

Book review : sociological aspects of homosexuality by Michael Schofield

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again. Whatever else I do or fail to do, whatever job I have or don't have, I can at least rise to your level and love you as you deserve, as you have earned, to be loved. I *can* and *will* love and serve you always, as you do me—as nature and destiny have decreed and worked out so beautifully, and rightly, for us both . . .»

Book Review

Sociological Aspects of Homosexuality
by Michael Schofield. Longmans. 35s.

Mr Schofield—in a most careful piece of research—interviewed six groups of men, fifty in each group. The groups were as follows: homosexuals imprisoned for homosexual offences with adults; men imprisoned for offences against boys under sixteen; homosexuals under psychiatric treatment and a control group of normal men undergoing treatment; a group of homosexuals who had neither been in prison nor under treatment, and a control group for them of heterosexuals. At first it might be thought a somewhat odd way of investigating types of homosexuals, but in point of fact the groups of homosexuals differed from one another more than they differed from the normals with whom they were compared.

Several points of interest emerge. The first, and perhaps the most important, is that the paedophiliacs were entirely different from the homosexuals. Many of them had gone through a period of heterosexuality, they got but little satisfaction from their encounters, and they did not mix with homosexual friends, having no interest in adult males. The homosexuals, on the other hand, preferred adults and were not interested in children. This puts paid to the notion that homosexuals are a menace to the young. So far as the three groups of homosexuals are concerned, the prisoners were from rather unsatisfactory homes, they had low-paid occupations and several of them were feckless and socially incompetent. They were promiscuous and reckless in their sexual activities and many of them had committed non-sexual offences. The psychiatric patients also came from unsatisfactory homes, as did their controls, they were not particularly promiscuous but they suffered from a sense of guilt and anxiety. The other group of homosexuals did not differ from the normals with whom they were compared in any respect save their sexual tastes. They had accepted the situation, had good jobs in which they were successful and happy; they were, in fact, perfectly well integrated.

After this series of comparisons Mr Schofield discusses the sociological aspects of the situation. We do not know the causes of homosexuality, psychiatric treatment has not proved a roaring success, therefore we must learn to live with homosexuals. And why not? They do no harm, and as nonconformists they are positively beneficial to society, to say nothing of their intellectual and administrative gifts. In fact, in Mr Schofield's view, it is the hostile pressure of society that produces the less attractive features. The men in prison 'develop anti-social attitudes'

against the hostility about them—they flout the rules, sometimes in a rather blatant manner. The patients 'were unable to cope with the hostility' and fell mentally ill. The suggestion is that the kinds of behaviour that make people indignant, and the pressures that make the lives of many homosexual a misery could all be avoided if people were more sensible. Needless to say Mr Schofield argues strongly and cogently in favour of a change in the law. W. J. H. Sprött

From «The Listener» London, Nov. 18th 65

Homosexual

SIR. — So the Wolfenden proposals are surfacing for air again. As a homosexual I am resigned to being degenerate, depraved, vicious, corrupt, obscene, evil, bestial, sick, pathetic, and misunderstood. A monster, pariah, criminal, child seducer, effeminate, irresponsible, immature, inadequate and immoral. A fairy pervert, pansy, pouff or ponce. But I'm confused. Neither in public nor private am I received with the contempt and veiled hostility that I ought to incur. Remarkably few people edge away and my friends treat me as a rather ordinary person. I'm often asked to look after the children (male) of a married couple while they go out for the evening. I once asked an exceeding heterosexual colleague who knows me well whether I should be imprisoned and after a moment of blank amazement he conceded that if my cell mate turned out to be attractive it might be worth my while. Maybe I'm too damned lazy to make a convincing sinner. Or could it be that generally people consider there are more important and interesting aspects of living to discuss or worry about than my deviation? *Bewildered*

From «The New Statesman», London, June 11th 65

The Male Homosexual

Sir.,—Your printed discussion on male homosexuality (The Listener, January 28) has an especial interest for one like myself, who—although not 'angled' that way—has lived much of his life in the world of the arts, where homosexuals abound. Thus, my main surprise is that throughout the discussion it seems to have been assumed that homosexuality as such should either be prevented or 'cured'. But why, for heaven's sake, should these be the desiderata?

The fact that this 'state' is against the law, if physically practised, is of course an absurd reason to advance for its eradication! by the same token, female homosexuality, which is not illegal, should be immune from censure.

There are no valid moral grounds for trying to eradicate homosexuality except the words of certain moralists, based historically, no doubt,