



## **Down With LGBTQ!\*** **by John Lauritsen**

**LGBT** or **LGBTQ**. They're not pronounceable words, and therefore not acronyms, but rather initialisms or alphabetisms. Coming out of nowhere, these letter groups were immediately obligatory. Somewhere, hidden from public view, the Powers That Be ordained that all gay and lesbian organizations and media must begin using one or the other. They all fell into line: the Human Rights Campaign (HRC); the National LGBTQ Task Force, Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG); Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund; and the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD). A September 2015 conference at Harvard will address "Challenges That Remain for the LGBTQ Community."

We have been drawn through the looking glass into a world where nothing makes sense. There has never been, nor could be, an LGBT person, an LGBT community, or an LGBT movement, let alone LGBTQ politicians or an LGBTQ agenda. We are not

supposed to question this identity politics run amuck; we can only add letters to metastasizing alphabetisms – LGBTQIA, LGBTTQQFAGBDSM....

I maintain that this alphabet soup is a fraud, devised by our enemies and carried forward by uncritical supporters. Under the guise of *inclusiveness*, the thrust is to erase gay men. Let's take a critical look at each of the five letters: L G B T Q.

### **L is for Lesbians**

In the Gay Liberation movement, and before that the Homophile movement, “gay” and “homophile” could apply to both males and females. However, some lesbians felt that this rendered them invisible, and so names were changed to Gay and Lesbian or Lesbian and Gay.

The main American organizations – Mattachine, ONE, Gay Liberation Front, Gay Activists Alliance, and National Gay Task Force – were for both males and females. At the same time, other organizations were for women only: Daughters of Bilitis and Lesbian Feminist Liberation. I can think of only one group, the pre-Stonewall Homosexuals Intransigent, that was for men only.

In Europe the largest organizations – the *Wissenschaftlich Humanitäres Komitee* (Germany: the Scientific Humanitarian Committee) and the World League for Sexual Reform – were for both males and females. However, there were also important groups open only to men: the *Gemeinschaft der Eigenen* (Germany: Community of One's Own) and *Der Kreis* (Switzerland: *The Circle*). From 1932 to 1967 *Der Kreis* published a tri-lingual (German, French and English) monthly magazine, which had subscribers all over the world. Since Switzerland was a neutral country in World War II, *Der Kreis* survived, whereas other movements for homosexual emancipation were destroyed by Nazism and Stalinism.

I raise the question, whether lesbians and gay men ever belonged together in the first place. Medical writers and psychiatrists, beginning in the 19th century, have joined us together, under the assumption that lesbians and gay men are counterparts of each other: same-sex lovers, united by a common oppression. However, this union is open to challenge. It is not apparent to me that gay men have more in common with lesbians than with other men, or, for that matter, with heterosexual women, who love men like us.

This point was made in 1958 by “Noel I. Garde” (Edgar Leoni),

author of the seminal gay geniuses book, *From Jonathan to Gide*, in response to an editorial in *ONE* magazine by Associate Editor Alison Hunter, which urged that men and women in homophile organizations “learn to work together.” (“Alison Hunter” was a pseudonym of W. Dorr Legg, who wished to give the impression that women played an important role in *ONE*.) “Noel I. Garde” wrote:

Dear *ONE*:

This writer wishes to object to the basic premise in Alison Hunter's Editorial (July, 1958) favoring closer relations between the male homosexual and his alleged twin, the female homosexual. This is based on full acceptance of the negative Freudian claptrap about homosexuality as being against something. Thus, according to this nonsense, the male homosexual, due to some traumatic childhood horror, has rejected the usual female ideal; likewise, the female homosexual has rejected the usual male, etc., ad nauseam. Ergo, the two have a common origin.

When the study of homosexuality is freed from this dogmatic claptrap, when properly viewed as something positive, the obvious fact will be brought out that the primary, positive essence of male homosexuality is an inherent and very strong attraction to the male. Of all females with whom such a male has the least in common, the Lesbian obviously comes first....

Noel I. Garde, New York, N.Y.  
[*ONE* magazine, Letters, September 1958]

In the next issue of *ONE*, Rolf, the co-founder of *Der Kreis*, replied:

Dear Miss Hunter:

In your Editorial (July, 1958) you mention the fact that *DER KREIS*, the oldest and one of the largest of all the homophile organizations, does not admit women either as members or as participants....

The slight accusation unspokenly present in your above-mentioned editorial is not exactly new to *DER KREIS*. We have been “accused” of the “crime” of not admitting women to *DER KREIS* repeatedly within the last twenty-five years. However, I

would like to point out that the beginnings of DER KREIS have much in common with the beginnings of ONE. As you are doubtlessly aware, DER KREIS was founded by a woman, Mammina, who carried all of the burden for several years on her shoulders alone, until I had the honour of becoming her co-worker.

We worked closely together for several years until finally we both came to the conclusion that though the interests of homophile women and men are identical, their ways of living socially together are – at least in Switzerland – incompatible. The real reason for this incompatibility neither Mammina nor myself have ever been able to define clearly. All I can say is that since the day DER KREIS was only admissable for male subscribers we have had several “mixed” clubs at Zurich, all of them very short-lived ones, I'm afraid.

From nearly a quarter of a century of observation I am inclined to say personally – and, mind you, I'm speaking only for myself and for conditions in Switzerland – that generally women of our kind tend to be not only critical but **super**-critical of their brothers in kind, whereas the male homophile is far more tolerant toward his sisters....

Rolf, Editor DER KREIS, ZÜRICH, SWITZERLAND  
[*ONE* magazine, November 1958]

Groups and publications for both lesbians and gay men are fine; lesbian women-only groups are fine; but there is also an urgent need for all-male groups. What's sauce for the goose ought to be sauce for the gander.

### **G is for Gay Men**

The definition of “gay man” is neither obvious nor easy. Part of the difficulty lies in the bisexuality of the human male, amply demonstrated by survey research, history, anthropology, and animal studies.

Human males are powerfully attracted to other males, erotically and emotionally. This attraction is not the product of psychological problems, peculiar life experiences, hormonal imbalance, or genetic aberrations. The male capacity to love another male is inborn, a

phylogenetic characteristic of our species. If a man has any libido at all – if he is not a total eunuch – his libido has a homoerotic component. As Mario Mieli expresses it: “Homosexual desire is universal.” Therefore, the following definitions:

- A gay man has recognized and accepted his desire and capacity to love another man.
- A straight man has denied his homoerotic desires, consciously or unconsciously, or is unable to act on them.

Note that neither definition makes reference to women. Almost all gay men have had some amount of heterosexual experience, and most of the rest could, if necessary, rise to the occasion. (It's easy enough, if you've had practice with other guys – indeed, I suspect that gay men are less likely to be impotent with women than straight men are, but that goes off topic.)

At any rate, *straight* is an entirely negative term. It does not mean *heterosexual*, but simply *not gay*. Until some time in the mid-20th century, both *gay* and *straight* were underground words of a criminal subculture. Edwin Sutherland, in *The Professional Thief*, one of the classics of American sociology, shows how such words had meanings that were unknown to *straight* (law-abiding) people – and all active gay men were criminals then. Until recently, males who had sex with each other were punished by death or imprisonment, in accordance with the Judeo-Christian moral code, based on a taboo in the *Holiness Code of Leviticus*.

Immediately following the Stonewall rebellion, and in the earliest days of the New York Gay Liberation Front, some of us gay men intensely debated what the goals of our new movement should be and what words we should use. Many of our discussions took place in the Silver Dollar, a greasy spoon diner on Christopher Street. Their hamburgers and coffee weren't very good, but they didn't mind if we spent hours talking to each other. We all agreed that *gay* was the word for ourselves and for our movement. *Gay* was our word, and it was always positive. We rejected *homosexual* as too clinical, and we rejected *homophile* as too conservative and obscure.

*Gay* as a code word goes back much further than we thought back then. Rictor Norton has demonstrated that by the late 18th century, *gay* and *lesbian*, with their homoerotic meanings, were already being used by the *initiated* (Rictor Norton, *The Myth of the*

*Modern Homosexual*, 1997).

*Gay* may not be ideal, and it has acquired negative connotations in recent years. I'd much prefer the beautiful word, *Dorian*, which can be both noun and adjective. But for now, *gay* is the best we have.

## **B is for Bisexual**

There is no need for this letter. Most men and women have at least the potential for both homosexual and heterosexual behavior. Even back in the 1940s, when Kinsey did his surveys of American sexual behavior, nearly all men who could be considered gay (2 through 6 on the Kinsey scale) had also had heterosexual experiences.

The issue is *gay* versus *straight*: that is, *gay* versus *not gay*. In my early years of involvement in the gay subculture, I and my friends often had sex or affairs with men who were married or had girl friends. So what? If they enjoyed sex with other guys, then they were *gay*. We would never have said, "Oh, he's not gay, he's bisexual."

If bisexual is made into a separate label, then only the Kinsey 6's (exclusively gay men) would be gay. This would define a gay man negatively, as being incapable of having sex with a woman. Many people believe this, but it is false. *Yes* to bisexuality in practice. *No* to making it a separate category.

## **T is for Transgender**

I object to the "T" because transgender/transsexual goals are incompatible with mine. The issues are complex, and deserve a full discussion in the gay media. So far there hasn't been any. Statements critical of the received transgender narrative have been censored and suppressed, blasted as "transphobia" – apparently a new form of bigotry.

A case in point: Ronald Gold was one of the leading members of the Gay Activists Alliance in its heyday in the early 1970s. He is the man most responsible for getting the American Psychiatric Association to drop "homosexuality" from its list of disorders. Asked to write a column for Bilerico, a leading LGBTQ internet site, Gold submitted a brief article: "*No*" to the notion of transgender. Bilerico

accepted and published it, and almost immediately a flak storm broke out. Bilerico fired Gold, apologized to readers, and deleted the offending column, which went down the Orwellian memory hole until gay scholar Wayne R. Dynes retrieved it. In my opinion, Gold's article expresses good common sense; it is direct, truthful, and in no way offensive.

I regard the transgender credo — “a woman's soul trapped in a man's body” (ANIMA MULIEBRIS CORPORE VIRILE INCLUSA) — as mystical nonsense. In his entry, *Incarceration Motif*, in the *Encyclopedia of Homosexuality*, “Warren Johansson” (Joseph Wallfield) traces this motif back to Karl Heinrich Ulrichs (1824-1895), the grandfather of gay liberation. Ulrichs derived the notion from Heinrich Hösli's 1836-1838 book, *Eros: die Männerliebe der Griechen* (*Eros: the Male Love of the Greeks*). In turn, Hösli took the notion from an article in a Munich newspaper, discussing the kabbalistic belief in the transmigration of souls. The idea is that gendered souls, male and female, are zooming around up yonder, waiting to enter into bodies. Once in awhile — oops! — a female soul ends up in a male body. Thereby, a transsexual. This kabbalistic belief is portrayed in the play, *The Dybbuk*, in which the heroine ends up with two souls inside her: her own female soul and the male soul of her dead lover. A powerful and haunting movie of *The Dybbuk*, with actors from the Yiddish theater, was made in Poland in 1937; I have watched it many times.

As someone who advocates the liberation of sexuality, I cannot approve of “change-of-sex” surgery — which is not a *change* of sexuality, but its eradication. Why use euphemisms? Castration is castration, not a transformation of male into female.

My goal is to free sexuality from superstition — but the transsexual narrative is rife with irrationalism. It is a crazy world, indeed, when we are compelled to believe that a castrated man is really a woman, or that sex can simply be “reassigned” like a clerical procedure.

Up to a point I can accept the viewpoint of J.S. Mill, that the state has no right to hinder an individual's freedom, even to prevent him from harming himself (*Liberty*). But there are also doctors and therapists involved. As long as medical malpractice is punished, those performing “transsexual surgery” should lose their licenses and be sent to prison.

It may be hard to save adults from their folly, but we should be

concerned for children who are caught in the transsexual trap. Last June a documentary, *Growing Up Trans*, was broadcast on PBS television. In one unforgettable episode, a bewildered but perfectly fine little boy is surrounded by his mother and a group of female therapists, who are proposing he go on drugs that will prevent puberty – chemical castration in preparation for surgical castration when he's old enough. This is truly a *crime against nature*. It is through puberty that boys grow into men – and sometimes feminine boys become masculine men.

Whether transsexualism is a hoax, a delusion, or both, it is no ally of mine or of other gay men.

### **Q is for Queer**

*Queer* is so obviously wrong, that arguing against it is almost demeaning. Here we have a word that was and still is one of the most hateful in the American language. “Dirty queer” is what many gay men heard as they were being beaten to death. Although “queer theorists” talk of “reclaiming” the word, this is impossible, since it never belonged to us in the first place; it was always the word of our enemies.

Although *queer* is clearly understood as referring to men, it is women who have been its strongest promoters. Eve Kosovsky Sedgwick, in her over-rated book, *Epistemology of the Closet*, used the word often. In a *Gay & Lesbian Review* interview (September-November 2015) B. Ruby Rich proudly takes credit for coining “New Queer Cinema” in 1982 to label what she saw as a new cinematic phenomenon. If these women can call gay men queers, why shouldn't we call them *cunts*? – and yet historically, *cunt* has been far less pejorative than *queer*.

In the same issue of *GLR* Larry Kramer tells his interviewer, Matthew Hays, “Don't use the word queer. I loathe it.” This dialogue follows:

**Matthew Hays:** Why do you loathe the word “queer”?

**Larry Kramer:** Because I am not queer. I am gay.

**MH:** Some see “queer” as an inclusive word that embodies gay, lesbian, bi, trans, and so-on. You think it's that offensive?

**LK:** I do. It's like calling blacks “niggers”.



I agree.

In addition, *queer* is unacceptable because of its core meanings: queer, odd, spurious, worthless, deviant (dictionary definitions). Gay men are not worthless. Sex between males, in historical perspective, is healthy and good, not deviant or spurious.

I am not alone in opposing *queer*. Most gay men, and especially those who were active in the homophile and gay liberation movements, also strongly object to it. A section in my personal website has critiques of *queer* by John Rechy, Wayne R. Dynes, Stephen O. Murray, Arthur Evans, and myself.

Since *queer* is so blatantly wrong, I'm amazed that any gay men have acquiesced in it. I can only attribute their acquiescence to self-hatred, low self-esteem, or the "protective stupidity" that George Orwell called *Crimestop*:

"Crimestop means the faculty of stopping short, as though by instinct, at the threshold of any dangerous thought. It includes the power of not grasping analogies, of failing to perceive logical errors, of misunderstanding the simplest arguments if they are inimical to Ingsoc, [English Socialism] and of being bored or repelled by any train of thought which is capable of leading in a heretical direction. Crimestop, in short, means protective stupidity." (George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*)

In sum, *queer* was foisted on us by our worst enemies, aided and abetted by feminists and academics. We should oppose its use in every way possible.

## **Conclusion**

When I was in the Gay Liberation Front (1969-1971) I favored a multi-issue approach: all forms of oppression were related, and all were ultimately caused by class society, capitalism. When I later joined the Gay Activists Alliance (1969-1981) I came to appreciate the logic of the single-issue approach. GAA was concerned with gay rights, period, and it was far more effective and influential than any of its predecessors.

I believe that gay men need to establish the validity and beauty of male love, which comprises love, sex, and friendship. We must preserve our heritage, which includes a noble tradition and much of

the world's greatest literature.

We should seek to destroy for all time the taboo on sex between males. All sexual superstition, all theological morality, must be replaced by rational, secular ethics.

Gay men need to explore and rediscover how to relate to men. This requires all-male spaces, as it cannot be done where feminist PC cops are present.

Of course, we'll need allies, but we should get our own act together first. We'll need our own publications: literate and free from the pernicious sex industry described by Ian Young in his *Stonewall Experiment*. Rather than striving for an indiscriminate *inclusivity*, we should build a vanguard of intelligent, courageous, and principled gay men.

Our best allies may prove to be other men, with whom we could unite in reversing encroachments on male liberty. Thanks to state-enforced feminism, almost no all-male organizations or spaces are left. YMCAs are now for both males and females, but YWCAs are still for females only. There are still women's colleges in the U.S., but no men's colleges (except rabbinical colleges). All of the Ivy League men's colleges have gone co-ed, and yet half of the Seven Sisters colleges are still for women only. Here in Boston there are a dozen health clubs for women, but not a single one for men.

It used to be that every small town had an Elks Club or similar fraternal organization, where males could socialize with each other. They no longer exist. In my home town, the Elks Club was a grand building with stained-glass windows, which, with its parking lot, took up an entire city block. Here my father taught me how to play pool in a huge room filled with regulation-sized pool and billiards tables. Then all fraternal organizations went co-ed; the Elks club, a shadow of its former self, was forced to give up the old building and moved into a small, nondescript modern building.

We might also fight on behalf of American boys, who are being emasculated by female teachers. (Christina Hoff-Sommers, *The War On Boys*) Millions of these boys — often the most vigorous and intelligent — are being poisoned by the drug Ritalin, prescribed to treat a phony diagnosis, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD).

Gay men have a right to male companionship. We have a right to be ourselves, and as men — with men — for men — to fight for our own liberation. To paraphrase Kurt Hiller, a prominent homosexual rights activist in the early 20th century: “It is only by men that male

love can be freed.”

Could LGBT or LGBTQ be made into pronounceable acronyms? I've tried, and the best I can come up with (by putting gay men first) are *glebitran* or *glebitranq*, which are as bad as the initialisms. At any rate, the forced groupings are based on false premises. LGBT and LGBTQ are clumsy, contradictory, and hard to pronounce. Let's reconsider our goals and go back to using words that mean something. Myself, I'll settle for the **G**.

# # #

### **References/Further Reading**

Wainwright Churchill, *Homosexual Behavior Among Males: A Cross-Cultural and Cross-Species Investigation*, 1967.

Louis Crompton, *Homosexuality & Civilization*, 2003.

Wayne R. Dynes, *Encyclopedia of Homosexuality*, 1990.

Wayne R. Dynes, Arthur Evans, John Lauritsen, Stephen O. Murray, and John Rechy, “Critique of the Word Queer”,  
<http://paganpressbooks.com/jpl/QUEER.HTM>

Ronald Gold, “No to the notion of transgender”,  
<http://paganpressbooks.com/jpl/RONGOLD.HTM>

Christina Hoff-Sommers, *The War Against Boys*, 2001; revised edition 2015.

Hubert Kennedy, *The Ideal Gay Man: The Story of Der Kreis*, 1999.

John Lauritsen, *A Freethinker's Primer of Male Love*, 1998.

John Lauritsen and David Thorstad, *The Early Homosexual Rights Movement (1864-1935)*, 1974; revised second edition 1995.

Rictor Norton, *The Myth of the Modern Homosexual*, 1998.

John Addington Symonds, *A Problem in Greek Ethics*, 1873 (available

on Rictor Norton's website).

Ian Young, *The Stonewall Experiment*, 1995.

\* Copyright 2015 by John Lauritsen. This article can be printed out and passed around, but not published commercially without my permission. Comments welcome: [john.lauritsen@verizon.net](mailto:john.lauritsen@verizon.net) . The Gay Liberation section of my website is at: <http://paganpressbooks.com/jpl/GAYLIB.HTM> .