

**bi ~**

## **sexuality**

Often in discussions at Gay Lib meetings the idea is thrown up that "bisexuality" is one of the aims of the liberation movements. It seems part of the orthodoxy of the Sexual Revolution that this will be one of the corollaries of our ceasing to pigeon-hole people by sex and sexuality. Because of dissatisfaction with some of this thinking, we decided to dig rather more deeply into it, and invited Women's Liberation to participate in the discussion held at Bruce Hall on Tuesday 20th June. What resulted was a vigorous free-for-all and sometimes, verging on the riotous.

I don't attempt to present the conclusions of the group ( we didn't arrive at any), but to give some of the ideas which were tossed about and something of the flavour of the meeting.

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Where to start ?

A first approximation to what is meant by bisexuality in the language of the movements is "equal attraction to the sexes." We accept this as a working point, but as the meeting

point, but as the meeting progresses it seems less than satisfactory.

"Most of the talk on bisexuality in the liberation movements is based on the (few) comments of Freud, who stated that at birth, we are polymorphously perverse (!) and are later shaped into sex roles. I don't think that this means that we are initially or naturally bisexual and that this is coached out of us. Rather, that we are capable of organic response to anyone (anything?) with our whole

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bodies, that we might go in any direction. Upbringing produces a localisation of response and limitation among classes of objects met in the world - usually the opposite or the same sex "

Sadly, none of us present has the technical knowledge to amplify these comments and so we take up the question of how the sex roles of later life arise. Most of us feel that conditioning from birth upwards is the (major?) cause.-that sexual behaviour is learned and that the choice of hetero-/homosexual (if that is the choice) is forced by upbringing in the [broadest sense... "But what about genetic factors?" This elicits a loud response from all corners. [The case of families where Mum, Dad and the kids are all camp

and the kids are all camp doesn't provide evidence either way and deprives us of the lame joke of- " I inherited homosexuality from my father."]

Our opinions vary but our version of the hoary heredity versus environment-debate upholds "environment", carried on the voices.

We talk a little about sexuality in tribal cultures (especially as studied by Margaret Mead)but are unable to come to agreement on the interpretation of these studies.... Where are we being led by the type of conditioning provided by the nuclear family of our own culture ? This is the concern much of the philosophy of W.L. but one idea relevant to our discussion tonight is that the kids upbringing is now in the hands of two people. These two people provide pretty well the only example for the children of people in sexual relations. The marriage (including its flaws) becomes the norm, in the context of which the kids grow up ..... well , it's the way of human relations to be imperfect, but perhaps even more important than the risk that the hangups of the parents will be visited upon the children unto

the umpteenth generation, is that comparatively few of the manifestations of sexual relation will be brought before

manifestations of sexual relation will be brought before the children (even by the most imaginative husband and wife). This may cramp development since it is chiefly in seeing

day-to-day life that the genius for living can be drawn out. Also familiarity with human life will hopefully provide a climate suitable to the growth of the right liberal attitudes.

After having added to the list of crimes of the Nuclear Family, we are brought back to consider the meaning of 'bisexuality' by a sister whose comments are a springboard for the rest of the talk: "

"I've been listening to the discussion and am starting to wonder whether bisexuality is not essentially asexual. By that I mean that it is without predisposition on the basis of the sex of the other person ....that the whole of the human race is available and, whatever the individual whom we light upon, sex will be the expression of the love."

We cast about for less promiscuous words. We agree also that there are as many types of sex as there are occasions; one of the more charming is the impression of a pleasant evening - sex with strawberries and cream !

Still, our difficulty in finding suitable terms before, leads somehow to a discussion of jealousy and (until we veer onto something else) we have managed to see two types of jealousy; the

two types of jealousy; the I'd-like-one-of-those-too variety and the why-does-that-bastard-have-all-the-luck variety. There seems to be enough material in discussion of the quality of relationships to keep us up all night; but someone (male) drops a hint of a belief that men are superficial /promiscuous than women, at least by inclination. He is howled down in ribald style by practically every woman present.

The timely discovery that the wine is all gone necessitates arrangements for fresh supplies of grog and cigarettes .

Someone says that she has a residual fear of too intimate a relation with someone of the same sex, but feels that the barrier is dissolving. Is this true generally ? Does not the club and pub culture glorify male to male relations anyway ? Is it just women who are walled off from one another in our society, Women's Liberation representing an assault on those walls? Is the horror of homosexual relations the only barrier to full relations between men in this country—as if this were not enough!

We must be conscious of the corrosive effect of setting up norms of behaviour or rather of defining and glorifying "normality" It is freedom for development which we desire, not a conjugal bed of Procrustes . Keeping this in mind we ask what can be done in the direction of bi-

done in the direction of bisexuality.

"At present the desire for a dichotomy in sexuality is very strong. Social pressure is brought to bear on people to force them to slip into either the heterosexual slot or the homosexual slot. The pressures exerted by straight society are obvious enough but the same holds true of camp society where one might hope for better." So the prospect at present is bleak. What then? Do we need bi-liberation ?

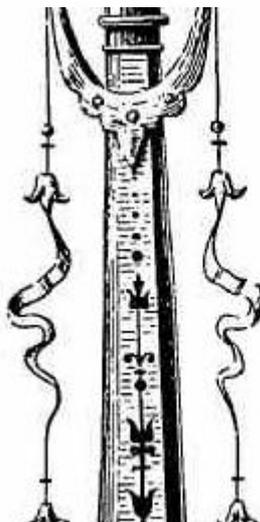
Even in Gay Lib there seems to be a tendency to split into groups for camp men and lesbians separately. Some find Women' Lib more relevant than Gay Lib.

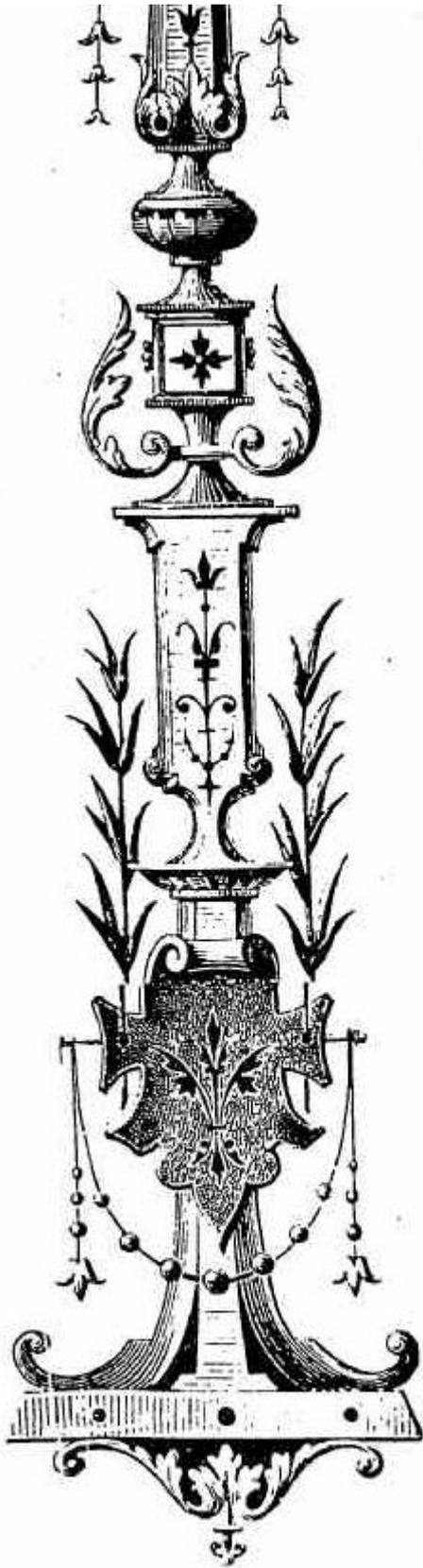
"Is the more important difference sex rather than sexuality?" Should we have a program in which their are mutually separate groups- a sort of Men's Lib for those of all leanings- in which issues are sifted through, leading later to united groups after some insight is gained ? But surely .....

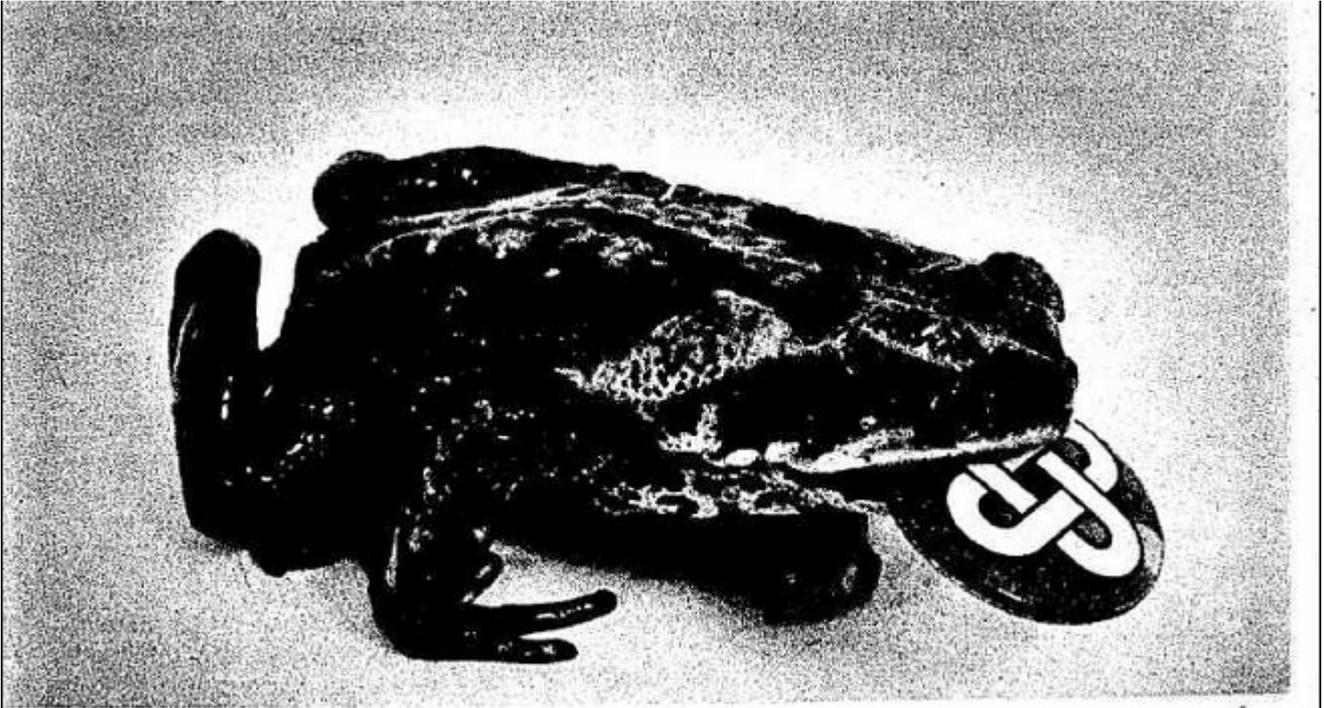
The meeting shatters into a riot of two , three and four - person arguments and for the next hour and a half ideas are exchanged. This is perhaps the most rewarding part of the evening as we get down to the grit of our own experiences and try to bring some mental force to bear



*Mirror, Mirror on the wall – How do I get rid of my Narcissus complex?*







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