

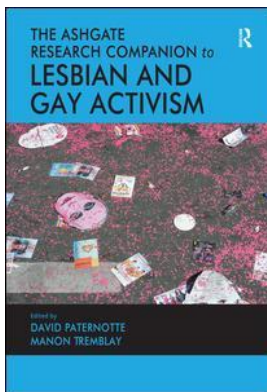
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The Homophile Movement

Julian Jackson

Introduction: What's in a Name?

If the word “homophile” is remembered at all today, except by historians, it conjures up fusty (black and white) images of respectable (white) men in suits earnestly debating at committees and congresses. Or it calls to mind discreet homosexual publications with none of the sexually explicit photographs that became widespread from the mid-1970s. The “homophiles” have neither the transgressive glamour of the *fin de siècle* nor the heady excitement of the revolutionary activism of the 1970s. They seem irremediably associated with a certain view of the conservative 1950s as opposed to the “radical” 1960s—although in fact most homophile organizations continued into, and after, the 1960s. Many leaders of these movements hid behind pseudonyms, and this further demonstrated their closeted timidity to later generations.

The very term “homophile” has disappeared from use while “homosexual,” “gay” and “queer,” whose usage and popularity has fluctuated, are all employed today. The homophiles never recovered from their dismissal by 1970s gay liberationists who were revolting as much against their precursors as against heterosexual society. Only recently have historians begun rescuing “homophiles” from what E.P. Thompson in another context called the “enormous condescension of posterity” (Churchill 2008; Jackson 2009; Loftin 2012; Meeker 2006; Rupp 2011). This re-evaluation is partly due to the pendulum of historical revisionism but also to our contemporary preoccupations: stripped of the label, the “homophile” world view seems closer to us in some respects than that of the gay liberationists who consigned them to the dustbin of history.

The word “homophile” was coined in 1924 by a German physician and homosexual activist in a work entitled *Hetero und Homophilie* (Legg 1994: 23–7). It achieved currency when adopted in 1946 by the Dutch organization *Cultuur-en-Ontspanningscentrum* [Cultural and Recreational Center] known as COC. By the early 1950s, homosexual reform movements throughout the Western world had adopted it. It appeared in the first issue of the Danish publication *Vennen* in 1950, and needed no explanation when used in the first issue of the American homophile publication *ONE Magazine* in 1953. By this time, self-proclaimed “homophile” movements existed in the United States, France, Belgium, Britain and Scandinavia. In Germany there was no one organized movement, but groups in Hamburg, Bremen, Frankfurt and Berlin publishing a plethora of more or less ephemeral magazines: *Der Weg* [The Way], *Die Gefährten* [The Companions], *Die Freunde* [The Friends], *Hellas*, *Der Ring* [The Circle].

Continuity and Change

This “homophile moment” represented both continuity and a new beginning. The most visible manifestation of interwar homosexual activism had literally gone up in flames when in May 1933 the Nazis publically burnt the archives of Magnus Hirschfeld’s Institute for Sexual Research in Berlin. Forced into exile, Hirschfeld died in 1935, but his legacy survived. A Dutch chapter of his Scientific and Humanitarian Committee had existed since 1911 (Hekma this volume). It survived until the Nazi invasion of 1940 when it disbanded and ended its recently founded newspaper *Levensrecht* [Right to live]. In 1946, however, one of the editors of this publication, Nico Engelschman (pseudonym: “Bob Angelo”) revived it under the name *Vriendschap* [Friendship] and set up what became COC in 1949. Another thread of continuity between the years before and after 1945 was the Zurich based Swiss periodical *Der Kreis* [The Circle] which had started in 1932. Its editor from 1943, Karl Meier (“Rolf”), had worked as an actor in Germany between 1924 and 1934. Subsequently publishing also smaller English and French language sections, *Der Kreis* was between 1940 and 1945 the only homosexual periodical in the world, and the best known in Europe for many years after 1945 (Kennedy 1999; Steinle 1999).

Continuities were less evident in America when the first American homophile movement, the Mattachine Society, was founded in San Francisco in 1951 (D’Emilio 1983). But there were some links to a European past. One influential book in America was Donald Webster Cory’s (pseudonym of Edward Sagarin) *The Homosexual in America*. Cory—whose pseudonym was a reference to André Gide’s 1924 defence of homosexuality *Corydon*—had himself been influenced by Hirschfeld’s book, *The Homosexuality of Men and Women*.

The homophile movements also represented a new beginning. Belonging to the immediate post-war mood of liberal optimism following the defeat of Nazism, they employed the discourse of liberal democratic citizenship and human rights which was the prevailing idiom of the 1950s. Many of the movements made explicit reference to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, arguing that it should be extended to cover sexual minorities. The three Scandinavian movements followed the example of Denmark which called itself *Forbundet af 1948* (The Federation of 1948), a name that also had the advantage of sounding anodyne and un-provocative. This was a feature of most of the movements: the French one usually known as “Arcadie” from its eponymous magazine was officially the *Club scientifique et littéraire des pays latins* [Literary and Scientific Club of the Latin Countries]; one local group of the Mattachine Society dubbed itself the Association for the Social Knowledge of the United States (Boag 2004).

This commitment to civil rights discourse gave these movements a strongly transnational character. The first issue of ONE Magazine reproduced an article that had appeared in the German magazine *Insel* [Island] to show the “how similar are its purposes to ONE’s and how international are all our aims.” When Axel Lundahl-Madsen in Denmark set up a homophile group, he wrote to COC and *Der Kreis* to seek advice (Rydström and Mustola 2007: 33). André Baudry, founder of Arcadie, had come to homosexual activism by writing for *Der Kreis*. There was even an attempt to establish a transnational structure when in 1951 the COC organized an International Committee for Sexual Equality (ICSE). The ICSE aimed to be a coordinating organization for existing homophile movements. It shared information through a newsletter and held congresses (in Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Paris, Brussels). The first one sent a telegram to the United Nations demanding rights for homosexual minorities. Always dominated by its Dutch leaders, ICSE petered out towards the end of the 1950s (Rupp 2011).

Despite these transnational affiliations, national contexts were different. In France and Switzerland, homosexuality was not illegal. This meant that Arcadie and *Der Kreis* were

not primarily interested in law reform. In Britain, on the other hand, the Homosexual Law Reform Society (HLRS) sought only to end the criminalization of male homosexuality. Indeed, the HLRS was more a lobbying organization than a “homophile” movement. When its chairman, Antony Grey, informed one supporter that he was homosexual, the reply was: “I wish you had not told me that” (Grey 1997: 223). But the values of the HLRS, and its sister organization, the Albany Trust, were similar to those of other homophile organizations. In Holland, COC was less centrally concerned with law reform than its pre-war precursor had been, but this may have been because the discriminatory law in question, dating to 1911, only penalized homosexual relations for those under 21 (for heterosexual relations the legal age was 16) and to have foregrounded this issue risked confusing the defense of homosexuality with the more incendiary issue of childhood sexuality.

Differences between homophile organizations were also linked to personality. Baudry was a former Catholic seminarist more interested in philosophy and literature than politics; Harry Hay, founder of the Mattachine Society, had been a Communist; the founders of COC were from Socialist backgrounds with experience of the Dutch Resistance. There is no simple typology of the organizers of these movements, except that most were men in their thirties. The homophile world was predominantly male. Some organizations, like Arcadie and COC, played lip service to the presence of women, and contained occasional articles by a woman or about female issues; in others, like *Der Kreis*, women were entirely absent. There were two exceptions. One was Belgium where the first homophile movement, the Centre Culturel Belge [CCB, Belgian Cultural Center], was founded by a woman, Suzanne de Pues (Suzan Daniel), in 1953. But the other recruits were men and soon Daniel resigned. The CCB folded and was replaced by an organization (CCL) modeled on COC. The other exception was the United States where a separate women’s organization, the Daughters of Bilitis (DOB), was founded in 1954. Two years later it launched a monthly magazine, *The Ladder*. The values of DOB were identical to the Mattachine Society, until its two leaders, Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, eventually drifted away from it in the late 1960s because they felt that homophile politics could not accommodate specifically feminist issues (Gallo 2006).

Responding to Oppression

Overall similarities between homophile movements were more important than differences. Throughout the western world, the political liberalism of the 1950s was accompanied by cultural and social conservatism. In America, this was bound up with the anti-Communism of the Cold War: the McCarthyite purges targeted homosexuals as much as Communists (Johnson 2004). In Europe, the values of family and domesticity were re-asserted after the upheavals of war. In France a 1945 decree (confirming a law introduced by the collaborating Vichy government in 1942) made “unnatural acts”—sex between males—illegal for under 21s. This was the first time even that the French Penal Code established in 1791 contained any discrimination between homosexual and heterosexual sex. In 1960 a French parliamentary amendment even declared homosexuality a “social scourge” along with alcoholism and tuberculosis. In most countries, the repression of the 1950s required no new legislation, merely a harsher application of that already existing. In Austria, about 13,000 convictions occurred in the 1950s and 1960s under a law of 1852; in Germany, there were about 45,000 convictions between 1950 and 1965 (as opposed to about 10,000 in the Weimar Republic) under a law of 1871.

This unpropitious political climate forced the homophile movements onto the defensive: tactical prudence was the price of survival. This was demonstrated in Denmark in 1955 when

the police raided the premises of one of the earliest homophile publication companies. The result was a major homosexual scandal in which 250 men were convicted of having sex with minors. Some leaders of the *Fordundet af 1948* were implicated—Lundhal-Madsen spent several months in prison—and the movement did not recover until the 1960s (Rydström and Mustola 2007: 75–6). In America, the postal service seized the August 1953 copy of *ONE Magazine* on the grounds of obscenity. Although this never occurred again, the editors were understandably alarmed (Loftin 2012: 38–9). In France, in 1955 Baudry was prosecuted for a number of anodyne articles published in *Arcadie* which were deemed a “danger to youth.” He escaped with a fine, but the experience made him more cautious than he had previously been. Baudry was also constrained by a 1949 law protecting the young from “immoral” publications. The authorities exploited this law to forbid *Arcadie* from being publically displayed. A ban of this kind could be the kiss of death, and *Arcadie* only survived through subscriptions (Jackson 2009: 79–86). In order to survive, homophile movements tried to remain on good terms with the police. The leaders of COC, *Arcadie* and Kreis allowed plain clothes policemen to attend some of their events, and at the annual *Arcadie* banquet Baudry would proudly proclaim that a representative of the “authorities” was seated at his side. This kind of thing led 1970s gay radicals to claim, with no evidence, that homophiles bought the goodwill of the police by handing over their membership lists.

The tactical prudence imposed by circumstances did not fundamentally contradict the way that the homophiles viewed the world. They did not see themselves as revolutionaries. They claimed equal citizenship on the grounds that homosexuality was neither a sickness nor an abnormality. The “homophile moment” was premised upon the idea that had emerged in medical writing at the end of the nineteenth century that homosexuality was a distinct and stable category. The homophiles embraced that idea while stripping it of any moralistic assumptions. In accordance with the 1950s faith in the capacity of the human and social sciences to improve society, homophile movements exploited the research of “experts”—psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists and anthropologists—to buttress their claims. They drew on the work of the founders of modern sexology like Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Hirschfeld and Havelock Ellis, but also on contemporary figures: Alfred Kinsey whose report on male sexuality appeared in 1948, the American psychologist Evelyn Hooker, the German doctor Hans Giese, author of a 1957 book on homosexuality. Some have seen this strategy as a Faustian pact in which homophile leaders abandoned agency and sold out to so-called experts (D’Emilio 1983: 124–5). But faith in experts was not uncritical, and dialogue did not preclude dissent. Psychoanalysis was treated with considerable suspicion. Having invited a psychiatrist to lecture to it, a Mattachine Society group in Philadelphia commented: “all the Freudianisms were there in abundance: the breast and the penis, the mouth and the vagina, rivalry of parents, regressive states and arrested developments” (Stein 2004: 210). An *Arcadie* writer warned: “if we dialogue too much with psychiatrists, we are ineluctably led to adopt their assumptions and implicitly accept our ‘abnormality’” (Jackson 2009: 118). Experts were mined for what they could bring to the homophile cause. As one Mattachine leader put it, the aim was to “ride the coat-tails” of established authorities as a way of changing opinion (Minton 2002: 239). But homophile movements showed no interest in the etiology of homosexuality. Asking *why* people were homosexual could lead down the slippery slope to cures; it was *how* homosexuals could live in society that mattered.

Even so, working with those outside the homosexual world could impose unsavory compromises. One supporter of law reform told Antony Grey in Britain that “no amount of legislation will prevent homosexuals from being the subject of dislike, derision or at best pity.” Grey wrote that he “almost puked” on hearing these words (Grey 1997: 126). How much to accommodate people who shared such beliefs was a decision which each movement had to make, but in general all of them aimed to remain on good terms with the

authorities in order to change elite opinion. Activism in the style of the late 1960s was not in their repertoire.

Homosexual Ethics

If one part of the strategy to integrate homosexuality into society was to win over opinion formers, no less important was the need to change homosexuals themselves: equal citizenship implied duties as well as rights. As the Mattachine Society President wrote in 1956: “we must blame ourselves for much of our plight. When will the homosexual ever realise that social reform, to be effective must be preceded by personal reform?” (D’Emilio 1983: 113). What kind of “personal reform” was envisaged? One important target of homophile criticism was effeminate or “camp” behaviour. Baudry regularly addressed his members at Arcadie’s club in Paris and castigated them for manifestations of “eccentricity”—his favorite term of abuse. *Der Kreis* was hardly more tolerant: “the womanly homosexual has not chosen his kind himself; but nevertheless he has the duty, to conduct himself in public as inconspicuously as possible ... and not exaggerate his female behaviour to the outside” (Kennedy 1999: 172–3). The Mattachine Society was contemptuous of so-called “hair fairies” who affected feminine characteristics and addresses each other as “she.” This is what the Americans called “Swish” and *ONE Magazine* defined as follows: “one hand always on the hip ... mincing steps ... reedish voice ... pink shoes, red ties, and mauve undershorts.” It offered its readers in 1955 a detailed article on how to avoid “swish” in their personal behavior (Loftin 2007: 581–4).

Homophile leaders were hardly less vociferous in their denunciation of the allegedly promiscuous aspects of the homosexual life style—the endless search of sex in bars, parks, public toilets and so on. “Why, asked Baudry, ‘are you only known by your worst aspects ... Your excesses ... Your eccentricities, your obsession with sex and nothing but sex’” (Jackson 2009: 11). This also made homophile leaders suspicious of, if not indeed hostile to, the emerging world of gay bars (Boyd 2003: 159–93). Their high-mindedness often tipped into prudishness. One ICSE organizer in 1952 worried that more people seemed to be attending the congress for the social events than the congress debates; another that people would “cross all Europe to see a boy but not to speak about our problems” (Rupp 2011: 1026).

It is these aspects of the homophile movement that particularly excited the scorn of later gay activists. At best, they depicted homophiles as bourgeois conformists; at worst, they accused them of having interiorized the prevalent homophobia of the period. But closer study of any individual homophile movement paints a more complicated picture. Arcadie, often portrayed as the most conservative, organized (at some legal risk) in 1956 a film showing of Jean Genet’s film *Chant d’Amour*, which represented that transgressive image of sexuality which the homophiles deplored; in the early 1970s, it screened an early example of gay pornographic cinema by the American Pat Rocco; on another occasion Arcadie organized a lecture on sado-masochism. In America where the homophile movements did not have their own social venues, the correspondence columns of their publications allowed their readers to offer a diversity of views. One wrote: “If we must have a crusade it must be for civil rights and equality ... Getting all homosexuals to act like bourgeois gentlemen is not going to get those rights for me” (D’Emilio 1983: 114). Another wrote: “if effeminate homosexuals are considered an embarrassment to the homosexual movement, I think you have rejected a great many of your friends” (Loftin 2007: 586). If one French homophile writer argued elegantly that the aim of homophiles was not so much the “right to difference” as the “right to indifference,” *ONE Magazine* in 1954 had an article entitled “The Importance of Being Different.”

Nonetheless, since the predominant tone of the homophile organizations was to caution against “difference” or “eccentricity,” it would be more useful to understand the reasoning behind this position than merely to condemn it. The homophiles would have argued that the models of homosexuality identity and behavior which they criticized were the prevailing stereotypes of homosexuality in society at large. The effeminate homosexual reaffirmed rather than subverted moral order: he was what heterosexual society needed the homosexual to be. In France, this reading was underpinned by the influence of Sartre’s existentialism—many contributors to *Arcadie* had philosophical backgrounds—with its injunction to make authentic choices that were not determined by others (Jackson 2009: 228–30). The DOB also argued that “butch” or mannish behavior by lesbians was a kind of false consciousness (Boyd 2003: 183).

Homophiles also argued that many deplorable aspects of the homosexual lifestyle were distortions caused by the repressions of existing society. Forcing homosexuals into secrecy and shame created forms of behavior that would disappear once they were able to live openly. As one French writer put it: “the idea of adventure, soon associated with that of pleasure, pushes homosexuals ceaselessly to change their partner and to multiply the number of encounters in ever more risky conditions. The result is a kind of degradation of sensibility ... opening door to a kind of obsessive and invasive pan-sexualism” (Jackson 2009: 128). Such remarks were part of a broader quest for an ethics of homosexuality. “Ethics” was a key homophile concept. The task, as one American writer put it, was to create “an ethical homosexual culture” (D’Emilio 1983: 77). In a world whose laws and models of socialization were constructed around heterosexuality—the family, marriage—homosexuals were offered no patterns of their own: “a young homosexual has to discover the world as if he was born into it as the first of his species” (Jackson 2009: 116). For this reason, homosexuals had to develop their own rituals of socialization—to invent their own vocabulary. One word that had great resonance was “Friend” as in the titles of the COC’s magazine *Vriendschap* or the Danish one *Vennen* [friend]; Rolf of *Kreis* liked to talk of “comrade-love” (Rizzo 2006).

This was not the elevation of platonic love over sex. Ethics was not the same as moralism: it was as much about asking questions as answering them. One *Arcadie* writer asked: “should the homophile couple ‘ape’ the normal one?” His answer was no: “It seems to me that in homophile couples there should exist a greater liberty, less subjection of one of the partner to the other.” The lives of some homophile leaders belied the hetero-normativity often ascribed to them. Henri Methorst, one organizer of the ICSE, lived in a triangle with his male lover, and that lover’s wife; an *Arcadie* writer celebrated his own “ménage à trois” with a man of his own age and younger boy as an example of how to build a life that was “peaceable, happy, without incident” while avoiding any “grotesque caricature of the heterosexual relationship” (Rupp 2011: 1019, Jackson 2009: 128).

The search for a homophile ethics seemingly contradicts the notion that homosexuals were no different from any other individuals, except for sexual preference. This was why the term worried some members of the Mattachine society (D’Emilio 1983: 79). One would not, after all, seek an ethics for left-handers. One answer might have been that this was a provisional position until full integration had taken place. But the contradiction highlights a paradox of the homophile movement—showing that its success, such as it was, differed from its main ambition. The homophile leaders never succeeded in changing the attitude of the world toward homosexuals, but instead they did create the rudiments of a kind of counter community to help their members survive an inhospitable world.

As far as changing the world is concerned, the problem was to be listened to. It was a great coup when the Mattachine Society was contacted by *Life Magazine* for a big article on homosexual life in America (Meeker 2006: 153–89), but such successes were exceptional, and said more about changes that were taking place in the United States than anything

the homophiles had done. More common was the experience of Arcadie whose attempts to lobby politicians, church authorities and journalists were met with complete silence through to the end of the 1960s. When law reform did come in Britain in 1967, the HLRs had little impact on the drafting of a law that was more restrictive than it would have liked.

Making Connections

Where the homophile moment did matter was in helping to connect homosexuals—to each other, to their history, to their culture (Meeker 2006). As a letter in ONE put it: “this is more than a magazine to me. It’s a vehicle through which communion is made with thousands of brothers whose outlook, ideals, problems, etc. are my own. It is one of several important links with the world of our minority without which I would feel very parochial, not to say isolated” (Loftin 2012: 18). For many homosexuals growing up one of the greatest burdens was isolation. Stumbling across a copy of a homophile publication could change a life. One couple wrote to *Der Kreis* in 1952:

we remember very well the exact moment, when, for the first time, we had the review in our hands, after years of oppression and the growing sense that for us nothing would ever change even if public life had moved back to normal and democratic line. Incredible: it was with a child’s eyes that we looked at this first issue we had ever seen, purely by chance. The joy of being in possession of it could not have been greater than if it had been a precious ring or an Old Master. (Rizzo 2006: 59)

Through such publications, homosexuals discovered they were not alone. They learnt a hidden homosexual history not taught at schools and were introduced to a rich literary culture. This included the canon of homosexual writers—Wilde, Gide, Whitman—but also contemporary books that told of their lives. Some of these, like Gore Vidal’s *City and Pillar* (1948) or James Baldwin’s *Giovanni’s Room* (1956) or Roger Peyrefitte’s *Amitiés particulières* (1945) [Special Friendships], are still read today while others like Cory’s *The Homosexual in America*, James Barr Fugate’s *Quatrefoil* (1950), Walter Baxter’s *Look Down in Mercy* (1952), Marcel Guersant’s *Jean Paul* (1953), Rodney Garland’s *The Heart in Exile* (1953) may be largely forgotten—but they played a role in the lives many homosexuals of the 1950s. The homophile organizations ran book distribution services for those who could not find such titles.

Some might see this demonstrating the allegedly middle-class tone of the homophile movements as echoed by a reader of ONE in 1956: “What the Hell do I care about Plato, Socrates and Walt Whitman ... Remember that some of us are just ordinary guys” (Loftin 2012). Quite apart from the fact that most of those who wrote for the magazines were educated and middle-class, it is patronizing to assume that “ordinary” readers were indifferent to their own past. Such articles, pioneered by the homophile publications, became the staple of subsequent experiments in the gay press up until the present. For those who found Plato hard going, the magazines also their own short stories. It was in *Der Kreis* that the later homosexual pornographer Sam Steward (“Phil Andros”) first found a forum in which to publish even if not yet allowing him to give full expression to his sexual imagination or that of his readers (Spring 2010).

The homophile movements also connected their members to each other in more concrete ways. Many of them ran personal ads but not in the US where this would have been illegal. These were couched in decorous language for legal reasons but the initiated could easily decode them. Many European movements had venues to allow where socializing. The COC,

Kreis and Arcadie all clubs which organized lectures, film showings, and debates. Arcadie's club, a Parisian institution from 1957, had a restaurant and dancing. This offered greater security than gay bars which risked being raided by the police. In return members had to show a certain decorum. Baudry policed his establishment to ensure that slow dances did not infringe propriety; the organizers of the annual Christmas party of *Kreis* wanted to keep out "less desirable ... gate crashers" and "questionable elements" (Churchill 2008: 40). We should not exaggerate the high-minded tone. The 1958 Congress of the ICSE had an evening show with performances by "Mae West" and "Marlene and her boys" (Rupp 2011: 1025). Homophiles could have fun as much as anyone.

The organizations also provided support services offering legal advice and sexual health counselling (Meeker 2006: 68–76; Jackson 2009: 164–5). There was information for those travelling abroad. One publication in the United States, which started in 1963, was wittily entitled the *Lavender Baedeker* (Meeker 2006: 201–25). In short, the homophile organizations offered the rudiments of community organization and kind of self-help.

It is difficult to know how many lives were touched by these organizations. Membership figures were tiny and the circulations of the magazines fluctuated. *ONE's* circulation was around 3,000–5,000 at its peak; that of the *Ladder* about 1,000 and *Der Kreis* around 1,000. *Arcadie* at its peak had over 10,000 subscribers (it was necessary to subscribe to get entry to the Club). But these publications were also passed round by hand and sales underestimate the readership. Homosexual lives were multilayered and contacts with homophile organizations might be more or less formal, more or less continuous. For some people, such a contact with a homophile might have been their first encounter with any aspect of the homosexual world. Most will probably have first experienced other forms of homosexual sociability or contact in bars, baths, parks or toilets, and the encounter with the homophile world would offer another strand to their homosexual lives, while not displacing the others. They would take from it what they needed, negotiating their relationship to it as to all aspects of their lives. Arcadie may have exhorted its members to look for something more enduring than the one night stand, but one member recalled: "there was a period when I never went to the Saturday night dance without taking someone back at the end of the evening" (Jackson 2009: 157). Readers of Arcadie's lists of bars or park to avoid because they were dangerous or degrading were free to treat the information as they wished. One such list on Bordeaux in 1968 provided as full an account of gay activity in the city as any contemporary gay guide, and doubtless many readers ignored the prohibitions but acted on the information. In other words, homosexuals could use the self-help tools provided by the homophile organizations to lead very un-"homophile" lives. And the connectedness that those organizations provided made it possible to lead such lives with more confidence.

That does not mean that the relationship between the homophile organizations and their members was a purely top down one where moralizing leaders imposed a vision of homosexuality which clashed with the ways that they wished to lead their lives. There were examples where members vented their frustration at the prudishness of their leaders. One Arcadie reader complained: "I don't want to lay the disgusted: we have to meet somewhere, and meeting is infinitely harder for homosexual than for heterosexuals ... I don't like it when one of us, leaving a urinal where he has just wanked a partner exclaims: 'Me a homosexual? Certainly not. No I am a homophile,' turning his nose away to smell a rose" (Jackson 2009: 163). But in such cases, the correspondence columns opened up opportunities for self-expression (even if anonymous) for individuals who may never have had the chance of writing about their own homosexuality. They may have resented the injunctions of the homophile organizers, but this also led them to think about their identity and how they should live their lives.

There were many for whom the vision of the homophiles resonated perfectly with the way they aspired to live and showed that this language responded to a real social demand. In this context, nothing could be more eloquent than to quote from a letter written by a young Frenchman in 1958 to the radical activist Daniel Guérin about his homosexuality:

I am myself homosexual, exclusively so, and this has been true as far back as I can go in my memory. I discovered this fact entirely alone, and I have bit by bit, and somewhat belatedly, decided to assume it fully. But the career which I envisage does not allow me to conduct an open struggle. Could one conceive of a teacher affirming himself as homosexual! So like many others I am fated to clandestinity. But that is nothing compared to solitude. The usual ways that homosexuals have to meet each other (the street, night clubs) do not attract me, quite apart from their lack of safety ... and above all one finds only [an] immediate and egocentric preoccupation with pleasure ... Thus the social prohibitions [against us] not only deprive us of a sexual outlet, but also, and above all, of a psychological and affective outlet. What I most crave ... is to meet, from time to time, homosexuals with whom I can talk, with whom I can share this secret part of myself that I find stifled under the weight of social taboos, to meet homosexuals of all ages and all professions provided that they have in common the wish to assume their state with lucidity ... to meet homosexuals without this automatically implying sexual relations (without of course excluding them when the conditions of reciprocal attraction are fulfilled) ... I live all the day among students and if I believe the statistics there must be many like me among them. But unknown distances keep us apart from each other ... We are like as many 'monads,' without doors or windows, alone in the presence of our secret drama ... Thus it seems to me that one of the steps in our 'liberation,' as long as the perfect conditions for full self-expression are not met, would be to facilitate meeting between homosexuals in perfect conditions of dignity and discretion.

Guérin directed the author of this *cri de coeur* to Arcadie which became the centre of his homosexual life for the next 20 years. For him, this was indeed a "liberation" even if it did involve leading a life of partial "clandestinity." But quite apart from understanding the constraints imposed by the moral climate of the period, it would be wrong retrospectively to impose on homosexuals of the 1950s and 1960s the values of their successors. "Coming out" should not be essentialized as *the* only authentic way to be a liberated homosexual. The metaphor of wearing masks which is found in some homophile publications, implies not necessarily oppression but a sense of agency: masks can be put on and taken off. The wearer of the mask is not totally in control about when this should occur but he/she can enjoy the sense of empowerment that comes from living in multiple worlds and knowing that he/she is one step ahead of those who think they are in charge (Meeker 2001).

Towards the End

The heyday of the homophile movements was from the early 1950s to the mid-1960s. After this, the political climate became less oppressive and offered opportunities to those impatient with the caution of the homophile leaders. There was a changing of the guard at COC. Engelschman, who had run it since 1946, was replaced by Benno Premsele, who sought to increase the involvement of women and shift the emphasis from community cultural activities to more political aims (Aldrich and Wotherspoon: 322–4). In America, too,

things were changing. One Mattachine member who became increasingly frustrated with the organization was Frank Kameny, a scientist who had been dismissed from the Army Map service for his homosexuality. Having spent four years trying to reverse this verdict until losing a Supreme Court Appeal in 1961, he transferred his experience of fighting the administration, to energizing the Mattachine Society. This resulted in the setting up of the East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO), and in 1965 a handful of its members took the unprecedented step of picketing the offices of various government buildings while carrying placards with slogans like "Discrimination against homosexuals is as *immoral* as discrimination against negroes and Jews." This was an entirely new style of activism (even if many wore sunglasses to conceal their identities) although it remained located within the homophile vision of the world: the aim was to obtain equal rights. The Mattachine Society of Washington began publishing in 1966 a monthly magazine entitled *The Homosexual Citizen* (Johnson 2004: 178–208).

Another change affecting homophile organizations was that the liberalization of censorship meant that the gently erotic stories in their magazines came to seem tame compared with what readers could find elsewhere. For this reasons both *Kreis* and ONE Magazine folded in 1967.

It would be wrong, however, to see the "homophile moment" as ending with the 1960s. In Germany, the first new organization set up after the decriminalization of homosexuality in September 1969 was the Hamburg-based International World Homophile Organization (IWHO) (Pretzel and Weiss 2010: 210–29). In Holland, when at the end of the decade the new leaders of the COC came in their turn to seem unduly cautious, the slogan of their successors, "integration through confrontation," was still "homophile" in its ambitions if not its tactics (Aldrich and Wotherspoon: 399–401). In Francoist Spain, it was only around 1970 that the first homophile organization developed. The catalyst was a new law proposing the internment of homosexuals as a "social danger." Armand de Fluvia, a jurist based in Barcelona, contacted Arcadie which helped lobby internationally against the proposed law. Whether or not this made any difference, the law passed in 1970 was less severe than the original draft. Fluvia then established in Barcelona a group called the "Homophile Group for Social Integration." Arcadie in France published its Bulletin, AGHIOS, which was smuggled across the frontier. This went on until 1973, when the French authorities warned Baudry that if he did not stop he would be considered in breach of the law. De Fluvia managed to find a replacement publisher in Sweden whom he had met in Paris at an Arcadie congress. What better example could one wish of the possibilities offered by homophile transnationalism (Huard 2011)?

In Britain, the changing of the law in 1967 actually made it legal for a homophile organization to exist. Out of the HLRS emerged in 1969 the Campaign for Homosexual Equality. It sent a group to COC in 1972 to learn about organizing a Club, and its 1974 conference in Malvern was attended by a representative from Arcadie (Jackson 2007). The word "homophile" continued to be used in France in the 1970s even by some of the soft porn magazines that emerged in these years. Arcadie continued throughout the 1970s and at one level these were its most successful years. The more open climate permitted greater visibility without the organization diluting its core vision. The ban on public display of the magazine was lifted in 1975, and Baudry found himself often solicited to speak on the radio and television. Arcadie was able to organize in the 1970s three big congresses of which the most successful in 1979 was addressed by Michel Foucault. It was attended by representatives of homosexual movements from all over the world as well as journalists and trade union leaders. But this apotheosis was also the beginning of the end. Like *Der Kreis* in the 1960s, Arcadie's club no longer had much to offer compared with the explosion of

commercial venues associated with the sexual revolution. Arcadie finally closed in 1982. Of the homophile movements, only COC still exists—but it bears little resemblance to its origins.

What really killed off the homophile movements in the 1970s, however, was not so much sexual liberalization as the threat they faced from the new style “gay liberation” movements: the GLF in America in 1969, and Britain in 1970, the Homosexual Revolutionary Action Front (FHAR) in Paris in 1971, the plethora of groups that sprung up in Germany in the wake of Rosa von Prauheims’s 1971 film “It is not the Homosexual who is Perverse but the Society in which he lives.” For these groups, the word “homophile” was the emblem of what they opposed. In Britain, Anthony Grey found himself accused of being at best an Uncle Tom, at worst a CIA agent. In France, the founding moment of the FHAR in France was a radio program debating the “problem” of homosexuality. Baudry, who had agreed to participate, found himself shouted down by angry young activists. The FHAR was born, and for Arcadie nothing was ever to be the same again.

The most radical phase of these liberationist movements was brief, and they soon collapsed or moved into more reformist directions. But they had won part of the argument. Terms like “coming out” or “gay,” and events like gay pride, made the homophile injunction to “dignity” seem outdated. In truth, the relationship between the homophile moment and what followed was more complicated than the rhetoric would imply. In the United States, the explosion of gay liberation was the result of many converging factors which included the greater activism of the homophile movements in the second half of the 1960s, but also the daily experience of harassment in bars. The emblematic example of this was the famous riot at the Stonewall Inn in New York in 1969, but the same phenomenon was true in other cities like San Francisco (Boyd 2003). Yet one should guard against any simple opposition between courageous clubs and timid homophiles: Dorr Legg, the editor of ONE, had failed in the 1950s to get bar owners to sell his magazine because they feared that this might give the police a pretext to close them (Loftin 2012: 45). In France, the irruption of the gay liberationists was linked to the political radicalization associated with May ‘68, but they shared more with their homophile predecessors than they realized at the time. In a different language from the homophiles, they too castigated the world of anonymous cruising or the objectification of sex in commercial clubs; and they too sought other forms of homosexual connectedness.

The Homophiles in Perspective

What makes it possible to view the homophiles more sympathetically today is the fact that our contemporary world of gay marriage, civil partnerships, and gay adoption seems more in tune with their vision of the world than with a gay liberationist one, which execrated the family or the couple as a bourgeois anachronism. Gay marriage was occasionally discussed by the homophile movements: an issue of ONE in 1953 carried the cover “Homosexual Marriage?,” the DOB in 1956 organized a lecture on the subject “Is Homophile Marriage possible?,” and Arcadie’s congress in 1973 even proposed allowing homosexual couples to adopt (Gallo 2006: 25; Jackson 2009: 212). But although rarely discussed because it was simply inconceivable, these ideas were entirely in the logic of the homophile vision of the world. It seems, therefore, fitting that the first homosexual couple in Denmark to enter a legally registered partnership were Axel Lundhahl Madsen and his partner Eigil with whom he had lived since 1950 (they had already since 1956 taken the common surname Axxgil) or that, in June 2008, after living together for over 50 years, the two founders of the Daughters of Bilitis, Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin, were the first same-sex couple to marry in San Francisco.

Some might simply dismiss this as evidence that we live in a more conservative age. As the radical French feminist Françoise d'Eaubonne, once a member of Arcadie until she left to become one of the founders of FHAR, retorted to Baudry in a debate: "you want to integrate into society whereas I want to disintegrate it." But the labels "conservative" and "radical" are more fluid than this dialogue suggests. For a start, gay "radicals" were much more ambivalent about how to deal with camp and effeminacy than one might expect, and a trawl through any contemporary ads would show that the search for some ideal of gay masculinity—"no queens or fems please"—remains strong. And there are other issues, like pedophilia, which were sometimes discussed more openly in homophile publications than would be possible anywhere today. The ICSE even planned a congress for 1960 around the topic "Homosexuality vs Pedophilia" even if in the end it decided the subject was too incendiary. Or, to take the issue of what is now designated as "transgender," its inclusion into the rainbow coalition of LGBT politics might seem like a radical opening toward diversity antithetical to the worldview of the homophiles. But one commentator has offered an entirely different interpretation which sees this as a useful category for "accommodationist" groups, because it "can absorb the gender transgression which has doggedly been associated with modern homosexual identities for more than a hundred years." Or to put it another way, the "T" in LGBT confers a reassuring sense of stability on those who want to see themselves as "L" and "G" (Valentine 2007: 64).

Thus it is not productive to use terms like "conservatism" and "radicalism." The history of homosexual politics and mobilization has been a constellation of shifting positions whose meanings change according to context. It would not be wrong to describe the homophiles as "assimilationist" since they used the term themselves: the Mattachine Society described itself in 1956 as seeking for homosexuals "full assimilation into the communities in which they live" and *Kreis* called for "the complete integration of gay men into existing society" (Boyd 2003: 159; Churchill 2008: 40). But if it is true that homophiles did not want to destroy existing society, the society they sought to create would have been radically different in its attitude to sexuality from the one in which they lived. It is for this reason that the concept of "assimilation" has been refashioned by theorists of ethnicity who note that if immigrants are changed by the culture they enter, so that culture also changes in ways that members of the host culture can find threatening (Chauncey 2004: 122). Those who want to see homosexual marriage as irredeemably conservative should ask why the Church of England, the Republican Party or so many French conservatives have so opposed it. The issue of ONE which was seized in 1953 was the one devoted to homosexual marriage. This gives pertinence to words written by Michel Foucault when Arcadie folded in 1982: "To want to have homosexuality admitted by the established authorities, to bring it into existing institutional structures ... is a much more difficult enterprise, much more ambitious than merely to try and create for homosexuals spaces of liberty outside existing institutions. After all, such spaces have always existed" (Jackson 2009: 252).

In February 2006, the French newspaper *Libération* published an article about the difficulties experienced by homosexuals wanting to be open about their sexuality in the workplace. It quoted a member of an organization called "Homoboulot" (Homojobs) helping homosexuals to live more openly at work: "In homosexual there is the word sex. This is very reductive. We need to invent a type of word like homo-love." Perhaps there is a future for "homophiles" after all.

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