I:

_OUTING: WHAT IT MEANS AND HOW IT CAME TO MEAN IT_

Outing may become the great debate of the nineties. It raises the question of whether we are a nation, strong and united—a Queer Nation—or merely a gay community or a homosexual culture or subculture. It counterposes group interests, patriotic loyalty to the Queer Nation, against the right of the individual to privacy. It vitalizes disputes about the ethics of the press in reporting or refusing to report gossip and facts about homosexual conduct, which has normally been taboo. Cutting across all previous alignments, it realigns Marxists and conservatives, even the religious right and the gay avant-garde, for and against it. It threatens heterosexuals by destroying their pretense that all important and worthwhile human beings share their own sexual persuasion—obligatory heterosexuality—and by shattering negative stereotypes of the homosexual.

Heretofore heterosexuals ("breeders" in our slang) outed homosexuals to destroy us. Now we are seizing the initiative to help our cause—our nation! Only the increasing integration of overt homosexuals into society and our increasing, if albeit still occasional, acceptance by society has finally made outing by gay activists feasible. Outing by AIDS had revealed certain screen and sports idols, more prominent than any that had ever come out on
their own, as well as hundreds of thousands of others to be gay. The epidemic, long neglected by authorities, also had made activists (increasingly queer nationalists, often themselves HIV positive) much more impatient and bolder. Without the massive coming out in public of hundreds of thousands of ordinary gay people during the 1970s--one of the greatest achievements of the post-Stonewall decade--pro-gay outings would not have been imagined. But none of the truly rich and famous came out on their own even then.

In the 1950s the intrepid pioneers of the American homophile movement prepared the way, though because of the extreme hostility and danger even many of them hid behind pseudonyms. Hostile authorities outed many more than came out under fire during or between the wars. Previously far fewer had dared to come out. The unprecedented increase in higher education after the Second World War contributed to their resolve. American homosexuals had been virtually invisible before then, leaving the "sleep of reason" free to "engender monsters."

Pagan Greeks had institutionalized pederasty under decorous and socially beneficial guidelines and Romans had never outlawed it. During the Middle Ages and the Reformation, Christians sporadically persecuted sodomites brutally if selectively to terrify the others. The Enlightenment, the Revolutionary and Romantic periods, which ended the reign of Christianity, began the abolition of sodomy laws but left social opprobrium intact. Inspired by the trial of Oscar Wilde, homosexual emancipation began
in fin-de-siècle Germany and grew into a mass movement under the Weimar Republic, but not even one thousand came out in public before Hitler crushed it. Not enough of us were visible to undermine the negative stereotypes propagated by clerics, lawyers, and psychiatrists. Although for almost a century now activists have from time to time advocated that everyone come out, no one has yet seriously advocated outing everyone. Pedophiles who prefer prepubescent children of the same sex, sadomasochists who prefer partners of the same sex, and other categories who might incur social and legal attacks if they were outing (see the last chapter) are, for the purpose of this book, not "queer nationals." They form communities as distinct as zoerasts who prefer animals of their own sex or necrophiliacs who prefer corpses of their own sex. Pederasts, those who prefer adolescents between 12 and 17, are a marginal group because their sexual conduct, even in private, remains illegal and strongly tabooed.

To what extent should an individual be outing? Should the bare fact of his being homosexual or bisexual be the limit, and if so, what would that prove? Would the press demand the minute details of his private sexual behavior as proof and then broadcast them to the world? The latter revelation would probably subject most outing to scorn and ridicule which the curtain of decency drawn over their sexual life would largely spare them. Should those in a sedate, monogamous gay marriage be distinguished from those who seek only one-night stands wherever they pick them up? So the
definition of outing must be formulated in a manner that takes into account both the extent to which the subject's privacy need be violated to satisfy the demands of the media before it will publicize the outing. When one comes out, of course, one need not specify the details of one's sexual life.

An increasing number of activists are urging the closeted to come out. In contrast, scarcely any homophiles, no matter how vociferously they recommended coming out, urged outing before 1989. Until then the "unwritten law" of silence vis-à-vis lovers of the opposite sex was tacitly accepted by everyone involved in the gay subculture, even if gay activists and barflies freely touted the names of closeted celebrities to other homosexuals. Outing within the gay community was a customary, commonplace event, but we did not normally relay the gossip to heterosexuals. That was verboten. The new practice thus signals the abandonment of a long-standing principle that participants in the homosexual subculture or the gay community do not reveal one another's orientation to a hostile and vindictive world. In the new concept of a Queer Nation, however, disloyalty through hypocritical perjury of one's identity seems to merit outing, even if the closeted are in no other way harming fellow queer nationals. The need for collective visibility overrules the right of privacy.

Few indeed are as yet preoccupied with these issues. The vast majority, and they are a happy lot indeed, still innocently understand "outing" to mean going out for a ride or a picnic in the countryside. The English verb "to out" is attested from the late
fourteenth century in the meaning of putting (someone) out of a house or parish. With its new derivatives "outer" and "outee," "to out" revived at the beginning of the 1990s with a new meaning. Current usage depends on the recent homosexual slang contrast between "being in the closet" and "being out," i.e., admitting to being gay. One can be out to family, friends, or fellow workers, or to the public in general. Retrospectively we can say that inquisitors and police as well as spiteful gossips outed sodomites over the centuries. But outing in the new sense means militant activists dragging the cowardly and disloyal out of the closet by trumpeting their proclivities to all and sundry, ostensibly in the political interest of the Queer Nation. Although we do not know who first used it in the current sense, an article in Harper's of October 1982 predicted that "outage" would become a political tactic in which the closeted would find themselves trapped in their own crossfire. Then, in its issue of January 29, 1990, Time introduced "outing" to the great American public. This act raised the curtain on the debates, conflicts, and revelations of the decade just beginning.

It should be mentioned that after the seventeenth century "to out" ceded to the form "to oust" the meaning that it had had in earlier usage, of forcing or driving (someone) out of a house or parish. Consequently, "to out" has made itself available for redefinition in the new sense given to it by the popular weekly. On March 23, 1990 the Atlanta Constitution wrote: "Mr. Forbes has become the latest target of 'outing,' a growing practice in which
undeclared gay men, lesbians or bisexuals are involuntarily yanked from the sexual closet, typically by activists in the gay community." William Safire appropriately commented on the Time article in his column "On Language" in the New York Times Magazine of May 6, 1990: "The language is dexterous in giving sinister meanings to familiar words. Outing comes from 'coming out of the closet,' which has meant the public assertion of previously secret homosexuality." He added: "Lexies take note: we are witnessing the birth of new meaning to a gerund." John Algeo and Adele Algeo promptly recorded the coinage in "Among the New Words," American Speech 65 (1990): 256-257. The rapidity with which the new meaning spread is shown by the fact that on August 29, 1991, outing was used in French in the biweekly Gai Pied, so that in exactly nineteen months it had made the crossing from New York to Le Havre and boarded the express for Paris.

Vociferously condemned as it may be by the majority of heterosexuals and even perhaps also of us, outing is here to stay. It will not end until the tradition of secrecy and hypocrisy in regard to the subject ends. Like homosexuality itself (a term first coined in 1869), the practice of outing existed long before today's term for it came into use. Previously it was nearly always heterosexuals who did the outing (without coining a special term), using this potent weapon against homosexual or bisexual foes. Now a handful of gay journalists and activists, or as we term ourselves "queer nationals," have seized the initiative.

The idea of coming out, which predominated among gay activists
in the 1970s and 1980s, and was advocated by some German homosexual emancipationists even in the pre-Hitler period, preceded the notion of *outing* one's own. It is aimed particularly at celebrities and power brokers who have obstinately refused to come out of the closet. By analogy, outing might imply forcing others to "come out" by threatening to out them, as some now recommend, giving them the chance under compulsion to come out of their own free will. The threat can of course come from ordinary blackmailers, police or other investigators, rivals, or—in the newest phase that began in 1989—from gay activists and journalists. Properly handled, it can be a great, badly needed, and perhaps indispensable weapon in our arsenal, and we must deploy every one at our disposal now that the AIDS epidemic has made our war against homophobia more urgent than ever. But it must be used with discretion and the establishment media, however reluctant they be, must be dexterously pressed into service.

*The Closet*

Homosexuals who hide their orientation from a hostile entourage are said to be "in the closet." All the senses of closet depend on a comparison with house construction. The American usage, denoting a windowless and airless alcove for storing clothes sealed off by a door, differs from the older English meaning of any private room or chamber. Through merging these meanings "to closet oneself" came to connote privacy and remoteness, on the one hand, as well as narrow confinement, on the other. The aspect of secrecy occasioned by the suspect character of whatever was hidden appears
in the old expression: a skeleton in the closet. Literary historians also speak of a "closet drama," one never intended for public performance. The adjectival use has a long history. During the reign of James I of England an ecclesiastic coined the phrase "closet sins." Gay speakers sometimes reactivate the metaphor, so that the expression is taken in a literal, architectural sense, as in "stifling closet" or "his closet is nailed shut."

Introduced only in the mid-1960s and restricted until the late 1970s to gay jargon, to be in "the closet" means to conceal one's homosexuality. Donald Webster Cory (pseudonym of Edward Sagarin) did not know the term when he wrote *The Homosexual in America* (1951), nor did the English writer Douglas Plummer use it in *Queer People* (1963). One of the earliest to join the Mattachine Society, Jim Kepner of the International Gay and Lesbian Archives remembers that when he employed the expression in a speech at a movement conference in 1966, most of the hearers did not know the new meaning. In the specifically homosexual sense it first appears in print in Wainwright Churchill's *Homosexual Behavior Among Males* (1967). In point of fact, the idea of a "closet homosexual" would have had no meaning when, apart from a few individuals on the outer margin of society, everyone gay was "in the closet." The original sense was someone hiding even from himself, i.e., not admitting his homosexuality to himself, or else aware of his tendencies but hating and repressing them. At times some such people even persecuted other homosexuals as revenge for their own frustration and misery or to bolster their heterosexual image. But this
concept in turn may imply a dimension of depth psychology that presupposes the Freudian notions of "latent" and "repressed" homosexual tendencies.

At the end of the 1960s, individuals maintaining a heterosexual façade, or at least hoping to do so, were said to be "in the closet," as far as outsiders or even at times others of their ilk were concerned. Chastised for their illusions, they were labeled "closet queens." The underlying notion was that they remained what they were no matter how skillful their public heterosexual impersonation might seem. Others emerged from the closet, i.e., "came out," to one extent or another. They might come out only to themselves, to a few select acquaintances, or to other homosexuals in general. In the seventies mainstream journalists learned and amplified the usage so that they could speak of "closet conservatives" and "closet gourmets" with no sexual connotation.

Quite different is the contemporary meaning in Queer National circles. There it commonly refers to someone leading a homosexual life in private but maintaining a homophobic political stance in public. Such a character is hypocritical in a way that the "closet case" of the 1960s, however wretched he may have been, was not. Hence "the closet" in its present meaning and implications for queer nationals is a product of the 1970s, and outing an expression of the political impasse of the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The long-time Philadelphia activist Barbara Gittings, a participant in some of the first demonstrations, has dubbed
assisting the process of coming out "oiling the hinges of the closet door." "Returning to the closet" designates the retreat of those who have come to feel ill at ease with their open homosexuality or to sense that it is unwise to continue to advertise their sexual orientation. Only a small minority of African-Americans, Jews, Native Americans, Hispanics, and other members of stigmatized groups have even tried to pass as WASPS. In contrast, even the most obvious homosexuals until recently tried to pose as straight. Arrest, accident, or the spite of their enemies outed many unfortunates, but practically no one dared to come out to the general public before Stonewall.

Sociologists, above all Erving Goffman, have written of ways of life among other persecuted groups, such as ex-prisoners and former mental patients, who learn to "manage spoiled identity" by editing their presentation of self. Most closet cases, however, do not think of themselves in quite the same way. Unencumbered as most are by the stigma of official records of ancestry and birth as are members of ethnic communities, and convinced, often in the face of common sense and weighty evidence to the contrary, that their cover has not been blown, they rarely ponder the problems involved in their own self-concealment. When pressed as to why they remain closeted, they appeal to the English-speaking world's tradition of the separation of public business from private lives. And many heterosexuals would concur that sexuality is a private matter.

For a variety of reasons, which they themselves do not clearly understand, the overwhelming majority of homosexual men and women
can and do even today remain "in the closet." This is so despite fervent appeals by movement leaders to "come out." Such coyness makes it hard to estimate the true number of their potential followers, to collect valid samples for research, and most important of all, to organize them for political struggle. In fact, because of this unwillingness there has been increasing discussion of the ethics of "forced de-closeting" or outing.

The pressure to remain in the closet comes not only from heterosexuals, but from others hiding in the same closet, as it were on the principle "the more the merrier." The gay novelist Armistead Maupin observed that "one of the unwritten laws of gay life is where you reach a certain level of fame, you shut up about your homosexuality. You're not told this by straight people, you're told it by other famous homosexuals who are ushering you into the pantheon of the right" (Warren, 1989).

The closet protects not merely the living. Even corpses are often left to rest in peace in their underground closets. Many newspaper obituaries still refuse to mention that a lover has survived, or allude to other aspects of gayness, presumably in order to protect the privacy of relatives and the reputation of the deceased. Today this reticence seems out of place. And the restriction on information has made it difficult to ascertain the true sexual orientation of figures of the past who very likely had homosexual feelings, whether they acted on them or not. Homophobic scholars have been as busy fabricating heterosexual scenarios for historical figures as press agents have been for their show
business clients. Outing the dead is no easy matter.

The biographer who must study the evidence for the sexual proclivities of a historic personality faces a challenging task. The subjects themselves almost always took great precautions to destroy or have destroyed any "incriminating" evidence. Then their biographers bent over backwards to shield them from accusations of homosexuality. The painter Théodore Géricault and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, in whom we have good reason to believe that there were strong elements of a homoerotic sensibility, cannot be proven to everyone's satisfaction to have done anything. Even such twentieth-century figures as New York's Francis Cardinal Spellman and FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover--despite repeated signals from the grapevine during their lifetimes--continue to resist any final pigeonholing. As knowledge advances, many historical question marks will remain. A great many, perhaps the majority, burrowed so deeply into the closet while they were alive that no one will ever be able to out them convincingly. A propos of matters of sexual orientation, as the Rabbinic saying goes, "The confession of one's own mouth is worth a hundred witnesses." But to prove that another person is homosexual or bisexual may demand the testimony of more than a hundred witnesses, especially if none claims carnal intimacy with the subject. Thus gay historians, especially of countries with a meta-Latin or meta-Byzantine tradition, face often impermeable closet walls. Some, like Wayne R. Dynes, favor a minimalist approach, while others such as Noel I. Garde (pseud.) claim the dead uncritically.
Almost immediately after the Roman emperor Constantine the Great converted, ecclesiastical excommunication, state persecution, and social ostracism proved the lot of those who loved their own sex. His own sons decreed death by the sword, and Justinian excruciating tortures and the avenging flames. Virtual death sentences continued sporadically through the regimes of Hitler and Stalin and executions still occur under Islamic law. Consequently lovers of their own sex have historically taken great pains to hide their true nature and predilections from a hostile world. Even today scarcely any prominent members of the queer nation have come out. Scholars have gone to unbelievable lengths to deny that the famous were homosexual or bisexual. The resulting invisibility allowed our enemies to invent the most bizarre and terrifying fantasies. Not only were we lustful and depraved, but the sodomy delusion allied us like witches with the demonic powers of another world. Thus we were invested with diabolical urges and powers. We threatened other individuals with eternal damnation by corrupting them, and society itself with divinely sent famines, plagues and earthquakes if it did not ferret us out and punish us. In the Enlightenment, the sodomy delusion waned, but was replaced in the late nineteenth century by caricatures almost as ghoulish propounded as empirical findings of physicians and psychologists. Our need to refute and dispel such damaging characterizations remains great. Even historians still adamantly deny that it can be proven that there have been any Catholic or Orthodox saints or
presidents of the United States who were sexually active with other males. Much less can it be claimed that there were any overt lesbian saints. No one has been able to establish beyond doubt the homosexuality of some of the most famous Renaissance intellectuals and artists: Desiderius Erasmus, Michelangelo, Shakespeare, Montaigne, or Newton, however much probable cause we have for suspicion. The Freudian doctrine that creative minds sublimated their instinctual drives has been used not only for them, but until recently even for Walt Whitman, until Charley Shively's detective work brought the truth to light.

Denied our claim to such genius, we have been thrown back on lesser mortals and of course, on the aristocratic Greeks of antiquity, most of whom were pederasts and had played the passive role as boys, from 12 or 14 to 18 to 20 before becoming active lovers during their twenties, most of them marrying at 30. Social Constructionists, followers of a now fading French intellectual of the 1960s, deny the Greeks' "homosexuality." They argue that homosexuals--reciprocal couples--evolved in Western Europe circa 1700 or 1800--they are not very precise--or even 1892 (Halperin, 1990). Thus they exclude pederasty, the almost universal form before modern times, from the definition of homosexuality as now understood.

**From Sodomite to Queer**

The term by which medieval theology and law stigmatized homosexual activity is *sodomy*, which first appears in Latin about 1175. It is derived from *sodomite*, the word that the Septuagint
used for an inhabitant of Sodom in Genesis 19. It came to signify anyone who practiced the vice for which God allegedly rained brimstone and fire on the city. Because the "crime against the law of nature," as Philo Judaeus dubbed it, acquired a wider meaning in Christian usage, sodomy in the broadest sense can signify any of various forms of non-reproductive sexual activity: with the wrong species, with the wrong sex, or in the wrong orifice, as St. Thomas Aquinas pontificated in the *Summa Theologica*. In the late Middle Ages the mythopoetic Christian imagination even spawned the notion that the sister city of Gomorrah had been a hotbed of lesbianism, so that as late as Marcel Proust *gomorrhéenne* could mean "lesbian". A term preserved by British legal usage, dating from the 1533 statute of Henry VIII, which was the first English law against sodomy, was *bugger*, from Latin *Bulgarus*, originally a designation of the Cathars of Southern France, whose heresy was traced to the Bogomils of Bulgaria. The dual meaning of "heretic" and "sodomite" suggests how the two notions overlapped in medieval theology. After all, Leviticus, which had prescribed death for "males who lay with males as with womankind," also ordained the death penalty for apostasy from Judaism. New Testament stories of demonic possession reinforced the fear of witches as the Pauline condemnation of those who dishonor their persons contrary to nature ratified the death penalty ordained in Leviticus for sodomites. These assumptions created the "sodomy delusion" alongside the "witchcraft delusion" of the Middle Ages and Early Modern Europe. In everyday British speech *bugger* became an exceedingly obscene and abusive word, but
contrary to popular belief *faggot* in this sense is attested only in a slang dictionary from the Northwestern United States in 1914. It has no semantic connection with the "faggots" used to burn witches and sodomites in the Middle Ages; in fact in England the act of 1533 ordained hanging as the penalty for buggery.

The Church invented and inculcated the "sodomy delusion," a complex of paranoid beliefs that prevails throughout Christendom to this day: Non-procreative sexuality in general, and sexual acts between males in particular, are contrary to the law of Nature, to the exercise of right reason, and to the will of God. Sodomy is practiced by individuals whose wills have been enslaved by demonic powers. Everyone is heterosexually oriented, but susceptible of the demonic temptation to commit sodomy, and potentially guilty of the crime. Everyone hates and condemns sodomy, but the practice is ubiquitously threatening and infinitely contagious. Everyone regards the practice with loathing and disgust, but whoever has experienced sodomitic pleasure retains a lifelong craving for it. It is a crime committed by the merest handful of abandoned sinners, but if not checked by the harshest penalties it would become so rampant as to lead to the suicide of the human race. It is a source of eternal damnation for the individual sinner, it impairs and undermines the moral character of those who practice it, and it is so hateful as to provoke God's retribution in the form of catastrophes befalling an entire community for the crime of a single individual left unpunished in its midst. For its own self-preservation every Christian community must be eternally vigilant.
against its occurrence and spread. The parties guilty of such abominable practices should be punished with the utmost severity and—if not put to death in accordance with Biblical precept—then totally excluded from Christian society.

Partly to avoid the theological associations of *sodomy*, the secular-minded eighteenth-century writers adopted for homosexuals in general such classical terms as *pederast*, which in Ancient Greek had meant only "boy-lover," or paraphrased it as "devotee of Greek love" or of "*amour socratique*," an expression revived in the twentieth century. Other expressions figure from time to time: *bardache* (the Persian word for slave that came to mean the passive homosexual and then the quasi-hermaphroditic possessor of shamanistic powers), *catamite* (the Etruscan, then Latin corruption of Zeus' beloved Ganymede), and the like, while the Anglo-Saxon word *bædling* survived only in certain British dialects and in the adjective *bad*. German writers distinguished between *Knabenliebe* (boy-love) and *Männerliebe* (love between adult males).

In the late nineteenth century, homophile apologists and psychiatrists under their influence invented a new set of terms. The earliest of these was the pioneer advocate of homosexual rights, the Hanoverian lawyer Karl Heinrich Ulrichs (1825-1895), who inspired by Kabbalistic lore on metempsychosis coined the word *Urning* (feminine *Urinde*, from Plato's *Aphrodite Uranius*) to designate an individual who had "a female soul trapped in a male body," that is, a male attracted to other members of his own sex and vice versa. This term never gained favor and was displaced by
a word introduced in 1869, five years after Ulrichs published in 1864—under the pseudonym of Numa Numantius which he later lifted-- the first pamphlet in a series on *The Enigma of Male Love*.

This new and ultimately successful coinage was *homosexual*, modeled on the French botanical terms *bisexuel* and *unisexuel*. American gay activists later scorned the term because it had become "medical" and opprobrious. This rejection of theirs was grounded in ignorance of the truth of its origin. It was first used in an anonymous pamphlet of 1869 entitled §143 of the *Prussian Penal Code and its Maintenance as §152 of the Draft of a Penal Code for the North German Confederation*, a denunciation of the planned extension of the Prussian law to jurisdictions that had earlier adopted the Code Napoléon. In *Homosexuality in Men and Women* (1914), Magnus Hirschfeld, the leader of the German homophile movement, confirmed that the word "homosexual," as Ulrichs attested, stemmed from Karl Maria Benkert (1824-1882), whose name in Hungarian was Károly Mária Kertbeny.

In 1884 Ulrichs revealed to Karl Egells that Kertbeny, whom he came to know in 1864 or 1865 as one of the first "comrades," was the author of §143, and that "out of jealousy" he did not want to use Ulrichs' terms but invented his own. Kertbeny first opted for anonymity, then in Gustav Jaeger's publications of 1880 and 1900 he was designated only as "Dr. M.," which gave rise to the erroneous but interminably repeated belief that he was "a Hungarian doctor." In fact a dissertation written at the University of Szeged in 1936 showed that Kertbeny never received a doctorate in any subject and
never wrote on medicine or the natural sciences. Kertbeny had in the meantime supplied Jaeger with the material included in the second edition of *Discovery of the Soul* (1880), which introduced the terms *homosexual* and *heterosexual* to a wider public. To boot, Kertbeny wrote a panoramic description of Europe's homosexual subculture that Jaeger published only in 1900 in the second volume of Hirschfeld's journal, the *Jahrbuch für sexuelle Zwischenstufen*. Presumably sometime between 1900 and 1905 Hirschfeld learned Kertbeny's identity from Egells, and announced it in the preface to the reprint of the first pamphlet in the seventh volume of the *Jahrbuch* in 1905. So the inventor of the word *homosexual* never came out, and was outed only 23 years after his death and 36 years after the first use of the word in print.

Urged by Ulrichs to investigate the subject more closely, the Prussian psychiatrist Karl Friedrich Otto Westphal (1833-1890) published an article in *Archiv für Psychiatrie* in 1869 in which he designated the condition as *die konträre Sexualempfindung* "contrary sexual feeling." This term also failed to gain favor and was replaced by the translation invented by Arrigo Tamassia (1849-1917), who had succeeded the homophobic Sephardic Jew Cesare Lombroso in the chair of legal medicine at the University of Pavia. He first used it in a paper published in the fourth volume of *Rivista sperimentale di freniatria e medicina legale* in 1878. This coinage was *inversione dell'istinto sessuale* "inversion of the sexual instinct," which in the concise form *sexual inversion* quickly became the *medical* term in the other Romance languages and
in English.
The new term homosexual, designating us as persons oriented solely toward others with the genitalia of the same sex, contrasted with the older view of the sodomite who committed a sin, but was not necessarily different in mind or body from any other human being. The sin may indeed have been graver than any other, but anyone might be tempted to it. Some medieval theologians held that sodomy was worse than murder, but like any other sin it could be atoned. In his statute criminalizing buggery, Henry VIII provided that wives and children of such a felon could inherit his goods—a privilege because those convicted of other felonies forfeited their property to the crown. Sodomites were not thought to have innate or exclusive tendencies; they were frequently married fathers. Likewise, before the second half of the nineteenth century, unalterable traits were not usually ascribed to any minority community or nationality. Then Kertbeny and Jaeger introduced the concept and the term homosexual as the antonym of heterosexual. In the wake of the interest in sexuality generated by the debate on evolution, the Freudian school made sexual orientation central to its analyses of individual psychodynamics. The emergence of the medical concept of sexual inversion during the late nineteenth century, supposedly more scientific and objective than the clerical notion of sodomy, meant only that instead of prison courts and families could have homosexuals subjected to indefinite confinement in asylums, with electroshock, pre-frontal lobotomy, castration, and other forms of "treatment"
recommending by physicians or psychoanalysts. Supposedly all this was not only for the good of the patients but also to keep the latter from "infecting" society with their degeneracy. Although Freud's views were equivocal if demeaning in regarding homosexuals as imperfectly developed human beings, his American disciples unequivocally classified homosexuality as a mental illness. The American Psychiatric Association in 1973 and the American Psychological Association in 1974 finally removed homosexuality from their Diagnostic Manuals. Some courts and practitioners still impose "therapeutic measures" upon patients, whom—as experience has long since amply proved—there is really no hope of "curing." "Converting" would probably be a better word; the difference is in the last analysis purely semantic. It would probably be easier, as some have flatly asserted for so long, to turn a heterosexual into a homosexual than to do the reverse. Think of the fees these quacks extorted from their unfortunate patients whom in reality they more crucified than cured.

Because of the stigma which they felt attached to the term *homosexual*, used as it was by psychiatrists in the United States, American activists from 1969 onward preferred the word *gay*. A Middle English borrowing from Anglo-Norman French, which had in turn obtained it from Old Provençal, it meant "fond of sexual pleasures and available for erotic liaisons." In British English *gay girls* meant "prostitutes." There is some evidence that *gay* was used in Walt Whitman's circle, and later, in a narrower sense, by Gertrude Stein's, but it became a password of the American
homosexual subculture only in the 1920s. Familiar enough to the *cognoscenti* by the 1960s to be the usual word, it was blazoned on the banners of the gay liberation movement in the following decade. In the minds of many activists, this political context has narrowed the application of the word: *gay* can mean only someone who consciously identifies with an aggrieved minority or community fighting for its rights, a concept that leftists of the 1960s often preferred.

There is the increasingly difficult problem of defining whether an individual is "gay" or homosexual. From the legal standpoint until the recent past a single homosexual act sufficed to convict of sodomy or buggery. Such a proceeding destroyed a man's reputation and social existence, if it did not deprive him of life through mob violence at the pillory or by execution.

Orientation is quite another matter. Is someone "gay" who has homosexual impulses but never acts on them because he regards them as "unnatural" and sinful—as is probably true of a large number of celibate clergy, perhaps no longer the majority in the United States, and of most if not all saints? Is a married man gay who occasionally indulges in furtive sex with other males? What about married women who fail to reach climax with each other?

The Kinsey report of 1948, which posited a scale from 0 to 6, indicating that his subjects passed from exclusive homosexuality to exclusive heterosexuality, with 3 indicating equal attraction to or experience with both sexes, blurred the line. It claimed that 37% of American males had climaxed with another male since puberty,
that 10% practiced homosexuality predominantly at any one time, and that 4% were exclusives. Its findings seem to have been confirmed for industrialized Western societies by the study of Michel Bon and Antoine d'Arc, *Rapport sur l'homosexualité de l'homme* (1974), which used a scale of 1 to 10. This finding has been called into question, however, by one David Forman of Oxford (*British Medical Journal* 298 [1989]: 1137-1142). Based on a survey made in England and Wales, he concluded that a mere 1.7% of the respondents had had homosexual intercourse. Another conducted by the sociologist Tom Smith of the University of Chicago for the National Opinion Research Center, *Adult Sexual Behavior in 1989: Number of Partners Frequency and Risk*, found that fewer than 1% of those sampled were "exclusively homosexual."

Last of all, dissatisfied with such cumbersome triptychs as "lesbian, bisexual, and gay", the group that broke off from AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power [ACT UP] in March 1990 styled itself Queer Nation. *Queer*, which began as a rather derogatory term for homosexual in American criminal slang in the early years of the century, became common in British English of the 1950s and 1960s. Those who adopted it in 1990 felt it to be a liberating word. The concept of a Queer Nation may in the long run prove more inspirational than anything else. Aspiring to nationhood does represent a new stage in the political consciousness of the movement. Some activists, strongly resisted the innovation because they disliked the other meanings and associations, "odd, eccentric, counterfeit" and the like as well as the insulting colloquial use
of the term equivalent to the English bugger.

Conservatives and legal and medical professionals cling to "homosexual" and speak of a minority. Most movement writers use "gay and lesbian" and sticklers "gay men and lesbians" and refer to a community. Young radicals increasingly prefer "queer" and "nation." Only a few retrograde theologians still refer to "sodomites." "Pederast" has regained its specificity, referring to those who prefer adolescents, while "pedophiles" seek pre-pubescent children. "Homosexual" connoted a plea for toleration and legal reform, "gay" was a term of liberation demanding respect, and "queer" expresses defiance and patriotic nationalism.

One of the reasons why many are queasy about the appropriation of the word "queer" is that those who hate us, including fag-bashers, will feel that it is again acceptable for them to use such epithets—to our detriment. A biographer of the Norwegian collaborationist Vidkun Quisling noted that words beginning with the cluster qu- conjure up a sense of unease and doubt: question, queasy, quibble, quixotic, quiz, quizzical, quagmire, qualm, quandary. . .queer. It is therefore understandable that a mere two days after Quisling's name was blazoned in headlines in the British press, it was degraded to a common noun: quisling "collaborationist, traitor, defector, would-be collaborator with the enemy." The names of his French contemporary Pierre Laval and of his Croatian equivalent Ante Pavelić underwent no such semantic debasement.

There may be an analogous problem with outing. This book
abundantly documents how widespread hostile outing has been, and indeed continues to be. How can we be certain that our own growing custom of outing the quick as well as the dead will not find a dismal parallel as straight enemies--no doubt from the "highest of motives"--start viciously to out us once again? What is sauce for the (gay) goose may be sauce for the (straight) gander. On the other hand, some breeders will doubtless continue to out queers no matter what we do.

*From Being Ferreted Out to Claiming Our Own*

Outing, though not by that name, was originally the act of a society that ferreted out the individual guilty of sodomy and expelled him from its midst, if it did not execute him. This hostility reflects a prohibition that in Western society has prevailed since the fourth century, when Christian persecution replaced Greco-Roman tolerance with the death penalty. Intolerance peaked in the late thirteenth century, when the High Scholastics declared sodomy second in heinousness only to murder. A South Italian jurist of the mid-fourteenth century, Luca da Penne, even reasoned that it was worse than murder because it aimed at the death of the entire human race. The paranoid loathing and detestation that such beliefs inspired forced homosexuals into a "closet" of social invisibility.

The individual whom the police or chance discovery outed to the authorities could expect to be prosecuted and imprisoned, banished, or executed. On the other hand, even in more recent times outing to society--to one's family, friends, associates,
employer, and the like—meant ostracism, disinheritance, loss of employment and career, a civil
death, as the phrase has it, leaving the victim no option but exile or suicide, or else suffer
ostracism, assault, battery, or murder. It is true that legal records for the entire period before the
French Revolution show that only in exceptional cases did the state intervene to inflict the drastic
penalties that had been enacted into criminal law. On the other hand, the clergy succeeded in
making the sodomite infamous in the eyes of all Christian society. That infamy survived the
Reformation and the Enlightenment to flourish under liberal and totalitarian regimes alike. It
persists in attenuated form even in the last decade of the twentieth century. In such dire
situations crypto-homosexuals came out only to others who shared their proclivities and secret
lore.

Individuals who have decided of their own free will to come out have realized that there are
degrees of being out: to oneself, to sex partners, friends, family, roommates, colleagues, co-
workers, neighbors, teammates, bosses, and the like. Besides degrees of being out, there are also
various depths of concealment. Some are deeper inside the closet than others. In a society which
accounts homosexual behavior but a minor peccadillo—as in some parts of the Third World today
still not too impacted by Judeo-Christian morality—the closet is a very shallow space, for one
needs no great depths into which to retreat. Because of its implacable condemnation and
frequent severe persecution of homosexual activity, Christianity has, however, bequeathed a very
different situation to a supposedly enlightened Western world. Thus outing needs to be seen in its historical relationship to coming out.

"The closet," said one member of the Scholarship Committee of the Gay Academic Union, "is a Chinese box." Perhaps the most forlorn are those who cannot come out even to themselves, so fearful or ashamed are they of their innermost feelings and responses. On becoming aware of one's orientation one may choose to tell relatives or close friends, then workmates, and finally larger circles, or be outed by others to them in whatever order. Unless one is as famous as Boy George or John Lennon, it is almost impossible to attain the blessed state of being completely "out," because there are always some people who will simply assume that the person they encounter is heterosexual. The older habit of "dropping pins"—outlandish behavior and dress or letting down one's hair to friends or in closed groups was a form of coming out mainly used by "queens." Of course, there are buttons or T-shirts that enable the wearer to announce "How Dare You Assume I'm Heterosexual!," but they are often donned only in gay resorts or bars, not at race tracks or in Baptist churches. Before the coming of gay liberation, this self-advertisement could have occurred only in a nightmare. There are even those who opt to disbelieve when another acknowledges himself to be gay or when someone else says it. After all, it is impossible truly to know what another human being feels.

On the other hand, an individual may be out to others whom he
encounters at the work place, in his leisure hours, and in his political activity on behalf of the
movement, but not to his family and neighbors in the town where he grew up. This pattern is
particularly true of gay men who have moved to New York or San Francisco to escape the
repressive atmosphere of their Midwestern or Southern birthplaces. A scale indicating the extent
to which a subject is open about his or her identity would not therefore be a continuum, it would
rather have a series of points of social contact each of which would be positive or negative.
However, only a small proportion of those who engage in sexual activity with members of their
own sex join organizations furthering the ideology and aims of gay liberation, much less chapters
of Queer Nation. But as such organizations become a feature of the political landscape, more
and more young people are first contacting the community of their peers by attending meetings
and rallies.

Individuals relate to a particular model by a cultural and psychological process. They
internalize a "gay" or "lesbian" identity in accord with that model, of which there are many and
varied examples. This emergence from the closet may be termed "coming out" to oneself. An
animal, even if it were exclusively attracted to others of its own sex, could never have the
consciousness of being "homosexual." This entails both a self-definition and the recognition that
other human beings are "bisexual" or "heterosexual," and that their orientation in turn limits their
availability as sexual partners. The bisexual has to accept that exclusive homosexuals of the
opposite sex and exclusive
heterosexuals of the same sex will always be unresponsive to his (or her) advances. All these things must be learned through social contact and acculturation. Because different cultures have different identity models of homosexuality or none at all, the coming out process, even to oneself, also shows wide variation. Then there are stages of progressively coming out to others. A homosexual identity, although it may be formed during childhood or even infancy, is not part of one's upbringing by adults. It differs radically from acculturation into a religious or ethnic minority. If you are descended from a religious or ethnic group that has suffered persecution or oppression in the past—Protestants in a Catholic country, or Christians under Islamic rule—no matter how shunned, despised and humiliated your ilk may have been, within the circle of your family and friends you are accepted and loved for what you are. The life histories of your parents and more distant relatives furnish object lessons for you in how to survive in a hostile milieu. Your very existence is proof that the community or nation has surmounted all the tragic vicissitudes of its past—legal inferiority and exclusion, humiliation and persecution, famine and slaughter, forced migration and exile.

But membership in the gay subculture comes only with self-awareness—and so far from bonding you with your family and friends carries the seeds of complete and irrevocable alienation from them. You are, even if by no choice of your own, setting out on a path in life that is dark and unfamiliar, even forbidding and terrifying,
to those closest to you. On your own you must internalize the symbolic systems of the gay subculture or the queer nation and learn to negotiate its hidden paths and perilous byways. Your task is not only to manage your self-image, but to maintain the persona necessary for a *modus vivendi* with a still largely hostile environment.

This dilemma of self-image and identity brings you face to face with the long tradition of suppressing and falsifying the existence of homosexuality in public discourse. And in turn, it may fill you with an intense desire to know more about those who were or are like you, their lives, their accomplishments, their legacy to you as a child of the late twentieth century. In the case of other "minorities" or nationalities these often mean obscure, virtually forgotten figures whose sole claim to attention was their accidental origin from the outsider group. But some of the most famous men and women of all time were actively, even proudly homosexual or bisexual—a fact which the standard histories and biographies painstakingly ignore. It is the dominant Christian culture that has made lovers of their own sex past and present invisible—and in not so subtle a manner tells us to remain unseen. We need to out the quick and the dead: visibility is our best hope for acceptance by ourselves and by society.

In industrialized countries, anyone with a sufficient erotic interest in others of the same sex can come out. The end result of the process is his identification as a "homosexual" or hers as a "lesbian." In the less developed societies, the process of gender
identification primarily affects the sexually receptive male, or the passive rather than the active one who plays the insertive role. The end result may consequently be identification as a quasi-female, what Hispanics call a maricón. It is not clear to what extent a corresponding process exists for women, though Latinos have long recognized the "bull dyke" or marimacho. Much less research has been done on or by them. In other cultures and at other times, and in particular where pederasty has been popular, the identity model is lacking and the question of "coming out" does not arise.

Theorists have generally characterized coming out as a series of crucial steps. The subject moves from virtual, almost complete unawareness or total concealment to self-recognition or even to proclamation of a homosexual identity to the whole world. Political shifts have led to considerable dispute over where "coming out" ends. The older, minimalist view held it to be a state of internal acceptance of a homosexual self-identity (which could be wholly private). Then gay liberationists redefined it as a state in which one's homosexuality is made known to virtually anyone with whom one has socially meaningful contact, or even more daringly, is revealed to the public through open involvement in gay organizations whose leaders are named and quoted in the media. At that point one may become a "professional gay activist." Various moderates take intermediate positions.

Wide media exposure of the homosexual subculture makes coming out in these days primarily a matter for youth from puberty through
the mid-twenties. Before the taboos on public mention of homosexuality were broken, however, the process was not uncommon at much older ages, sometimes prompted by a chance encounter. Coming out is, it seems, occurring earlier and the process is becoming more compact with each new age cohort, especially in cities and on campuses. Now coming out often begins shortly after puberty, and is completed by the end of adolescence. The recent visibility of our distinctive subculture accelerated the process. Today even early adolescents commonly know what it means to be "gay" or "queer." A few of them, especially in the United States, proudly identify with what they consider their special category of society.

Stages of coming out often dramatically affect the individual. Many recall, and some even celebrate, the anniversary of their coming out. Stories and plays reflect and articulate the fear, vacillation, isolation, alienation, and sometimes also the violence and pain that often accompany it. For many, however, the evolution is not very memorable or painful. Some become aware of their future orientation at 4, 5, or 6, cannot even remember not being out, at least to themselves, though they may only gradually come out to others.

Coming out as infants, or very young children, they never imagine that they are straight but at once perceive that they have different sexual interests. Percy, for example, like André Gide, feels that he came out to himself at age 4 or 5 when he realized that while other boys were interested in girls, he was interested only in them. He never felt any shame but only fear that he might
be discovered and unjustly punished. By 12 he realized that famous Greeks and Romans as well as some of his own successful relatives had loved others of their own sex. So he never felt guilty but merely took measures not to be caught or exposed to a hostile society. Coming as he did from a prominent family of the South, where ancestry defined status, he never let his homosexuality damage his sense of self-worth.

As prosecution and blackmail receded into the past during the 1960s, coming out became paramount. Gay liberation gave coming out a new meaning: the defiant revelation of one's identity to an intolerant society. Last of all, only at the very end of the 1980s, activists and journalists undertook to out closeted members of their presumed community, at least who were maliciously and hypocritically acting against its interests. Hence gay-initiated outing breaks a well-established code of silence, a rule enforced until now almost as rigorously as that of a secret society or of the Mafia. Now some queer nationals believe that they have a right to out passive as well as active traitors and collaborationists.

Coming out is the reverse of the coin of which outing is the obverse, or face. While the triggering mechanism—others' denunciation vs. one's own choice—is different, the two phenomena still offer striking similarities. The very process of coming out is usually attributed to a homophobic environment in which one must take a stance against the majority in order to assert one's own orientation or personality with its preferences, attractions, feelings, and inclinations. The slogan "We are the people our
parents warned us against" epitomizes this mind set. In this view, full social acceptance of homosexuality as a natural and universal variation would end most of the emotional difficulties as well as the fateful significance of what is otherwise described as coming out. Now, of course, the retarding and favoring aspects of voluntary coming out are joined by outing, for some an ominous prospect, for others a satisfactory development.

Christianity has over the centuries pursued an undeviating policy in regard to homosexual behavior: either defamation or silence. If "the sleep of reason engenders monsters," as Goya, the painter of the grotesque, entitled one of his etchings, Christian unreason imagined the sodomite as a monster addicted to unutterably loathsome forms of depravity and bringing down the vengeance of the Creator upon himself and all around him. On the other hand, the positive achievements of those who loved their own sex, both in pagan antiquity and in more recent times, were blotted from the annals of history. The result was that those attracted to their own sex were forced underground, into an invisible, pariah community. The invisibility that resulted from the hypocrisy and deception which Christian intolerance had imposed on homosexuals and bisexuals of every and all persuasions allowed the most absurd and fantastic notions and stereotypes to flourish. But paradoxically enough, some of the most prestigious figures in Christendom were at the same time covert members of this secret society.

From the very beginning, homophile apologists recognized that
visibility was a prerequisite for converting this invisible, pariah caste into a community with prestige commensurate with the objective merits and achievements of its members. Ulrichs, who emphasized the role of great homosexuals (who we know today were rather bisexuals and pederasts than exclusive androphiles) in ancient Greece and Rome, where alone in Western history they were visible, had already asserted that "Urnings must come out as Urnings." He realized when he began his campaign in 1864 that invisibility was a major obstacle in the way of changing public opinion. And 128 years later, the challenge remains the same: If we can out the rich and the famous, the geniuses and heroes, the saints and the self-sacrificers and benefactors of mankind, whether quick or dead, we can discredit the derogatory stereotypes and regain our rightful place in the sun.

The demand for outing results from the knowledge on the part of the newly visible members of the largely still pariah community that prestigious individuals are secret members of our nation, together with ressentiment at the prestige which they reap from invisibility. Conversely the closeted celebrities in our pariah community resent the freedom from the burden of hypocrisy which the open members have gained, and fear that their own status may be jeopardized by activists' demands and by the public attention focused on their own secretive conduct.

During the early years of the twentieth century, other German pioneers followed Ulrichs with similar proposals. In *The Sexual Life of Our Time in its Relation to Modern Civilization* (1907), the
German-Jewish physician Iwan Bloch urged that elderly homosexuals reveal their identity to those in their milieu, that is to come out even to their heterosexual family members and acquaintances. Magnus Hirschfeld's major work of 1914, *Homosexuality in Men and Women*, mentions a proposal by his friend, the political theorist Kurt Hiller (1885-1972). In his article of 1913, "Ethical Tasks of Homosexuals," Hiller called for a mass "self-denunciation" of homosexuals to the police (what we would today style "coming out") in order to influence legislators and public opinion. Even though he claimed homosexuals to be a third sex with marked inversion of the secondary and tertiary sexual characters, Hirschfeld admitted that it would certainly be an effective weapon if several thousand men and women of rank and standing would make such a self-sacrificing confession. But the proposal overlooked one vital factor: the psyche of the homosexual; "it is this that makes the whole idea utopian and illusory." Hirschfeld correctly asserted that the external and internal inhibitions were then much too strong for a significant number of socially prominent homosexuals to find the courage for a voluntary and open acknowledgement of their orientation. One of the most zealous defenders of this idea, when the press ascribed homosexual tendencies to him, urgently sent the newspapers a message in which he defended himself against this assumption (Hirschfeld 1914, pp. 1003-1004).

For this reason, said Hirschfeld, the author of *Disinherited from the Happiness of Love*, Otto de Joux, was probably right. In 1893--four years before the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee was
founded—the latter had written:

Given the case that the hour struck when by
international agreement a general Uranide [homosexual]
amnesty was suddenly proclaimed and everyone of them
was urged to enter his name unabashedly on the open
Urning census lists, in order to clarify the question
once and for all whether the percentage of humanity that
is homosexual does in point of fact demand a comprehensive
reform of all the laws of social life—then quite
certainly out of a hundred Uranians barely three would
summon up the courage suddenly to drop the mask that has
all but fused with their inner selves (Joux 1893, p. 244).

How things have changed since then, especially since Stonewall! On the other hand, those who
had come out in Germany, seemingly the most tolerant country before 1933, faced sanctions or
even extermination by the National Socialist regime. The permissibility or feasibility of outing
varies according to the overall political climate. It is obviously more acceptable to other gay
people and considerably less hazardous to the outee in today's relatively favorable climate than it
would have been, say, at the time of the mass trials of the Knights Templar in the fourteenth
century or in the Third Reich.

In 1951, when the American movement was just beginning, and independent of the Mattachine
Society in Los Angeles, the New Yorker Donald Webster Cory (pseudonym of Edward Sagarin)
wrote in The Homosexual in America that until considerable numbers of
homosexuals revealed their identity to the world, or as we would say today, came out, there was not likely to be any significant change in public attitudes. But in the eighteen years that followed, only the fewest and bravest did "come out" completely, mainly those like the government astronomer Frank Kameny and others who had involuntarily been exposed and stigmatized. The majority, including every single celebrity in America, still lurked behind the scenes, as did Sagarin himself who like many activists felt that he had to use a pseudonym so as not to jeopardize his livelihood or very existence. The organizations themselves can be said to have been "in the closet," preferring to act by proxy or double proxy rather than to speak, let alone act, up openly for their cause. And when they did humbly approach official bodies and public institutions, they were often refused elementary courtesy, let alone a serious hearing. Steady if erratic progress was achieved, however, in identifying and publicizing figures from history and literature who were safely in the past, so as to compile a lengthening list of reputable homosexuals, but traditionalists contested and still contest many of the most heroic and brilliant. The battle to out the dead is far from over.

Not surprisingly, activists after Stonewall took as their slogan "Come out!" and "Out of the closets and into the streets!" Inspired by Third World liberation fronts and mimicking their "guerrilla" tactics, they renounced their predecessors' reticence. Immediately rather than gradually, confrontation rather than education, demands rather than petitions, youth rather than
experience were their mottoes.

The tactical shift from passing to coming out and from petitioning to demanding could be formulated as a change from *crypsis*—hiding behind a façade of "normality"—to *mimicry*—imitating the political tactics of ethnic minorities seeking to better their status within American society. From adopting measures that would make them invisible to the straight world, gay liberationists went over to imitating the vocal tactics used before them by racial minorities and by women, neither of whom, with rare exceptions, could disguise their identity. Strictly speaking, of course, we were neither a religious nor an ethnic community. In fact, we did not constitute a community at all; too diverse and too scattered (in spite of burgeoning gay ghettos), we nonetheless had more common interests than just to end persecution. These made us more than just a passive minority. Many, including most activists, found the courage to come out to heterosexuals during the seventies. Even so, John Alan Lee estimated (1977, p. 58) that of the hundred male leaders in Toronto's gay organizations, a mere half had allowed their real names to appear in print identifying them as gay. Activists who only cautiously came out had no motive for outing others until they saw that wielders of power and other celebrities were refusing to come out. To boot, AIDS had begun to out hitherto closeted celebrities during the eighties with startling results. Outing was reinforced by the painful discovery that closeted individuals, dreading visibility and potential stigmatization, would refuse to associate any longer with anyone
known to be gay, and would offer him no support or encouragement. The definition of the gay community with its leftist connotation, or better still aspirations for a Queer Nation without such but portending greater militancy, are central to the issue of outing. Michelangelo Signorile, himself one of the leadingouters as well as a theoretician, has written that the analogy with other outsider groups motivates "the accountability by gays in high places to their own community, much the way that Blacks, Jews and women in high places are accountable to their respective communities."

For outsider groups whose members are not highly visible there is a choice between assimilation and separatism. This produces an ideological bifurcation: what the assimilationist denies, the separatist proudly affirms. It has been said that by and large, those who can assimilate do, while those whose physical type and mannerisms, or accident or compulsive nature set them in relief must make a virtue of necessity and espouse the separatist cause. The assimilationist may reject and hate the separatist because he is a constant reminder of his own "otherness," while the separatist may envy and hate the assimilationist who almost effortlessly crosses the barriers that are for him invisible but impenetrable. This clash of personalities and identities creates the tension that leads to our outing "invisible" celebrities.

The historical situation of the homosexual minority in America obliges us to adopt a separatist position, because we are the object of forced assimilation by and into the heterosexual majority and of a cloak of invisibility which they impose on us. The
ideological difference is between the minimalist, who prefers a conventional life in all areas except the sexual, and the maximalist, who opts for a totally gay "lifestyle." Minority emphasizes tolerated differences from the majority, while community falsely stresses likenesses within the group. Queer nationalism is an open rejection of assimilation; it stresses our right to be as different, as flamboyant as we wish without deferring to the feelings and prejudices of "breeders." Class and occupation make the choice less than voluntary: even today one cannot be openly "gay," much less "queer," in certain professions because formal and informal sanctions would be too severe. Until quite recently overt homosexuals were prohibited from practicing psychiatry and still cannot serve in the military or be ordained as Roman Catholic or Orthodox priests or as ministers in many Protestant denominations. These include the largest in America, the Southern Baptists, as that organization has recently affirmed, expelling two congregations in spite of its old principle of letting each church go its own way.

It is interesting in this context that Karl Heinrich Ulrichs once wrote of Urnings like himself: "We only play the male, as the German born in Paris plays the Frenchman, as the Jew reared in Germany plays the German." This is true, to be sure, only of the feminine-identified male homosexual to whom the male persona is profoundly alien. In *The Cities of the Plain* (1921) Marcel Proust wrote that inverters were a "race upon which a curse weighs and which must live amid falsehood and perjury, because it knows the world to
regard as a punishable and a scandalous, as an inadmissible thing, its desire, that which constitutes for every human creature the greatest happiness in life. . . but also brought into the company of their own kind by the ostracism that strikes them, the opprobrium under which they have fallen, having finally been invested, by a persecution similar to that of Israel, with the physical and moral characteristics of a race." Richard Bernstein described the lot of the assimilated Jew in Weimar Germany, who "trembles at the revelation of his real origin; he keeps a constant watch on himself lest he betray himself by a word, a gesture, a look; his life has no aim and purpose save one: successful camouflage" (Gross 1991, p. 375).

These considerations enable us to summarize the stages in the development of homosexual visibility: 1) outing by the Church and its accomplices or by the public authorities and police; 2) coming out privately or in a coded language to other crypto-homosexuals; 3) coming out publicly to an intolerant Christian society; 4) outing by movement activists.

This book mainly treats those who have been brought out or made to come out unwillingly. They contrast with those who, as far as the United States is concerned, beginning in the second half of the twentieth century, have chosen to come out of their own accord. But an absolute separation between "coming out" and "outing" is not possible. In fact, the two processes interact in a twofold dialectic. Outing in late medieval and early modern society meant exposing a sodomite or bugger to the penalties which
the law and the infamy which society attached to "unnatural vice." Then homosexuals would come out--but only in private or in a discrete, coded language to others who shared the burden of outlawry and infamy. In the next phase, the pioneer homophile activists in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Germany and their successors in late twentieth-century America called upon their followers to "come out" voluntarily--to defy an intolerant society as a political move toward achieving our rights. The final innovation, which began only in the 1980s, saw queer nationalists outing closet cases who, by refusing to "come out" of their own volition and even professing indifference or hostility to the movement, are hypocritically perpetuating an intolerance from which we who are visible suffer continuously.

We quote various commentators and then address the various points of view about the advisability of outing. This debate will seem far more significant, however, once we have examined some of the many cases unearthed from the annals. Those who do not learn from the past are condemned to repeat its mistakes! Outing of closeted celebrities is needed for the good of the cause. We insist upon our right to claim them as our brothers and sisters. This may seem appalling, but--before reaching a conclusion, read the following chapters.


Wainwright Churchill. 1967. *Homosexual Behavior Among Males:*


