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Attitudinal Differences Between Heterosexually and Homosexually Oriented Males*

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I. *The Aims of the Investigation*

Bene (1965) in a previous issue of this *Journal*, has summarized the main evidence for the view that homosexuality is a product of defective role training and is not a result of any direct genetic mechanism. It is becoming apparent that once a child has been pronounced as a boy or a girl it has to learn the forms of behaviour appropriate to its *ascribed* sex. The learning or conditioning mechanism by which the child learns to make its role performance congruent with its' ascribed sex is not understood. Comfort (1964) has suggested that sex-typing may be some form of imprinting. Hampson (1965) investigating several types of hermaphroditism has found evidence that if the gender role has to be changed after about the third year of life, increasing psychological difficulties are encountered. He also points out that the development of the gender role coincides with that of language.

There is much arguing in the literature as to whether the mothers or fathers are the major culprits in the development of homosexuality (Clarke, 1965a). Sears (1965), however, has carried out some investigations, the results of which may bring about a rapprochement in these arguments. From his researches Sears suggests several child-rearing variables which may serve as either masculinizing or feminizing agents for either sex. Feminizing agents are: (1) sexual anxiety displayed by the father, (2) the repression of overt aggression on the part of the child due to punitive measures by the mother, (3) ridicule and severe physical punishment, and (4) the strict insistence on good table manners and severe weaning and toilet training. A masculinizing agent is noted in the rearing of girls, namely the intrusion of the father's affection. Such variables suggest that the manner in which overt aggression of one form or another is controlled may be of great importance, and in this respect both parents may be at fault.

In our investigation we were interested not only in such aetiological agents as style of upbringing and sex ratio of siblings but also in the attitudes of homosexuals to various aspects of the world about them. We reasoned that once a male, either by the overt act or the covert idea, realized that he preferred men to women as his sexual object of gratification a "decision" had been made. Using "decision" in Festinger's sense (Festinger and Bramel, 1962), "cognitive dissonance" should then follow. Cognitive dissonance should be especially strong in those homosexuals who seek treatment, because a wrong decision had been taken, or in those homosexuals committed by the Courts for treatment which they may not want. One consequence of cognitive dissonance reduction is derogation of agents at variance with the individual's own attitudes (Zimbardo, 1960). In other words the blame is put on somebody or something else. Such a mechanism of cognitive dissonance reduction may of course lead to the opinion that homosexuals, by observation, are paranoid (Freud, 1911, Ferenczi, 1914). The aim of this investigation was to try and elucidate whether homosexuals who could be considered to be in a state of cognitive dissonance derogated familial and social aspects of their world in comparison to normal males.

II. *The Sample of the Investigation*

The subjects in this investigation consisted of twenty males referred to the Maudsley Hospital with a presenting symptom of homosexuality.

* This investigation was carried out at the Institute of Psychiatry, University of London.

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Five of the homosexual group were Court referrals. The homosexuals were rated by their psychiatrists on the Kinsey scale for homosexuality. Eighteen had ratings of 5 or 6, and the remaining two had ratings of 4 and 3 (Kinsey *et al.*, 1948). The normal males were all non-psychiatric subjects. Eight were paid volunteers, the remaining twelve were acquaintances of the writers. If one can accept the incidence of homosexuality as 1 in 20, then by chance we may have included one homosexual in our group of normal males, but to the best of our knowledge we did not.

The twenty normal and homosexual males were matched with each other *individually* on the variables of age, intelligence and socio-economic class. The attitudinal investigation being reported upon was a part of a much larger study into aetiological agents of homosexuality, and the psychological and sociological concomitants of homosexuality. The results of the larger study allow us to define more precisely the degree of similarity between the normal and homosexual males. These are as follows:

(1) The two groups, obviously, were not differentiated on age, intelligence and class. The relevant data are: (*a*) homosexuals (Group H) mean IQ= 107·10, mean age=31·60 years, mean socio-economic class=2·55, normal males (Group N) mean IQ=108·10, mean age= 31·40 years, and mean socio-economic class= 2·55. The IQ estimate was obtained from the Mill Hill Vocabulary Scale, Form 1 Senior (Raven, 1958) and the class rating was based upon the Registrar General's system (H.M.S.O., 1960).

(2) There was no significant difference between the groups in frequency of the subjects being youngest or only children, nor of the number of siblings per family, nor of the sex ratio of the siblings.

(3) The incidence of broken or disturbed homes was similar for both groups.

(4) The style of childhood upbringing was not significantly different between the groups. (All subjects were asked to rate their upbringing on a five-point scale from extremely strict to extremely lax).

(5) There were no significant differences between the groups in respect of work record or community integration.

(6) There was no evidence that the homosexuals showed more feminine interests, as measured by the Slater Selective Vocabulary Scale, though the normal males did know slightly more masculine words (Clarke, 1965b).

The major differences between the groups were as follows:

(1) Eleven of Group N were married, the rest were single, there being no divorcees or widowers in the group. Eighteen of Group H were single, and there was one married man and a widower.

(2) As assessed by the Eysenck Personality Inventory (Eysenck and Eysenck, 1965) the groups were not differentiated on Extraversion, but Group H was significantly more neurotic than Group N. The Lie Scale did not differentiate the groups.

(3) There was a significant difference between the groups at the 5 per cent. level in parental age discrepancy (fathers older than mothers), with Group H's parents showing the greater discrepancy.

III. *The Method of Investigation*

The method of assessing attitudinal differences was by means of the Semantic Differential Technique (Osgood *et al.*, 1957). Twenty concepts were chosen to fit into the framework proposed by Kelly (1955) to cover family, intimates, valencies, authorities and values. Such coverage should afford plenty of scope for differences in attitudes between normal and homosexual males to be displayed.

The concepts chosen were: "Myself as I am", "Myself as I would like to be", "My mother", "My father", "My ideal sexual partner", "My closest male friend", "The woman who is closest to me", "The most successful person I know", "Someone who has had it in for me", "Someone to whom I was close but let me

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down", "People in authority", "The British Social System", "British Justice", "Sex", "Being queer, liking sex with men", "Being normal, liking sex with women", "Men", "Women", "Punishment".

The twenty concepts were rated on twenty scales consisting of twelve evaluative bipolar adjectives, five potency and three activity bipolar adjectives as defined by Osgood (Osgood *et al.*, 1957). After the data were collected, the scales were factor analysed to check that they corresponded with the three factors to which they had been assigned. This they did. At the same time we were able to check the polarity of the scales. In the actual administration of the concepts to be rated by the subjects, the polarity of the adjectives was randomized as were the order of the concepts. Standard wording in the administration was not used, but the plan of instructions provided by Osgood was followed (Osgood *et al.*, 1957).

IV. *Results*

After checking the polarity of the scales, scores were reversed where necessary. The scores for each subject on each of the three factors were then summed. The data were then subjected to analyses of variance. In each case the total N=800, 20 concepts rated by 40 subjects. Each set of scales was analysed separately, and a summary of results is shown in Table I.

As can be seen the groups are differentiated on the Evaluative and Potency Scales but not on the Activity Scales, also there are significant differences between the concepts, which is only to be expected or we should have failed to choose concepts which sampled the framework within which we were working.

The scales used to define the Evaluative factor were as follows (shown in their correct polarity): kind–cruel, nice–awful, forgiving–revengeful, wise–foolish, beautiful–ugly, fair–unfair, clean–dirty, blameless–guilty, good–bad, successful-unsuccessful, savoury–tasteless. The Potency Scales were as follows (also in their correct polarity); heavy–light, masculine–feminine, hard–soft, severe–lenient, strong–weak. The scores were so arranged that on the Evaluative Scales low scores were "good", and on the Potency Scales low scores were "severe".

T-tests were carried out on the differences between the two groups on the twenty concepts for the Evaluative and Potency Scales. On the Evaluative Scales significant differences were found on the following concepts: Myself as I am, 5 per cent. level, My mother, 5 per cent. level, British Justice, 1 per cent. level, Sex, 1 per cent. level, Being queer, 1 per cent. level, Being normal, 5 per cent. level, and Punishment, 5 per cent. level. In each case, except for the concept Being queer, the homosexuals had higher scores than the normal males, i.e. less favourable attitudes. On the Potency scales the following significant differences were found: Ideal sexual partner, 1 per cent. level, The woman closest to me, 5 per cent. level, Someone who has had it in for me, 5 per cent. level, Someone to whom I was close but let me down,

TABLE I

Summary of Analyses of Variance

Source	d.f.	Potency Scales M.S.V.	Potency Scales F.	Activity Scales M.S.V.	Activity Scales F.	Evaluative Scales M.S.V.	Evaluative Scales F.
Between Groups	1	298·90	8·90**	47·53	3·12	3300·78	7·29*
Between Concepts ..	19	481·43	26·081†**	135·42	15·96†**	3955·63	37·881**
Subjects within Groups ..	38	33·58	1·82†	15·20	1·79†	453·05	4·34†
Groups × Concepts ..	19	66·13	3·58†	18·53	2·19†	226·57	2·17†
Residual	722	18·46		8·48		104·43	
Total	799						

†=Conservative test used *=Significant at 5 per cent. level **=Significant at 1 per cent. level

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5 per cent. level, and Being queer, 5 per cent. level, on these concepts the homosexuals had lower scores, i.e. the concepts were regarded as "stronger" and more "severe", but on the following concepts the normal males had the lower scores: Myself as I am, 5 per cent. level, and My closest male friend, 5 per cent. level.

V. *Discussion*

The Semantic Differential Technique uses a 7-point rating system, and in our case, scores 1 to 3 on the Evaluative Scales are the "good" scores and 5 to 7 the "bad" scores, 4 is neutral. Similarly, on the Potency Scales scores 1 to 3 are the "strong", "severe" "masculine" scores and 5 to 7 the "weak, lenient and feminine" scores, 4 is neutral. Now, although we have found significant differences between our groups on different concepts and different sets of scales the difference is generally a relative one in one half of the seven-point system. That is to say, the difference is not one of "good" versus "bad" scores, but one of "good" and "less good". Similarly, with the Potency Scales, the difference is not between severe and lenient, or masculine and feminine, but between differing degrees of severity and masculinity. On the Evaluative Scales per concept no mean score lies on the "bad" side of the 7-point scale. On the Potency scales per concept only one score lies on the "weak" side of the scale and that is the concept: My ideal sexual partner for normal males.

Our notion that homosexuality would produce derogation of certain models or aspects of the family and society has been supported at a relative level, in that on certain concepts the homosexuals do have less favourable attitudes than the normal males, but in no way can the homosexuals be considered to have "paranoid" attitudes.

According to Sears (1965) a severe upbringing would have tended to feminize males. There is no evidence from our data that the homosexuals investigated could be considered more feminine in their outlook than the normal males. As far as we could ascertain the homosexuals had a no more severe upbringing than the normal males, they showed no greater knowledge of feminine words on the Slater Selective Vocabulary Scale, and on the Potency Scales there was no difference between the groups in the way they rated their mothers and fathers. Our selection of homosexuals cannot, however, be considered representative because we included no homosexuals who were happy to be in that condition. If such subjects had been included then perhaps the results may have been more clear cut.

VI. *Summary*

An attitudinal study has been carried out on 20 homosexual and 20 normal males on various aspects of familial and social relationships, in order to test the notion that homosexuals seeking treatment or being sent for treatment by the Courts are in a state of cognitive dissonance. One way of reducing cognitive dissonance is to derogate somebody or something else; if such derogation could be demonstrated it was argued that this would explain the common observation of paranoid attitudes in homosexuals. Differences were found between the two groups, but the attitudes of the homosexuals could not be considered paranoid.

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