

A MINORITY

*A Report on the Life of the Male Homosexual
in Great Britain*

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LONGMANS

II CONCLUSIONS

A. SUMMARY

INFORMATION has been obtained from 127 self-confessed homosexuals. The contacts covered a wide range as regards age, education, occupation, and background (from Chapter 1).

It was found that many came from homes that were in some way inadequate and, in particular, that the father was absent or away for long periods in many cases. This is in agreement with the many theories which suggest that homosexual tendencies develop in children from unsatisfactory homes, but it does not account for thirty-eight (30%) contacts who came from apparently undisturbed backgrounds. Contacts were often the youngest child or the youngest son; very few of them had brothers or sisters who were known to be homosexual (from Chapter 2).

The very first homosexual experience was usually at school with a boy of about the same age. Homosexuality was found to be more prevalent at boarding schools, but the extent of a boy's homosexual activities at school cannot be regarded as a sign that he will grow up to be an adult homosexual. The sexual technique at the time of the first significant experience was full body or mutual masturbation in three out of every four cases. The effects of seduction and early sexual experiences with adults seem to be exaggerated, but the social relationship between an adult homosexual and a boy may be important (from Chapter 3).

Contacts sought advice about their homosexual problems from many different people and often tried to deal with these problems on their own. Most of the advice was unhelpful and attempts at self-control were rarely successful. Once a homosexual has learnt to come to terms with his deviation, he is not interested in obtaining advice or treatment (from Chapter 4).

No evidence was found to support the view that homosexuality is on the increase, but as actual frequencies are slightly lower than desired frequencies, a change in the law might bring about a small increase in the number of homosexual acts. The contacts met other homosexuals at all types of rendezvous, varying from the respectable to the sordid. Homosexual activities usually take place in private but there is a small minority who regularly commit public indecencies. Importuning is rarely recognized as such by the general public and depends for its effectiveness on the ability of one homosexual to recognize another. Most of the contacts claimed to be

good at recognizing other homosexuals. A few homosexuals put on a display of bravado to conceal feelings of anxiety or insecurity, but most of the contacts in this sample were not known to be homosexual by casual acquaintances or by the people at work (from Chapter 5).

Nearly all the contacts had the opportunity to mix with girls when they were young, but about one-third have always avoided feminine company. Less than one-fifth had regular heterosexual intercourse at any time in their lives. Only ten contacts in this sample had been married, but contacts maintained that there were many married men who would take part in homosexual activities with them. One-quarter of the unmarried contacts hoped to marry. Two-thirds of this sample were judged to be exclusive homosexuals and nearly all of the contacts were predominantly homosexual. Some of their partners, however, were men with wide heterosexual interests (from Chapter 6).

About one-third of this sample have affairs which are still continuing, another third have had affairs which have now ended, and the remainder have never had an emotional alliance lasting over a year. The number of affairs is higher than the figures given in most of the literature on the subject, and the probable reason for this difference is that **the homosexuals with stable affairs do not often come into conflict with the law and only rarely seek psychiatric aid.** Promiscuity is widespread among two-thirds of the sample. Part of this may be due to a fear of legal and social sanctions, which makes many of them restrict their sexual activities to 'one-night stands' with anonymous partners. But promiscuity correlates very closely with other **social maladjustments, and further research into this problem is needed.** The contacts gradually extended the range of their sexual techniques as they got older. Many contacts **were prepared to** try most of the techniques but less than a third **regularly had anal** intercourse. The results of this research show that it is not possible to make a clear division between active **and passive homosexuals** (from Chapter 7).

The **findings of this research** do not confirm the suggestion that homosexuals are likely to commit other kinds of offences. Great efforts are made to persuade arrested homosexuals to plead guilty. A conviction for a homosexual offence often means that the individual leaves his home town and spends more time in the homosexual coteries. The indirect effects of the law produce feelings of insecurity and a tendency to adopt unorthodox and anti-social attitudes. The contacts who were blackmailed, robbed, or assaulted were reluctant to go to the police. Male prostitution seems to be only a minor part of the homosexual problem. There is some foundation for the contention that homosexuals attempt to

proselytize; almost 19 per cent. of this group try to obtain partners who are not homosexual. Very few adult-seeking homosexuals are sexually interested in pre-pubertal boys and paedophilia appears to be a separate phenomenon (from Chapter 8).

Homosexuals are found in every occupation, but leisure-time interests suggest that many would prefer work connected with the arts. Four out of every five contacts kept their homosexual interests secret from their employers and fellow employees. Most of the contacts led useful and productive lives; the least satisfactory were the most promiscuous (from Chapter 9).

About half the contacts found it difficult or impossible to use their homes for homosexual relations. Most of them wished to live alone or with other homosexuals, and there was a tendency to move from the provinces to London. The social pressures act as a progression from early feelings of isolation to complete absorption into the homosexual way of life. Nevertheless, well over half of the sample have resisted these pressures and remain reasonably well integrated with the community. Homosexual groups exhibit many of the characteristics of other minority groups (from Chapter 10).

B. SOCIAL REFLECTIONS

Much of the ground covered by this research has not been the subject of previous enquiries and lack of experience in these areas has meant that faults in the design of the research have been revealed. The most obvious omission is the absence of a control group. This idea was dropped after the pilot survey because the homosexuals who were interviewed up to that time showed such wide differences in behaviour. It was felt, therefore, that representativeness could not be obtained unless we concentrated all our limited resources upon interviewing as many homosexuals as possible. We are still not certain that it would have produced more useful results if we had interviewed fifty homosexuals and constructed a control group to match this number, but it would have meant that the results on early sexual interests, promiscuity, work, leisure, and community-integration would have been more meaningful.¹

The absence of a control group reveals another disadvantage when the results as a whole are reviewed. Without an equivalent heterosexual group to use for comparisons, the results of this research will be judged in the light of conventional attitudes and public

¹ A further enquiry is now in progress under the auspices of Birkbeck College, London University. Many of those interviewed in this research will be seen again and a control group is being used.

morality. But in practice there is a disparity between public morality and private activities.

The concept of sexual morality in society, as expressed by its laws and its leaders in their public capacity, is always more rigid and less tolerant than the private activities of the individual members of society. This official morality exists almost entirely in theory and for public purposes and, as Kinsey has shown in America, it bears only a slight relationship to the private sexual activities of the individual who regards public morality as little more than a background of conventional principles.

All the contacts in this group have revealed their private sexual activities in considerable detail and with extraordinary frankness, and the only fair comparison is with a heterosexual group who have been equally frank. Until this can be done, it is felt that moral judgements will be out of place. For this reason the comments in this report have been restricted to those which are required to make intelligible the mass of facts that have been assembled.

This research set out to obtain information about the acts and attitudes of homosexuals. It seemed, at first sight, to be a simple fact-gathering assignment. It was not simple, nor was the research worker prepared for the large amount of information which was obtained about other sections of the community.

The conflicting evidence presented to the Wolfenden Committee and the views of the authorities quoted in this report show how much is still to be learnt about the problem. The remedies suggested by some doctors have been inadequate and surprising. The information obtained in this report confirms Bailey's point that some priests are temperamentally unsuited to deal with the problem. The chance to give useful and helpful advice to young homosexuals has been missed by many parents, teachers, and others in charge of the youth of this country. Police methods are sometimes more expedient than equitable and this presents the difficult problem of having to choose between two evils. The Wolfenden Committee noted that feelings of disgust or indignation in judges and magistrates might account in part for the disparity in sentences imposed for similar homosexual offences, but equally important is the attitude of the lawyers instructed to defend the homosexual offenders. The reports in certain sections of the press increase the consequences of arrest far beyond the legal penalties, and help to form public attitudes of hostility and intolerance. These attitudes tend to drive the homosexuals away from community-integration into secret minority groups.

Of course there are many fine exceptions in all sections of the community to this catalogue of imputations. Furthermore, the results of this research make it clear that many homosexual acts

and attitudes are undesirable, and make understanding and toleration difficult. But it should not be impossible to find some point between condemnation and condonation. The present social and legal methods of dealing with the problem are irrational and tend to create more social evils than they remedy. This emotional hostility affects many thousands of individuals and reflects upon the community as a whole.

APPENDIX A

RESEARCH DESIGN

A. THE SAMPLING FRAME

IN most social researches, when information is sought about a particular group of people, a sample is selected from lists, indices, maps, or other population records. The major difficulty in this research is that the homosexual population is unknown. (Population is used in the statistical sense to mean the aggregate of persons under investigation.)

This has been the main weakness in previous researches into homosexuality. Most of the books and scientific papers that are anything more than mere conjecture have been written by psychiatrists and criminologists, and have taken as their subjects homosexuals who have sought psychiatric treatment or who have been in prison. Over 85 per cent. of the homosexuals interviewed in this research have not been treated by a psychiatrist and over 90 per cent. have not been to prison.

From the very start of the research we have had to accept the fact that there is no precise information about the number of men in Great Britain who either have a *homosexual disposition or engage in* homosexual behaviour. The *Wolfenden Committee considered the results* reported by the late Dr. Kinsey and others, but were not prepared to make an estimate of the prevalence of homosexual behaviour in this country. But it is agreed that the numbers are very large, as even the most conservative speculative arithmetic will make clear. If we take 4 per cent., the lowest figure suggested in the *Wolfenden Report*, this would include nearly three-quarters of a million males over the age of fifteen and most authorities would agree that this is an under-estimate.

Our problem was to see how we could get a representative sample of the homosexual population. Even assuming that everyone would respond to our request for information, this would mean that a 1 per cent. sample of the homosexual population would involve a minimum of 7,500 people. With such large numbers it seemed to be essential to use a self-administered questionnaire, and it was only after thorough testing during the course of our pilot survey that we reluctantly abandoned this idea. The limitations of the questionnaire method are so great and the degree of error is so considerable that we have come to the conclusion that the results we would have obtained by this method would be of very doubtful value.

The subject of homosexuality is surrounded by strong social conventions and the questionnaire presents too great a temptation for the respondent to mislead, to understate, or to exaggerate. The interviewer is better able to appraise the validity of what a person says in the light of how he says it. As in every social research in this country, time and funds were short, so our rejection of the questionnaire meant that we had to

be content with a small sample¹ considering the size of the homosexual population.

It is quite possible to over-estimate the importance of a large sample and it certainly is not true that as long as the sample is big enough, errors in sampling will cancel themselves out. For example, in the sample we have obtained for this research we know that it is biased in favour of the more literate, better-educated homosexual; but it seems likely that a sample ten times the size obtained by the questionnaire method might be even more biased in this direction, for some of the men who were interviewed during the course of this research would have great difficulty in filling in a questionnaire and others would find such an exercise quite beyond their capabilities.

It seemed more sensible to use our limited resources to reduce bias and errors in response rather than to increase the size of the sample. Evidence from other social researches has revealed that non-response bias has often been greater than the sampling error.⁽⁸⁶⁾ Time that might have been spent on increasing the over-all sample size has been used to persuade some of the more reluctant homosexuals to be interviewed; and by asking our contacts about those who would not agree to an interview, we have obtained enough information about refusals to enable us to see where our sample is not representative.

When the research worker suggested to each contact that they find other people who would agree to be interviewed, he specifically told them that the more reluctant their friends appeared to be, the more anxious he was to interview them. Although many of them came willingly without much persuasion, there is no doubt that others arrived with many misgivings and had undoubtedly been pushed into meeting the research worker rather against their inclinations. Some of them suspected it might be a police trap, others were extremely reluctant to give their names and addresses, and in fact it was possible to arrange some of the interviews without the research worker ever knowing their names.

Special efforts were made to persuade the shy, the reluctant, the suspicious, and the inarticulate to agree to an interview so that the sample should contain others beside the literate, defensive, or ostentatious homosexuals. Some criticisms⁽¹²⁾ of the Kinsey Report suggest that he tended to collect those people who enjoyed boasting about their sex life. It is difficult to see how such a criticism can be levelled at the individuals in this group. Once the research worker heard about a homosexual who had expressed an interest in the research, he was persistent to the point of being tiresome.²

A fairly representative sample of the total homosexual population can

¹ According to Hobbs and Lambert,⁽⁵⁴⁾ the conclusions regarding homosexuality in the Kinsey Report⁽⁶⁸⁾ appear to rest on fewer than 500 cases in 'all degrees of homosexuality'. Taking into consideration the difference in the populations of Great Britain and the United States, the sample of self-confessed homosexuals in this research may be as representative as Kinsey's.

² One contact announced at the start of the interview that he would never have come, 'if Jim [another contact] hadn't twisted my arm until I promised I would'. So not all the contacts can strictly be called volunteers.

be obtained by building up a chain-reaction whereby the friends of those interviewed (and the friends of their friends) will agree to co-operate in the research. Homosexual society is a relatively classless society. Many times this point was emphasized during the interviews. More than once the research worker interviewed manual workers who were introduced to him by professional men.

Sometimes it happened that, after the interview, a contact became extremely enthusiastic about the research and set to work to persuade many others to be interviewed. One person said he would find twenty-five people. But there is a danger here that the contacts obtained might all be coming from only one or two groups or closed circles, so it was decided to limit to three the number of people introduced by any one person. Although it sometimes happened that the names of contacts already interviewed were mentioned by other contacts, and occasionally this provided a useful check on the validity of the material, yet it can be said with confidence that the contacts came from a large number of different groups and covered a wide diversity of backgrounds.

B. INADEQUACY OF THE SAMPLE

This group consists of 127 self-confessed homosexuals. But it is well known that not all homosexual acts are committed by individuals who admit that they are homosexual. Indeed, one could go further and say that there are homosexual acts committed by men who would vigorously deny that they are homosexual.

For example, the results of this research suggest that there are a number of married men who have occasional homosexual experiences (see Chapter 6). It would be difficult for such men to mix in a homosexual group for part of their social life, and many of them would have no homosexual friends at all.

As most of the individuals in the sample were obtained through introductions from other homosexuals, it follows that men who do not mix with other homosexuals are less likely to be found in this sample. This means that not only married men with homosexual experiences will be missed, but also a number of unmarried bisexual men who have occasional homosexual experiences but who are extremely secretive about it. The social stigma attached to homosexuality can mean that a man might have quite extensive homosexual experiences and no one except his anonymous partners be aware of his activities.

It is clear that the results of this report are neither representative of those people who commit casual and infrequent homosexual acts, nor of those who have strong heterosexual interests but who nevertheless commit occasional homosexual acts, nor of those whose interests are confined exclusively to boys under the age of sixteen. Paedophilia¹ is a different

¹ A paedophilic is a man who is sexually attracted to the pre-pubertal boy—*pais+philos*. Another term that is sometimes used, *paederast*—*pais+erastes*—is literally the better word because *erastes* denotes sexual love, but unfortunately the Oxford Dictionary and others now define *pederasty* as sodomy. Clearer, perhaps, is the American term—child-molester.

half-truths. In addition to this, the defensive attitude that most homosexuals assume has made the research worker extremely reluctant to accept everything on trust.

On the other hand, many homosexuals have been forced by their circumstances to look hard at their environment and it is not difficult to make them see the value of a social research of this kind. Nearly all of them had a really sincere desire to be co-operative, and it was made clear to them that anything less than complete honesty would make the results quite useless. In addition the emphasis on anonymity and the precautions taken to protect the confidences of the contacts made it easier for them to tell the truth.

In general the research worker has met extraordinary frankness and apparent honesty. There were only two cases where there seemed to be major inconsistencies and in only a few other cases were minor inconsistencies found. These inconsistencies may be genuine and an attempt to iron them out may give a false picture.

The structure of the interview was planned to show up responses that may be invalid. The items were not taken in chronological order and there were various **cross-checking** questions throughout. In addition it was possible to **make several checks** when one contact was friendly with another. Just as Kinsey⁽⁶⁸⁾ had some check on the validity of the information by interviewing both husband and wife, in the same way the research worker was able to compare the answers of homosexuals who were known to each other.

Working with the same schedule day after day, it was not difficult for the interviewer soon to become expert at spotting a contact's attempt to cover up or evade the answer. As a rule the research worker refused to be put off by evasive answers, although of course there were a few contacts whose answers were so interwoven with the need for self-justification that nothing less than a psychiatric examination would have revealed their true feelings. None of the answers can be expected to reflect more than the contact's free replies to a series of questions. It might be said that without a series of analytical interviews probing deep into the subconscious, it is not possible to report accurately on the contact's innermost feelings. But this was not what the research was trying to do. We are concerned with the day-to-day activities of the homosexual and, as with everyone else, his acts will usually be incited by his immediate reactions to a given situation and only rarely will he have the opportunity or inclination to analyse or reflect at length before acting.

Taking all the material as a whole, the research worker feels fairly satisfied that he got answers that were as close to the truth as the contact was capable of giving. But this report is based upon what homosexuals say they do, which is not necessarily the same as what they actually do. And so it is better to end this section with a warning.

All the material is either (1) true, or (2) what the contact believes to be true, or (3) what the contact wants to believe, or (4) what he thinks the interviewer wants to hear. It is believed that most of the material comes into the first category. Where the material comes into the second category, it should be remembered that even if what the contact believes is not in

fact really true, it is true for him; and his action, reactions, thoughts, and attitudes evolve from these beliefs, whether they are true or false. It is hoped that most of the material that comes into the third and fourth categories has been eliminated from this report, but in those sections where the prestige of the contact is in question, it would be cavalier to assume that these influences have been completely excluded.

D. FOLLOW-UP

At the end of the interview the research worker offered to destroy the name and address of the contact immediately. But he explained that it would be useful to have a follow-up a year later, so he asked for permission to keep these particulars so that he could communicate with the contact again. All but four of the contacts agreed to this; some of them felt that a year was too long an interval and suggested regular monthly meetings.

Thirteen (10%) of the contacts who had insisted on being anonymous at the start of the interview became sufficiently convinced of the trustworthiness of the research and the precautions taken to keep the material confidential to give their names and addresses at the end. One contact never revealed his name, another gave his name and address but asked the research worker not to write to him, and two asked for their names and addresses to be destroyed.

The remaining 123 (97%) contacts were either seen again or were sent a letter asking for further details. In fifty-five (43%) cases this was over a year after the interview and in the remaining sixty-eight (54%) cases it was at least six months after the interview.

Eleven (9%) contacts were seen again and forty-seven (37%) replied to the follow-up letter. No reply was received from fifty-five (43%) contacts and in a further ten (8%) cases the circular letter was returned because the contact had changed his address. Thus a progress report was received from 46 per cent. of the contacts. This is a better response than the research worker had been led to expect by experienced sociologists.

As it was obviously impossible to see all the contacts again, the follow-up interview did not take a standardized form. It was simply an informal meeting where queries arising out of the first meeting were resolved and the information was brought up to date.

The follow-up letter gave each recipient a code number so that it was not necessary to sign the letter. In this way the contact was encouraged to write in as much detail as he wished. A few of the contacts had continued to write to the research worker after the interview and sent him reports of their activities. The others answered the letter by relating any developments since the interview and by enlarging on their answers to the questions.

The follow-up provided the opportunity to check the material for reliability and validity, but the time-interval between the interview and the follow-up was too short to provide much interesting information. A series of annual retakes extending over five years would yield more valuable results.

STATISTICAL TREATMENT

A. TESTS OF SIGNIFICANCE

A SURVEY of this kind does not lend itself to complex statistical techniques. As it is not strictly a random sample, statistical tests of significance can only be used with caution, but it seemed appropriate to use the χ^2 test for showing the validity of the different distributions of a variable between two or more groups. This is essentially a test of comparison; it compares the distributions of a variable between two or more groups as observed in our sample, with the distribution which would be expected statistically if there were *no relation* at all between the two factors under consideration. The result is expressed as a value of *p* (or probability): thus when *p* is said to have a value of less than 0.01 ($p < 0.01$), it means that there is less than one chance in a hundred of the observed distribution occurring, according to the law of probability.

As this is a small sample, and particularly because the size of the homosexual population is not known, *p* values greater than 0.01 were not regarded as statistically significant. The values for χ^2 and *p* are noted in the text if a difference is statistically significant. These trends may be taken to have at least some general application. If no values for *p* are noted in the text but a tendency is noted, it should be assumed that generalizations about the homosexual population cannot with safety be made from this result.

Where the expected frequency in a fourfold Table is less than 5 in one cell, Yates's correction has been applied. In some Tables the numbers are too small for the χ^2 test to be used.

Over 250 Tables were constructed and some 100 tests of significance were made. The results show that less than twenty of the tested differences are significant at the $p < 0.01$ level. Since so many tests were computed, and still more contemplated, there is certainly inflation of probability (i.e. from so many tests, one would expect some of them to be significant merely by chance). The small number of differences which are statistically significant emphasizes the complexity of the problem. Heterosexuality or homosexuality is only one facet of a man's personality; it is not all-embracing and many other factors influence his acts and his attitudes. It is, of course, practically impossible to isolate these other factors, and controlled experiments cannot be conducted in a research which sets out to study the problem in the wide context of the whole community.

B. THE RATING SCALES

It was felt that to use just one or two questions to cover an individual's activities and attitudes on a particular subject would not give an accurate

picture. The interviews have been designed to provide as much information as possible on each of the traits under consideration. For example, there are twenty-five questions which attempt to estimate how large a part the individual takes in community activities.

This mass of information has been used for descriptive purposes, but it was also desirable to convert this material into a quantitative form which could be handled statistically. It was decided that this could best be done by adopting the rating-scale method (with modifications) used by James Robb in *Working Class Anti-Semite*.⁽⁹⁵⁾

Rating Scales were made for Attitude to Religion, Attempts to Combat, Work Contentment, Proselytism, Extent of Secrecy, and others. All the contacts were rated by the research worker soon after the end of the interviews. The danger here is that the act of converting a battery of questions into a rating scale may have been influenced by the unconscious bias of the research worker. Accordingly it was decided to test three of these scales by employing two outside judges not in any way connected with the research.

For this test the three scales which were found to be the most difficult were selected. Eighty of the 127 contacts were rated by two outside judges on scales for Adjustment to Homosexuality, Community-Integration, and on the Kinsey Rating Scale. The outside judges used the complete interview records to reach their conclusions. The ratings made by the research worker were compared with those made by the outside judges with the following results:

Ratings for Adjustment to Homosexuality

Judges	Categories						Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	
Research Worker . . .	20	20	20	10	4	6	80
Judge A	20	19	16	8	13	4	80
Judge B	14	14	26	17	3	6	80
Total	54	53	62	35	20	16	240

Ratings for Community-Integration

Judges	Categories				Total
	A	B	C	D	
Research Worker	28	23	21	8	80
Judge A	25	35	18	2	80
Judge B	25	27	24	4	80
Total	78	85	63	14	240

Ratings for the Kinsey Scale

Judges	Points of the Kinsey Scale					Total
	2	3	4	5	6	
Research Worker	—	2	10	21	47	80
Judge A	1	1	12	24	42	80
Judge B	2	2	12	15	49	80
Total	3	5	34	60	138	240

Six grades were used in the scale measuring Adjustment to Homosexuality. All three judges agreed in thirty (38%)¹ cases and in twenty-two (28%) cases the research worker agreed with one judge, the other disagreeing by one point.

In the four-point scale for Community-Integration, all three judges agreed in twenty-eight (35%) cases and in thirty-one (39%) cases the research worker agreed with one judge, the other disagreeing by one point.

The Kinsey Scale was used for rating Heterosexual Interests. It was found that there was complete agreement by all three judges in fifty-five (69%) cases, and in a further sixteen (20%) cases the research worker agreed with one judge, the other disagreeing by not more than one point. Forty of the eighty contacts were placed in grade 6 by all three judges.

¹ All the figures in brackets given in this section are percentages of eighty, the number rated by the three judges, not percentages of 127, as in other sections of the report.

APPENDIX C

THE HOMOSEXUAL VERNACULAR

SOME homosexuals do not use any of the words in the vernacular, but a few terms, such as *queer* and *camp*, are common to nearly all homosexual groups. But other words are peculiar to certain areas, groups, and socio-economic classes. For example, *to have trade* (meaning 'to have homosexual relations') is used in the lower economic groups, but might be misunderstood in the better-educated circles. It seems to reduce all homosexual relations to the same commercial-sounding level, but it does not appear to have any connexion with prostitution or payment for sexual activities.

Like every argot, it is a living and growing language. New words are introduced and old words change their meaning. In the vernacular the word *tatty* is an adjective meaning 'cheap and nasty', or 'tasteless'; from this comes the noun *tat* meaning 'rubbish' or 'eyesore', and then *tat queen* meaning an 'antique dealer'.

As in all languages certain words become fashionable. A vogue word of the moment seems to be *bold*, meaning 'outrageous' or 'cheeky'. A few years ago an overdressed male on the other side of the street might have evoked the remark, 'Get him!' but now it is as likely to be, 'He's bold!' Words are also taken from and given to other special groups, especially theatrical circles and the young London sets. Words adopted from other groups are *fab*, *chi-chi*, *do you mind*, and *do me a favour*; vernacular words now heard in the coffee bars are *get you*, *camp*, and *send up*.

Vogue words get used too much, with the result that a single word is invested with many meanings. *Camp* is an example of a word in which the change of usage has amounted to a change of meaning. The word is said to come from the Italian *campeggiare* meaning 'to stand out from a background', and so it came to mean in turn, 'theatrical', 'ostentatious', 'effeminate', and now sometimes it is used as a synonym for 'homosexual'. The word *bitch*, which can still be used as a term of abuse, is now accepted in some circles as a generic term meaning a homosexual who prefers passive anal intercourse.

Queer is the commonest term in the vernacular. The homosexual connotation of the word (perhaps stemming from 16th-century Scots *quire*, referring to 'a group of prisoners') is said to have come into general use about 1920 through the theatrical profession. In 1925 the word was first used to mean 'homosexual' in *Variety*, the American theatrical periodical. Most American homosexuals prefer the word *gay*,⁽²⁵⁾ objecting to *queer* because of its more usual meanings—'odd', 'eccentric', 'strange'. British homosexuals seem able to accept the word as a fair description of themselves.

On the next page an attempt is made to give an interpretation of some of the words used by the contacts. It is not, of course, a complete glossary of the homosexual vernacular.

- affair*, n. An emotional alliance of uncertain duration. (Also used of the partner, i.e. *my affair*.)
- bent*, adj. Homosexual. (As opposed to *straight*, meaning heterosexual, and thus *half-bent* meaning bisexual.)
- bi*, adj. Bisexual.
- bitch*, n. A passive homosexual. (See notes above.)
- bold*, adj. Outrageous, cheeky. *boldness*, n. Cheek.
- butch*, adj. Masculine. (Sometimes used as a noun to mean a man who prefers active anal intercourse.)
- camp*, adj. Effeminate, ostentatious, homosexual. (See notes above.)
- chicken*, n. A young homosexual.
- come*, v. To have an orgasm. (Usually a verb, but also used as a noun to mean semen.)
- cottage*, n. A public lavatory. *cottage*, v. Go to lavatories on the search for a partner.
- cruise*, v. To look for a homosexual partner.
- Dilly*, n. Piccadilly Circus.
- drag*, n. Women's clothing. *drag up*, v. To wear a woman's clothes.
- dyke*, n. A female homosexual, Lesbian.
- gay*, adj. Homosexual. (More often used of places than people, e.g. *a gay bar*.)
- get you*, int. Who do you think you are! (Addressed to a person acting in an ostentatious or conceited manner.)
- minny*, n. An effeminate homosexual. (Sometimes shortened to *min*.)
- normal*, adj. Heterosexual. (Also used as a noun for any individual who is not exclusively homosexual.)
- on the game*, adj. phr. Working as a prostitute. (More often used of female prostitutes.)
- one-night stand*, n. Homosexual relations with a partner on one occasion only.
- quean*, n. A sophisticated homosexual. (Originally an old homosexual trying to look young, now used more generally of anyone with obvious homosexual mannerisms.)
- queer*, adj. Homosexual. (See notes above.)
- rent*, *renter*, n. A male prostitute.
- send up*, v. To make fun of, to mock.
- straight*, adj. Heterosexual.
- swish*, v. To mince, walk effeminately. (Sometimes used as a noun—a *swish*.)
- take it*, v. To perform the passive part in anal intercourse.
- trade*, n. Homosexual relations. (See notes above.)
- trick cyclist*, n. A psychiatrist.
- troll*, v. To look for a homosexual partner. (Used as a verb and a noun. Also *trolling-ground*.)

APPENDIX D

REFERENCES

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