

hold as matter of law that the book in question is not violative of the statute. Accordingly, and under the stipulation entered into in this case, that the testimony taken upon the summons shall be the testimony taken upon the complaint, if one is ordered, I hereby order a complaint against these defendants.

IN DEFENSE OF HOMOSEXUALITY

(1932)

Parisex (Henry Gerber)

The following essay is one of the numerous replies received attacking The Riddle of Homosexuality, by W. Béran Wolfe, which appeared in the April issue, for its "severe" position with reference to sexual inversion.

After reading the article by W. Béran Wolfe, M.D., in the April issue of *The Modern Thinker*, one cannot but deeply sympathize with the inverts for being the world's eternal scapegoats. In the early Middle Ages the Papacy stipulated that "sodomers, heretics and sorcerers be burned." When the legal control of the population slipped from the hands of Mother Church into that of the legislatures and politicians, better times came for the homosexuals in that their sexual "crimes" were considered less heinous. After Napoleon had written his liberal code, homosexuals were no longer molested by the law in Latin countries, but in the Anglo-Saxon world, in England and the United States, persecution of them is still in vogue, and as recently as the year 1915 the legislature of the State of California passed a new law, extending the scope of the term of sodomy. Today a more lenient attitude is being shown to homosexuals by the law. On October 16, 1929, the German committee of the Reichstag, discussing the new German legal code, proposed to abolish punishment for homosexual acts *per se*, between *men*, and in Russia, of course, the medieval persecution of homosexuals was repudiated with religious superstitions.

Now, that the inverts have almost escaped the stake and the prison, the psychoanalysts threaten them with the new danger of the psychiatric torture chamber. It is not to be wondered that a priest, a legislator and a psychoanalyst should be interested only in their dogmas. The priest is as much convinced of his sin theory as the legislator is sure that prison is the cure of crime, and the psychoanalyst, not a bit less, is certain that his therapy will bring back the erring homosexual to the normal fold. But he is strangely silent on the method.

Of course, the chief fallacy of psychiatry and similar trades is that it puts the cart before the horse. If we may believe the psychoanalysts, it is not modern machine civilization, at great variance with nature, that is conducive to neuroses, but civilization itself is the norm, and anything else, even nature, is perverse and neurotic. Nature, which has struggled along valiantly these million years, is now being told by the Freuds, the Adlers, the Jungs, and their slavish followers, that its manifold sex urges are abnormal, and that civilization, that recent

upstart, is the only norm of life; that if one reverted to good old mother nature he would quickly be accused of no less a crime than seeking to flee from reality. As if it needed homosexuality, impotence and other "neuroses" nowadays to drive a man crazy! Are not the long lines of unemployed, the starving, those cheated out of their lives' savings by the leaders of society and those married and unable to feed their brood, enough reasons for mental, physical and moral breakdowns?

And what about the homosexual fleeing from reality? Thousands of priests, nuns, monks, choose celibacy to avoid "normal sex life." Psychoanalysts undoubtedly include them too in their long list of "neurotics"; still there is no law compelling anyone to marry. As to social responsibilities of homosexuals, I am not aware of their having been exempted in the late war, neither do I see on the tax blanks where the unmarried homosexuals pay less than the heterosexual who is not fleeing from reality; nor do I know of any place of employment where the homosexual is not required to work as hard for his pennies as the heterosexual worker. Is it perhaps an exception to the psychoanalyst's rule of neurotic symptoms for those avoiding "normal sex life" that the psychoanalytic studios are filled with married women but shunned by the "neurotic" homosexuals?

And is not the psychiatrist again putting the cart before the horse in saying that homosexuality is a symptom of a neurotic style of life? Would it not sound more natural to say that the homosexual is made neurotic because his style of life is beset by thousands of dangers? What heterosexual would not turn highly neurotic were his mode of love marked "criminal," and were he liable to be pulled into prison every time he wanted to satisfy his sex urge—not to speak of the dangers of being at all times exposed to blackmail by heterosexuals who prey upon him, and the ostracism of society? Were he not clever in pretending to be "normal," he would lose his place of employment quickly. This constant insecurity and danger from all sides would drive anyone into any number of neuroses. That the average homosexual even in spite of a thousand dangers does not want to be "cured" and wants nothing but to be left alone by hypocritical meddlers, and feels comparatively happy in his love, is evidence enough that his condition cannot be merely acquired.

If it were so easy to "cure" a homosexual, the homosexuals would flock to the psychiatrists, and instead of having to ask the authorities to establish free clinics for homosexuals, the landscape would be dotted with such hospitals. The surgeon removing the "queer" complex would find his practice as profitable as that of taking out tonsils and appendices. While Dr. Wolfe unhesitatingly affirms the question whether homosexuality can be cured, how, where, and for how much this can be done, the deponent sayeth not. I doubt if there ever was a cure of a genuine homosexual. Such cures have been reported once and then, but they are as temporary as the famous experiments of Dr. Steinach and the monkey gland transplantations. It stands to reason that a homosexual cannot be cured (and the doctor cautiously adds: provided the homosexual *wants* to be cured) because if he showed any interest in women he would simply not be a homosexual. The few cures reported were brought about by alleged heterosexual suggestions to the "patient," but Hirschfeld points out very clearly the absurdity of suggesting to a homosexual to get married. There are thousands of homosexuals who are married, upon the advice of doctors, and unless they were strongly bisexually inclined, not even marriage has cured them. The homosexual man does not shun women because he wants to flee from the reality of normal sex life, but because he himself is physically a woman and his normal sex life is directed to the other sex, another man, the only person to attract him. According to the physical formula, opposite poles attract each other, while like poles repel each other.

It is highly improbable that an intelligent homosexual could be "cured" by suggesting to

him the blessings of monogamy, an institution which, according to Russell, Calverton, Schmalhausen, Lindsey and other modern writers resembles a ship full of leaks, ready to sink at any moment. Few homosexuals are stupid enough to forget the scandalous divorce courts, the ever increasing desertions, and marital unhappiness in general, to decide to jump from the frying pan into the fire. Too much pessimism, of course, is uncalled for, but anyone acquainted with the real life of homosexuals or heterosexuals will have to admit that many heterosexuals lead a happy life, but also that homosexuals live in happy, blissful unions, especially in Europe, where homosexuals are unmolested as long as they mind their own business, and are not, as in England and in the United States, driven to the underworld of perversions and crime for satisfaction of their very real craving for love.

Nowadays, when commissioners of health and other medical authorities sell their names to advertise the gadgets of clever business concerns, one would not find it so much out of place, if (presumed Dr. Wolfe were broadcasting his article on homosexuality) the radio announcer would after the closing words of the good doctor enunciate: This program comes to you through the courtesy of John Doe, manufacturer of baby carriages. As a matter of fact, one finds the law against invert sex acts and other sex taboos labeled in some state penal codes as: *Laws for the Protection of the Christian Institution of Marriage*.

But the contradictions in his article alone disprove the various statements of Dr. Wolfe. Let me point out only the most glaring ones. He says on page 99: "Analytic investigation of the invert's total personality demonstrates *practically without exception* a basic misanthropy of the invert." On page 96 he says: "Today homosexual 'joints', homosexual 'drags', homosexual plays, and homosexual clubs are known in every large American city," and again on page 99: "Homosexuality is unique in that the homosexual neurotics form communities and thus develop a certain social feeling." They are then not misanthropes without exception, but rather as gregarious as the heterosexuals who also may be found congregating in ball rooms, clubs and "joints." One cannot really blame the parosexual if he is not very much in love with heterosexuals who exploit and persecute him and make his life miserable.

The fact that scientific information concerning the nature of homosexuality is almost unobtainable is not due to the ignorance of the medical profession but to the public policy of suppressing anything truthful about homosexuals. The truth about homosexuals is suppressed in the same degree as the knowledge of birth control, for homosexuality, of course, is but one of the many natural forms of birth control.

It is ridiculous to assume that the whole Greek nation was neurotic because homosexuality was practiced there with the sanction of the state. Homosexuality even exists among the primitive tribes and among animals, though this fact also has been suppressed. It must be more than a neurosis if a certain natural trait persists throughout all ages and still carries on after the most cruel and fatal persecution of those so inclined. It is not very clear how one could "easily" escape the reality of normal sex life by merely adopting a sex mode the very practice of which is punished with penitentiary terms, with social ruin and the danger of blackmail from all directions. But many heterosexuals are also in jails, socially ruined by jealous competitors and blackmailed by greedy women. It is so much easier to conform to conventionality and marry. The politicians have always believed that they could put over their various panaceas to make the world perfect according to their beliefs. They have sponsored their sacred institution of monogamy by propaganda in all fields of public education, and not enough with this, have surrounded holy wedlock with vicious taboos, punishing the violators with penitentiary terms; they have passed the 18th Amendment to stop people from drinking, but we see in reality only about 50% of the population married, and getting plen-

ty of booze to drink. One cannot enforce a law against natural cravings. Taboos always result in bootleggers of love or drink. The very fact that it takes so many laws to enforce monogamy at once labels it only an ideal but not a natural institution. One never hears of laws compelling people to eat! Sex and drink are very closely related. Where sex laws are lenient, as in Latin countries, people drink more modestly, but the Protestant countries are notorious for hard drinking and drunkenness. Drinking is another "neurosis," an effort to escape the bitter reality of the "responsibilities of normal sex life." But intoxication is not *per se* punished.

The Bible story on which the persecution of the homosexuals is based even now, is also full of contradictions, for it tells of the willingness of Yahwe to save the wicked city if there were only five righteous among the citizens (that is, those not given to sodomy). But not even five could be found. The men and women, both young and old (*Genesis*: all the people from every quarter), surrounded Lot. One wonders by which methods the children of the homosexuals were produced!

Dr. Wolfe states that a too great desire for complete security characterizes all inverts. Page the premier of France! 50,000,000 cannot be neurotic! In these days of insecurity, general unemployment and racketeering, one does not need to be a homosexual to feel the need for more security in employment, house and home. All the other symptoms of neurosis which the doctor here enumerates are too general to be blamed merely upon homosexuals. The inferiority complex? We wonder how many people in very high ranks of life are homosexual without being suspected? And they might be considered the very acmes of superiority and excellent character. Schopenhauer said that those who look for the devil with horns and claws and clanging bells are always fooled. Conventional opinion looks for homosexuals only in the gutters. It is not fair to hold up a homosexual in the gutter to the scorn of the normal world and maintain that all homosexuals practically without an exception are like him. Heterosexuals do not point to their weakest member for the benefit of the homosexuals. There are hundreds of homosexuals among the pillars of society and no one knows of their being homosexual, except perhaps a cute little boy prostitute in Paris.

We cannot all be bank presidents and millionaires, but the percentage of homosexuals among the lowly workers is not greater than that of the number of heterosexuals. Homosexuals often occupy well-paid positions as secretaries and bank clerks and not rarely hold positions of trust. Especially in hospitals they are considered more valuable than heterosexual men.

The writer knows several elderly homosexuals of wealth who spend part of their incomes for the support of unfortunate children deserted by their parents and interned in orphan asylums.

If homosexuals were stupid enough openly to make converts to their aberrations they would not be at liberty very long, for the public policy demands a stern suppression of homosexuality.

"Homosexuality often becomes criminal because of their aggressive acts against society," says Dr. Wolfe. It would be interesting to look up the statistical figures of crimes. Thus it might surprise Dr. Wolfe that the average annual convictions for sodomy in the State of New York are only about 15, while the number of cases of rape, adultery, and other sexual delinquencies of heterosexuals reaches many hundred cases. It must be remembered also that the sodomy law in the State of New York likewise punishes heterosexual men and women convicted of committing certain sexual perversions. The statement of Dr. Wolfe that homosexual sex acts are a penitentiary offence is not a fact. There are certain extreme sex acts which are punished by law, but it makes no difference at all whether the perpetrators are homosexuals

or heterosexuals. Many homosexual sex acts are not punished at all, neither is homosexuality *per se*. The inability of our legislators properly to evaluate social phenomena is significant. While two grown-up persons who in private with mutual agreement perform a certain harmless sex act, may be sent to prison for twenty years (or life as in the State of Georgia), a syphilitic may freely spread his loathsome disease to wife and children without the law lifting a finger. Our sex laws are still based on the ignorance of Christian sex morality.

While we must congratulate Dr. Wolfe on his courageous stand in the matter of punishing homosexuals, we do not believe that homosexuals would want to be freed from the jails in turn to be put in lunatic asylums. But, no doubt, there are many psychologists looking for jobs and they are as desirous of getting onto the public payrolls as other vendors of nostrums.

If homosexuals were permitted to let loose one-tenth as much propaganda about homosexuality as the heterosexuals (the stage, radio, film, literature, theatre, and especially the vaudeville, reek with a nauseating display of female legs and whatnot—while homosexual propaganda is entirely out of question) we wonder if there would not be much more homosexual “neuroses” present. Even today the works of Havelock Ellis on sex are banned from the mails because he does not moralize on inversion. It is well known that a great number of homosexuals are only attracted by masculine men of normal inclinations, and if they tried to convert all men to homosexuality, they would defeat their own purpose.

To make an analogy of homosexuality with epilepsy is highly arbitrary insofar as Dr. Wolfe himself has stated in his article (page 99) that homosexuality is not a disease in itself. It is, of course, just as ridiculous to state that homosexuals have a greater number of truly great men among their ranks as it would be to maintain that a man could not be a genius because of his being homosexual. Many inverts are driven to introversion by the hostile attitude of society and thus often turn to study and literature instead of watching ball games, prize fights and other pastimes of the heterosexuals.

After considering Dr. Wolfe’s thesis one is somewhat in doubt whether he is interested in homosexuality or whether he is interested in squaring it with the Adlerian individual psychology, of which he is so obviously an advocate. It must seem to a layman intelligence that the latter case is the true one. There is a matter of finality about his findings and his “remedy” that, to the body of scientists who realize the complexity of this field and who admit that they are only at the beginning of the solution, must appear engagingly naïve. One is suspicious of anyone who approaches an intricate phase of life with a definite theory, for the simple reason that he is apt to find something that will not tally with his original theoretical pre-possession, and his pride of theory is very apt to prevent him from sacrificing the theory.

Once more we are told that inversion is not a matter of biology or physiology, but is acquired by social conditions and determined by “early childhood experiences.” We are shown the proof of this by the statement that homosexuals as children, “in the vast majority” of cases, occupy an ordinal position in the family—that is, they are almost always the oldest or youngest child, that also the father dies early (in the boy’s case) and that the resulting coddling of the boy by its mother ultimately makes the boy homosexual. Suppose this is true: How then will psychiatric therapy of the “individual homosexual” effect a cure? Supposing such a cure possible, supposing further that each homosexual could be prevailed upon to submit to this cure (which is preposterous) the fact would still remain that in every generation there would be another crop of homosexuals, simply because boys still continued to be first and last children, losing their fathers and mothers early in life. If it is true that the “ordi-

nal family position" occupied by the incipient homosexual is a basic cause of homosexuality, how can curing the individual results of such family conditions abolish the root of the condition? According to this view the only possible way to exterminate homosexuality is to alter social conditions, to see that no married couple has a first or a last child, and that neither the father nor mother die while the child is yet young.

The making of the homosexual, we are further assured, does not, however, cease in the family conditions. Increasing maturity intensifies his difficulties. Still more hellish is the fact that segregation of the sexes aggravates the situation. Segregation in schools—and, it might be added, the army, navy, labor and prison camps; this may be true, somewhat, but how will individual therapy solve it? By arranging society so that no army, navy, prison and labor camps and schools will be necessary, it would seem.

Next he introduces the factor of masturbation as a formative element in the making of homosexuality. The idea seems to be that masturbation is peculiar to homosexuals. But every heterosexual who reads that passage will know that this is absurdly false. Havelock Ellis shows that 60% of theological students practice it. Dr. Max Huhner says that any man who denies it is a liar. There can be no actual statistics about the extent of masturbation, but McCabe states that most of the estimates given vary between 90 and 99% of the adult community. Thus, were the practice of masturbation an indication of homosexuality, we would find 95% of the population homosexual rather than an alleged 5%.

That social conditions, environment, may be a factor in homosexuality is no doubt true, but it is not *the* factor. Is character, anyone's character, a matter of physical constitution, or is it a product of environment? It seems absurd to stress one of those factors. Both are necessary, and it is yet impossible to say which is the more important and formative. They both act on and supplement each other. A good seed planted in poor soil will result in little. A poor seed planted in the richest soil will similarly result in little. Who can say at what point physical structure ends and environment begins? Who can say whether the excellence of a fruit is due to the inherent qualities of the seed, or the qualities of the soil that nourished it? Dr. Wolfe says it is all a matter of soil.

He is so intent on improving the mental health of society by condemning the homosexual, so busy listing the evil and vicious aspects of inversion, that he nowhere asks the question: Is it possible that homosexuality, in the final analysis, does contribute something of value to society? Yes, he points out that though Wilde, da Vinci, and others (to name but a few) were homosexuals, "this is hardly a valid argument for being homosexual." As though becoming a homosexual were a matter of choice! He fails to account for those homosexual geniuses, and takes arbitrary refuge in holding up to scorn and contempt the prostitutes, the "seducers," making it appear further that these boy prostitutes are innocent victims. This thin trick should fool nobody. Prostitution is a large and perpetual element in heterosexuality, and no doubt many people believe that heterosexual women prostitutes are seduced into their profession, which leaves room for much doubt. A large per cent of girl prostitutes are so by choice, nothing else. And while social conditions are such that prostitution must be even more closely associated with homosexuality, homosexuality offers therefore opportunities of exploitation through blackmail, etc., that are not possible to such a large extent among heterosexual prostitutes. But such argument by Dr. Wolfe is arbitrary. Would he cast any such reflection on heterosexual great men by some one who detracted from their greatness by pointing out the heterosexual seducers and prostitutes? Arbitrary indeed.

He does not ask anywhere whether homosexuality might not have a social value. On the face of it, there must be some social gain in homosexuality. Homosexuality has existed from

the beginning of time, in all sorts of social regimes and conditions. It is a *constant* human quality. It survives, almost if at all, undiminished since the dawn of history. Why? There has to be a reason somewhere, and that reason must be one of utility, of human value, else it could not survive. If the homosexuality of geniuses does not prove that homosexuality is a higher order, it certainly does prove that homosexuality is not exclusively an affliction of gutter snipes, maniacs, and thugs. Can anyone say definitely that homosexuality has not in the past contributed valuable things to society—unsuspected things perhaps—or that homosexuality, by its strange duality of character, may not fill an important function in the future of society?

Dr. Wolfe is at pains to list the defects and weaknesses of the homosexual temperament, but none of the fine and worthy qualities: the artistic nature of the homosexual man, his sensitive spirit, his rhythmic emotions, his “hardihood of intellect and body,” or his capacities for friendship. I find myself in sympathy with the statement of Edward Carpenter, in his intelligent and human book, *Love’s Coming of Age*: “It may be said to give them both (women and men of homosexual inclination) through their double nature, command of life in all its phases, and a certain free-masonry of the secrets of the two sexes which may well favor their function as reconcilers and interpreters.” There are the great artists of the world, wholly or partially homosexual, Michaelangelo, Shakespeare, Alexander, Julius Caesar, Christine, Sappho, and the rest. Whether or not homosexuality has been a large factor in genius, it has been closely associated with it, and that significant fact has not yet been explained away. And further, who will say that an element of homosexuality is not today woven into the temperament of our artists and creators and interpreters? And that it will not continue to be in the future? The extermination of homosexuality, even if it were possible, might result in a very jagged hole in the fabric of society and its culture; might, in fact, be a costly experiment.

But there is a yet more complex problem attached to this therapeutic cure of homosexuality. Dr. Wolfe gives the impression that homosexuality centers around actual sexual intercourse, that it is exclusively absorbed with intercourse and the act itself. But there are all shades and degrees of homosexuality, from Platonic, spiritual attachments down to the sexual. Where is the psychiatrist to draw the line here? Will he cure the homosexual who is literally sexual, and permit to exist all the varying shades of attachment between similar sexes, attachments that verge close to the sexual border and are yet beyond it? There is no hard and fast distinction between friendship and love—friendship can and does deepen into love. Therapeutic methods, developed to their ultimate capacities, would, it seems, cast suspicion on friendships existing between members of the same sex, however non-homosexual those friendships might really be. Such a state of affairs might inconvenience many people, including heterosexuals; including also Dr. Wolfe, of course.

While Dr. Wolfe upbraids the apologists of homosexuality as liable to forget the far greater number of dilapidated homosexuals who are brought into police courts, he is strangely silent on the fact that normal heterosexuals also clutter up police stations. And why harp on the very few homosexuals who find satisfaction for their pathological craving to deal with the young boys, when the papers are at present full of the details of atrocious killings of little girls by mentally deranged heterosexual men? The cinemas in which homosexuals often seek contact with their kind are closed to minors, and the homosexuals who prefer the very young boys are as rare as the heterosexual “cradle snatchers.” These shows are full of heterosexual prostitutes who as rugged individualists have long ago caught up with the ready market for young men, and they, like their heterosexual sisters of the street, are not as innocent as Dr. Wolfe might think. The youth of 16 or 17 is no longer ignorant of masturbation