

Cruising the 70s: Imagining Queer Europe then and now
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Abstracts.

Harvesting Time: The Legacy of Jean Genet and the Post-Algerian French 1970s

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Time had undergone a curious transformation since I arrived in Ajloun. Every moment has become 'precious,' so bright you felt you ought to be able to pick it up in pieces. The time of harvest had been followed by the harvest of time.

– Jean Genet, *Prisoner of Love*

As historian Todd Shepard has claimed, "Algerian questions—and answers—made the sexual revolution French," adding to current scholarship that views 1970s sexual liberation struggles in the métropole as a direct development of "worldwide anticolonial movements of the 20th century," especially those of the Arab world.¹ Within this conjuncture, the notorious Jean Genet emerged as a major European voice of the struggle against imperialism, travelling with and writing in support of the Black Panther Party and the Palestinian Liberation Organization, both beginning in 1970. The unlikely connection of Genet—then widely regarded as a "homosexual outlaw"—to the vanguard of Third-World Liberation movements has engendered a mixed reception of the writer's legacy, one whose complexity endures to this day. To use the author's metaphor from *Prisoner of Love*, this talk proposes an encounter with Genet's time in order to ask what political stakes for contemporary Europe have been harvested from his anti-colonial militancy and what lessons might still be left to be reaped. To this end, I will explore where the queer writer has lately re-emerged as a figure of reference in anti-imperialist circles in France and North Africa, while juxtaposing these uses of Genet to the silences around anti-colonialism emanating from his deployment in contemporary French culture. In particular, I will examine his invocation by theorist Houria Bouteldja of the Parti Indigène de la République,² as well as the continued importance of Genet's legacy in the Moroccan literary milieu, especially around the press and bookstore Librairie des Colonnes in Tangiers.³ While these

¹ Todd Shepard. *Sex, France and Arab Men (1962-1979)*. Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 2017.

² Houria Bouteldja. *Les Blancs, les Juifs et nous: Vers une politique de l'amour révolutionnaire*. Paris: La Fabrique, 2016. In English translation: *White, Jews and Us: Toward a Politics of Revolutionary Love*. South Pasadena: Semiotext(e), 2017.

³ See *Jean Genet: Un saint marocain*. Ed. Abdellah Taïa. Nejma, revue littéraire (Tanger). Numéro Spécial. Hiver 2010-2011, and Jean

nodes of reception largely omit the question of transgressive homosexuality from their engagements, metropolitan France has been awash in a new campaign of Jean-Paul Gaultier "Le Mâle" cologne advertisements, which make explicit reference to Genet's repertoire of homoerotic proletarian figures, signaling a re-appropriation of his oeuvre as tied to essentially French images of white masculinity.⁴ In a contemporary political landscape in which "universalized" gay citizenship is seen as irreconcilable with "communitarian" Muslim transnationalism, Genet's anti-bourgeois vision of homosexual freedom, his militant solidarity with Black and Arab revolutionaries and his "courage to destroy all the habitual reasons for living" in order to "discover others,"⁵ demonstrates that we indeed inhabit the future that Genet's work and person sought to enunciate.

Jackqueline Frost is a PhD candidate in Romance Studies (French) at Cornell University and a visiting researcher in Philosophy at Université Paris 8. Her dissertation project, "Looking into the Seeds of Time: Anti-colonialism, Antifascism and the Transatlantic Poetics of History," explores the development of new political philosophies of time in the works of militant Avant-guard writers between France and the Caribbean in the era of decolonization. Rather than a unified vision, the work of Aimé Césaire, Michel Leiris, René Depestre, Jean Genet and René Char offer studies in a variety of historical experiments engaging untimely temporalities. Jackqueline was a 2017-2018 Luigi Einaudi Research Fellow in Intellectual History during which time she worked in parallel on the reception of francophone anti-colonial theory in 1960s revolutionary Cuba, examining debates around the figure of the third-world intellectual with her collaborator, Jorge Lefevre Tavárez (University of Chicago).

Genet. *Quatre heures à Chatila* (suivi d'entretien avec Leila Shahid). Tanger: Librairie des Colonnes Éditions, 2015.

⁴ See the 2016 Le Mâle & Classique Commerical "Welcome to the Factory," which was paired with a Paris Metro ad campaign through spring 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2iiyPzttSx>. Accessed 24 October 2018. For Gaultier's comments on Genet, see Laura Havlin. "Jean Genet: The Quintessential Frenchman." *AnOther Magazine*, 2011. <http://www.anothermag.com/fashion-beauty/1501/jean-genet-the-quintessential-frenchman>. Accessed 24 October 2018.

⁵ Jean Genet. *The Thief's Journal*. New York: Grove Press, 1964.

Reflections on Hubert Fichte's *Essay on Puberty* (1974)

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In *Versuch über die Pubertät* (Essay on Puberty, 1974), German writer Hubert Fichte enacts an ethnological exploration of Afro-Brazilian culture and religion that catalyzes a re-visiting of his own psychic, social, and sexual development. Beginning in Santiago de Bahía, which he first visited and began researching in 1969, Fichte's account jolts back to memories of Hamburg in the late 1940s, when as a teen actor-prodigy, son of a single mother who was a costume designer, he socialized with Hans Henny Jahnn and other figures in the theater milieu of the day. Born in 1935, Fichte was a central figure in postwar German literature, but his importance has been underrecognized since his death from AIDS in 1986. In this presentation I will combine excerpts from my own translation-in-progress of *Versuch über die Pubertät* with critical reflections on several of Fichte's primary concerns – the implication of scientific and poetic languages; the restructuring of consciousness that his encounter with the Afro-American religions of Brazil initiated; and the dialectic of European rationality and other modes of consciousness and knowledge that he embodied as both queer writer and ethnographer. Queer sexuality was the lens through which Fichte observed the world. But what questions did his transition in the early 1970s from the counterculture of Hamburg to the ritual trance worlds of Santiago raise for him about his own sexual development in postwar Hamburg? And what understanding can his account give us about queer sexuality in postwar Europe and in intersection with discourses of decolonization?

European Queer 70s and Becomings: Spatiality, Queerness
and *Bombay Dost*

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The paper intends to investigate the influence of European queer movements in 1970s on one of the prominent queer magazines in India, the *Bombay Dost*, by making use of the theories on spatiality by English cultural geographer Doreen Massey. The paper also intends to look at the perspective of a nation struggling with the Emergency in 1970s where at the same time queer writings and other movements in popular culture were taking shape, widely influenced by the West, insisting on an anti-colonial identity. All such movements culminated in the publication of *Bombay Dost*. Doreen Massey's theories of 'relativism' and 'constellations' and her insistence on open, multiple, unfixed and porous identity could be used to analyze the transactions and influence of Queer 1970s upon *Bombay Dost* that began its publication in 1990 when the nation was opening to globalizing and liberalization. The ideas of connectedness, globalised identity and 'radical contemporaneity' the magazine ingrained while publishing in a city filled with complex multiplicities, even at the rise of fundamentalism could be studied to come at a meaning of spatialised queer identity and how it is in the process of becoming and also part of radical politics in the city.

Bombay Dost focused on the issues directly related to the Indian space, 'to act as an agent of progress' as its objective when the nation still had laws that criminalized homosexuality. It also acted as a space for many to 'come out of the closets' and be part of a narrative, to open up to the public their struggles. This opening up was theoretically dealt by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick in her writings on European queer movements in the latter half of 20th century. The paper, using Massey and Sedgwick would like to study how 'coming outs' were implicated, supported and contextualized by the magazine and thereby looking into the contemporariness that it emplaced to reach out to the public. Major issues linked to section 377 of Indian Penal Code that criminalized homosexuality, movements like first Asian lesbian conference and the coming of internet into the nation and its implications on the queer movement were published by the magazine. Thus the paper would focus on the becomings of queer identity in India through a study on *Bombay Dost*.

Patrick Kelly at Le Palace: Lost things, Dead Ends, and
the Mythology of Visual Documentation
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According to various people who knew Kelly, as well as interviews with Kelly, he worked at Le Palace as a costume designer upon arriving to Paris circa 1980. However, there is no pictorial evidence of the designs he created for the venue/club.

The issues in methodology here revolve around how can a researcher uncover a black queer history that was not documented/all but forgotten outside of using oral history which is key but does not fully compensate for visual evidence. This is especially when documenting the work of someone who was just considered a laborer at the time before becoming a fashion phenomenon. Are there inherent privileges/exclusivities that dictate documentary value for some and not others? How do we document his work with the images we do have of Le Palace? How can we recover the common absence of black queer contributions/narratives?

Queer Theory, Visual Culture, and "emotional resistances" in Torremolinos (Spain) during the Sixties and Seventies.
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This paper proposes an epistemological approximation between the method of visual analysis developed by Aby Warburg in *Atlas Mnemosyne*, based on concepts such as *Nachleben der Antike* (the afterlife of Antiquity) and *Pathosformel*, (the "emotionally charged visual tropes"), and some aspects of the Queer Theory, in particular the concept of "emotional resistances" proposed by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick with the intention of developing "reparative epistemologies".

This methodology has been applied in the analysis of the traces and practices of personal photography that were developed in the Sixties and Seventies in the LGBTQ+ community of Torremolinos (Málaga, Spain), as an example of cultural practice that allows to recover the "emotional resistances", especially of the members of this community with which the Francoist "emotional regime" (1939-1975) fattened.

These photographs show the role that Torremolinos had in the Sixties and Seventies as a destination for the LGBTQ+ community in Europe and the development of activism in Spain. Proof of this was the foundation in January 1977 of the Democratic Union of Homosexuals (UDH) in Málaga, months before the first demonstration for the repeal of the Ley de Peligrosidad y Rehabilitación Social (LPRS) in Barcelona in June 1977.

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Heteronormativity and the Repression of Lesbianism in
the 1970s French Women's Liberation Movement

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Dominant historiographical narratives on the 1970s French Women's liberation movement (Mouvement de libération des femmes – MLF) repeat the same story over and over again: the Women's liberation movement provided lesbians with an unprecedented opportunity for the liberation of homosexual desire and lesbian visibility. Based on the argument I developed in my recently submitted PhD thesis, I argue in this paper that these narratives conceal a more complex and embarrassing history: that of an entrenched repression of lesbian difference at the heart of 1970s French feminism. My argument hinges upon two different methodological approaches. The first one consists in reading the MLF archive against the grain, that is in showing how narratives of liberation in the archive are told from a heteronormative standpoint endlessly claiming that homosexuality is always already liberated in a women's movement and thus always already anachronistic as a political issue. Second, I provide an analysis of Monique Wittig's political and biographical trajectory in the 1970s (the history of which has never been told so far) and show how her departure from France to the U.S. in 1976 is directly tied to the silencing and repression of her attempts to politicize lesbian difference within the French feminist movement. The second part of my analysis is based on an archive that has never been studied before: Monique Wittig's private papers, held at the Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscript Library at Yale University.

This history is important to trouble the seemingly clear line between feminism and anti-feminism : by revealing the anti-lesbian genealogy of revolutionary French feminism, I argue that unexpected discursive complicities can be charted between 1970s feminists' anti-lesbianism and contemporary attacks against equal rights for same-sex couple in the name of French universalism and what conservative constituencies have recently called "gender ideology".

"I thought I was the only one that felt that way"¹
The 1970s as a turning point for the ways to feel about
homosexuality in East Germany?

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My presentation addresses the case of lesbians² in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and outlines the continuities and shifts in the private and public feelings around female* homosexuality with a focus on the 1970s and 1980s. I take inspiration from the affect turn in queer theory. It is an attempt to "feel backwards"³ and to highlight the complex and sometimes contradicting feelings around homosexuality. Following ideas by Heather Love, Deborah Gould and Ann Cvetkovich I want to explore the huge role emotions played for the regulation of homosexuality in East Germany, but also for individual and collective moments and actions of emancipation. Drawing on archival materials, oral history interviews and documentary projects my presentation outlines a periodisation for the history of female* homosexuality in the GDR with a focus on feelings and transfers.

In the GDR – like in other Eastern European Countries – the 1970s were not the decade of emancipation and an emerging gay pride because there was hardly any room for activism and politics that did not fit the the "official" political agenda. It is not before the 1980s that a homosexual rights movement kicks off in the East. This would not have been possible without the major developments in the 1970s that took place in the homosexual, lesbian and feminist movements in Western European countries and the USA. I therefore work with a transnational perspective that looks at the transfer of ideas embedded in such iconic movies like *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Society in Which He Lives* (Praunheim, 1971) and feminist writing like Pamela Allan's *Essay on Free Space* (1970) on consciousness-raising which came to blossom in the East during the 1980s.

¹ Gutsche, Kerstin: *Ich ahnungsloser Engel. Lesbenprotokolle*, Berlin 1990, p. 19.

² I use the term "lesbian" with regards to self-identifications of the historical actors, not to an essential and closed identity category or group.

³ Love, Heather: *Feeling Backward. Loss and the Politics of Queer History*, Cambridge, MA/London 2007.

Supported by exchanges with activists from other countries and these ideas, newly founded groups sought to make sense of the negative emotions that many lesbians described – e.g. fear, self-guilt and shame. The concept of consciousness-raising was central to the emotion work that occurred in these groups, as was the idea that coming-out was a process through which women could learn to accept their homosexuality despite the constant discrimination that they experienced. Talking and writing about their experiences and feelings helped participants to see their lives in a broader perspective and to transform their feelings, not least because groups offered support and ideas of a positive self-understanding. Nevertheless, if we look at personal testimonies from the 1980s we find a big variety of feelings – shame, guilt and fear were still present. My case study shows the rapid changes in the ways to feel about homosexuality over a short period of time and highlights the importance of political activism. But the politicisation and emotionalisation of homosexual identities which was central to the emancipation movements had – if we look at present discourses – contradicting outcomes.

Maria Bühner is a PhD-candidate and Lecturer at the Institute for Cultural Studies at Leipzig University in the section for Comparative Cultural and Social History of Modern Europe. Her major research interests are history of sexualities, history of emotions, gender history, and body history. She is currently completing her dissertation on Subjectification of female* Homosexuality in the German Democratic Republic. Maria is a member of the interdisciplinary Graduate School "Global and Area Studies" at Leipzig University and was a scholar of the German Academic Scholarship Foundation. Recent publications include a volume on European Gender Histories (Franz Steiner Verlag), coedited with Maren Möhring, and three essays on the lesbian movement in the GDR for the Deutsches Digitales Frauenarchiv (German Digital Women's Archive).

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And sex? Re-reading representations of queer desire in the
1970s Polish artistic practices

Aleksandra Gajowy, Newcastle University

Focusing on Krzysztof Jung's explicitly homoerotic 1970s drawings and a masturbation scene from the 1978 Piotr Majdrowicz's film *Misunderstanding*, this paper sets out to investigate possibilities of re-inscribing narratives of desire and jouissance into the predominantly grim landscape of histories of queerness under socialist regime in Poland, still resonating in the public sphere today. Although much new research has come to light in the recent years, the perpetuated narrative of queer people in Poland is often one of rejection, isolation, and of life marked with dreadful sense of shame and fear. Not aiming to dismiss the lived experiences of persecution and rampant homophobia in Poland, in this paper I suggest that as stories of queer desire are perpetually linked with trauma and suffering, they nonetheless contribute to victimisation of queer people in Poland and, even today, only grant them visibility within the sphere of abjection. Jung's and Majdrowicz's works are rare and important examples of ephemeral yet wonderfully liberating expressions of homoeroticism defying the austerity and oppressive atmosphere of the socialist regime. As they explore the sexual body as a site of resistance, in its close reading of the works this paper considers how we may write about sex, love, and queer desire *viscerally* rather than in abstract, sublimated forms – and how such an exercise can be a strategy of reclaiming the externally imposed sphere of abjection with joys of fucking.

'On Sequins and Shit.

The Sense of Radical Dress in Mario Mieli's Transsexual Utopia'

Roberto Filippello, Edinburgh College of Art

'Through clothing, we want to communicate the "schizofrenia" that lies "at the bottom" of social life, hidden behind the censorious screen of the unrecognized "normal" transvestism of everyday' (Mieli, *Elementi di Critica Omosessuale*)

This paper addresses the work of activist, performer, and queer theorist (*ante litteram*) Mario Mieli through the lens of fashion, seeking to unearth the central function that dress occupies in his gay communist project. I will focus in particular on how, within Mieli's queer utopianism, radical transvestism functions as an ethico-political praxis aimed at challenging capitalism and liberating Eros.* After briefly outlining Mieli's 'transsexual aesthetics,' I will explore the only apparently contradictory role of fashion within his oeuvre (both in *Elementi di Critica Omosessuale / Towards a Gay Communism* [1977; 1980, 2018] and in the fictional autobiography *Il Risveglio dei Faraoni*, [1982]). On the one hand, fashion (i.e. the fashion system, or industry) is

* Since his first public appearance at the International Conference of Sexology, in Sanremo (Italy), where he was *en travesti*, Mieli showed the affective power of (publicly performing) the queer dressed body to disquiet morality and disturb normative codes of appearance and behavior. His crossdressing practice (or "radical transvestism", or *genderfuck* as he became increasingly influenced by English subcultures after his encounter with the Gay Liberation Front in London) enabled him to embody via dress the "deviancy" that was pivotal to deconstructing that very 'hyper-dressed rigidity of femininity and masculinity' (Prearo 2018: xv) through which the Norm is articulated.

harshly condemned by Mieli with arguments attuned to those used by the Frankfurt School to denounce the culture industry. On the other, dress (intended as a signifier of politicized self-fashioning) emerges as a force incorporated by the crossdresser to establish modes of intersubjectivity rooted in polymorphous desire as well as collective forms of resistance against the 'monosexual' capitalist Norm. For Mieli, critique is corporeally embodied. On this ground, dress permits to materially articulate embodied critical instances of (queer) insurrection against the normalization of costumes and ideas. Vis-à-vis the political tendencies among homosexual subjects to be assimilated within the heteromatrix (which Mieli envisaged as the possible cause of defeat of his liberationist-communist project), he argued that only a critical process that would let emerge the castrating workings of the Norm on the collective psyche and take into account the radical potential of experimenting with one's appearance could lead, utopianly, to political emancipation and human liberation.

'"Nuremberg For Mothers": Tony Duvert, French Boy Lovers and the problem of power'

Paul Clinton, Goldsmiths, University of London

Through a reading of novelist and polemicist Tony Duvert's work, this paper will grapple with the under-examined but central place of pederasty/paedophilia activism in 1970s gay liberation. It will claim that this uncomfortable history has much to tell us about identity and transgression in contemporary queer politics.

Duvert was a pivotal figure in French gay liberation and literary culture, writing for activist magazine *Gai Pied* and even winning the Prix de Medicis fiction award. Yet his reputation was ambivalent: in his book *Good Sex Illustrated* (1974), he even claims that the sexual liberation movement was itself repressive and capitalist, before setting out his argument for the emancipation of child sexuality. Despite the overtly pro-paedophile themes in his work, he is once again the subject of renewed interest, with five widely-reviewed books being translated in the last decade.

A careful analysis of *Good Sex Illustrated* will outline some of the key arguments used by pro-pederasty activists in mainstream gay liberation, including arguments against the family, law and assimilation. I will demonstrate that his anti-authoritarian texts appeal to three dominant tendencies in queer culture today: the identitarian, the anti-normative and anti-assimilationist. I will argue that the appeal of a figure like Duvert points to a fetishization of the minority as inherently transgressive: as if to be outside the norm is to be radically against it. But also to show how arguments around age of consent in the 1970s point to some of the continuing conceptual limits around power and consent within current queer critiques of normativity.

Paul Clinton is a writer and art critic based in London, and is lecturer in curating at Goldsmiths, University of London. For four years he was senior editor at the magazines *Frieze* and *Frieze Masters*. Previous invitations to speak have included at University of Reading, Royal College of Art London, Tate Modern, FIAC Paris, Kunsthalle Basel, Fargfabriken Stockholm, amongst numerous other venues. He edited a special issue of the peer reviewed journal *Parallax* on stupidity, which was also the subject of a major exhibition at Focal Point Gallery. And he continues to write for *London Review of Books*, *MOUSSE*, *The White Review*, *Frieze*, *Art Review* and other publications. In 2018, he curated the exhibition 'Forbidden to Forbid' at Galerie Balice Hertling, Paris, organised the queer book fair 'Strange Perfume' at South London Gallery, and delivered a series of public talks called 'Performance Power Desire' to coincide with the Ian White exhibition at Camden Arts Centre. His forthcoming book, *Other Hunting* (Ma Bibliotheque) examines the work of French author Tony Duvert and what it reveals about queer culture today.

A personal journey into the radical past of a gay fetish club in Eindhoven, Netherlands.

Sam Ashby

While I was on an artist residency in Eindhoven – a small provincial city in the south Netherlands – a friend told me: “Eindhoven used to have the dirtiest gay club in the world.” I was to be in the city for a month to go over my ongoing research into rural queer networks before the internet, and so this local story became an irresistible distraction. I soon discovered the club was called Vagevuur (Purgatory) and provided a space for a number of fetishes including fisting, rubber, leather, watersports, military, sportswear, s/m, and scat. Vagevuur began in the 1980s and closed its doors for good in 2008.

Through a series of chance meetings, archive visits, online networking, and sexual encounters, I gradually built up a picture of the club, it’s community, and its history, including its origins in Roze Driehoek (Pink Triangle), a local queer activist group who were active in Eindhoven from the late-1970s and gradually disbanded in the late-1980s. Their bold political and aesthetic values had strong emphasis on radical sex practices and freedom of expression, which created space for the development of Vagevuur. The club formed outside the dominant mainstream gay cultures of the time to create a utopian space in the midst of the international AIDS crisis, with an emphasis on community and safe sex.

This paper recounts my journey through the research into Vagevuur, and touches on my own relationship to fetish and kink, a space that began to open up alongside the history of the club.

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Back to the Sweatshop: revisiting 'early'
lesbian and gay theatre
Stephen Greer, University of Glasgow

This paper returns to problematise the 1970s as a founding moment of LGBT theatre in the UK in its relationship to contemporary queer practice. While multiple histories of British performance – including my own work – emphasise the significance of the first wave of self-identifying lesbian and gay theatre artists whose emergence followed the end of direct stage censorship, the retrospective gaze of these narratives may too tidily orient historical knowledge on a telos of social progress, not least through a privileging of performative strategies of visibility and coming out.

By returning to consider the intersection of the work of gay and lesbian theatre companies such as Gay Sweatshop with contemporaneous Gay Liberation and Women's Liberation movements in the 1970s, this paper considers what queer histories might emerge when they are not (pre-emptively) aligned with the strategies of formal recognition and assimilation which characterise contemporary mainstream LGBT politics. Doing so involves an understanding of how theatre history's own narrative tropes (often oriented on companies and key artists) and understanding of 'professional' practice may occlude recognition of alternative social, political and artistic configurations at work in the period.

What alternative historiographical strategies might serve a better understanding of queer performance practice during the 1970s? How might revisiting queer performance in the 70s allow us to better acknowledge and recognise alternative social and historical trajectories? How might situating British performance in the broader context of European practice (and work further field) serve that goal?