

OSE/CCSR Intro to Cultural Studies

Queer as Folk

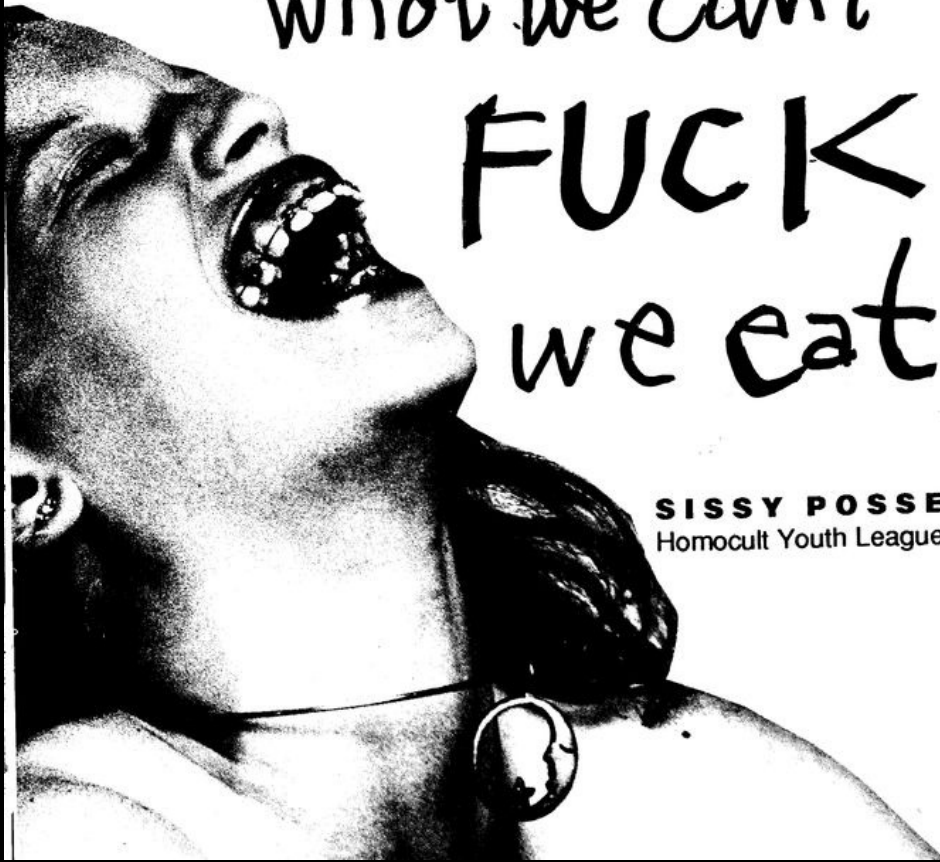
Stephen Maddison

GIVE US YOUR
CHILDREN

what we can't

FUCK

we eat



SISSY POSSE
Homocult Youth League

Outline of session

- Key themes
- Words & Naming
- Historical Models: Sin & Sickness
- Historical Models: Social problem
- Gay Liberation Front
- Queer & AIDS



Key themes

- Assimilation vs liberation
- Discourse, representation and naming
- Subculture, community, intergenerationality
- Gender and sexuality
- Importance of the 'other' (what is homophobia, really?)
- Diversity and divisiveness (LGBTQI...)



Words & Naming

- “lesbian” predates both “homosexual” and “heterosexual” (1700s onwards)
- 1869: “homosexual”
- 1870+: “heterosexual”
- Didn’t pass into common usage until 1890s
- “Gay”: pre-Stonewall subcultural, mainstream thereafter
- “Queer”: reclaimed from late 1980s

HOW TO SPOT A POSSIBLE HOMO

YOU can and will meet them in London's Bond-street, Tokio's Ginza, Rome's Via Veneto, Glasgow's Sauchiehall-street, the Road to Mandalay, and the street where you live...

Vassall, the spy, was a homo. He lived like one, he acted like one.

Yet here, in the formal, carefully chosen words of the Tribunal's report, we are told by Lord Radcliffe and his two assistants:

"So far as we can see, nothing short of active police detective work would have offered any clue to the fact that he was a practising homosexual."

Later on they say: "The Russians, indeed, had caught him through his homosexual proclivity, but the volume of evidence that we received convinced us that at that time, just as in the later years in London, there was nothing either in Vassall's conduct or conversation that indicated even to a sharp observer a man addicted to homosexual practices."

Almost unbelievably it seems they are right. One or two people Vassall worked with thought he was a bit effeminate. Some even nicknamed him "Vera." But neither his bosses nor the officials picked to vet him ever appeared to mark him down as a homo, and a dangerous one at that.

If it is really true that in this day of frankness grown men, professional men, men of the world, cannot spot a homo when they see him, I think it is high time we had a short course on how to pick a pervert.



Vassall, a spy and homo—a gilt-edged specimen of his type.

The Admiralty, the Foreign Office, and M.I.5 don't seem to know... so the Sunday Mirror offers them some useful advice

Basically, homos fall into two groups—the obvious, and the concealed.

OBVIOUS: Those who dye their hair, touch up their lips, and walk with a gay little wiggle could be spotted by a One-Eyed Jack on a foggy day in Blackwall Tunnel.

CONCEALED: They wear silk suits and sit up at chi-chi bars with full-bosomed ladies.

Or they wear hairy sports jackets and give their wives a black eye when they get back from the working men's club.

THEY wrestle, play golf, ski and work up great knots of muscles lifting weights. They are married, have children.

THEY are everywhere, and they can be anybody. How then are we ever going to pick them out?

I have been discussing them with a psychiatrist and others who have made a keen study of the problem. Quite clearly EVERY man of the type listed here is NOT a homo, but you will certainly find that the queers fall into these categories. They would be on my "suspect list." I wouldn't tell them my secrets.

1—**THE MIDDLE-AGED MAN**, unmarried, who has an unnaturally strong affection for his mother.

2—**The man** who has a consuming interest in youth. He is ready to give ALL his spare time to working and talking with boys or youths.

3—**THE CRAWLER**. The 'umble man, the man who is always saying he's nothing and everybody else is marvellous, the man with the fixed and meaningless smile on his face. A prime suspect.

4—**THE FUSSY DRESSER**. When one, two or three button jackets are in he is the first to wear them. His shirts are detergent bright, his tie has the latest knot and is always just so, and he can never pass a mirror or a shop window without a sly glance at himself.

5—**THE OVER-CLEAN MAN**. His cheeks are

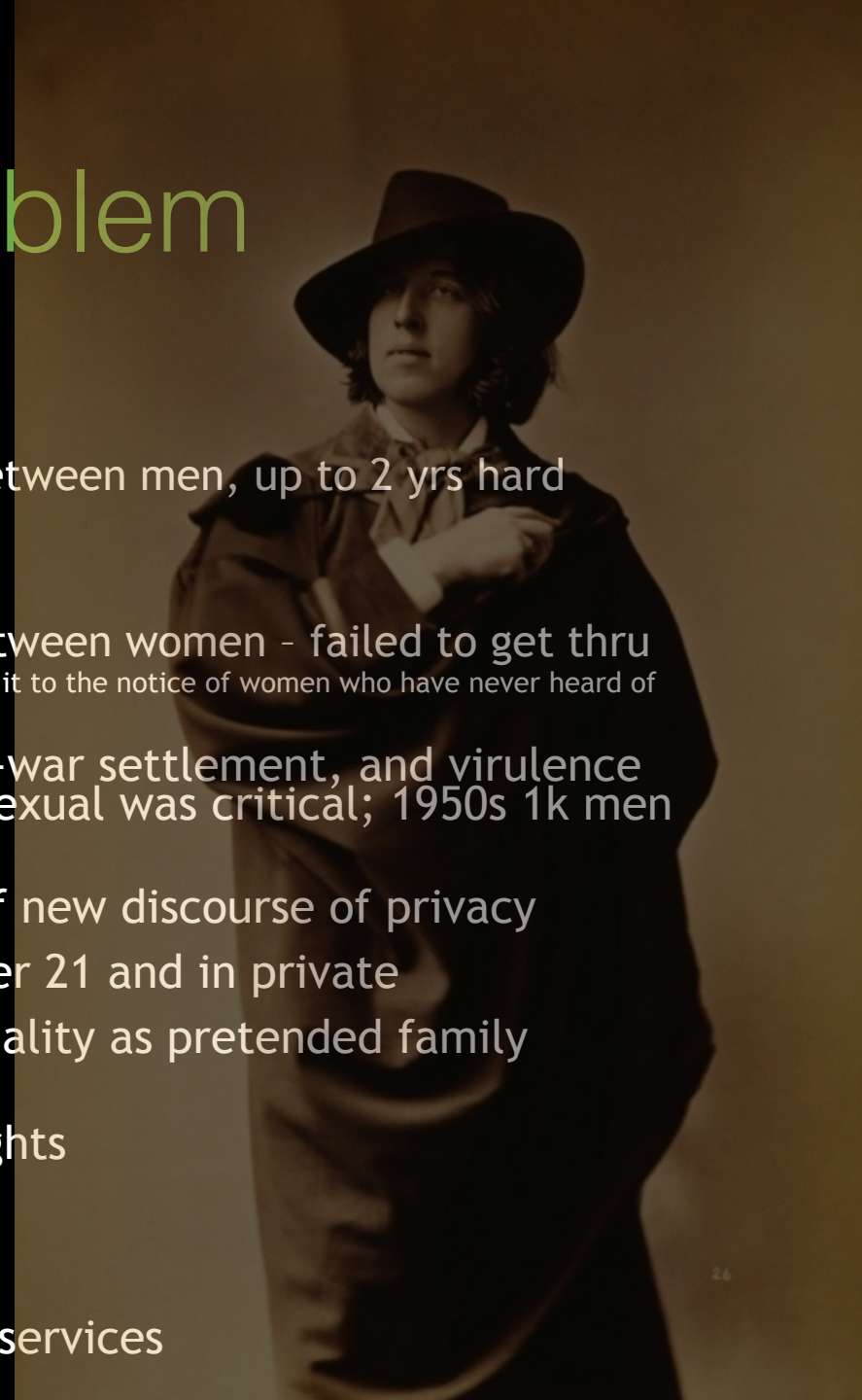


Historical Models: Sin and Sickness

- Judeo-Christian concept of sin/sinner
- Foucault: confession, act/identity (condemn the sin, forgive the repentant sinner)
- Sickness: enlightenment/Victorian cultures of science and classification
- Early Sexology: liberal, naturalising imperative
 - Karl Heinrich Ulrichs - uranism (Germany late 1860s)
 - Havelock Ellis - inversion (England 1897)
- Pathology: psychiatric cures (psychotropic drugs, aversion therapy), eugenics (Nazi death camps, AIDS discourse)

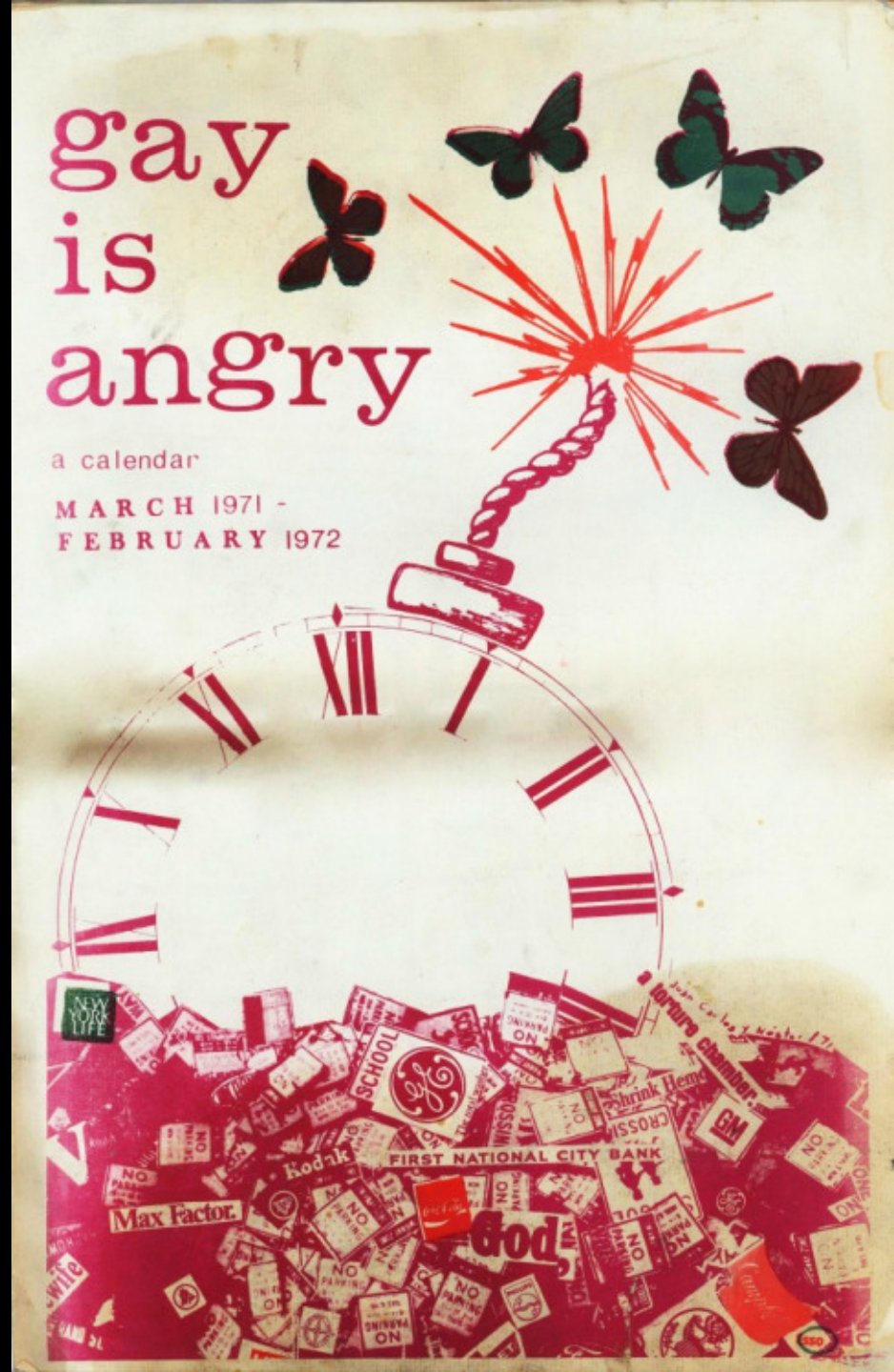
Historical models: social problem

- Pre-1861 buggery punishable by death (range of sexual improprieties)
- 1861 Offences Against the Person Act reduced penalty to 10 yrs to life
- 1885 Labouchere Amendment specified nature of “gross indecency” between men, up to 2 yrs hard labour
- 1895 Oscar Wilde sentenced under Labouchere
- 1921 Labouchere-style amendment proposed for “gross indecency” between women - failed to get thru parliament (Lord Desart: “You are going to tell the whole world that there is such an offence, to bring it to the notice of women who have never heard of it, never thought of it, never dreamt of it. I think that is a very great mischief.”)
- Post WWII tensions between emerging social liberalism of the post-war settlement, and virulence of Cold War ideology in which the figure of the treacherous homosexual was critical; 1950s 1k men per year imprisoned for gross indecency
- 1957 Wolfenden Report suggested limited legalisation in context of new discourse of privacy
- 1967 Sexual Offences Act implemented Wolfenden: legalisation over 21 and in private
- 1988 Section 28 of Local Govt Act: outlaws promotion of homosexuality as pretended family relationship by local authorities
- 2001 Age of consent equalised, under EU Convention on Human Rights
- 2003 Section 28 repealed
- 2004 Civil Partnership Act
- 2006 Equality Act outlaws discrimination in provision of goods and services



Gay Liberation Front

- GLF formed in London in 1970, following US model, and informed by Black Panthers etc.
- Militant, not assimilationist
- Specific opposition to liberal concessions of Wolfenden
- Sexuality as agent of revolutionary change for everyone
- GLF advocated:
 - coming out - to friends, family, work, to reverse presumption of heterosexuality and allow open expression
 - coming together, solidarity, strength thru community, attempt to reverse condition of Wolfenden privacy, being cut off
 - recognition of sexism as cornerstone of homophobia
 - Direct action: 'zapping' pubs, newspaper offices etc



Queer and AIDS

I'D SHOOT MY SON IF HE HAD AIDS, SAYS VICAR!



Shatner message... the Rev Simpson demonstrates his point about AIDS with the help of son Chris.

A VICAR vowed yesterday that he would take his teenage son to a mountain and shoot him if the boy had the deadly disease AIDS.

And to make his conviction clear, Bishop Simpson, 45, behind his church and across a highway from his 17-year-old son Chris, said: "I would shoot him if he had AIDS."

Another red hot Sun exclusive

JOKERS' CUP CAPER **600 IN TRAIN FIRE**

TV Stef falls for polo ace worth a mint!

BY THE FOREIGN DESK
TV star Stefania Faroni, 30, has fallen madly in love with a polo ace worth a mint!

GUN THUG, 13

A 13-year-old boy shot a man dead in a pub in a bid to get a girl.

He would pull trigger on rest of family, too

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- AIDS as a "gay plague"
- Right wing social policies on family, children
- Right wing attack on local govt, specifically "loony left" councils that ensured provision for l&g and BME
- 1987 ACT-UP formed in New York
- 1989 ACT-UP London
- 1990 Queer Nation in US, Outrage! in UK
- Queer politics revived GLF in terms of:
 - Diverse coalitions: "rainbow"
 - Direct action
 - Non-assimilationism

What happened next?

James Penney:

identity politics has been exploited by ideologies of liberal democracy and multinational capital that have offered fragmented identity groups important concessions, thereby forcing us

‘to abandon ambitious agendas for social change as the price paid for the defence of hard-fought victories on the terrain of race, gender and sexuality’

(After Queer Theory, 2014: 51)



gaytimes

PRIDE & GROOM

The December issue of *gaytimes* magazine is available to buy from November 16th from all good newsagents, Prowler Soho, Prowler King's Cross and Prowler Camden. Subscribe on-line at www.gaytimes.co.uk or call 0845 430 9112

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