THE HOMOSEXUAL IN PRISON*

This paper should be prefaced by at least 50 photographs of those whom society chooses to stigmatize as homosexual. The pictures would reveal that such men are all racial colors, that there is a wide range of physical build and intellectual achievement, and that they come from all walks of life. Homosexuals do not fit into any kind of specific categorization except that they are sexually orientated in a way different from others. And even in that difference the range of sexuality is extremely wide. This paper is concerned with these men and how they move and function in prison. The observations, based upon almost three years’ first hand experience in a maximum security prison, were made by the author who was living in the same environment and milieu. It has been estimated that about 20% of the prison population is homosexual. My personal estimate is that it is nearer 33 1/3%. The following discussion will indicate why.

The thesis posited here is that the homosexual in prison fills a slightly different role from those outside. In prison the homosexual role is that of female replacement. The matriarchal society, in effect, is transferred into the prison subculture by the presence of the female counterpart, i.e. the homosexual. Therefore the role of the homosexual is more important and has a far greater meaning and social significance. The subculture resembles the total culture and makes internal adjustments to secure its own identity.

PRISON ECOLOGY AND HOMOSEXUAL MEMBERSHIP

The major portion of this paper is concerned with the conditions and patterns inside a maximum security prison in California. However in order to arrive at San Quentin, all felons must be processed at one of the California Reception and Guidance Centers, the largest being in the Medical Facility at Vacaville. This correctional facility (a polite term for a medium security prison) is divided into two parts: one housing those who are in transit to other prisons; and the other, those who are resident at the medical facility. Those who are transient, wear green; those who stay, wear blue. The ‘blue’ side has a distinguished company of felons who are purportedly under medical programs, i.e. care and treatment; a large proportion are classified as neurotic, psychotic, or otherwise mentally unstable. However, this center is also one of the easiest places in the prison system to serve time because the guard-inmate relationship is softened by the doctor-client relationship. Thus those who can manipulate the State machine, stay at Vacaville. This center has a high proportion of those who are wealthy, those who have influence, and those who have peer support from middle and upper class levels. The center has a large staff of psychologists, sociologists, psychiatrists, doctors, and other qualified personnel. These pleasant benefits and amenities decrease rapidly as one progresses to maximum security of State Prison where, as custody takes control, the iron fist is taken out of the velvet glove and prison reality sets in.

But what is unique at Vacaville is the alphabetizing of the corridors: A Wing, B Wing, etc. W Wing is for maximum security; X Corridor is for medical and psychological check-ups. It was inevitable therefore that as groups were segregated into neat compartments, all the homosexuals, for the sake of
convenience, would be put in one area. This became known as “Queen’s Row.”

The “queens” were allowed a great deal of freedom and were virtually outside of police control. Since they were regarded as people with a problem they became the object of medical rehabilitation. This whole approach, instituted by Dr. Keating around 1955, merely reinforced the styles of homosexuals in prison. To many first-timers arriving at Vacaville, this was their first acquaintance with “queers” in large numbers. They were literally all over the place, having little regard for the guards whom they openly solicited. As time went on (1964-1968) they became an accepted part of the population both on the blue side and the green. It was not uncommon to see overt homosexuality in a so-called rehabilitation center. While this may not be objectionable to some, it must be remembered that this was the only form of sexual outlet available to prisoners. The prisoner either masturbated, became homosexual, or literally repressed the fact that he existed as a man by sublimating his sexual urges in work, study, or a ritual of both. Considering the fact that most of these men were in prison for at least three years, the show put on at Vacaville had a great deal of meaning.

As time progressed into the late 60’s fewer and fewer actual homosexual arrests were made. But nevertheless the homosexual population of the prisons remained about constant. What was apparent was that homosexuals came from all walks of life and committed all sorts of crimes. The heterosexual committed crimes along the same spectrum. Thus, although no actual research has been done along this line, I am sure that types of crimes committed by homosexuals are very similar to those committed by heterosexuals. I would venture to say that the percentage would correspond. But what happens when they both meet in prison is another matter entirely.

While Vacaville specialized in the overt homosexual, this was not true of maximum security. Here there are all kinds. But once again, far from actually recruiting for companions, they are themselves the target of the hunt. Being as they are, they are able to train and educate others to a socially acceptable norm of criminal society.

While homosexuality is classified as deviant in Californian society, very few homosexuals are sent to prison for that specific offense. The great majority of homosexuals in prison commit other crimes; they are sentenced for crimes ranging all through the Penal Code. During the initial sentencing and conviction, the homosexual is unidentifiable, and often is discreetly heterosexual until his arrival in prison. A comparable situation is the illiterate who claims a grade 7 or 11 education until testing proves otherwise.

The advantage for the homosexual is that if he is immediately identified, he may be kept at Vacaville where he is in competition with all the other “queers” and will be so named and subject to homosexual peer group norms prevailing on “Queen’s Row.” This may be quite repugnant to many homosexuals who prefer to operate discreetly within a society that will not stigmatize them. An advantage with sexual anonymity is that once in prison, the homosexual will be assigned to a two-man cell with a person of similar criminal background (similar religion and race and within five years of his own age). If he is detected, he will be segregated particularly if there is a suspicion of trouble, e.g. a young attractive homosexual.
with too many suitors. This type of situation may and often does lead to murder.

That prisons shall have a homosexual environment is determined by the State. The male prisoners are deprived of all normal sexual intercourse for a median period of three years (or up to life). The male prisoner is forced to sleep in the same cell with another male adult. He is forced to bathe with males and defecate with them publicly. He may be stripped in front of his peers at any time and searched in a humiliating and degrading ritual. For the rest of his prison life, except for rare visits from family, his whole life is predicated on homosexualized group contact. Is it any wonder, then, that prisons are breeding grounds for homosexual membership?

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND THE MATRIARCHAL SOCIETY

It is precisely because the prison sub-culture is isolated, enclosed, and homosexual that internal forces are created to correct the existing social imbalance. In a society without women, the natural drive of men will subordinate the more effeminate, literally creating a class of substitute women. These "women" will be given all the status and privilege according to the customs and mores of outside society. In other words, the society set up inside prison walls will in all points resemble the society from whence it came. It will have the same institutions, the same customs and, more or less, the same laws. It has one different aspect of great importance. It is a deviant society, balanced between administrative norms and peer group norms. There will be a shell culture and a core culture—a shell anomie and a core anomie. Thus the inmate society will adapt social institutions to its own use and orient them towards its own social preservation and survival. What is acceptable in the inmate world may be completely unacceptable in the total community, but the social structure will be the same; only the function is different. Homosexual marriage is unacceptable in contemporary society, whereas it is totally acceptable in the inmate society. The institution is the same, the function is different, though the difference is minimal in many respects. The major difference is in the non-existent family and kin patterns.

Because no kinship patterns exist, the inmate marriage cannot survive; but its function does serve to release sexual and emotional frustrations. It also serves to create a social pattern of simulated normalcy. It can be seen at this point that the homosexual has a very important role in prison sub-culture. Not only does he assume the role of the "female," but also that of "wife" and "mother." The power and status of these roles is transferred into prison styles of life. Prison society becomes a matriarchal society with the same social roles filled with accepted and designated members. In order that these roles may be maintained, the institutions into which they fit must also be maintained to preserve the interactional nature of social behaviour. Simply stated, without the homosexual in prison sub-culture, an imitative social system could not be established. What would be substituted in its place is hard to conceive. Certainly it would be beyond any acceptable standards and probably terminate in rabid insanity. Thus, the homosexual, in the prison sub-society acts as catalyst through which the social system is transferred and at the same time preserves the sanity of the prison system. The paradoxical view expressed here perhaps
for the first time is that sanity is preserved through a socially deviant norm.

That the homosexual functions therapeutically in a prison situation suggests that such a role is not necessary in normal society. Again the ready acceptance of the homosexual in prison implies that there may well be a hidden preference for homosexuality, if there has been prior ego fragmentation from heterosexual experience.

HOMOSEXUAL ARRANGEMENTS AND CONTACTS

Meeting a homosexual in prison was almost inevitable. Knowing how to conduct oneself without becoming involved or causing offense was an art of diplomacy. Contact could be made in several ways. The first is approaching a known homosexual and arranging a meeting. This would be consummated in the maximum prison by “buying” a cell move so that partners could be together, by meeting in the showers, at games on the week-end, in the gym, or one of the many places known where there was privacy from the guards. This initial meeting was literally a “date” in every sense of the word. It fulfilled the same function. The aggressive male would buy candy or some favor as an introductory present. The idea was to show “class.” The finesse of “class” may well be relevant to inmate class structure, i.e., doing things in style.

In a “no-class” association, the first contact was strictly a financial deal. Goods were passed in return for services rendered. It was as cold blooded as that. In a “class” relationship, the romance was likely to ripen into a marriage. This would be a significant event within the in-group. Only prominent people would be invited; gifts were expected in much the same way as any other similar social occasion; and the union would be legalized, complete with certificate. Following the ceremony, there would be a honeymoon, which culminated the process that was easily as important as any outside event for those who “counted.” As on the outside, the marriage demonstrated stability within the inmate society.

SOME IMPLICATIONS OF “SETTING UP HOUSE”

Wedding invitations (embossed in gold) were secretly printed in the prison and circulated. The marriage certificate usually stated that the two people involved would agree to the terms of a homosexual contract. Such a contract defined the masculine-feminine roles of the relationship. Usually it implied a class (status) relationship. That is, the more sophisticated the formalities, the greater the responsibilities; and the more that society expected, the greater the number of rules to be adhered to. A husband was expected to provide the comforts of life for his homosexual wife who, in turn, assumed the housekeeping duties and other widely responsibilities. Such an arrangement meant that the partners would “set up house.” The “pad” would be decorated with carpets and curtains. There would be paintings, colored lights, perfume—the makings of a whole boudoir scene which is, of course, strictly contraband under correctional rules, but is obliquely tolerated in order to keep the peace. In any case the officers were somewhat afraid of the power of the “women.” Given enough incentive, such as a raid on the cells where the guards would “rip off” the contraband (stealing some for their own use), the “broad” would club together in a way resembling a homosexual P.T.A. They would then proceed to make life
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miserable for the guards until they got their own way. If one thinks this is impossible, one should stand in the bottom tier during a raid (usually for dope) and witness the mass of contraband thrown out—and it always gets back. Indeed, as it is thrown out, certain inmates are allocated by consent to gather up the more valuable items and to return them to the owners. Inmates stealing such items had best beware of penalties from the owners if they were caught.

Thus the homosexual housekeeping arrangements also established property lines and permissible infringements of the administrative rules. Such infringements became universally adopted by others and almost become common usage, to the extent that the guards are cautious about who is raided. Homosexual wives are notorious carriers for illicit and dangerous contraband, i.e. drugs and weapons. A reason for this is that guards are loathe to shake down a “woman.” It not only embarrasses them, but it is also against their own accepted tradition.

So well has the inmate culture created the concept of “broad” that it is accepted as if it were real (in the sense that women are there). The concept is created by role-playing, reciprocal interaction, status giving and status acceptance, terminology and chironomic communication. It is more than a theatrical performance, it is an actual life situation. It may well be seen as a response to acute sensory deprivation and superimposed mental patterning. The fact is that the homosexual is an established and essential part of the prison system. The prisons breed homosexuals and intensify the nature of the homosexual propensity of men deprived of normal sexuality. While many are not participants, no one is unaffected.

Prison populations are divided into three main types. The participants (those who do), the observers (those who don’t and watch), and participant observers (those who watch and also occasionally participate). About 30% of the long term inmates are participants, and another 20% are participant observers. As to the rest, they either are not interested, do not serve enough time, or have sufficient heterosexual activities (visits or the nature of assigned jobs) to avoid homosexual implications. I would venture to suggest that under sufficiently severe long term incarceration, with acute deprivation and patterning, that these percentages would rise considerably. Under such an observation, one could hardly call prisonization an effective sexual rehabilitation.

PARTIAL FAVOR ARRANGEMENTS

A second form of approach in prison is that made by the homosexual toward a prospect. This consists of passing gifts to the prospect or of discreetly laying them upon the subject’s bed. In due course an inquiry is made to find out “if the gifts have been received and accepted.” Unless the prospect is incredibly naive, the answer is affirmative or the gifts are returned. Upon an acceptance, the arrangements are then put on a continuing basis. This method is also used to effect in securing partial favors, rather than the establish the more durable arrangements discussed above. It is also used to gain favor with a married type who is susceptible to gifts. Partial favors indicate that what is wanted is a temporary and often freakish arrangement. In this paper I shall not discuss prison pornography or bizarre sexual acts.

In a true homosexual relationship, the favors secured are those of intercourse and
substitute marriage. The male-female relationship is played to the hilt. The course of events is such that while there is no sexual restriction, there is no loss of masculine aggressiveness and feminine submissiveness. The “female” never exceeds the proper sexual role. Such females often dress the part and respond in all ways with feminine gestures. It should be pointed out here that many sophisticated “female” homosexuals are not offensive and indeed have as much sense of propriety as any woman. The males likewise are not offensive and do not conduct themselves any differently from most other men.

Nevertheless, as in heterosexual relationships, there are “freak-outs” and bizarre happenings. In fact all the observable deviance of heterosexual relationships is manifest in homosexual relationships. This is one more way in which the inmate sub-culture reflects the total social image. Intellectually, the capacities of both males and females apparently range over the whole spectrum, from I.Q.’s of illiterates to near genius (135 or better).

In many ways homosexuality is discreet and in many ways it is not. It is with the indiscreet aspects of homosexuality that I shall deal next. This phase of homosexuality is most offensive, but in the same way that heterosexuality may be offensive in its indiscretion. The total deviance to accepted normality creates problems and sanctions, and yet, at the same time, provides services desired by a section of the community.

INDISCREET HOMOSEXUALITY AND SOME IMPLICATIONS

By ‘indiscreet,’ I mean the type of homosexuality that is practiced blatantly and publicly. I am not prepared to moralize upon this issue as it also has its counterpart in heterosexual relationships. Perhaps the most offensive “freaking” that occurs is the “gang-bang” of a young homosexual. This is sometimes voluntary, sometimes involuntary. It occurs usually during shower times. The guard is diverted and men are set up to “point,” i.e. to direct other inmates away from the scene and to permit uninterrupted pleasure to proceed. The “point” also warns of police approach. During the “gang-bang” (which has several variations) the homosexual is subjected to or submits to intercourse from several men. In a voluntary situation, the homosexual is paid; in an involuntary situation, it may be payment for a debt, or rape by force.

I would like to comment here on the phrase “rape by force.” There is absolutely no protection in society for homosexual who is raped by force. It is the same as far as the prison administration is concerned: “A faggot deserves all he gets and he gets what he deserves!” Such a comment demonstrates the attitude of officials toward the problem. However, it should be noted here that among the inmates who do not participate, there is a strong sanction against homosexual rape. The penalty is death. In any case involving an in-group inmate who is threatened with rape (by virtue of age or attractiveness), the aggressor is politely warned that his life is forfeit. In the core code regulating relations between inmates, the penalty of death is not lightly invoked. Thus the seriousness of such an offense as homosexual rape by force merits attention.

There is, in the first place, no counterpart in total society of homosexual rape. Recognizing a unique offense—the rape of one man by another—the inmate code reinforces the
concept of "woman" in prison society. A very famous criminal decision—one which changed California law—was based on the inmate penalty for just this offense. The killer received life. Had the real facts come out as to code pressure, he should have been exonerated. As it was, he was saved by over-zealousness of the police. What is important here is that a potential aggressor is told he will be killed if he violates another person's body, under the inmate code, he does not challenge the statement or proceed. Usually the message is conveyed by a "committee" of the inmate's friends; this reinforces the code. But in spite of the code, rape does occur in prison, just as it occurs outside prison. Unless the inmate is a core-inmate, he has no protection. Thus the very young and the very new are susceptible prey. As in normal society, there is no protection against homosexual rape for these men. And once raped they are classified as homosexual!

Rape by force of a known homosexual, on the other hand, results in a substantial violation of moral codes and is revenged by the male partner. The code is so strong in this respect that the inmate must revenge the rape or face social exclusion. In prison, this would mean social isolation that would place sufficient pressure on an inmate to affect his mind.

As for the indiscreet nature of the "gang-bang," it was pointed out above that variations do exist. In some cases the white homosexual is serviced by several blacks; or the situation is reversed; or there is a "mixed party." As far as race lines go, the homosexual world is somewhat democratic. Even inter-racial marriage occurs. Again in the case of the gang situation, in a variation of "straight" intercourse, there may be oral as well as anal with adaptations depending on the number of members in the "gang-bang." In the event that there is more than one homosexual (submissive) available, the party soon becomes a "freak-out." Although no one becomes pregnant as a result of such prison orgies, gonorrhea is known to have been spread by homosexuals.

It is interesting how such parties are set up and how the officials remain in "complete ignorance" of what is going on. They are in fact diverted, paid-off, and given reciprocal favors. Or they owe a reciprocal favor and stay away from the "action." Occasionally they are homosexuals themselves and secretly indulge. Certainly, homosexuals are patronized, and do have connections within the administrative system as well as within the inmate culture. Certain officials permit the movement of homosexuals into cells occupied by other homosexuals; that is, two men are allowed to cell together with consent of officials. Other times, when homosexuals occupy key positions in the administrative hierarchy (clerks, accountants, stenos, etc.) favors permitting activity are given for smooth operation of the prison. These favors consist of permitting inmates to shower together on night details when there is minimal or no supervision at all. Or inmates are permitted in certain rooms together without supervision. In a prison that has an educational and an industrial complex, there are plenty of places where supervision is minimal or deliberately overlooked. Such inmates also keep secrets of what goes on when the officials are involved in deviant practices (such as participating homosexuality, narcotics traffic, theft, fraud, etc.).

Thus advertently or inadvertently, the homosexual is a key figure in the corruption
of officials and part of the deviant sub-culture. While seldom a core figure, the homosexual is both peripheral and necessary. The homosexual may not only “pack” goods, but may also “get the goods” on officials and thus aid in their blackmail. This kind of “blackmail” may be described as operational consent, i.e. a favor for a favor; nevertheless, it is corruption, and its effects result in damaging consequences. Such an official may be used to pack weapons, narcotics, or other desired contraband into the prison. He may also be used to cover up crime and corruptly exert influence. Obviously, such an official will not announce his own deviance; in fact he will probably “scream bloody murder” if he is denounced, but it does happen and will continue to happen as long as the prison system retains its own peculiar emphasis on homosexual isolation. As was stated earlier, homosexuality knows no race lines, class lines, or status barriers.

OTHER FORMS OF CONTACT AND VARIANT STYLES

If there is one thing that is in demand in prison it is the masculine style; i.e. the inmate who adjusts to prison, is “cool” (does not get involved unnecessarily, but when he does always comes out on top), and has acquired wealth (demonstrated in a “bonnar”u style of life, with pressed clothes, new shoes, and ample funds for canteen, commissary, or influence). He might be described as the “man about prison.” Such a person should also have a reputation. Usually a status inmate like this is approached directly by submissives (female) and told that they are desirable as partners on almost any terms.

Disengagement from such an offer requires diplomacy. A direct rebuff causes an affront, because the offer is made in the sincerest terms and actually represents a token of high prison flattery. The offer means that the inmate has “arrived.” Moreover, at face value, the offer boosts the male ego: obviously if the individual is attractive to men, he must also be attractive to women. Therefore refusal is made in terms of courtesy. The way of inmate etiquette requires that the party so approached state that he is already committed and is sorry to turn down such an attractive offer. Such a reply causes no offense and actually returns the compliment, thereby making a friend instead of an enemy. A direct rebuff, or a moral refusal, (such as “Get off my back, you punk!”) could result in retaliation and reprisal, thereby lowering the status of the inmate from “cool” to that of a “no-good bastard.”

The argot here has particular significance. While homosexuals are referred to as ‘fags,’ ‘punks,’ ‘bitches,’ ‘broad,’ ‘whores,’ etc., the word ‘fag’ is seldom used; the word ‘punk’ signifies a younger homosexual in a slave category (and was good for blood if used indiscriminately). The more usual definition was ‘broad’ or ‘bitch’ or even ‘old lady.’ The term ‘girl’ was reserved for the younger more nearly virgin, flirtatious, fun-loving type of younger homosexual. What is important here is the sub-societal definition of a homosexual. As the designation of a homosexual was feminine, the male aggressive was never self-defined or societally defined as homosexual.

Regardless of what dictionaries or psychiatrists say of both members of a homosexual act, in prison the male partner was never normally defined as homosexual. Therefore masculinity was preserved and defined by
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homosexuals in the deviant sub-culture. As was stated previously, one of the greatest forms of flattery was to be in demand by homosexual "women." This could cause embarrassment as other inmates would concern themselves as to what "that s.o.b. has that I haven't got." Nevertheless it was a mark of status to be singled out for "female" attention. In accordance with one's "core" status, it was a mark of distinction to be able to travel freely without creating offense. In the in-group the celibate was admired for his skill. Abstinence, like virginity was "no big thing." An inmate's personal life was his own affair.

Because the inmate culture is faithful to the outside community, the styles of homosexuals are similarly related. There are those who operate alone, those who have a pimp and those who are "on call." This stresses the demand for feminine services in prison and the way in which those services are defined by the homosexual.

One service that is generally touted along the tiers is that of "a head job for two packs." This means that an act of oral coition is offered for two packs of cigarettes. Cigarettes are the main token of currency in prison. The service is offered "over the bars" in the maximum sections and in comfort in the honor blocks. Once a service is contracted for (usually through a tier tender or block worker), at a convenient time when a guard is diverted, the copulatee will press himself against the cell bars as to be as nearly hidden as possible. The copulatee will then place his penis in the other inmate's mouth until ejaculation is effected. Some "broads" pride themselves on the success of their methods, and they certainly are in demand. In the honor blocks, where the status inmates live, the act is performed in a more comfortable surrounding. There is privacy. The frequency with which this happens, and those who participate have led me to conclude that this more nearly establishes a male-female relationship. It is clear that the secrecy of the honor blocks has covered many such acts by high status members.

For reasons that I am unable to explain (or so far, apparently, anyone else), the act of oral copulation is viewed as more deviant than an act of anal homosexuality. In the inmate-inmate relationship, both acts are normative; in the inmate-administration relationship, oral acts are "sexual perversion" as defined by the California Penal Code. I would suggest here that the femininity of oral acts, accepted by the inmates, violates the administration definition of homosexual deprivation. A famous story is told of two inmates who were caught red-handed (and red-faced) in such an act. They were in the same cell. They appeared before the captain who is now in another state. The seriousness of such an offense was that both could be subject to isolation, adjustment, loss of parole consideration, etc. To explain the event, one inmate explained that he was having a sexual dream; during the dream he fell out of his top bunk, and as he did his erect organ landed squarely in the mouth of his partner in the bottom bunk, and it was in this position that he was caught. The captain laughingly dismissed this pair with the remark, "Well, I can't convict you anyway, it appears you have swallowed the evidence."

It is well to comment here that the most serious injury that can be inflicted upon such homosexuals is a blow in the mouth. Such an injury may be interpreted in the Freudian sense as a desire for physical contact. During fights, an injury to the mouth takes on the aspect of a mortal
wound. Again, it is common practice for status inmates to have their own cups. The reason for this is that should anyone use someone else's cup, he is told, "I wouldn't use that cup if I were you; you'll be a cocksucker by proxy." Strangely enough this comment is not directed at the homosexual, but at the preservation of prison hygiene. Status inmates are a remarkably clean group. They do not take the risk of infection lightly. It is also sport to pull an exchange of cups on an unsuspecting inmate, especially if he is a moralizing self-righteous type. The subsequent look of horror upon the inmate's face is compensation for pseudomorality.

It is in this type of humor that we see yet another function of the homosexual in prison. Such humor tends to preserve the stability of prison sub-culture and gives support to the role of the homosexual. In essence, the homosexual provides a basis for humor—an indispensable relief for the severity of prison deprivation. Perhaps the maturity (or irony) of the situation is that the homosexuals themselves participate in this type of humor. In the honor blocks, the service usually costs more. And it is not unknown that such services continue on a retainer basis. I was unaware of this practice until a close friend revealed that he had been paying for legal services out of his retainer. Should prices go up, he would demand a greater retainer. In this case, the inmate was heterosexual, was the male, and was serviced regularly by an older man. The usual relationship was for an older man to retain "a kid," "his kid" as defined by property rights.

**LIFE STYLES OF SUBMISSIVES**

The word 'submitive' is used to designate the "female" of the male-female homosexual relationship. The "broads," as they are usually referred to, always keep this feminine designation, as 'she,' 'her,' 'hers.' Because they assume the female role, and because they are designated as females, they meet group expectation of role requirements. They are seldom referred to as "fruit." This word is usually reserved for the type who "flip-flops"; that is one who goes either way as male or female or who "freaks" out. This type is also known as 'pitcher-catcher.' The expression here means that "today's pitcher is tomorrow's catcher." A person given to this disorientation of roles acquires the name of 'fruit' (in the sense of over-ripeness). As for the true submissives, it must be noted that the mental patterning, induced by society, results in a feminine physical style. The "girls" behave in the showers in a feminine way. They wear shower caps, they are quite different in their washing procedures; they wrap their towels differently. When they go to the washrooms together, they carry "douche-bags" with their toiletries packed within. They use make-up, cosmetics, perfume, any and everything that simulates the outside feminine world. On occasions when the contraband situation is just right, they wear stockings, panties, bra, and any other item of female apparel. The conversation is feminine. They refer to each other by girl's names (and are generally known by feminine names; this can be disconcerting if one does not know who the person is). They refer to "tarts" and "bitches" of their own kind who break accepted rules. They discuss marriage, divorce, affairs and sexual qualities of their lovers. In this instant, the argot of prison asserts itself when they discuss men. The sexual organ is referred to as a 'bone.' This is
taken apparently from the domino cult of the "Big Yard." Here the dominoes are referred to as bones; the game itself is called 'slapping big six' (the method of opening the game). In cosmetic habits, the "broads" shave their legs and bodies; they wear tight pants; they do anything to accentuate sexual appeal. Their hair-dos are specially catered to. Negro "girls" have a real problem in this respect. Yet in a maximum security prison this is what actually takes place right under the noses of the officials and often with their sub rosa consent.

For long term inmates the submissive style becomes sophisticated; and, in the case of a stable marriage, serious problems can arise upon release of one partner and not the other. Inmates may commit crimes to stay in, even murder to avoid separation, or in despair they may attempt suicide. It has been known that paroles have been refused because of the homosexual institutionalization of inmates, who have literally established a home in prison. There is a strong homosexual security feeling in prison life styles.

Here then, we see that the homosexual functions to defeat rehabilitation and to actually create security within prison walls. Recidivism may well be related to homosexual propensities. No studies have been done in this area. But it has been clear to my own observations that the homosexual is more secure in prison than outside. Within prison, the homosexual has ascribed status. Indeed, he can achieve higher status along with the recognition he would not receive on the outside, especially if it is known that he is a homosexual.

Moreover, homosexuals tend to settle in jobs that appeal to them, tending to manipulate job situations until they can get what they want. In prison, jobs can be bought or sold for favors as anywhere else. Thus they will congregate in groups. The clothing industry attracts large numbers, and many will end up as stenos to officials. They are allowed to work with women as they are a safe risk. They are permitted outside. (It would be impossible to "drive some of them off with a stick," as long as their partners are inside.) But in groups, they behave quite differently. Towards people they know and trust, they make female gestures, little girlish waves, obvious male compliments—the sort of pleasantries reserved in offices for status people. They feel safe. Towards someone they confide in and who protects them the "girls" reciprocate in terms of protection. Other favors are available, but neutrality is respected and admired.

Homosexuals also attend church. Although it has been said that church has been used as a meeting place, I doubt it. Homosexuals have not frightened Christians out of church, rather the opposite is true. Although homosexuality is incompatible with the Christian religion, one cannot imagine that any one has the right to deny beliefs to any person. As in outside churches, where the preponderance of the congregations are women, and the workers are women, it appears that in the inmate sub-culture, the same life styles will be practiced. Thus when the homosexual takes the female role, church attendance is merely one more factor of that role rather than religion per se. This applies to all other institutions that are reflected in the sub-culture. In the prison homosexual society, a vacuum is created that demands filling.

In short, once more, with the complete deprivation of women and sexuality, the homosexual is an essential part of inmate
society. In a life situation that demands the interaction between the sexes, the prison community will adopt a model or a reasonable facsimile that approximates the normal social structure. With two basic groups, male and female, in society, the prison will also divide into basic divisions. As long as it "takes two to tango," the partners will have to be drawn from opposite groups. Where society institutes closure and isolation, the contained group will modify and adjust to resemble the structures of the former society.

CONCLUSION

Homosexuality, possibly with the exception of organic displacement, is learned behaviour. In a normal society, the homosexual is seen as socially and sexually disoriented, as somewhat schizoid. But in a prison society, constituting a sub-culture of adult males, persons exhibiting this type of social-sexual deviancy are essential to the function of the prison community. Thus in an abnormal inmate culture, deviancy to social norms is now acceptable as approximating social needs. The homosexual, schizophrenic in normal society, is adjusted and normal in the maladjusted prison sub-culture. His partial role as male or female is fulfilled in prison, whereas on the outside it was incomplete. In consequence, the homosexual is absolutely essential to the function of the adult male prison.

In summary, the homosexual meets the social need of an all male society in the following ways:

1 He assumes the role of female, wife, mother in various orders and styles.

2 He acts as a catalyst through which the image of matriarchal society is transferred (by institutions).

3 His deviancy acts to preserve the social sanity of the prison sub-system, thus acting as a therapeutic.

4 The homosexual by his role defines male-female status and preserves the hierarchical order (role-status-class).

5 The homosexual creates stability in prison by establishing property lines (marriage-contact-home).

6 The homosexual provides a basis for humor.

7 The homosexual adopts and preserves life styles of normal society.

In contrast to the essential function of the homosexual, there is also a built-in dysfunction. The homosexual:

1 acts as a key figure in the corruption of officials;

2 sets deviant norms and sanctions for inmate anomie; and

3 defeats the rehabilitation process by establishing strong security feelings within prison walls.

In conclusion, therefore, it can be seen that the homosexual is not only essential to the function of prison society, but is also a product in that prison intensifies and perpetuates homosexuality. Such deviant behaviour
is carried and transmitted into normal society upon the release of inmates. Because of the security of homosexuals in prison, the more natural act of the homosexual is to return to prison where his status is assured.

By isolating women from their husbands and men friends, the prison administration gives silent consent to the extension and propagation of homosexuality. In any case, no prisoner can remain unaffected from the impact of such overt practice; thus rehabilitation is token and actually more directed at homosexual education than heterosexual adjustment. The younger the inmate, the longer the term, the greater the deprivation—the more likely the inmate is to become homosexual or become socially deviant by State direction. The State of California punishes crime by making offenders more prone to deviance, by making deviants more so, and by punishing (indirectly) the families of those in prison.

The problem is not a happy one but then, without exception, neither were any of the homosexuals I knew.

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**NOTES**

1. *The writer spent three years as an inmate in a California maximum security prison (San Quentin) on the basis of an allegation for which he was later exonerated. During this time he was teacher, aide to a supervisor, and legal counselor to many inmates. Because he was not involved, and remained neutral, he was trusted and confided in without fear of reprisal. Details disclosed here are true and verifiable.*


4. See note 2.
