hocquenghem, François Paul-Boncour, 'La révolution des homosexuels,' *Le Nouvel Observateur*, January 10, 1972, 32.

¹¹⁶² Hocquenghem, Paul-Boncour, 'La révolution des homosexuels', 32.

¹¹⁶³ Madeleine Hocquenghem, 'Lettre à mon fils,' *Le Nouvel Observateur*, January 17, 1972, 36.

¹¹⁶⁴ Bory and Hocquenghem, *Comment nous appelez-vous déjà?*, 129-30.

¹¹⁶⁵ Bory and Hocquenghem, *Comment nous appelez-vous déjà?*, 134.

¹¹⁶⁶ Jean-Louis Bory, *Ma Moitié d'orange* (Paris: Julliard, 1973), 25.

¹¹⁶⁷ Daniel Garcia, *Jean-Louis Bory* (Paris: Flammarion, 1991), 201.

'I needed to say 'I', to finally say 'I'... And let nobody tell me: 'It's a private matter. It is nobody's business.' That is wrong!'¹¹⁶⁸

'You get to a point in life where you're sick of lying, to yourself at first, then to others, and you just want to live in harmony with your true self and to not have shame, or to have a taste for lying.'¹¹⁶⁹

'There you have a very Parisian notion, by the way you're persuaded that "artists" are people who allow anything, and as a consequence it [homosexuality] is contained in a milieu... it's not true.'¹¹⁷⁰

'Commentaries on commentaries and opinions on opinions.'¹¹⁷¹

'There is nothing more classical, more French, more Parisian than this marvelous little pamphlet... You have a tie when you write, you're not in jeans.'¹¹⁷²

'The big newspapers with the necessary means.'¹¹⁷³

'Imposture consists of taking the attire, the clothes, the rags of marginality to produce the most conformist, the most classical pamphlet that there is... you know that to be an iconoclaste, what you claim to be here, you need icons. There

¹¹⁶⁸ The article is reproduced in Garcia, *Jean-Louis Bory*, 202.

¹¹⁶⁹ *Samedi Soir*, Antenne 2, first broadcast February 17, 1973.

¹¹⁷⁰ *Samedi Soir*, February 17, 1973.

¹¹⁷¹ *Apostrophes*, Antenne 2, first broadcast April 20, 1979.

¹¹⁷² *Apostrophes*, April 20, 1979.

¹¹⁷³ *Apostrophes*, April 20, 1979.

are no more icons! Pederasty, I'm surrounded by it. You have a Jewish grandmother? I have two of them... you represent a certain sort of imposture that is visible in the difference in style as soon as you begin writing literature you put on your dinner jacket.'¹¹⁷⁴

'We have both decided to live our homosexuality out in the open.'¹¹⁷⁵

'I'm one of them [j'en suis]. You're one. Is he one? *En*: an adverbial pronoun that represents a thing, or a place, or a person, or a group of persons. This *en*, what does it represent?'¹¹⁷⁶

'Doubtless Foucault was not unhappy to hit back at the most radical militants, at those who tried to teach him a lesson, and retort that they were themselves trapped in the ruses of power that they thought they were combatting.'¹¹⁷⁷

'Tender, moving and discreet'; 'wave of pornography'¹¹⁷⁸

'For them love is companionship, a look, gestures, continuity, persistence, daily life, much more than the sexual act.'¹¹⁷⁹

'the word "homosexual" bristles with barbed wire because for the last four or five years the media have seized upon the problem of our, of *my*, minority... in

¹¹⁷⁴ *Apostrophes*, April 20, 1979.

¹¹⁷⁵ Bory and Hocquenghem, *Comment nous appelez-vous déjà?*, 8.

¹¹⁷⁶ Bory and Hocquenghem, *Comment nous appelez-vous déjà?*, 11.

¹¹⁷⁷ Eribon, *Réflexions*, 448.

¹¹⁷⁸ *Aujourd'hui madame*, Antenne 2, first broadcast June 13, 1977.

¹¹⁷⁹ *Aujourd'hui madame*, June 13, 1977.

terms of a spectacle and have created a new form of racism – that of the homosexuals we speak about *too often...*¹¹⁸⁰

‘Proust, Genet or Montherlant give us tragic or shameful experiences. Dominique Fernandez makes a defence of freedom. It is the first time that a university professor declares himself openly as homosexual.’¹¹⁸¹

‘In the Parisian and intellectual milieu there is a certain freedom. But as soon as you leave the intellectual milieu, if you go to the home of a Renault factory worker... you find hostility, total refusal... that is why I’m fighting, not only for homosexuality but for the rights of all minorities to be themselves.’¹¹⁸²

‘Yves Navarre appears more severe, but his blows spare individuals to attack a class: the bourgeoisie that devours its children.’¹¹⁸³

‘Of course, that is how I interpret it. That will be the case because between 150,000 and 300,000 people will read my book and it will allow many to think about homosexuality through the life story of Pier Paolo.’¹¹⁸⁴

¹¹⁸⁰ *Aujourd’hui madame*, June 13, 1977.

¹¹⁸¹ *Journal 20h*, Antenne 2, first broadcast December 1, 1978.

¹¹⁸² *Journal 20h*, December 1, 1978.

¹¹⁸³ Gabrielle Rolin, ‘Yves Navarre dénonce les mœurs bourgeoises,’ *Le Monde*, September 26, 1980, 18.

¹¹⁸⁴ Jean Le Bitoux, ‘Dominique Fernandez, notre Goncourt ’82,’ *Gai pied hebdo*, November 27, 1982, 5.

'But because it is fashionable, contemporary production starts too often from the sole fact of homosexuality: they hope for good sales of the book because of a little scandal.'¹¹⁸⁵

'Have we succeeded in reproducing a gay view upon the world [*un regard gai sur le monde*]?'¹¹⁸⁶

'Nothing is as ridiculous as the concept of a "homosexual writer", except maybe a "catholic writer", a "Breton writer", an "avant-garde writer". I can barely come to terms with being a "writer", I would prefer to be two writers, three, or more.'¹¹⁸⁷

'I cannot separate what is and what is not homosexual... Homosexuality is such a part of my worldview, of my sensibility, that I cannot see where it begins or ends.'¹¹⁸⁸

'Oh I recognise you, you were on the TV on the programme about fags... A new racism, one aimed at homosexuals "who we talk about all the time"... The current form of fascism is not to gag people but to make them talk.'¹¹⁸⁹

'this troubling and often painful phenomenon'¹¹⁹⁰

¹¹⁸⁵ Le Bitoux 'Dominique Fernandez,' 5.

¹¹⁸⁶ 'La lettre de *Masques*, 'no.1, May 22, 1979. NAF 28675, (MP).

¹¹⁸⁷ Jean-Pierre Joecker, 'Homosexualités et création littéraire,' *Masques*, Winter 1980, 34.

¹¹⁸⁸ Joecker, 'Homosexualités et création littéraire,' 30.

¹¹⁸⁹ Yves Navarre 'Une place entre l'ombre et le soleil,' *Libération*, April 25, 1977, 15.

¹¹⁹⁰ *Émission médicale*, Antenne 1, first broadcast November 29, 1973.

‘a certain emotional immaturity, and homosexuality can run in tandem with this immaturity.’¹¹⁹¹

‘a very ill man locked in his constitutional neurosis, knowing himself incurable, he has decided to use his natural infirmity as a means of gaining publicity which he finds therapeutic and consoling.’¹¹⁹²

‘entering the debate I wanted to know if I was supposed to called you *monsieur* or *madame*.’¹¹⁹³

‘refuse the mask and the ghetto, where he’d like to shut me.’¹¹⁹⁴

‘But you will never have that!’¹¹⁹⁵

‘They’ve destroyed the neighbourhood’; ‘They are what they are, that’s it... I have friends like that and I love them very much.’¹¹⁹⁶

‘Certain ones amongst them who show themselves.’¹¹⁹⁷

¹¹⁹¹ *Émission médicale*, November 29, 1973.

¹¹⁹² *L’huile sur le feu*, Antenne 2, first broadcast April 18, 1977.

¹¹⁹³ *L’huile sur le feu*, April 18, 1977.

¹¹⁹⁴ *L’huile sur le feu*, April 18, 1977.

¹¹⁹⁵ *L’huile sur le feu*, April 18, 1977.

¹¹⁹⁶ *Question de temps: ces hommes qui s’aiment*, Antenne 2, first broadcast November 5, 1979.

¹¹⁹⁷ *Les dossiers de l’écran: être gay aujourd’hui*, Antenne 2, first broadcast September 4, 1984.

‘We should not play the heteros’ game by giving importance to Navarre, Yourcenar and others. I’m absolutely against the representation of homos through celebrities.’¹¹⁹⁸

‘in an ivory tower, unreachable in a way, a “writer-artist homosexual.”’¹¹⁹⁹

‘The glass case is thus the bizarre status of the famous fag, who is given the right to exist in public on condition that he sticks to his role.’¹²⁰⁰

‘I no longer want to hide.’¹²⁰¹

‘I know that this problem is deep within me, but I don’t understand its depths or its implications. It is at that moment that Jean Louis Bory intervenes for the first time in my life... he is overwhelming, funny, warm, deep, knowing how to move you without ever wallowing in misery.’¹²⁰²

‘Lacking nuptials with the fairer sex, they marry death... But they are just as incapable of dying as they are of really living.’¹²⁰³

Part three: Some life stories

¹¹⁹⁸ Nelly Melo and Patrick Lorenzo, ‘Vécus par ceux et celles qui l’ont vécu,’ *Masques*, Summer 1981, 86.

¹¹⁹⁹ Christian, ‘Colouche ou Navarre,’ *Gai pied*, January 1981, 2.

¹²⁰⁰ Jean-Jacques Passay, letter, *Gai pied*, January 1981, 2.

¹²⁰¹ *Question de temps*, November 5, 1979.

¹²⁰² Antoine, letter, *Gai pied*, July-August 1979, 2.

¹²⁰³ Michel Foucault, ‘Un plaisir si simple,’ *Gai pied*, April 1979, 1.

‘this French youth, even if at this time it was shot through with homogenous elements, remains no less sociologically and culturally diverse...’¹²⁰⁴

‘As an autobiography transfigured into historical and theoretical analysis, or, if you prefer, as a historical and theoretical analysis anchored in a personal experience.’¹²⁰⁵

‘I did not intend to write an autobiography, rather to propose an analysis of the social world and a theoretical reflection, by anchoring it in personal experience. And so it can be said that theoretical analysis is born from personal experience or in any case relies upon it. But it could also be asserted that it is the theoretical viewpoint that has allowed me to give shape and meaning to that lived experience.’¹²⁰⁶

‘My oldest memories, I remember that, well, I wasn’t attracted to... well, I had more... I was never attracted to little girls, it was more by the boys in my class, but in the end in a very neutral way, I didn’t pounce on people! But anyway, I was always preoccupied by it.’¹²⁰⁷

‘I never had any problems, no problems at all in that regard, nobody knew outside of the people who I was seeing, not my family... but even so, that didn’t

¹²⁰⁴ Sirinelli, *Comprendre*, 461.

¹²⁰⁵ Didier Eribon, *Retour à Reims* (Paris: Flammarion, 2010, 1st ed., Fayard, 2009), 22.

¹²⁰⁶ Didier Eribon, *Retours sur retour à Reims* (Paris: Editions Cartouche, 2011), 40.

¹²⁰⁷ Philippe, interview with the author, June 2015.

cause me any problems, some people cause themselves insurmountable problems, but me, it didn't give me any problems.'¹²⁰⁸

'I knew that I was attracted to boys... I understood that very quickly, but I hesitated to take action, because, because of my education to start with, it was religious, catholic, and I believed in it, so there you have it, there were principles. So that was a real torment.'¹²⁰⁹

'Quite quickly I determined that, by being a lawyer, for me a real lawyer is someone who defends any cause... and so, naturally that led me to thinking that everyone has their own truth, that, who allows us to judge that one is better than another, that one point of view is better than another? It is simply a set of social rules... and well, if I was a homosexual, it's worth just as much as heterosexuality... That's it... to each their own truth.'¹²¹⁰

'I wasn't going to lie, I wasn't going to flirt with girls, that didn't interest me, I liked guys.'¹²¹¹

'In my family, homosexuality was shameful... when we saw things on the television, my mother said things like "oh! I couldn't stand it if one of my children turned out like that."¹²¹²

¹²⁰⁸ Philippe, June 2015.

¹²⁰⁹ Jean, interview with the author, June 2015.

¹²¹⁰ Jean, June 2015.

¹²¹¹ Jean, June 2015.

¹²¹² Patrice, interview with the author, August 2015.

'I'm afraid of madness but it watches over me,
It is there, I feel it and I cry out for it to stop,
Don't drag me back to that endless abyss,
To defeat my torments I'll need my sanity.'¹²¹³

'I knew that if I stayed there I'd break... So for me it was vital... I left, I fled.'¹²¹⁴

'There wasn't a "coming out"'¹²¹⁵

'I never hid anything, not from my family, from my neighbours, from my
business partners, from nobody, not even my employees, I never hid
anything.'¹²¹⁶

'I was lucky enough to know older homosexuals... in my family there were
older homosexuals... so, they were references.'¹²¹⁷

'We understand that one of the structuring principles of gay and lesbian
subjectivity consists of finding the means to flee insult and violence, that is
achieved through hiding oneself or emigrating to more accepting places. This
is why gay lives look toward the city and its networks of sociability,'¹²¹⁸

¹²¹³ Joël, interview with the author, June 2015.

¹²¹⁴ Joël, June 2015.

¹²¹⁵ Joël, June 2015.

¹²¹⁶ Joël, June 2015.

¹²¹⁷ Joël, June 2015.

¹²¹⁸ Eribon, *Réflexions*, 30.

‘Everyone thinks that it’s just about sex, but no not at all, it’s simply about living.’¹²¹⁹

‘When I was a teenager, there were two girls who threw themselves off the cliff, I lived by the sea... two girls who threw themselves off a cliff, and... it was a hidden love you understand... and it really... it didn’t traumatize me but it’s true that it’s not great is it, had to leave.’¹²²⁰

‘A rejection on their part, but an intelligent rejection.’¹²²¹

‘At the time I thought that if I acted on my homosexuality I’d become a sort of [feminine voice] character that I certainly did not want to become. And that really scared me, so I stayed in the provinces.’¹²²²

‘I think that I’ve lived a difficult life in terms of my intimate life. Because I didn’t want to pursue that theatre in Paris, I didn’t want to accept my homosexuality, I wanted to have children as a priority, I didn’t want to tell my wife that I was homosexual. So these things are bound to come back to bite you.’¹²²³

‘I must have been fourteen, I went to see for myself, to have a look, and there a gentleman followed me, well, I got scared and I must have left pretty quick!

¹²¹⁹ Joël, June 2015.

¹²²⁰ Joël, June 2015.

¹²²¹ Joël, June 2015.

¹²²² Patrice, August 2015.

¹²²³ Patrice, August 2015.

But even so I saw what went on... Well, I went back many times... and I tried to see, to pick out the places...¹²²⁴

‘who said to me, “can we see each other elsewhere?” a well-turned-out gentleman, very elegant, who smelled of good perfume... nevertheless I was still shy, but I said yes, and so I followed him...’¹²²⁵

‘He took me into an office, which was apparently his own, the director’s office, he put a blanket on the floor, and there you have it! It happened like that the first time.’¹²²⁶

‘You could meet people in pubs, but you needed to have the address, to buy a *Spartacus* guide.... where I did meet people in London, was at the University of London, there was a sports centre where there was a sauna... and there it was quite surprising...’¹²²⁷

‘I had a lot of angst... Things weren’t good, but I didn’t know why, at home things were bad, they said I was a lunatic, that I was bad tempered... and so I lived like that, I grew up like that...’¹²²⁸

‘We needed to hide ourselves, I could put my hand on his shoulder, “oh no no no! People can see us!” Always like that.’¹²²⁹

¹²²⁴ Philippe, June 2015.

¹²²⁵ Philippe, June 2015.

¹²²⁶ Philippe, June 2015.

¹²²⁷ Philippe, June 2015.

¹²²⁸ Charles, interview with the author, June 2015.

¹²²⁹ Charles, June 2015.

‘But what if one day I change how I am, if I become bad, things like that happen in life. He said to me “if I had my own son he could become bad too.”’¹²³⁰

‘He was sent from God... Often I pray for him... Often I think of him and speak to him and say “what could I do for you? If reincarnation exists I’m going to find you in another world in another life so that I can do for you what you’ve done for me” because he allowed me to live here, live well, live something else...’¹²³¹

‘Most people have no political engagement.’¹²³²

‘There was *Gai Pied*, I used to buy it from time to time... it was very politicised, the movement on the extreme-left etcetera, I didn’t like it especially, that wasn’t really what I believed in...’¹²³³

‘The FHAR and all that, I followed it but it didn’t really affect me, and the few friends that I had didn’t think it affected them either.’¹²³⁴

‘I’ve never been militant, because I’ve never needed to be. That’s what a lot of homosexual militants forget... there is still a big majority of homosexuals who’ve never needed to be militant because they’ve never had any confrontation.’¹²³⁵

¹²³⁰ Charles, June 2015.

¹²³¹ Charles, June 2015.

¹²³² Philippe, June 2015.

¹²³³ Philippe, June 2015.

¹²³⁴ Joël, June 2015.

¹²³⁵ Joël, June 2015.

'Militancy is to say in your daily life "I'm a homosexual".'¹²³⁶

'In reality we only dropped a hypocritical veil, because before May '68 you could live as a homosexual perfectly well by respecting a few social conventions, keeping up a few appearances... We certainly still had fun and I'd even say that it was more exciting, there's the aspect of a 'clan', people came together, undoubtedly that creates a kind of homosexual freemasonry.'¹²³⁷

'quote-unquote "serious"; 'mostly an orgy.'¹²³⁸

'it's not me, it's not really worth it.'¹²³⁹

'Ninety per cent homo, ten per cent hetero.'¹²⁴⁰

'Seduced like a little peasant girl.'¹²⁴¹

'The very day that the law was voted in parliament, I started to go to gay places.'¹²⁴²

'It really was nirvana.'¹²⁴³

¹²³⁶ Joël, June 2015.

¹²³⁷ Jean, June 2015.

¹²³⁸ Michel, interview with the author, June 2015.

¹²³⁹ Michel, June 2015.

¹²⁴⁰ Michel, June 2015.

¹²⁴¹ Michel, June 2015.

¹²⁴² Marc, July 2016.

¹²⁴³ Marc, July 2016.

'Once a week I used to go to a gay nightclub... It was one of those places where you had boys who dragged up to sing the fashionable songs of Dalida... it was very amusing. And there you have it, and after the 'carpet dance' at the end... it was very charming, very charming! But it was in a dark corner of Toulouse's Old Town, you used to look left and right before going in, we were very discreet.'¹²⁴⁴

'The only time that it was brought up, was at the end of her life... She received a telephone call saying that I was a homosexual, I think she asked me the question... I avoided it with a joke.'¹²⁴⁵

'I was able to live here the most beautiful love story of my life... I was very happy.'¹²⁴⁶

'I had it but I'd hidden it, I only read it when my parents weren't about... say, it was a beautiful story... I must have been fourteen, fifteen when I bought the book, and I really liked it, I used to think they were really lucky, it's rare to be like that!'¹²⁴⁷

'I had my professional life, my family life, with my family, my friends, and then the rest, the gay part... during those years it was just the sauna... without exception I used to meet people there but I never saw them outside, never,

¹²⁴⁴ Jean, June 2015.

¹²⁴⁵ Jean, June 2015.

¹²⁴⁶ Jean, June 2015.

¹²⁴⁷ Philippe, June 2015.

never, never. Once or twice, someone would say to me “are we going to see each other again?” and well... it was never more than that, two or three meetings, then I’d make sure that it stopped... one or two of them were a bit surprised that at the end of the second time I’d say to them “it’s finished”.¹²⁴⁸

‘It was a case of *not you again!*¹²⁴⁹

‘I wanted to protect myself, I didn’t want to break with my work, with my family, so that was that... if I was alone, why not? But I wasn’t alone, I had my mother, my family, it wasn’t possible. It was a totally secret area.¹²⁵⁰

‘A hidden life of a false heterosexual.¹²⁵¹

‘I had to create a divide between my family life on the one hand, with my hetero friends etcetera, and then my homosexual adventures on another... I remained clandestine.¹²⁵²

‘Even me, as a married guy, and coming in a small window of a long weekend... I had plenty of chances to have homosexual relations.¹²⁵³

‘lots of partying, but not really any friends... it was just about sex, acquaintances but not friends.¹²⁵⁴

¹²⁴⁸ Philippe, June 2015.

¹²⁴⁹ Philippe, June 2015.

¹²⁵⁰ Philippe, June 2015.

¹²⁵¹ Patrice, August 2015.

¹²⁵² Patrice, August 2015.

¹²⁵³ Patrice, August 2015.

¹²⁵⁴ Joël, June 2015.

‘There’s a book... that made a great impression on me... it was Andrew Holleran’s *Dancer From the Dance*... for me that was really a moment when things clicked into place.’¹²⁵⁵

‘the communal spirit, the fact that a ghetto existed, that I was not a part of, but that there existed a ghetto that was pretty friendly, that there were different paths.’¹²⁵⁶

‘But as for me, people really didn’t approach me... it was horrible... it was painful of course, because you feel rejected. On the scene it’s true that there’s so much racism, the gay scene is the most racist.’¹²⁵⁷

‘I didn’t go to bars, I wasn’t the type to stand there smoking with a drink in my hand, chatting like that, no... I didn’t really like to go to the sauna either because I didn’t have much success, you go up the stairs, you come back down the stairs... always the same, it was horrible.’¹²⁵⁸

‘In the seventies in New York everyone made love like we used to say “even behind a tree”... there I had a bit more luck because everyone had it, like a friend said to me once “If you don’t get lucky here then I don’t know what you need to do” [laughter].’¹²⁵⁹

¹²⁵⁵ Joël, June 2015.

¹²⁵⁶ Joël, June 2015.

¹²⁵⁷ Charles, June 2015.

¹²⁵⁸ Charles, June 2015.

¹²⁵⁹ Charles, June 2015.

'It was dangerous, but we went anyway, the police arrived like that with big torches, everyone scurried out like cockroaches... when you light your oven in New York all the cockroaches come out everywhere and homosexuals were the same... it was like a drug, you know that it's dangerous, but you went anyway.'¹²⁶⁰

'Four burly policemen come out of the car, and jump on me, lay me on the ground, put my hands behind my back, search me, take my papers and ask what I'm doing there... one of the policemen tells me "we never want to see you here again."¹²⁶¹

'You needed to show your identity card, and then there were lists... you shouldn't find yourself arrested three or four times, because by that time there would be problems I imagine...'¹²⁶²

'Registering [*la fiche*], I don't really believe it.'¹²⁶³

'It's true that it was very exciting... because it was forbidden... and that was very exciting.'¹²⁶⁴

¹²⁶⁰ Charles, June 2015.

¹²⁶¹ Marc, July 2016.

¹²⁶² Philippe, June 2015.

¹²⁶³ Jean, June 2015.

¹²⁶⁴ Jean, June 2015.

'Me, white but a foreigner... and with my accent too, you need to see papers to believe it. The police said "but haven't you got your own place you can take him back to?" I said that it's true that it's not easy, you can get yourself robbed...'1265

'I left calmly.... I knew that I couldn't escape, it's better to be "like that" [shhh]...'1266

'There was a boy, he lived very far from Paris, at the other end... they said to him "but what're you doing here?" and he said "I came to take a piss!" "You've come all the way from the Porte d'Orléans to come and take a piss here?!" When I heard that I thought that the police weren't very spiteful, in the end they were having a bit of fun.'1267

'In the parks and everywhere there's always guys who're going to rob you, beat you up.'1268

'I was independent, I was a shopkeeper so I wasn't watched over by a boss... In fact, I could say any shit I liked to anyone... but I think if I were an employee if would have done the same anyway!'1269

'No one ever knew.'1270

1265 Charles, June 2015.

1266 Charles, June 2015.

1267 Charles, June 2015.

1268 Charles, June 2015.

1269 Joël, June 2015.

1270 Philippe, June 2015.

'he said "oh! But what're you doing here?!" and I said "well, I'm on my way home!" He was embarrassed.'¹²⁷¹

'One day I go to the sauna, I sit myself down to take the sauna, and I look at the person next to me, oh! It was the head of religion at my school... he said hello to me, I said hello to him, well because he'd seen me and I'd seen him... well, afterwards we spoke, he knew for me and I knew for him, that's that...'¹²⁷²

'We made a real "clan."¹²⁷³

'We were affectionate, we didn't hide ourselves.'¹²⁷⁴

'I played at being a rich kid!'¹²⁷⁵

'After that you're the fag.'¹²⁷⁶

'it's, like we say in French, the "unsaid", everyone knows but nobody says anything... When you work, like I have, for 25 years, and you don't talk about your wife, you don't talk about your kids, you don't talk about your family, when everyone talks about their husband, that they've had a row, divorced, kids, problems, but you don't talk about anything like that... When they don't

¹²⁷¹ Philippe, June 2015.

¹²⁷² Philippe, June 2015.

¹²⁷³ Jean, June 2015.

¹²⁷⁴ Charles, June 2015.

¹²⁷⁵ Charles, June 2015.

¹²⁷⁶ Charles, June 2015.

ask you the question, it's because they've understood [laughter] and that made my life easier.'¹²⁷⁷

'Before '68 we did what we wanted, and more than now, by keeping up appearances... now you can more freely express yourself, even if there's a backlash since "equal marriage", but generally, the extent of freedom is being limited.'¹²⁷⁸

'I used to go so far as to make a joke by saying: "eh, why are you asking that, because I'm gay!" so that made everyone laugh because nobody believed it and in that way I had the impression of telling the truth, while not being truthful.'¹²⁷⁹

'I had a friend who said: "We may be careful, but we always drop a feather!"¹²⁸⁰

'Now things are more restrictive, before it was easier, there weren't any condoms and there wasn't any AIDS, today despite everything there's AIDS.'¹²⁸¹

¹²⁷⁷ Charles, June 2015.

¹²⁷⁸ Jean, June 2015.

¹²⁷⁹ Marc, June 2015.

¹²⁸⁰ Charles, June 2015.

¹²⁸¹ Charles, June 2015.

'When I'm with Robert I protect Liliane, when I'm with Liliane I protect Robert.'¹²⁸²

'Before '68 we did what we wanted, and more than now, by keeping up appearances... now you can more freely express yourself, even if there's a backlash since "equal marriage", but generally, the extent of freedom is being limited.'¹²⁸³

'And if I were to return, if life exists after death and you come back, I'd like to return as a homosexual. Because we have fun... our life's different, we have more freedom than heterosexuals, with their marriages and their children. I'd like to come back just the same, even if it means suffering...'¹²⁸⁴

Conclusion

'Before, it was the best years for everyone... but I saw people die, friends. It was horrible, homosexuals have lived through something terrible. When I think of those beautiful boys who'd come to Fire Island and Bellport...'

'There was no AIDS, I must emphasise that.'¹²⁸⁵

¹²⁸² Michel, June 2015.

¹²⁸³ Jean, June 2015.

¹²⁸⁴ Charles, June 2015.

¹²⁸⁵ Michel, June 2015.

'He himself mentioned it as if it was a mystery, with both truth and scepticism.'¹²⁸⁶

'are we not, once again, victims of this puritanism that sticks to our chromosomes and which the Americans have never managed to get away from? Is sex really liberating?... Pleasure and dissatisfaction: Morality, more Morality, always Morality.'¹²⁸⁷

'an integral part of homosexual desire in the American age. Arriving here from the other side of the Atlantic along with our coming out of the closet, transforming the fag into the gay.'¹²⁸⁸

'If doctors were not quite capable of untangling the different questions posed by the "gay cancer" how can we expect that the owners of commercial establishments to have a different reaction?'¹²⁸⁹

'homosexuality, which before the crisis was associated with life and joy and transgression, became a symbol of death.'¹²⁹⁰

'One can legitimately speak of the emergence of a gay society whose members, if they wish to, can live almost entirely cut off from the rest of the world. The gay press gives the addresses of the most diverse professions, from the plumber

¹²⁸⁶ Hervé Guibert, *A l'ami qui ne m'a pas sauvé la vie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), 21.

¹²⁸⁷ Claude Lejeune, 'U.S. Gai Cancer,' *Gai pied*, January 1982, 8.

¹²⁸⁸ Lejeune, 'Cancer gay, la vérité,' 5.

¹²⁸⁹ Patrice Pinell and Pierre-Olivier de Busscher, 'Tout rose ou tout noir?,' *Transcriptase* 44 (April 1996); 24.

¹²⁹⁰ Alain Lecoultre, interview with the author, July 2014.

to the mechanic, via the inevitable hairdressers and interior designers. If you get ill, you can go to a gay doctor, if you're going on holiday you can go with gay tour operators, in case of a mishap, a gay lawyer will advise you.'¹²⁹¹

'At 18, I consciously accepted by homosexuality, or more precisely, I chose to live it, rather than hide or suppress it... I heard of a homo movement at the time of the FHAR, until 1977 I was in a GLH. Personally, for me homosexual activism represents if not a necessary step, at least a useful one to become aware and take communal action...'¹²⁹²

'Ideally, I would have preferred to be hetero... I thought of suicide: it was indirectly linked to my homosexuality: strangled by solitude, crushed by the feeling of impasse.'¹²⁹³

'At work and with the neighbours, neither my boyfriend nor myself have hidden our homosexuality: no problem... I'm a homosexual, but an integrated one; for me, homosexuality is a way of life.'¹²⁹⁴

¹²⁹¹ Alain Sanzio [Alain Lecoultre], 'Splendeurs et misères des gais 80,' *Masques*, Spring-Summer 1985, 55.

¹²⁹² Cavailhes, Dutey and Bach-Ignasse, *Rapport gai*, 232.

¹²⁹³ Cavailhes, Dutey and Bach-Ignasse, *Rapport gai*, 225.

¹²⁹⁴ Cavailhes, Dutey and Bach-Ignasse, *Rapport gai*, 226.

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